



2nd OPEN CALL ANNOUNCEMENT

Sustainable Tools & Activities for Rural Tourism and Ecotourism SMEs Growth

Announcement of the STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call for Tourism SMEs.

Action acronym: STAR GROWTH

Action grant agreement number: 101085746

Action full name: Sustainable Tools & Activities for Rural tourism and ecotourism SMEs Growth

Call identifier: SMP-COSME-2021-TOURSME

WHAT

Name of the Open Call: STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call

Project acronym and Grant Agreement number: STAR GROWTH - 101085746

Objective: to enhance the sustainable growth of SMEs operating, in the rural tourism and ecotourism sectors in Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Romania and Italy by providing technical and financial support, whilst boosting their awareness, development and capacity in the area of sustainability and digitization.

STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call aims to:

Support SMEs by adopting sustainable and innovative practices through customised technical support activities and capacity building programs;

Support SMEs through processes of i) preparation and / or application for sustainability / environmental certification, ii) preparation and / or generation of Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) studies and Organization Environmental Footprint (OEF) studies, iii) implementation of improvement measures following the recommendations of the PEF / OEF studies, iv) developing of sustainability strategy plans;

Support SMEs for training and capacity building activities in order to empower their staff towards innovation and sustainability;

Support SMEs by increasing SMEs' competitiveness via boosting innovation in sustainable and resilient tourism.

Available grant amount per SME: up to 7,500.00 EUR

Total funding available: 270.000,00 EUR

WHEN

Calls' opening date: 2nd October 2023

Call's deadline: **extended until 13th December 2023 at 17:00 CET**

Evaluation process: at least 4 weeks (foreseen till January 2024)

Implementation of 2nd Open Call activities: foreseen from **February** 2024 - June 2025

WHY

By applying to the STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call SMEs have the opportunity to receive funding to implement sustainable and /or digitalisation oriented activities.



By pursuing sustainability and environmental certification, generating PEF / OEF studies, and implementing improvement measures following the recommendations of the PEF / OEF studies, the organisation can

- i) improve its environmental performance and reduce its environmental impact,
- ii) meet stakeholder (customers, investors, employees, ...) expectations, increase its visibility and improve its market reputation,
- iii) differentiate itself from competitors and appeal to consumers who prioritise environmental issues,
- iv) reduce its costs and increase its profitability.

By providing training and capacity building activities that upskill staff on key issues and trends (sustainability, digital innovation and data management issues), SMEs can stay competitive and differentiate themselves from others in the industry as well as promote sustainable practices such as their competitiveness, customer experience and operational efficiency.

WHO

SMEs of the tourism sector can apply to receive financial support. Companies shall meet the following criteria to be eligible:

- Having economic activity related to the tourism sector in the following three categories:

I5510 — Hotels and similar accommodation

I5520 — Holiday and other short-stay accommodation

I5530 — Camping grounds, recreational vehicle parks and trailer parks

NACE codes are given for indicative purposes alone; the SMEs must provide evidence that they are operating in one of those three categories;

- Be established for at least one financial year, as proved through the Company Registration, which may be delivered in local or English language;
- Be a small- or medium-sized enterprise (SME), according to the [EU Recommendation 2003¹](#);
- Be established in an EU Member State and operating in Cyprus, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Italy and Romania²;
- Operating in “predominantly rural regions” and “significantly rural regions / Intermediate”. In other words, SMEs operating in “predominantly urban regions” are not eligible for receiving funding in the form of grants. SMEs operating in “predominantly urban regions” will be added to Network list for inviting to SG events, as they could be possible candidates for participating based on their already expressed interest. SMEs must define their operating region in the application form.

Definition for Rural and Ecotourism SMEs for STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call is based on Urban-Rural Typology, by NUTS 3 regions³, where regions are classified into different types of regions according to the share of the population living in rural municipalities. There are three types of typologies, as listed:

- i) Predominantly rural regions: >50% of the population lives in rural municipalities or <50% of the population lives in urban municipalities;
- ii) Significantly rural regions / intermediate: 15-50% of the population lives in rural municipalities or 50-85% of the population lives in urban municipalities;

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:124:0036:0041:en:PDF>

² In the 1st Open Call, companies from Greece were initially eligible. However, due to the sufficient number of applications received during the first call, Greek companies are no longer eligible in the 2nd Open Call

³ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/cache/RCI/#?vis=urbanrural.urb_typology&lang=en



- iii) Predominantly urban regions: <15% of the population lives in rural municipalities or >85% of the population lives in urban municipalities.

HOW

The application form is available on the following website: <https://stargrowth.eu/>.

The STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call announcement and supporting documentation will be available in English as well as in all national languages (Greek, Bulgarian, Slovenian, Italian, Romanian).

The application form is submitted online with the following required supporting documents as attachments:

- Company registration report, proving for being established at least one year (as Attachment);
- Declaration of legal representative of SME (truthfulness, double financing and mandate, ANNEX 1).

The application can be submitted in the national language as mentioned above; however, the applicant can choose to submit the application also in English. Applicants must submit their application only once.

Information and contacts:

Web address for further information (full call text/proposal guidelines): www.stargrowth.eu.

During the STAR GROWTH 2nd Open Call there will be a main contact email opencall@stargrowth.eu for coordination with applicants (Acknowledgements, Q&A, notifications about postponing deadlines). Applicants communicate via this email only in English, while acknowledgments will be sent to applicants in all the mentioned languages. As for results, every national contact point will communicate the selection results at national level in the relevant language.

For any further support, please consult opencall@stargrowth.eu. Also please note that a specific section of the STAR GROWTH webpage (www.stargrowth.eu) will be dedicated to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). For the FAQ section we will add a disclaimer: »If there are any discrepancies in the translated version, the English version shall prevail«.

Contact of coordinates per country

Supporting coordination and communication activities in national languages could be conducted via coordinates per country. These coordinates' contacts are as follows:

EP – European profiles:

Contact person: Mrs. Alexia Zaglara

Contact email: azaglara@europeanprofiles.gr

Contact phone: +30 210 82 10 895

IRSEI – Accademia IRSEI:

Contact person: Mr. Federico Mazzara

Contact email: federico.mazzara@irsei.org / project.office@irsei.org

Contact phone: +393299566256

APINTECH – Applied Industrial Technologies

Contact person: Mr. Costas Daskalakis

Contact email: info@apintech.com

Contact phone: +35724721182

EU- ROM – EU- ROM Training Consultancy

Contact person: Babis Grammatikopoulos Contact email: babgramm@gmail.com

Contact phone: +40213130565



Co-funded by
the European Union



TPJ – Technology park Ljubljana

Contact person: Mr Gasper Juvancic

Contact email: gasper.juvancic@tp-lj.si

Contact phone: +386 1 620 34 00

NTC BG Guide – National Tourism Cluster Bulgarian Guide

Contact person: Mrs. Desislava Mincheva-Yordanova

Contact email: stargrowth@bg-guide.org

Contact phone: +359884293280

Publicity Disclaimer

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

