

# FAQs

## Open Call for project proposals dedicated to SMEs

Write to: [info@euroclusterfriendcci.eu](mailto:info@euroclusterfriendcci.eu)

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

- **Can you tell me if we from Hungary can apply for it, or only from countries like Italy France Spain Germany Romania?**

Yes, Hungary is included in eligible countries that can apply to the FRIEND CCI open call (see p.7 of the call), but it cannot be the lead partner of a proposal. This means your SME should team up with other SME and apply as a consortium, with a consortium leader from Italy, or Spain, or France, or Germany or Romania.

- **Is it mandatory to have SMEs outside the CCI inside of the applicant consortium?**

Yes, the applicant consortium should be composed of at least 2 SMEs, one from CCI ecosystem (see annex B) and one from a different Ecosystem (for reference see the Eurocluster ecosystems at footnote n.6 of p.8 of the call).

- **Regarding the Ateco/Nace codes. We don't want to be wrong and therefore we need to know if the codes 58.19 and 18.13 are among the admissible ones? Thank you for your kindness and availability.**

The code J58.1.9 was inserted in the annex B of the tender at the first revision. The C18 code is instead inserted in Annex B in a generic way without specifying the sub-NACE codes, therefore all the Nace 18 codes are included:

C18 - Printing and reproduction of recorded media  
C18.1 - Printing and service activities related to printing  
C18.1.1 - Printing of newspapers  
C18.1.2 - Other printing  
C18.1.3 - Pre-press and pre-media services  
C18.1.4 - Binding and related services  
C18.2 - Reproduction of recorded media  
C18.2.0 - Reproduction of recorded media.

- **The Ateco code I was considering for one of our client companies is 59.11. Among those envisaged I see J59 - Film, video and television production, sound recording and music publishing activities. Being a subcategory of the main code 59 does it therefore fall as eligible, even if the sub-sector is not specified?**



Code J59 includes all sub-numbers of NACE code 59, i.e.:

J59 - Motion picture, video and television programme production, sound recording and music publishing activities

J59.1 - Motion picture, video and television programme activities

J59.1.1 - Motion picture, video and television programme production activities

J59.1.2 - Motion picture, video and television programme post-production activities

J59.1.3 - Motion picture, video and television programme distribution activities

J59.1.4 - Motion picture projection activities

J59.2 - Sound recording and music publishing activities

J59.2.0 - Sound recording and music publishing activities

So yes, Nace code 59.11 is eligible as CCI.

- **NEW** If there are multiple NACE codes (prevalent, primary, secondary) within the same SME, can they be used without distinction to cover the second sector?

The important thing is that there are at least 1 SME with a CCI's NACE, even if a secondary one and not the main NACE code. Same applies for at least another SME that will have a NACE different from the ones listed in Annex B. In the event of the presence of two NACE codes in the same SME, one of which is cultural and creative and one from another sector, it must be specified in the application phase (Annex A) which of the 2 NACE codes the applicant participates with. We suggest inserting it in chapter 1.7 of the application form.

- We are a micro enterprise and do not have 10 employees and 2M turnover. Are we eligible to participate as partner or lead partner in a consortium of SME? If not, is there any chance to join the program and cooperate with other companies?

Yes, micro enterprises can apply as partners or as lead partners.

- Being an architect, who works in his own professional studio as a freelancer registered with the Order of Architects, can I participate in the tender? is there the professional and SME equivalence for the tender?

Unfortunately, no, professionals and freelancers cannot apply since they are not considered as SMEs for the purpose of this call.

- I am a fashion designer and I want to open a fashion studio, can this program apply for me? If yes, is it ok if I open my business this month before applying to this program?

We invite you to check the chapter *Who can apply –eligibility criteria* (p.7 of the open call) since you must be a SME and have all required documents in time for applying before the call deadline. professionals and freelancers cannot apply since they are not considered as SMEs for the purpose of this call. If you want your SME to be considered CCI, please be sure it has a NACE code as described in Annex B.



Please note that in order to receive the funding there is a phase of evaluation with evaluators from 5 European countries, and your project needs to qualify as described in the chapter *Evaluation process* (p.11 of the open call).

- **NEW** Regarding the FRIEND CCI project, I would like to know if a non-profit association can be considered an SME since the legislation states that any entity can be considered a company "self-employed, family firms, partnerships and associations". This is because in the FAQ you released, you said that a freelancer could not be considered an enterprise, so this doubt arose.

Associations are considered eligible in this call if they have a VAT number.

- **NEW** We are a Romanian SME from CCI sector that wants to apply to this call ( application deadline September 2023).Please clarify if an SME from Moldova Republic is an eligible partner, since the annex with SMP countries states that Moldova has expressed intention to join Single Market program, but no agreement is signed yet

Moldova is eligible in FRIEND CCI'S open call for SMEs, since it is listed in the list of participating countries in the SMP programme.

- **Can we find partners within the project or do we have to find it ourselves?**

In order to apply, applicants should find partners themselves. FRIEND CCI provides a platform (<https://euroclusterfriendcci.eu/> and sign in) where SMEs can register and use groups, forums and create their profile, which can be a valuable tool to search for partners. Otherwise, it is useful to participate at organized national open days and related events, or to browse providers list since some of them may participate as partners as well.

#### PROJECT PRESENTATION:

- **With regard to the CV in English of the PM to be inserted as an application, he must necessarily be an employee of one of the two consortium SMEs or it can also be provided in other contractual forms, such as a secondment in the case of a group of companies or a VAT number ?**

The CV of the Project Manager as mandatory annex does not necessarily have to be of an employee of one of the consortium SMEs, the assignment can be subcontracted. But in this case, we would suggest to justify the expenditure in the project as you highlight a lack of management competence internal to the partners.

#### FINANCIAL:

- **This fund will be also available for next year or it is only for this year?**



The FRIEND CCI open call for SMEs will open two times during the FRIEND CCI project lifetime, one in July 2023 and the other in November 2023 (approximate planning). Accordingly, there will be two application windows and each call will be open for at least two months. SMEs will be allowed to participate only one time as Partners of a consortium of SME, in maximum one application to be done in the first call OR in the second call for proposal. On the other hand, is it possible for SMEs to participate multiple times as a provider for a consortium of SMEs, in both calls.

For the moment, other calls are not foreseen.

- **I would like to ask that the project will be funded %100 or there is a need for contribution from the SME. I read this part below from the call but I could not be sure so I would like to ask. *The costs will be reimbursed at 100%. Please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement. IMPORTANT: 20% of the budget of each project should be dedicated to the SMEs from the CCI ecosystem.***

The call co-financing is 100% of the project budget. We ask you to dedicate at least the 20% of your project budget to the SME(s) from Cultural and Creative Industries (based on NACE codes annex B) that are partners in your applicant consortium.

In case your project will be awarded, you will sign a Grant Agreement contract (is available in the call web page also the template of how it will look like). In case of violation of the contract the awarded grant can be reduced.

- **About the guarantee statement letter from the bank: does it have to be given from both applicant companies or only on will be enough?**

Only the SME that is Lead Partner of a winning proposal must provide a guarantee to ensure the amount to be pre-financed and the interim payment by the FRIEND CCI Consortium in order to receive the funding and implement its project.

- **Is the cost of the financial guarantee for Lead Partners of winning proposals accountable to be inserted in the budget?**

Yes. p.18: [*..The fees and interest derived from requesting the bank guarantee can be included in the budget requested in the project proposal*]. We suggest inserting it in the budget category: "c4) Other expenses".

- **NEW On the budget of the application document for the call for SMEs, they have to add lines to present partner #2 #3 etc at the point 9.1?**

As table 9 of the Application Form (Annex A), instructions said: *Please copy this table so that each partner has its own budget table. Repeat lines/columns as necessary.*



- **NEW** Are fees for external experts eligible? There is no line such as natural persons in the budget template. Shall they be either subcontractors or in kind?

As stated in p.15 of the call: *Budget categories for this call: A) Personnel costs. This category includes employees and self-employed persons with VAT numbers.*

- **NEW** Are renting costs eligible? There is no line for indirect costs in the budget.

We suggest including them in c4) *Other expenses.*

- **NEW** The costs of HR in hourly rates have to be calculated such as for us, including employers contributions and using the method 215 days/1720h?

A general formula to adopt is **Personnel costs (estimated total costs EUR) = hour rate gross costs (gross cost per hour EUR) x hours worked in the project (estimated hours)**. In brackets you find the definitions of the budget (table 9.1) of the Application Form Annex A.

We let applicants free to calculate as they think is more suitable for their consortium. For instance an applicant with a consortium of SMEs from the same nation can follow the national working days instead of the European (fixed maximum of 215 workable days in 1 year, equivalent to 1720 hours). If in doubt, we suggest following the European maximum of working hours per year = 1720.

- **NEW** Would the financing be provided under a de minimis regime?

No, the financing of the FRIEND CCI call is not provided under the de minimis regime.

#### PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION:

- **Regarding project timeline, how long must the project be?**

The project must be 1 year long. First work package will cover the first 6 months, while the second will cover the last remaining 6 months.

- **How can I prove that I have done the internationalization activities?**

Since this open call will transfer the awarded grant based on results reached and a technical report (not on financial reports), each activity will have a deliverable that should prove the implementation and results of the activity.

For example: if in the activity the applicant organizes a series of events (that are explained in the activity description), the deliverable could be a report that describes the events organization, implementation, and results. This example is not compulsory.



- **If I organize the internationalization activity internally without the use of a service provider, is it considered eligible as an internationalization activity to participate in an international fair and promote our brand?**

Yes, it can be considered eligible as an internationalization activity.

- **Where can I find the list of eligible providers?**

At this link: <https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/service-providers-friendcci/> (footnote n.11 at p.9 of the call).

- **How does the provider involvement work? Can the provider be part of the applicant consortium?**

Is mandatory to include in the proposal budget at least one service from an external provider, that is from outside the consortium partnership. To include it, FRIEND CCI provides a list (in continuous update) of approved service providers. To be part of that list providers should apply to the related call for manifestation of interest for providers ([link](#)).

More from p.9 of the call:

*Applicant consortium will have as mandatory requirement to include in their project budget the financial provisions for at least one service from an external service provider. The service(s) should focus on one of the following topics: Digital transition, Green Transition, Internationalization. FRIEND CCI has launched in March 2023 a call for manifestation of interests for services providers<sup>10</sup> with the aim of furnishing SMEs a list of recommended providers, as highly respecting standards companies that have manifested their interests in supporting SMEs in three required topics.*

*IMPORTANT: Although it is not mandatory to select the provider from [the list](#) made available from the call for providers, we recommend it since it can help applicants to have control over the quality and delivery of the selected service.*

*Applicants should encourage potential providers to apply to the call for service providers that will remain open until August 2025, so that after validation from the FRIEND CCI Euroclusters, the provider is included in the recommended list. Successful applicants that select a provider not included in the list, will have to ensure the provider's registration to the list before the start of their service. In this way, FRIEND CCI Eurocluster can ensure that the provider comply with manifestation of interests' requirements.*

- **Is it mandatory to create an innovative product within the project period? If yes, must the final product be the result of work between the consortium partners? Or does each partner in the consortium have to create its own product/service?**

It depends on what specific goal you are doing (1 or 2, or both, see p.5 of the call).



Objective 1 is to introduce or improve innovative products, then either create them from scratch or implement one you already have through development activities, which in turn will innovate the company. The final product can be only one and can be produced by only one partner, if the presence of the other partners is justified by a different role/other important contribution in the project, which justify the inter-sectorality of the partners. The product can also be the result of collaborative work between partners.

*[..encourage the development of new ideas, innovative products or services. Applicants will be expected to submit proposals focused on innovation in their value chains. They should undertake innovation activities, i.e. all development, financial and commercial activities undertaken by a company and intended to result in an innovation for the company..];*

Objective 2 instead calls for the adoption of processes and technologies to strengthen the transformation towards a greener and more digital economy, which *[..improve the efficiency of value chains in the use of resources, develop markets for technologies and green services and the adoption of digital solutions. Therefore it is required to do activities that improve resource efficiency, support green entrepreneurship and facilitate market access for SMEs offering green products and services..]* It is not required to create an innovative product.

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