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Transformation of the Amazon of Europe  
into smarter and greener tourism destination

## Guidelines for applicants

Open public call SMARTER AOE – 202301 for  
tourism SMEs to receive financial support for  
digital transformation

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## Table of contents

<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>2 About the SMARTER AOE project</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1 Key project facts .....	5
2.2 Short description of the project.....	5
<b>3 Open public call for tourism SMEs to receive financial support for digital transformation</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>4 Why apply?</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>5 Who can apply?</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>6 What to apply?</b> .....	<b>8</b>
6.1 Eligible activities for financial support to tourism SMEs .....	8
6.2 Time period of eligible costs.....	9
6.3 Payment - reimbursement of eligible costs .....	9
<b>7 How to apply?</b> .....	<b>9</b>
7.1 Application form.....	10
7.2 Declaration of honor .....	13
7.3 Submission of the application .....	13
<b>8 Evaluation and selection process</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>9 Requirements for the transfer of financial support</b> .....	<b>15</b>
9.1 Publicity requirements.....	15
9.2 Requirement of participation in the AoE academy educational programme .....	15
9.3 Reporting requirements.....	16
<b>10 Timeline of the SMARTERAOE-202301 call activities</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>11 Processing of personal data</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>12 Attachments</b> .....	<b>20</b>

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## 1 Introduction

Amazon of Europe (AoE) is a tourism destination located in 5 countries (Austria, Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia and Serbia), along three rivers (Mura, Drava and Danube), linked to the 1<sup>st</sup> 5-country Transnational Biosphere Reserve in the world (TBR MDD). It has been established to connect different regions, countries, and cultures, which, despite their differences, carry many common characteristics. Connected by three rivers and five countries, the whole area offers vast natural and cultural potential for the development of sustainable tourism.

SMARTER AOE project, co-financed by the European Union (EU), has been selected in the COS-TOURINN-2020-3-04 call for proposals. The main SMARTER AOE project objective is to establish or support the growth of an international ecosystem of tourism Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the Amazon of Europe destination and other biosphere to boost social, digital, and ecological innovation through collaboration, capacity building and digital transformation. With the international ecosystem of over 200 tourism SMEs from seven countries (Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania and Bulgaria), the project will bring boosted digitalization and innovation, resulting in better efficiency and quality of services, increased revenue and reduced ecological footprint. The project unites a capacity-building programme, offering relevant content, expert support, and providing space for mutual learning to facilitate the process of digital transformation.

The project will provide direct financial support to tourism SMEs for digital transformation, which will be awarded in the SMARTERAOE-202301 public call to the selected tourism SMEs to fill in their skill and resource gaps in the field of business digitalization. Financial support will be awarded to the selected companies in the maximum amount of 3 000 EUR. Altogether, the project will award 390 000 EUR of financial support for digital transformation to tourism SMEs in all seven countries.

Subject of the SMARTER AOE-202301 call is to select and award third-party beneficiaries (tourism SMEs) whose financial and other support will strengthen their competitiveness and speed up their growth as well as support their environment (other organizations in the local and regional tourism ecosystem).

The language of the call is English. If needed, assistance will be available to the applicants in the national language by the project partners in each country.

Guidelines for applicants document presents general information about the SMARTER AOE project and detailed information about the SMARTERAOE-202301 call: why apply, who can apply, what to apply, how to apply, evaluation and selection process, requirements for applicants and timeline of activities.

## 2 About the SMARTER AOE project

This chapter presents basic information about the SMARTER AOE project: key project facts and short description.

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## 2.1 Key project facts

- Duration: 30 months (01. 01. 2022 – 30. 06. 2024)
- Total budget: 1.27 mio EUR (390 000 EUR of financial support to tourism SMEs)
- Project aim: Addressing specific needs of tourism SMEs (Small and Mid-size Enterprises) located in rural areas in the field of digitalization.
- Project objective: Establishing an international ecosystem of tourism SMEs in the Amazon of Europe and other Biosphere Reserves to boost social, digital and ecological innovation through collaboration, capacity building and digital transformation.
- Project partners and regional coordinators (RC) in participating countries:
  - *Slovenia*: Result Computer Systems (lead partner) - <https://www.result.si/>  
Institute Iskriava – <https://iskriva.net/>  
Pomurje Technology Park (RC) - <https://www.p-tech.si/>
  - *Croatia*: Business Incubator BIOS Osijek (RC) - <https://inkubator.hr/>
  - *Hungary*: West Pannon Nonprofit Ltd. (RC) - <https://www.westpannon.hu/>
  - *Serbia*: Tourism organization of Vojvodina (RC) - <https://vojvodina.travel/>
  - *Montenegro*: Institute 22 (RC) - <https://issp.me/>
  - *Romania*: Romanian Hotel Industry Federation (RC) - <https://www.fihf.ro/>
  - *Bulgaria*: Bulgarian-Romanian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RC) - <https://brcci.eu/en/>

## 2.2 Short description of the project

The SMARTER AOE project is complementing the results of EU projects AoE Bike Trail and Amazing AoE (Interreg Danube programme), joining forces to improve socio-economic situation of the AoE, tourism destination formed around the TBR MDD, where tourism SMEs want to raise the level of cooperation, digital skills, and innovation prospects.

The main project objective is to establish international ecosystem of tourism SMEs in the AoE area and transferring the model to other Biosphere Reserves (BRs) to boost social, digital, and ecological innovation through collaboration, capacity building and digital transformation.

The project will establish a joint digitally supported international ecosystem that will connect over 200 tourism SMEs from seven countries: the AoE area in Slovenia, Hungary, Croatia, and Serbia, and from the BRs in Montenegro, Bulgaria and Romania where the AoE model for managing sustainable tourism products will be transferred through pilot actions.

Three innovative digital solutions are being developed to optimize daily business operations of tourism SMEs and assist them in planning the measures to become greener. A capacity building programme, offering relevant contents, expert support, and providing space for mutual learning, cross-country and cross-sectoral exchange of knowledge and experience, is being organized to facilitate the process of digital transformation. Additionally, financial support will be awarded to tourism SMEs to fill in their skill and resource gaps. Altogether, 36 outputs in the forms of analyses, strategies, methodologies,

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digital solutions, events, workshops, trainings, mentoring programme, learning (e-)materials and reports will be produced, contributing to better efficiency, quality of services and international recognition of involved SMEs. All actions combined will result in transformation of the AoE into smarter and greener tourism destination as the solution for the post-covid reality.

### 3 Open public call for tourism SMEs to receive financial support for digital transformation

Smarter AoE project will provide financial support to third-party beneficiaries selected in a public call for digital transformation of tourism SMEs. Financial support aims to provide improvements of day-to-day business operations of tourism SMEs in the Amazon of Europe and other Biosphere Reserves (hereinafter referred to as the AoE&BR target area) through digitalisation, increased digital skills, knowledge, promotion of collaboration and cooperation. Applicants will be able to submit the application for 2 months (03.01. – 03.03.2023). Each SME can only submit one application.

### 4 Why apply?

SMARTER AOE-202301 call is targeting tourism SMEs in the AoE&BR target area wishing to improve their business operations through digitalisation and cooperation. Selected applicants will receive financial support for implementing new digital tools and gaining new digital skills and knowledge.

**Are you a tourism SMEs in the AoE&BRs target area?** Apply for this call not only to receive financial support, but also to gain the following benefits:

- improve the effectiveness of your day-to-day business operations,
- gain new digital skills and knowledge,
- connect with other service providers,
- expand your business network,
- find new business opportunities and ideas.

### 5 Who can apply?

This chapter presents formal criteria for applicants, which will be a subject of evaluation in the first round. Applicants that do not meet the stated formal eligibility criteria will not be included in the second round of the evaluation process, in which the application will be qualitatively evaluated. Such applicants will receive a decision on the rejection of the application due to failure to meet the formal eligibility criteria.

There are four formal eligibility criteria:



- 1) SME criteria
- 2) Geographic eligibility criteria
- 3) Categories of tourism industries eligibility criteria
- 4) Application submission criteria

Detailed information on all four formal eligibility criteria are described below.

- 1) **Applicant is an SME** (SME criteria)
  - SME definition is available at the link: [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en)
  - forms of business entities (companies, enterprises) are defined by national law
  - if needed, please contact your regional coordinator for help with the SME criteria
- 2) **Applicant has business premises located in the AoE&BR target area** (geographic eligibility criteria)
  - this criteria is based on NUTS3 regions covered by the AoE&BR target area
  - maps of NUT3 regions are available at the link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/nuts-maps>
  - eligible NUTS3 target regions are the following:
    - Slovenia: Pomurska region;
    - Croatia: Međimurje County, Osijek-Baranja County, Koprivnica-Križevci County; Varaždin County, Virovitica-Podravina County;
    - Hungary: Zala County, Somogy County, Baranya County;
    - Serbia: West Bačka District;
    - Montenegro: Montenegro;
    - Romania: Tulcea County;
    - Bulgaria: Dobrich Province, Silistra Province, Ruse Province.
- 3) **Applicant has registered business activity in one of the eligible categories of tourism industries** (categories of tourism industries eligibility criteria)
  - this criteria is based on Eurostat classes 27
  - eligible categories of tourism industries are the following (in line with selected Eurostat classes 27):
    - 55.10 Hotels and similar accommodation;
    - 55.20 Holiday and other short-stay accommodation;
    - 55.30 Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks;
    - 79 Travel agency, tour operator reservation service and related activities.
- 4) **Applicant has submitted the application on time, through the available online channel, in the prescribed form, along with the Annexes 1 and 2** (application submission criteria)

There are four subcriteria under application submission criteria. Descriptions for each subcriteria are presented below.

#### 4.1 Submission time

The application is submitted on time (until 03.03.2023, 5 PM UTC+01:00 - Ljubljana).

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#### 4.2 Submission channel

The application is submitted through the online form available on the website [www.visitaoe.com/call](http://www.visitaoe.com/call).

#### 4.3 Submission form

The Application form is signed, submitted in the .pdf format in the prescribed form with a presentation of the planned digital transformation project (substantive, financial, temporal).

#### 4.4 Declaration of honor

Additionally to the Application form, signed and scanned Declaration of honor is submitted.

## 6 What to apply?

This chapter presents information about the eligible activities and costs.

### 6.1 Eligible activities for financial support to tourism SMEs

The support scheme includes three types of eligible activities by the SMEs to receive financial support:

- 1) digitalisation and marketing tools for better performance of tourism SMEs,
- 2) costs of expert mentors (external consultants) and specialized training courses for tourism SMEs,
- 3) travel and accommodation costs directly connected to the implementation of project activities.

Detailed information on all three types of activities are described below.

#### 1) Digitalisation and marketing tools for better performance of tourism SMEs:

- digital adaptations of operation systems or new channels for enhancing internal, B2B and B2C communication (e.g. additional communication channels, additional social media channels and other online networks)
- automation of processes (e.g. channel managers, self-check-in systems, all in one internal management/communication system, operations in the Cloud, booking systems, internal management systems, new or upgraded website, new or upgraded payment options),
- gathering and analysing data for better operation, guests' engagement and improving reputation (e.g. digital management tools for workforce management, property management systems, implementation or upgrade of digital engagement tools – CRM database and processes).

#### 2) Costs of expert mentors (external consultants) and specialized training courses for SMEs:

- software and digital literacy,
- digital marketing,
- quality of services, etc.

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### 3) Travel and accommodation costs directly connected to:

- active participation of SMEs at regional workshops,
- individual meetings with mentors,
- joint conference/networking events for the international ecosystem of tourism SMEs in the AoE tourism destination and other biosphere reserves (organised by SMARTER AOE project - planned in May 2023 in Hungary).

## 6.2 Time period of eligible costs

The subject of (co)financing is only eligible **costs incurred after the contract for financial support has been signed by both parties and until 20.12.2023**, at the latest. Travel and accommodation costs for attendance at SMARTER AOE project events are eligible and not linked to this time period.

## 6.3 Payment - reimbursement of eligible costs

Eligible costs will be paid out to the selected applicant once - **after the implementation of the project and confirmation of Project and Mentoring reports.**

## 7 How to apply?

SMARTER AOE-202301 call announcement together with all the call documentation and an online submission form are provided on the web page [www.visitaoe.com/call](http://www.visitaoe.com/call). The applicant must include signed Application form (Annex 1) and Declaration of honor (Annex 2) in the online submission form. Applicants who fail to do so will not be considered eligible.

The public call is published on 03.01.2023 with a 2-month deadline for applications. The public call will be closed on Friday, 03.03.2023, 5 PM UTC+01:00 (Ljubljana).

Thereafter, the submission system will be closed. It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the application. Failure to submit it on time for any reasons, including network communication delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive. After the close of call no changes or additions will be taken into account.

Questions may be sent by e-mail no later than 10 days before the deadline for the submission of applications to the following e-mail ([smarteraoe@gmail.com](mailto:smarteraoe@gmail.com) – call coordinator Institute Iskriwa, Neža Cerar, tel. no. +386 30 686 006), indicating clearly the reference of the call for proposals. The project consortium has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than 5 days before the deadline for the submission of applications.

Call documentation consists of the following documents:

- Guidelines for applicants

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- Application form template
- Declaration of honor
- Contract template
- Project report template
- Mentoring report template
- Evaluation form template

Contract, Project and Mentoring report and Evaluation form templates are attached to the call for informative purposes for applicants. They are to be used in case of a selection of the applicant. After the selection notice, the applicant and the financing party will sign a contract to formalize the legal responsibilities of both sides. After the implementation of the project, the selected applicant will be required to submit a Project report on the implemented activities and Mentoring report on the implemented mentoring programme. Confirmation of both reports will serve as a basis for the transaction of the financial support.

## 7.1 Application form

Structure and content of the Application form are presented below, together with the general instructions for filling in the Application form.

Application form is divided into the following four parts:

- I. **Information about the company**
- II. **Proposal of the small-scale digital transformation project**
- III. **Additional statements linked to the proposed project**
- IV. **Attachments**

### Introductory provisions:

- It is recommended to fill in the application form **on the computer**. Application form which is filled in by hand will only be accepted if the text is readable.
- **Application form must be filled in English.**
- **Submitted application form needs to be sent in .pdf format, signed and scanned.** E-signature is also acceptable, in which case, scanned version is not required.

Detailed information on all four parts of the Form and instructions on how to fill in the Application form are provided in the following text.

### I. **Information about the company**

In part I., applicants are required to provide all the listed information about the company.

- Company name → *full company name in English*
- Company address → *headquarters and other business premises (if relevant)*
- NUTS3 region → <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/nuts/nuts-maps>

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- Country → *in English*
- VAT or TAX number → *company VAT number (if available)*
- Transaction account number → *bank account number to which the financial support will be transferred*
- Bank name and address → *bank name of the transaction account and headquarters*
- Legal representative → *name, surname and position of the legal representative of the company*
- Average number of employees (financial year 2021) → *how many persons did the company employ in financial year 2021 on average?*
- Turnover (financial year 2021) → *the amount received in sales in financial year 2021 (in EUR)*
- Webpage (if available) → *link to company webpage – if available*
- Social media pages (if available) → *link to company social media page(s) – if available*
- Registered business activity → *mark one of the listed activities and / or write other*
- Contact person information (name and surname, phone number, e-mail address) → *provide information on the main contact person from the company regarding the proposed project*

## II. Proposal of the small-scale digital transformation project

In part II., applicants are required to provide information on proposal of the small-scale digital transformation project:

- Full project title → *form the title of the proposed project in a few words that would best summarize the project*
- Planned digital activities: → *fill in information for all planned activities (max. 5 activities)*
  - Activity title → *what is the activity? E.g. Establishing a new company webpage*
  - Estimated value → *how much would the activity cost based on market research (collected offer) in EUR (VAT included)? E.g. 3.000,00 EUR*
  - Estimated implementation period → *when do you plan to implement the activity (period)? E.g. 09/2023 – 12/2023*
  - Current status → *shortly describe the current status linked to the activity. E.g. No company webpage*
  - Planned status → *shortly describe the planned status linked to the activity after its implementation. E.g. Company webpage with general company information and offer*
  - Expected business improvements → *shortly describe how you expect this activity to improve your business. E.g. Better online visibility*
- Total estimated value → *summarize the estimated value of costs of all listed activities*

## III. Additional statements linked to the proposed project

In part III., applicants are required to answer the provided additional statements linked to the proposed project:

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- The proposed project directly contributes to the fulfilment of goals stated in the existing, applicable regional development strategies: mark yes or no. → *Further explanation: Goals focused on sustainable tourism development and digitalisation on regional level.*
- The proposed project directly contributes to the fulfilment of sustainable development strategy in my country and to the goals connected to climate change and ecological sustainability: mark yes or no. → *Further explanation: Goals focused on sustainable tourism development and digitalisation on country level.*
- We estimate that the implemented digital transformation project will contribute to the growth of the revenue of the company: mark yes or no. If yes, please indicate the estimated amount (in EUR). → *Provide an estimation of the positive financial effect of the project on company's business. For simplification, it is suggested to first estimate based on percentage and do the calculation in the next step. E.g. 20% of the 2021 company revenue = 40 000 EUR.*
- We declare additional financial contribution / investment from private investors or our own into the project: mark yes or no. If yes, please indicate the estimated amount (in EUR). → *In case the proposed project activities exceed 3 000 EUR, the company needs to cover the difference itself or find a private investor to cover the difference. E.g. a new booking system would cost 5 000 EUR, of which 2 000 EUR would be covered by the company itself or a private investor.*
- We agree to become engaged / add a listing on the Amazon of Europe online networking platform (AoE Hub) before the end of the proposed and submitted project implementation: mark yes or no. → *Information on the process of joining the platform will be provided by SMARTER AOE project coordinator.*

#### IV. Attachments

In part IV., applicants are required to list attachments to the application form:

- Declaration of honor (mandatory) → *Declaration of honor is provided in the Annex 2. It must be sent together with the application form in .pdf format, signed and scanned.*
- Collected offer (mandatory) → *E.g. print screen of an online or e-mail offer, offer in .pdf format, etc. The format depends on the nature of activity. If possible, the offer should be dated. Date of the offer must not be before 01.12.2022. Estimated amount of costs from part III. will be evaluated based on provided offer.*
- Other attachments (if relevant) → *E.g. Print screen of the company website before the update*

It is obligatory to write the **date and place** information and **name and signature** of the legal representative at the end of the form.

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## 7.2 Declaration of honor

It is obligatory to read, sign and submit the Declaration of honor together with the Application form. Submitted Declaration of honor needs to be signed on every page and scanned. E-signature is also acceptable, in which case, scanned version is not required.

## 7.3 Submission of the application

Application needs to be submitted through the online form available on the web site [www.visitaoe.com/call](http://www.visitaoe.com/call). Applications received via e-mail will be rejected. The online form needs to be filled in and submitted together with the necessary attachments.

**Deadline for the submission of the application is 03.03.2023, 5 PM UTC+01:00 (Ljubljana), at the latest.**

## 8 Evaluation and selection process

This chapter gives detailed information on the evaluation and selection process:

- who will evaluate the applications;
- how will the applications be evaluated;
- steps in the process of evaluation and selection;
- timeline of the process.

The evaluation and selection process begins immediately after the application for financial support deadline and must be completed within four weeks.

The SMARTER AOE project consortium will appoint a Selection commission composed of nine evaluators, and experts in the field of tourism digitization - one nominated by each project partner. Eight selected evaluators will be allocated into four pairs of evaluators. Each pair will evaluate 1/4 of the received applications, distributed randomly. Additionally to the four selected pairs of evaluators, there will be one person allocated by the call coordinator Institute Iskrija as Evaluation coordinator who will act as the chair of the evaluation commission.

Four sets of applications will be reviewed through a **two-step evaluation process** with a Selection commission checking the fulfilment of formal eligibility criteria (legal status, closed financial structure, timely submission using the prescribed form and signed Annexes 1 and 2) in the first step and evaluating the proposed activities, impact and the implementation plan for digitalization and potential impact of the applicant's proposal in a second step.

The stated goals of the applicant will also have to support specific and measurable objectives of the project, allowing the assessment of impact by the evaluators.

At the time of applying, applicants will have to confirm their agreement with the participation in the AoE Academy programme (10 mentoring hours and at least 3 workshops), reporting methodology and

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publicity requirements. A consent statement is included in the Declaration of honor. If selected for financial support, these requirements will become contractual obligations.

All applications from one set will be reviewed by two evaluators. Each evaluator will record his / her reviews of each application in the **Evaluation form (Annex 6)**. The average of the two evaluations represents the result that the applicant achieved in the evaluation process. Based on the overall scores for each application, a ranked list will be prepared and a threshold for financing will be determined based on the availability of financing and applicants selected. Selected applicants will be informed accordingly.

Using the scores given on the consensus form, the project consortium will normally select the highest scored application/s for the call (or for the different part of the call if more than one).

However, the project consortium is not obliged to select the highest scoring application where it has objective grounds for objecting to the third party, for example commercial competition. In this case the choice may pass to the next-ranked application.

The consortium may conclude that even the highest scoring application is of inadequate quality, in which case it will make no selection. This conclusion is obligatory if all the applications fall below the threshold scores given on the attached evaluation form.

In the event of no selection being made or selection of limited number of applications only, the project consortium may re-open the call at a later date.

Selected applicants will receive **a notice on the decision on selection** and receive financial support in the maximum amount of 3 000 EUR based on the concluded **contract (Annex 3)** and submitted and approved **reports (Annex 4 and 5)** by the call coordinator.

At the end of the selection process, the Contract will be signed between the call coordinator and the selected applicant in 1 month after the information of selection, latest.

By signing the Contract in Annex 3, the selected applicants accept the grant and agree to implement the project under their own responsibility and in accordance with the Contract, with all the obligations and terms and conditions it sets out (attached in Annex 3).

**Deadline for signing the Contract by both parties is 30 days after receiving the notice on the decision on selection.** After the deadline, the decision on selection becomes invalid.

The other applicants will receive **a decision on non-selection** or rejection of the application with the possibility of **an appeal** until 5 working days after receiving a decision on non-selection or rejection of the application, which does not delay the signing of contracts on the allocation of financial assistance.

Complaints will be considered and resolved by the Selection commission. In the case of ineligibility, the commission will reject the lawsuit, and in the case of a majority agreement on eligibility and achieved evaluation threshold upon revision the applicant will receive a contract on the allocation of financial support for signature.

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Any costs of the digital transformation project implementation above the financial support amount are covered by the applicant itself or their private investor. The financial support payment will be made after the project's implementation in the amount of up to 3 000 EUR per selected applicant.

## 9 Requirements for the transfer of financial support

This chapter presents the requirements for the transfer of financial support. Selected applicants will, upon selection, sign a Contract (Annex 3), in which they agree, among other, to the following requirements for financial support:

- publicity requirements;
- requirement of participation in the AoE academy educational programme;
- reporting requirements.

Detailed information on all listed requirements are described in the following text.

### 9.1 Publicity requirements

There are some publicity requirements linked to the application for the call which will become contractual obligation for selected applicants. All applicants need to agree to implement the following publicity requirements in the Declaration of honor to ensure a wider public reach of information about the SMARTER AOE activities:

- hanging up the poster on receiving financial support from EU funds in their business premises (*provided by the call coordinator*);
- publication on their website or social media page on receiving financial support from EU funds;
- presentation of the Amazon of Europe tourism products on their website or social media page with destination website link (*provided by the call coordinator*);
- publication of at least one social media post on the received financial support;
- submission of a report on the implemented activities and results in the agreed time and format upon the completion of the project;
- become engaged / add a listing on the Amazon of Europe online networking platform (AoE Hub) before the end of the proposed and submitted project implementation.

All necessary documentation and information will be provided by the call coordinator (Institute Iskriva). Implementation of all listed requirements will have to be supported by attaching the proof in the Project report (pictures, print screens, etc.).

### 9.2 Requirement of participation in the AoE academy educational programme

The requirement of participation in the AoE academy educational programme linked to the application for the call will become contractual obligation for selected applicants. All applicants need to agree to participate in the following AoE academy activities in the Declaration of honor:



- mentoring programme (10 free individual mentoring hours – provided by the project consortium, in person or online);
- joint online trainings / workshops (at least 3 free online trainings - organised by the project consortium, online).

More detailed information on both activities are described in the following text.

- **Mentoring programme**

Mentoring programme will start after the selection and signing of the Contract. Selected applicants will need to participate in 10 hours of mentoring during their project implementation period. Information on the mentor will be provided by the call coordinator. Selected applicants will be required to submit the Mentoring report on the prescribed template (Annex 5) within one month after 20.12.2023, which is set as the deadline for the completion of project activities; 31.01.2024, latest.

- **Joint online trainings / workshops**

Joint online trainings are planned to be implemented in two parts:

- 1) March – May 2023
- 2) October – December 2023

There will be overall 10 online trainings implemented (5 planned in part 1 and 5 in part 2) online via Zoom platform. Information on the topics, dates and registration process will be shared with all applicants. Each selected applicant will need to participate at 3 online trainings, minimum. Selected applicants will be required to provide proof of participation (e.g. print screen from each training which clearly shows their attendance) as an attachment to the Project report on the prescribed template (Annex 4) within one month after 20.12.2023, which is set as the deadline for the completion of project activities; by January 31.01.2024, latest.

### 9.3 Reporting requirements

Reporting requirements linked to the application for the call will become contractual obligation for selected applicants. All applicants need to agree to prepare and submit the following reports as stated in the Declaration of honor:

- Project report
- Mentoring report

More detailed information on both reports are described in the following text.

- **Project report**

Each selected applicant will need to submit the Project report on the implemented activities specified in the application form on the prescribed template (**Annex 4**) within one month after





20.12.2023, which is set as the deadline for the completion of project activities; by **31.01.2024**, latest.

In the Project report, selected applicants will need to shortly describe the implemented activities (costs, implementation period, results, business improvement), answer statements regarding requirements (publicity, participation in the AoE Academy) and provide the following proof / evidence:

- Proof of participation at each joint online training / workshop – *mandatory, e.g. print screen where attendance is visible*
- Picture of the poster in the company premises on receiving financial support from EU funds - *mandatory*
- Print screen of the publication on the SME website or social media page on receiving financial support from EU funds - *mandatory*
- Print screen with the presentation of the Amazon of Europe tourism products on the SME website or social media page with a destination website link - *mandatory*
- Print screen to prove the company is enlisted on the AoE Hub platform - *mandatory*
- Content proof of the performed activity / ies described in the report – *mandatory, e.g. print screen of the upgrade on the webpage and webpage link*

Evidence of project implementation costs (receipts / invoices, bank statements) are not required as part of the report. However, all selected applicants need to keep all evidence attached to the project implementation at their premises for five years in case of an audit.

Project report will need to be sent **via e-mail** to the call coordinator ([smarteraoe@gmail.com](mailto:smarteraoe@gmail.com)) together with the mentoring report. It is recommended to fill in the report **on the computer**. Report which is filled in by hand will only be accepted if the text is readable. Report must be written in English. Submitted report will need to be sent in .pdf format, signed and scanned. E-signature is also acceptable, in which case, scanned version is not required.

#### ▪ **Mentoring report**

Each selected applicant will need to submit the Mentoring report on the implemented activities specified in the application form on the prescribed template (**Annex 5**) within one month after 20.12.2023, which is set as the deadline for the completion of project activities; by **31.01.2024**, latest.

In the Mentoring report, selected applicants and their mentors will need to provide information about the mentoring activities (dates, name of the mentor, name of the mentee, number of mentoring hours and brief description of the content).

Mentoring report will need to be sent **via e-mail** to the call coordinator ([smarteraoe@gmail.com](mailto:smarteraoe@gmail.com)) together with the Project report. It is recommended to fill in the report **on the computer**. Report which is filled in by hand will only be accepted if the text is readable. Report must be written in

#### **DISCLAIMER**



English. Submitted report will need to be sent in .pdf format, **signed by the mentor and mentee** and scanned. E-signature is also acceptable, in which case, scanned version is not required.

## 10 Timeline of the SMARTERAOE-202301 call activities

This chapter lists the activities and presents the timeline of the SMARTERAOE-202301 call:

- Publication of the call
- Evaluation of applications
- Publication of results
- Preparation and delivery of contracts for signature
- Acceptance of complaints from non-selected companies
- Resolution of complaints from non-selected companies
- Implementation of activities for the purpose of digital transformation
- Submission of reports
- Confirmation of reports and transfer of financial support

Figures 1 and 2 present the list and timeline of all SMARTERAOE-202301 call activities in chronological order.

**Figure 1: List of SMARTERAOE-202301 activities with implementation periods / deadlines**

ACTIVITY	IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD / DEADLINE
Publication of the call	03.1.2023 - 03.03.2023 (5 PM CET)
Evaluation of applications	04.03.2023 - 2.04.2023
Publication of results	03.04.2023
Preparation and delivery of contracts for signature	04.04.2023 - 18.04.2023
Acceptance of complaints from non-selected companies	03.04.2023 - 10.04.2023
Resolution of complaints from non-selected companies	14.04.2023 - 02.05.2023
Implementation of activities for the purpose of digital transformation	04.04.2023 - 20.12.2023
Submission of reports	21.12.2023 - 31.01.2024
Confirmation of reports and transfer of financial support	01.02.2024 - 30.04.2024

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Figure 2: Timeline for the implementation of the SMARTERAOE-202301 call

Activity / Implementation time period	Dec-22	Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24
Publication of the call			until 03.03. until 5 PM CET														
Evaluation of applications																	
Publication of results					03.04.												
Preparation and delivery of contracts for signature					until 18.4.												
Acceptance of complaints from non-selected companies					03.04.-10.04.												
Resolution of complaints from non-selected companies					14.04.-02.05.												
Implementation of activities for the purpose of digital transformation					from 04.04.										until 20.12.		
Submission of the beneficiary's report on the activities carried out for the purpose of digital transformation															21.12.-31.01.		
Transfer of financial support																	

## 11 Processing of personal data

The reply to this call involves consent to collecting, recording and processing of all personal data (name, address, etc.). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data.

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## 12 Attachments

These guidelines set out the rules for submission, selection and implementation of the projects financed under this call, in conformity with the Call for Proposals COS-TOURINN-2020-3-04. The conditions to award financial support to third parties are laid down in the model Contract (attached), which the Applicant has to accept and sign on each page upon selection (Annex 3).

- Annex 1 Application form
- Annex 2 Declaration of honor
- Annex 3 Contract template
- Annex 4 Project report template
- Annex 5 Mentoring report template
- Annex 6 Evaluation form

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