

OPEN CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Activities to support SME awareness raising, representation in the standardisation process and uptake of standards

Newly extended deadline for tenders: 2nd April 2024 midnight CET

Please send your proposal to: president@sbs-sme.eu

The funding of the selected proposals is contingent on the approval of the budget and signature of a grant agreement with EISMEA and EFTA as well as on the decision of the governing bodies of SBS.

A. Background

Small Business Standards (SBS) aims at representing small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the standardisation process, motivating them to get involved and raising their awareness about standardisation. In this framework, SBS is launching an open call for proposals for activities that support the above-mentioned objectives. The proposed activities may support the SME awareness, representation, and uptake of standards (especially supporting the digital and green transition) in any sector relevant to SMEs. The selected activities will need to be carried out and will be funded under the SBS Work Programme 2025. The call will be co-funded by the European Union and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The call is open to both SBS and non-SBS members.

B. Activities eligible for funding

Activities eligible for funding include the organisation of events (online or physical), the development of publications (e.g. guides to support the implementation of specific standards by SMEs, studies) or any other activity that could contribute to improving the representation of European SMEs in standardisation, facilitate the uptake of green and digital standards by SMEs or their awareness and training about the importance of standardisation and standards of systemic importance, especially in emerging and critical technologies (AI, cybersecurity, DPP, cleantech...) and in other relevant sectors.

Proposers are strongly encouraged to consider activities of relevance to SMEs that support European Commission priorities as described in the [Standardisation strategy](#), the [2024 Annual Union Work Programme for European Standardisation](#), and the [Commission work programme for 2024](#).

The proposed activities must be well justified from the European SME perspective. It is the responsibility of the applicant to substantiate the relevance to SMEs in the proposal. Only activities aiming at benefiting

SMEs based in the EU and EFTA countries are eligible for funding. The duration of the activities cannot exceed 12 months and should take place between January and December 2025.

Requests for funding of European experts for the participation in Technical Committees of European and International standards organisations are **not eligible** under this call. A different call will be launched by SBS over the summer for the funding of experts to represent SMEs in standardisation work at European and international levels.

Organisations may submit one or several proposals for different activities.

C. Eligibility and selection criteria

C.1 Eligibility criteria

Applying organisations shall be based in an EU or EFTA member state and **demonstrate the SME background** and representativeness of their membership **and the SME and standardisation relevance** of the proposed activities.

Entities replying to this call **may be but DO NOT NEED TO BE a member of SBS.**

The selected entity shall commit to **co-finance 11% of the total cost** of the proposed action by paying SBS in advance the relevant amount.

C.2 Evaluation criteria (impact: 30, relevance to SMEs/SBS: 25, relevance to EC priorities: 25, description and planning: 20)

The activities proposed will be evaluated and prioritised according to the following criteria:

- The expected **short- and long-term impact** for SMEs is also in relation to the requested financial contribution (**30 points- threshold 20/30**). At least **one clear indicator should be defined by the proposer to measure short- or long-term impact of the activity**. When evaluating the impact, the relation between the impact and the number of resources requested will be considered.
- Proven **relevance of the activities in relation to SMEs and the SBS objectives (25 points- threshold 20/25)**
- **Relevance** of the proposed activity in relation to EC priorities (**25 points- threshold 20/25**)
- The **description and planning of the proposed activity including** the allocation of resources foreseen (**20 points- threshold 15/20**)

Proposals will have to reach a **minimum threshold of 75 points** to be considered for funding. The different proposals that reach the above-mentioned threshold will be ranked based on the points obtained according to the above-mentioned criteria. If an organisation submits a proposal for more than one activity, **each proposed activity will be evaluated and ranked separately.**

D. Content and submission of proposals

D.1 Content

Proposals shall include:

- A description of how the entity meets the eligibility criteria regarding the SME representativeness and relevance;
- An indication of the commitment to co-fund 11% of the total costs of the proposed activity;
- **For each individual activity proposed:**
 - A description of the proposed activity and an **action plan for carrying it out** including allocation of resources;
 - A description of the **relevance of the proposed activity to SMEs and in relation to the SBS objectives** (i.e. improved awareness, uptake of standards and representation of SMEs in standardisation);
 - A description of the **relevance of the activity in relation to the EU objectives** and more specifically whether it is related to any of the strategic priorities identified by the Commission in its 2024 Annual Work Programme on Standardisation;
 - A description of the potential short- and long-term impact for SMEs **including at least one indicator to measure this impact**;
 - A budget for the proposed activity including details on the needed resources (e.g. man-days, travel and other direct costs).

If an organisation intends to request funding for more than one activity it may submit a single application. However, in the application, **the description, justification from the SME point of view, relation to SBS and EC objectives, impact and budget for each of the activities should be clearly differentiated since each proposed activity will be evaluated separately.**

D.2 Submission of tenders

Tenders must be sent by e-mail (president@sbs-sme.eu) by **2nd April 2024 at midnight (CET)** at the latest (*the deadline was extended from April 1st to April 2nd*). Tenders will not be accepted after this deadline.

E. Contract and co-funding

SBS will fund one or several proposed activities for an **indicative overall budget of around EUR 100,000** (VAT included). It is expected to be able to cover **between 5 and 10 activities with this budget**. Please note that this is **just an indicative amount** and that the actual final amount will depend on the available EU/EFTA grant and the decision of the SBS governing bodies. Indeed, the allocation of the budget is subject to the approval of the SBS governing bodies as well as the conclusion of an annual Action Grant with EISMEA and EFTA. SBS may decide not to use in full the available budget if the received proposals are not evaluated positively and do not reach the minimum threshold.

Applicants will be notified of the outcome by email by the end of April. The organisations proposing the selected activities shall commit to **co-finance 11% of the total cost** of the action by paying SBS the relevant amount. Following the payment of the co-funding, they will be offered a contract for carrying out the selected activity(ies). The activity (ies) will need to take place between January and December 2025.

F. Data protection

The invitation to tender involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CVs). Such data will be processed according to [Regulation \(EU\) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data \(GDPR\)](#). Any personal data will be processed solely for evaluation purposes under this call for tender.

The information provided by applicants to SBS is necessary to process the application which, if successful, may lead to the signature of a contract. Applicants will have to declare that they have taken note of our Privacy Policy. By applying you agree with our use of your personal information as described in our Privacy Policy available [here](#).

G. Further information

SBS reserves the right to contact the applying organisations directly if further information or clarification is required.

For any questions or further information, please contact the SBS Secretariat (info@sbs-sme.eu) / Tel +32 2 285 07 27).

This call is also available on the [SBS website](#).