

# CALL FOR PROPOSALS

## CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE Cultural Heritage Innovation Grants



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Project: 101236464 — CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE — SMP-COSME-2024-CLUSTER

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## ACRONYMS

<b>AP</b>	Associated Partner
<b>CCIs</b>	Cultural and Creative Industries
<b>CH</b>	Cultural Heritage
<b>CHVC</b>	Cultural Heritage Value Chain
<b>COSME</b>	Competitiveness of enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Programme
<b>DoH</b>	Declaration on Honour
<b>FAQ</b>	Frequently Asked Questions
<b>FSTP</b>	Financial Support to Third Parties
<b>EoI</b>	Expression of Interest
<b>KPI</b>	Key Performance Indicator
<b>LP</b>	Lead Partner (Lead SME in a consortium)
<b>PP</b>	Project Partner (Partner SME in a consortium)
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise
<b>SMP</b>	Single Market Programme
<b>TRL / CRL</b>	Technology Readiness Level / Commercial Readiness Level

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

<b>Applicant</b>	Applicant(s) refer to the eligible organisation(s) that submit a proposal under this Call for Proposals and request EU financial support. Applicants include Lead Partner and Project Partners.
<b>Associated Partner</b>	An organisation that contributes to a project through expertise, knowledge, facilities, networks or strategic support, without receiving EU financial support. They may include, for example, universities, research organizations, public authorities, cultural heritage institutions, clusters or Innovation Leaders.
<b>Authority</b>	The cluster organisation responsible for awarding and managing sub-grants to SMEs under this Call on behalf of the CR.EU.IN.HERITAGE consortium.
<b>Consortium</b>	Group of at least two SMEs applying in Step 2, with one SME acting as Lead Partner.
<b>Lead Partner</b>	The SME applicant that submits the proposal on behalf of the consortium and bears primary responsibility for coordination, communication with the Authority, and overall implementation.
<b>Project</b>	When referring to the “Project”, the Call intends the CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE Project, the European Initiative under which the present Call for Proposals is funded.
<b>Project Partner</b>	An SME applicant participating in a Step 2 consortium with the Lead Partner, contributing to the implementation of project activities and eligible to receive EU funding under this Call.
<b>Service Provider</b>	An external organisation engaged through a contractual arrangement to provide specific expertise, technologies or technical contributions to the project. Service Providers are paid by the applicant SMEs through the project budget.

## Introduction

This Call for Proposals is part of the CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE Project, co-funded by the European Union under the SMP Programme. The Project aims to promote innovation and strategic autonomy within the **Cultural Heritage Value Chain (CHVC)**, unlocking its potential for a more resilient, competitive and sustainable European economy.

To this end, the Call financially supports CHVC enterprises across Europe, fostering strategic autonomy and green/digital transition. **CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE will select and fund at least 20 innovative projects, supporting at least 40 SMEs across Europe.**

## 1. CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE Project

<b>Project Acronym</b>	CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE
<b>Project Title</b>	CRoss-sectorial and cross-border EU INnovation partnership for cultural HERITAGE value chain
<b>Project Number</b>	101236464
<b>Funding Programme</b>	SMP-COSME-2024-CLUSTER
<b>Project Duration</b>	30 months (from 01/10/2025 to 31/03/2028)

### 1.1 Partners

N.	Partner	Country
1	VENETIAN CLUSTER SRL (VEC)	ITALY
2	BASILICATA CREATIVA (BAC)	ITALY
3	INNOSKART Nonprofit Ltd. (INNOSKART)	HUNGARY
4	CLUSTER TWIST ASBL (TWIST)	BELGIUM
5	Athena Research and Innovation Center in Information, Communication and Knowledge Technologies (CORALLIA)	GREECE
6	BALTIC FILM & CREATIVE TECH CLUSTER (BFCT)	LITHUANIA
7	OPEN HUB ASSOCIATION (OPEN HUB)	ROMANIA
8	French Industrial Districts Club Association (FRANCE CLUSTERS)	FRANCE
9	Catalan Audiovisual Cluster Association (CAC)	SPAIN
10	Italian-German Chamber of Commerce Munich-Stuttgart (ITALCAM)	GERMANY

### 1.2 Project overview and specific objectives

CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE recognizes Europe's cultural heritage as a strategic resource for cross-sectoral innovation and sustainable growth. The Project drives innovation within the CHVC, fostering collaboration across sectors and governance levels to strengthen Europe's strategic autonomy. The cultural heritage sector faces challenges such as dependence on non-European digital and technology providers, data security risks, fragmentation and limited SME capacity to embrace the green and digital transition.

**To address these challenges, the Project will:**

- Identify EU-based technologies and digital solutions to strengthen the cultural heritage sector and reduce reliance on non-EU suppliers.
- Fund at least 20 collaborative SME projects supporting strategic autonomy and the twin transition.
- Provide SMEs training in digital skills, green innovation, and business management.
- Build a European cluster partnership for long-term cross-border cooperation.

### 1.3 CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE Guiding principles

<b>Strategic Autonomy</b>	Europe’s ability to reduce its dependency on external and non-EU suppliers by strengthening internal capacity, especially in critical technologies, materials and processes. By supporting strategic autonomy, companies increase their resilience.
<b>Innovation</b>	The development or adoption of new or significantly improved products, services or business processes that are new to the firm and are implemented in practice, improving competitiveness and performance, in line with the OECD/Eurostat Oslo Manual (international reference framework for measuring and defining innovation) <sup>1</sup> .
<b>Twin (green and digital) Transition</b>	Europe’s dual effort to help businesses become more sustainable while adopting modern digital technologies. Together, the Green and Digital Transition aims to make SMEs more competitive, innovative and future-proof, enabling them to operate responsibly and efficiently within rapidly evolving markets.
<b>Cross-sectoriality</b>	Cross-sectoriality encourages SMEs from different industrial ecosystems to collaborate, as innovations often emerge when diverse expertise and technologies interact. Industrial ecosystems are broad groups of sectors and their related supply chains that share similar economic structures, technologies, skills and transition needs. Under the European Industrial Strategy, the Commission identifies 14 industrial ecosystems with a pan-European nature <sup>2</sup> . Call applicants are strongly encouraged to build cross-sectoral consortia involving SMEs from different industrial ecosystems to drive innovation within the Cultural Heritage Value Chain.

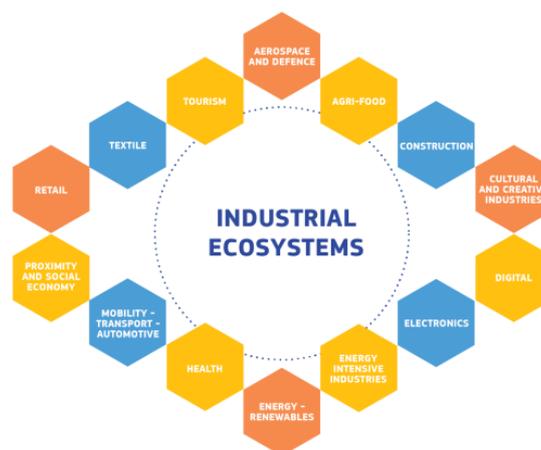


Figure 1: the 14 industrial ecosystems identified by the European Industrial Strategy

<sup>1</sup> OECD/Eurostat (2018). Oslo Manual 2018: Guidelines for Collecting, Reporting and Using Data on Innovation (4th ed.). OECD Publishing, Paris. DOI: 10.1787/9789264304604-en.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/in-focus/industrial-ecosystems>

## 2. The Call for Proposals in details

### 2.1 Aim of the Call

The Call aims to foster innovation and strategic autonomy within the CHVC, contributing to a more resilient, sustainable and competitive European economy. It will:

1. **Financially support collaborative SME innovation projects across ecosystems and borders**, targeting the CHVC through product and business process innovations that drive strategic autonomy and the twin transition.
2. **Enable SMEs to build capacity** by developing business skills and adopting digital and green innovations through targeted knowledge sharing, upskilling, and reskilling.

The Call prioritizes the **uptake of EU-based technologies and digital solutions** and encourages **cross-sectoral and cross-level cooperation** among industrial ecosystems and actors, such as public authorities, research institutions, and civil society.

### 2.2 Call KPIs

Key expected results and indicators include:

Expected Result	KPI(s)	Target (at least)
Funding of collaborative innovation projects by SMEs across sectors and countries within the CHVC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N. of collaborative innovation projects by groups of at least 2 SMEs funded.</li> <li>• N. of SMEs funded through the Call.</li> </ul>	20 40
Development of new-to-the-firm products and/or services (Strand 1).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N. of new-to-firm products/services identified and/or introduced on the market.</li> </ul>	10
Adoption of new or significantly improved business processes linked to green and digital transition (Strand 2).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N. of SMEs supported which undertook business process innovation tied to technological adoption leading to progress with their green transition (including improved climate performance), and / or higher sustainability and higher digitalisation.</li> </ul>	20
Increased uptake of EU-based technologies and/or engagement of innovation leaders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• % of funded projects applying EU-based technologies (as defined in the Call for Proposals) and/or engaging Innovation Leaders.</li> </ul>	100%
Strengthened cross-border collaboration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N. of different SMP countries represented by SMEs participating in funded projects.</li> <li>• Number of SMEs directly supported coming from regions and countries different from those of individual Euroclusters' partners.</li> </ul>	10 At least 10% of supported SMEs.
Strengthened business and innovation skills among SMEs and increased knowledge of digital and green solutions relevant to the CHVC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N. of SMEs supported (with direct service support / third party financial support) that enhanced their skills for implementing sustainable business models and practices and/or their digital skills as a result of participating in the Project.</li> </ul>	100

## 2.3 Structure of the Call

### Two strands of funding

The Call provides **two distinct funding strands**, both directly applied to the CHVC:

Call Strand	Innovation objective
<b>Strand 1. Product Innovation</b>	Strand 1 supports the development of <b>new-to-the-firm products or services</b> . Projects must focus on reducing dependency on critical external technologies to strengthen the strategic autonomy of the CHVC. Successful projects will introduce innovative solutions that improve the sector's competitiveness and sustainability.
<b>Strand 2. Process Innovation</b>	Strand 2 supports <b>business process innovation</b> , linked to the <b>adoption of new-to-the-firm technologies</b> that help SMEs improve the way they operate. Projects under this strand should enable SMEs to advance their green and digital transition, increase efficiency and adaptability, and strengthen their resilience to economic, environmental or technological challenges within the CHVC.

Budget and expected projects to be funded:

Call Strand	Overall available budget	Expected number of projects
<b>Strand 1. Product Innovation</b>	1,200,000.00 €	10
<b>Strand 2. Process Innovation</b>	770,000.00 €	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,970,000.00 €</b>	<b>20</b>

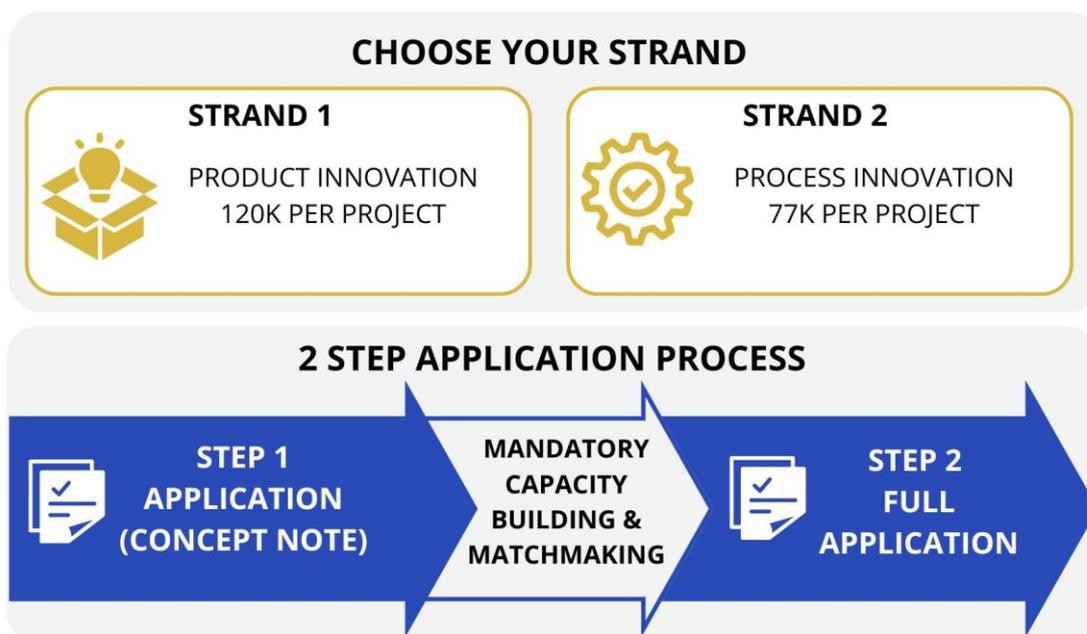


Figure 2: the Call two-strand and two-step application process

## Two-step application process

Call Step	Step description
<b>Step 1. Innovation concept</b>	SMEs are invited to submit a short project idea outlining their innovation concept, the challenge they intend to address, and the expected contribution to the Cultural Heritage Value Chain. <b>Project ideas may be submitted by individual SMEs or by existing groups of SMEs that already intend to collaborate.</b> Based on the evaluation of project ideas, <b>the most promising concepts will be selected to progress to Step 2 of the Call.</b>
<b>Step 2. Full collaborative project</b>	SMEs must <b>submit a full project proposal building on a project idea selected under Step 1</b> , describing the planned activities, expected results, implementation approach and budget. Projects must involve a consortium of <b>at least two SMEs.</b> Based on the evaluation, the best projects are selected for funding.

Between the two steps, SMEs access the **Capacity Building and Matchmaking Programme** ([Section 4.](#)), which supports skills development and partnership building.

## 2.4 Key definitions used in this Call

<b>The Cultural Heritage Value Chain (CHVC)</b>	<p>The CHVC covers all activities, products and services involved in the conservation, safeguarding, management and valorization of cultural heritage, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Tangible Cultural Heritage:</b> monuments, groups of buildings and sites, including immovable and movable heritage, as defined by the 1972 UNESCO Convention<sup>3</sup>.</li> <li>• <b>Intangible Cultural Heritage:</b> practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and skills as defined by the 2003 UNESCO Convention<sup>4</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>The CHVC is cross-sectoral, involving multiple industrial ecosystems and a wide range of actors (public authorities, research organizations, businesses, civil society), with SMEs acting as key innovation drivers.</p>
<b>Innovation Leaders</b>	<p><b>Innovation Leaders</b> are <b>technological “enablers” registered</b> through the <b>CR.EU.IN.HERITAGE Expression of Interest</b>, selected for technical excellence and contribution to European strategic autonomy. They include technology providers, research centres, and innovative enterprises offering EU-based technologies and digital solutions and specialized know-how, acting as mentors and partners for SMEs. Registered Innovation Leaders are invited to the matchmaking platform and networking activities in Step 1; the <b>Innovation Catalog</b> is continuously updated and accessible via the Call page, <a href="#">ECCP Project page</a>, and project channels.</p>
<b>EU-based digital solutions and technologies</b>	<p>The Call exclusively supports projects implementing/ adopting EU-based digital solutions/ technologies, meaning the strategic and technical “intelligence” remains in Europe, and the following cumulative conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>EU-based ownership/control:</b> the solution is owned and/or controlled (including key intellectual property rights and strategic decision-making) by an organisation established in the EU Member State or an SMP-eligible country.</li> <li>• <b>EU-based development and responsibility:</b> the solution is primarily developed within the EU or an SMP-eligible country, and it is supplied, maintained and supported under the responsibility of an organisation established in these territories.</li> </ul>

<sup>3</sup> <https://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

- **Data sovereignty:** the solution must guarantee that sensitive data is hosted and processed within the European Economic Area (EEA), prioritizing the use of European cloud providers and infrastructures.

A [Strategic foresight report on key EU-based technologies and actors to promote innovation in the CH value chain](#) has been published by the Project. The report provides a strategic overview of digital technology use in the sector, as well as an analysis of dependencies, gaps, and opportunities to reinforce the European ecosystem. Applicants are encouraged to review the document.

### 3. Application process

#### 3.1. Eligibility conditions

**Eligibility** applies to both Step 1 and Step 2 and defines **who can apply, where they must be established, and key legal, financial and compliance** requirements.

Main conditions:

<b>(1) SME Status (EU SME definition)</b>	Applicants must qualify as Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) according to the EU SME definition. This includes requirements related to staff headcount, annual turnover, and annual balance sheet total, taking into account any linked enterprises, as set out in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. Full details are available at the following <a href="#">LINK</a> . Applicants may use the <b>EU SME Self-assessment online tool</b> to verify their status at the following <a href="#">LINK</a> . SMEs from any industrial ecosystem are eligible.
<b>(2) Geographical eligibility (SMP countries)</b>	Only organisations legally established in countries participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP) are eligible to apply. This includes EU Member States and any other country formally associated with the SMP. A full list of participating countries is published by the European Commission at the following <a href="#">LINK</a> .
<b>(3) Financial eligibility</b>	Applicants must have the financial capacity to manage project resources effectively, meet their obligations, and sustain project activities throughout the implementation period. The assessment of financial viability will be conducted using a structured, indicator-based methodology. Applicants that do not meet the minimum financial thresholds will be considered ineligible.
<b>(4) Exclusion criteria</b>	Applicants must not be subject to any exclusion situations defined in Article 136 of the <a href="#">EU Financial Regulation</a> . This includes cases such as bankruptcy, insolvency, serious professional misconduct, fraud, corruption, conflicts of interest, or non-compliance with social or fiscal obligations. Applicants in any of these situations are not eligible to participate.
<b>(5) Compliance with EU funding obligations</b>	Compliance with EU funding obligations: acceptance of standard EU-funded project obligations, including conflict of interest avoidance, confidentiality, data protection, DNSH principle, compliance with the EU AI Act when relevant, visibility of EU funding and cooperation with checks/audits.

## 3.2 Submission requirements

### General submission requirements (both steps)

<b>(1) Cultural Heritage Value Chain (CHVC) Focus</b>	Eligible proposals must have a clear and direct focus on the Cultural Heritage Value Chain (CHVC), as defined in <a href="#">2.4 Key definitions used in this Call</a> . Projects must explicitly address challenges, needs or opportunities related to the preservation, safeguarding, management or valorisation of cultural heritage and demonstrate how the proposed innovation contributes to strengthening the CHVC. <b>Projects that do not demonstrate a clear and credible contribution to the CHVC will be considered ineligible.</b>
<b>(2) Strand selection and innovation objectives</b>	Applicants must select one single strand at the time of submission: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Strand 1 – Product Innovation</b>, or</li> <li>• <b>Strand 2 – Process Innovation.</b></li> </ul> <b>It is not possible to apply to both strands, either as LP or as Partner.</b>
<b>(3) Participation limits</b>	<b>A single SME may participate as an applicant in only one (1) proposal</b> (whether as a Lead Partner or as a Project Partner) at each step. If an SME is found to be an applicant in more than one submission at the same step, all involved applications will be deemed ineligible.
<b>(4) Submission procedure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applications for both steps must be written in <b>English</b> and <b>submitted electronically through the F6S Platform</b>: <a href="https://www.f6s.com">https://www.f6s.com</a>.</li> <li>• Applicants (or Lead Partners in case of consortia) must register on the F6S platform before submitting their application.</li> <li>• Only applications submitted <b>by the deadlines</b> indicated in <a href="#">Section 7. Timeline</a> will be considered.</li> <li>• Incomplete applications or applications not complying with the submission requirements may be declared <b>ineligible</b>.</li> <li>• Applicants are strongly encouraged to consult the <b>Guide for Applicants (Annex 1)</b> before submitting their application, to ensure compliance with all eligibility conditions.</li> </ul> <b>Note:</b> specific requirements apply to each step as described in <a href="#">Section 3.2 Application procedure</a> .

### Step 1-specific submission requirements

- **Submission type:** ideas may be submitted **an individual SME** or an **existing group of SMEs** (one joint application). **All applicants must be SMEs.**
- **Focus of the project idea:**

Call Strand	Focus of Step 1 idea
<b>Strand 1. Product Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the development of new <b>products and/ or services</b> contributing to strategic autonomy.</li> <li>• Needs related to <b>critical inputs and technologies</b> highlighted in the concept.</li> </ul>
<b>Strand 2. Process Innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on the adoption of <b>business process innovations</b> linked to technological adoption.</li> <li>• Progress towards the green transition and/or increased sustainability, and higher digitalisation is demonstrated.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Needs related to green transition and digitalisation highlighted in the concept.</li> </ul>
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### Step 2-specific submission requirements

- Consortium composition and Lead Partner:**
  - Consortium of **at least two (2) SMEs**.
  - Lead Partner** must be a Step 1-selected SME, must have completed the mandatory Capacity Building and Matchmaking activities and the satisfaction questionnaire.
  - Project Partners may include SMEs not selected in Step 1, if they meet general eligibility.
  - Associated Partners may be added without EU funding (their involvement does not count towards the minimum eligibility requirements of this Call).
- Project focus and mandatory deliverables:**
  - Proposals must build on a **Step 1-selected idea**.
  - Must demonstrate contribution to CHVC in innovation, resilience, sustainability, competitiveness, strategic autonomy and/or twin transition.
  - Proposals must include the following **strand mandatory deliverable(s)**:

Call Strand	Step 2 mandatory deliverables
<b>Strand 1. Product Innovation</b>	At least <b>one new-to-the-firm product and/or service</b> that differs significantly from the SME's previous goods or services. This means a product/service that the SME did not previously offer and that is developed and <b>introduced/piloted/demonstrated or otherwise ready for uptake</b> by the end of the project within the Cultural Heritage Value Chain.
<b>Strand 2. Process Innovation</b>	At least one <b>new-to-the-firm business process innovation linked to both the green and digital transition</b> , differing significantly from the SME's previous business processes. This means a new or significantly improved way of working that the SME did not previously use, that is put into use in the SME's operations by the end of the project, and that leads to measurable progress in sustainability (green transition) and/or digitalisation compared to the SME's previous way of working.

- Mandatory networking/business event participation:** all proposals must budget for travel to at least one European networking/business event to be undertaken during project implementation. To assist with planning this activity, CR.EU.IN.HERITAGE will provide a curated list of relevant events. Note that, while this activity is mandatory, travel costs are not reimbursable via the EU grant. Therefore, these costs must be accounted for as part of the SMEs' mandatory co-financing, as detailed in the financial requirements of the Call.
- Application of EU-based technologies and/or engagement of Innovation Leaders:** applicants must demonstrate that their project **will apply EU-based digital solutions and/or technologies and/or engage EU-based Innovation Leaders** (as defined in [Section 2.4 Key definitions used in this Call](#)).

Therefore, Step 2 proposals must meet **at least one of the following conditions:**

Option A and/or B	What is requested to applicants
<p><b>Option A — Apply EU-based digital solutions/technologies</b></p> <p>The project will apply one or more EU-based digital solutions and/or technologies.</p>	<p>EU-based technologies and/or solutions may be owned/ developed by one or more of the applicant SME or be provided by an external entity (Associated Partner or Service Provider).</p> <p>Applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• indicate <b>which solution(s)/technology(ies)</b> will be used or adopted, clearly specifying whether they are owned/ developed by the applicant(s) or are provided by an external entity;</li> <li>• provide a <b>short justification</b> explaining why the solution(s)/technology(ies) qualify as EU-based under the conditions set out in <u>Section 2.4 Key definitions used in this Call</u>. The justification shall include a technical description indicating where the intellectual property is owned and/or controlled; where the main development activities take place; and, where relevant, where data will be hosted and/or processed;</li> <li>• provide a <b>Declaration of Honour (DoH)</b> confirming that the proposed solution(s)/technology(ies) comply with the EU-based definition set out in this Call and that the applicant(s) have the right to use, implement and/or further develop the solution(s)/technology(ies) within the project;</li> <li>• In case of solution(s)/technology(ies) provided by an external entity, provide the following <b>supporting elements</b>: a letter of intent if the external entity is an Associated Partner; a brief quote/ offer if the external entity is a Service Provider.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> if the specific technology/ solution is not yet finalised or not fully market-ready at application stage, applicants must describe the intended solution, explain why it qualifies as EU-based, and indicate its current and target maturity/ readiness level (e.g. TRL/CRL). As this Call does not fund basic research, technologies are expected to be at a maturity level compatible with implementation and validation within the project duration.</p>
<p><b>Option B — Engage Innovation Leaders</b></p> <p>The project will engage one or more Innovation Leaders (as defined in <u>Section 2.4 Key definitions used in this Call</u>) in a concrete and identifiable role (e.g., through specialised know-how, tools, methods, testing/validation, technical support, or other structured contributions).</p>	<p>Innovation Leaders may be engaged as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an applicant SME <b>within the consortium</b> (if the Innovation Leader qualifies as an SME and meets all eligibility requirements of this Call).</li> <li>• an <b>external entity</b> (either as an <b>Associated Partner</b>, or as a <b>Service Provider</b>).</li> </ul> <p>Applicants must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>identify each Innovation Leader involved</b> and clearly specify <b>their role</b> in the project (applicant SME, Associated Partner, or external supporting entity).</li> <li>• describe the <b>concrete contribution</b> of each Innovation Leader to the project, with specific emphasis on how it supports the project's innovation capacity and contributes to strategic autonomy.</li> <li>• In case the Innovation Leader is an external entity, provide the following <b>supporting elements</b>: a letter of intent for Associated Partners; a brief quote/ offer or description of the planned contribution for a Service Provider.</li> </ul>

**Applicants may choose Option A, Option B, or both.**

Below is a summary table highlighting possible scenarios; a project may choose multiple scenarios:

Role in relation to technology / innovation capacity	Application of EU-based digital solutions/ technologies (Option A)	Engagement of Innovation Leaders (Option B)
<b>Applicant SME (Beneficiary)</b>	The project focuses on the use, adaptation or advancement of <b>EU-based technologies directly owned and/or developed by one or more applicant SME</b> . Applicants must describe the technology, confirm EU-based ownership/control, and confirm the right to use and further develop the solution within the project.	<b>Innovation Leaders</b> engaged in the project are <b>applicant SMEs</b> (beneficiaries) providing their expertise directly linked to project execution. This option is possible only if the Innovation Leader qualifies as an eligible SME according to the Call. Applicants must clearly describe the Innovation Leader's role and contribution in the project.
<b>Service Provider</b>	The project applies <b>EU-based technologies sourced from the market</b> . Applicants must describe the technology, explain why it qualifies as EU-based, and include a brief offer/quote or description of the planned service. Related costs must be clearly included in the project budget.	<b>Innovation Leaders</b> engaged in the project are external <b>Service Providers</b> . Applicants must describe the concrete contribution to innovation and strategic autonomy and provide a brief offer/quote or description of the planned contribution. Related costs must be clearly included in the project budget.
<b>Associated Partner (No Budget)</b>	The project applies, adapts or develops <b>EU-based technologies owned or developed by an external entity participating as an Associated Partner</b> . Applicants must describe the role of the Associated Partner, explain access to the technology, and attach a Letter of Intent/Support.	<b>Innovation Leaders</b> engaged in the project are <b>Associated Partners</b> providing mentoring, validation, testing or strategic innovation support. Applicants must describe the contribution to innovation capacity and strategic autonomy and attach a Letter of Intent/Support.

- **Financial requirements:**

- **Grant size:** proposals must request exactly the total EU funding amount specified for the relevant strand. Requests for a lower or higher amount will be considered **ineligible**. The total requested EU funding amount per project must be:

Call Strand	Fixed grant per project
<b>Strand 1 – Product Innovation</b>	<b>€120,000.00</b>
<b>Strand 2 – Process Innovation</b>	<b>€77,000.00</b>

- Maximum **€60,000.00** EU funding **per single SME (including linked enterprises)**.
- **Minimum 15% co-financing** of the total project budget (i.e. €120,000.00 or €77,000.00 plus at least 15% co-financing): all funded SMEs must contribute.
- **Cost Categories and Eligibility of Expenditures:** the budget submitted by applicants must be structured according to the following cost categories.

Cost category	Description
<b>A) Personnel Costs</b>	Personnel involved in the project (budget should include name and role in the project).
<b>B) Subcontracting costs</b>	External costs incurred for parties outside the consortium, if any. These are considered services provided by external professionals. Please describe the type of services.
<b>C) Other costs</b>	These costs differ from subcontracting because they involve minor purchases and are not considered 'services' provided by other professionals.
<b>D) Travel costs</b>	These costs can be included as eligible project expenses, provided that the travel is directly related to the project activities. However, <b>it is not possible to request EU funding for these costs</b> . They must be included in the project budget as part of the SME co-financing contribution.

All eligible costs that are included in the budget shall meet the following criteria:

- Be incurred in the project period.
- Be incurred in connection with the action and necessary for its implementation.
- Comply with the applicable national laws on taxes, and be reasonable and justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management (in particular regarding economy and efficiency).

**Note:** Value Added Tax (VAT) is not eligible for EU funding and must not be included as an eligible cost.

- **Project duration:** projects must have a **fixed duration of 12 months**.

## 3.2 Application procedure

### Step 1 Application Procedure

Step 1 applications should be submitted by the applicant (or LP in the case of a consortium) through the F6S Platform, via the Call for Proposals page at the following link: <https://www.f6s.com/cultural-heritage-grants-step-1/apply>.

Applicants must submit the following information:

- (1) **Fill the required information fields directly in the platform.**
- (2) **Upload the following mandatory annexes:**

Mandatory Annexes	Description
<b>Annex 3 - Step 1 Application Form</b>	Annex 3 should be <b>duly completed</b> and <b>signed by the Applicant</b> (or the Lead Partner, in the case of an existing group). The Step 1 Application Form includes a Declaration of Honour through which the Applicant confirms compliance with the general eligibility requirements of the Call and commits to participate in the mandatory Capacity Building and Matchmaking activities. The applicant also confirms that, if its project idea is selected, it will comply with the additional mandatory activities foreseen for selected SMEs, under the conditions described in this Call.
<b>Financial viability self-assessment</b>	Completed using the self-assessment tool in accordance with the instructions provided in Annex 2, <b>printed and signed</b> .  In case of an existing group of SMEs, <b>each SME participating in the group must submit its own signed self-assessment</b> .

### Step 2 Application procedure

Step 2 applications must be submitted by the Lead Partner electronically through the F6S Platform via the Call for Proposals page at the following link: <https://www.f6s.com/cultural-heritage-grants-step-2/apply>.

Applicants must submit the following information:

- (1) Fill the required information fields directly in the platform;
- (2) Upload the following mandatory annexes:

Mandatory Annexes	Description
<b>Annex 4 - Step 2 Application Form</b>	Annex 4 should be <b>duly completed</b> and <b>signed</b> (the form includes a Declaration of Honour (DoH) that must be signed <b>by the legal representative of each SME requesting funding</b> ). Through these declarations, each SME confirms compliance with the general eligibility requirements of the Call (including SME status, financial viability, the absence of exclusion situations) and also confirms that the information and documents submitted are true, complete and accurate.
<b>Annex 5 or 6 - Step 2 Budget Template</b>	Applicants should fill Annex 5 or 6 depending on the selected strand (Strand 1 or Strand 2). The budget template should be duly completed following the instructions within the document.
<b>Financial viability self-assessment</b>	<b>For each SME requesting funding:</b> completed using the self-assessment tool in accordance with the instructions provided in Annex 2, <b>printed and signed</b> .
<b>Proof of legal registration</b>	<b>For each SME requesting funding.</b> E.g., company register extract, certificate of incorporation, or equivalent official registration document.  If the document is not issued in a language of one of the CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE project partners (see <a href="#">Section 1.1 Partners</a> ), provide the original document and a simple English translation of: <i>Legal Name, Registered Address, Date of Incorporation, VAT/Registration Number, and Legal Representative Name</i> (highlighted or listed in a summary cover sheet).
<b>Balance sheet, and Profit and loss</b>	<b>For each SME requesting funding.</b>

Mandatory Annexes	Description
account for the last two closed financial years.	If the document is not issued in a language of one of the CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE project partners (see <a href="#">Section 1.1 Partners</a> ), provide the original document and a simple English translation only for the specific line items used to complete the Financial Viability Self-Assessment (highlighted or listed in a summary cover sheet).

**Note:** additional supporting documents or information may be asked to applicants where needed to complete due diligence or prior to pre-financing.

## 4. Capacity Building and Matchmaking Programme

### 4.1 Purpose and Expected Outcomes

The **Innovation Capacity Building and Matchmaking Programme** is integrated into the Call and supports SMEs in resource-efficient, sustainable operations, and in designing strong collaborative innovation projects for Step 2.

**Important! Participation in mandatory sessions is a prerequisite for Step 2 eligibility.**

The Programme strengthens SMEs' **innovation readiness, business skills and understanding of Step 2** requirements in areas such as innovation, business models, access to finance, IP and consortium building.

### 4.2 Programme Structure and components

The Programme runs from **May to June 2026** and is **open to all SMEs** and their teams.

**Components:**

Component	Focus and Key topics	Structure
<b>1. Webinar Series</b>	<p>A series of <b>interactive sessions</b> designed to strengthen business and innovation skills, long-term planning, and strategic decision-making. Participants will enhance sustainability practices, while gaining a clear understanding of funding logic, investment readiness and Step 2 proposal requirements. Key themes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Business Skills:</b> Models and strategic communication for cultural heritage.</li> <li>• <b>Innovation and Market Entry:</b> Market analysis and value propositions.</li> <li>• <b>Sustainability:</b> Climate resilience, risk management, and DEI (gender, inclusion, diversity).</li> <li>• <b>Investment and Funding:</b> Pitching, readiness, and global market reach.</li> </ul>	<p><b>A series of English-language webinars</b> delivered by expert speakers with relevant sectoral and technical expertise. <b>Each session (1–2 hours)</b> combines strategic perspectives with real-world use cases, ensuring actionable insights that SMEs can directly implement.</p>

Component	Focus and Key topics	Structure
<b>2. Knowledge-sharing sessions</b>	Sessions focused on adopting sustainable practices and translating Industry 5.0 concepts into concrete actions. The format promotes peer learning and professional exchange, enabling SMEs to discuss innovation approaches and identify transferable best practices. <b>Expert-led discussions</b> address digital transformation in the CHVC, green transition, social innovation, and stakeholder engagement.	<b>Two structured online sessions (max 2 hours each)</b> delivered by expert facilitators. Each session integrates interactive elements such as discussions and collaborative exercises to ensure active engagement. Content is aligned with participants' development needs, combining strategic guidance with practical examples of technology adoption.
<b>3. Matchmaking session</b>	A <b>strategic networking event</b> fostering innovative, cross-sectoral, and cross-border partnerships within the CHVC. While mandatory for Step 2 Lead Partners, the session remains open to all Step 1 participants — including those whose initial ideas were not selected — to explore joining consortia as partners. The session aims to support the formation of consortia that align with Step 2 requirements, engaging Innovation Leaders to facilitate synergies and matching of complementary expertise, while ensuring SMEs retain full autonomy in partner selection.	Delivered <b>online via a specialized platform</b> connecting SMEs, Innovation Leaders, and ecosystem actors. The platform allows participants to showcase capabilities, connect with potential partners or end-users, and initiate structured discussions. Innovation Leaders facilitate introductions and share best practices throughout the event.

### Overview and mandatory requirements

Participation in the Innovation Capacity Building Programme and compliance with the mandatory requirements set out below are conditions for eligibility to proceed to Step 2.

Component	# Total Sessions	Period	Target group	Mandatory participation requirement for Step 2	Outcome
<b>Webinars</b>	6-9	May - June 2026	ALL Step 1 SMEs	Min. 3 webinars	Strengthen business & innovation skills; practical guidance for project design
<b>Knowledge-sharing sessions</b>	2	May - June 2026	ALL Step 1 SMEs	Min. 1 session	Peer learning; exchange of best practices; strategic guidance from experts
<b>Matchmaking</b>	1	June 2026	ALL Step 1 SMEs	Mandatory attendance	Partner identification; cross-sector collaboration & consortium building

## 5. Evaluation process

### 5.1 Evaluation principles and methodology

The evaluation for both steps follows EU good practices for cascade funding and is guided by the following principles:

<b>i. Excellence</b>	The proposals selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the Call.
<b>ii. Transparency</b>	Funding decisions will be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants will receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals.
<b>iii. Fairness and impartiality</b>	All proposals submitted to the call are treated equally. They are evaluated on their merits, impartially and irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants.
<b>iv. Confidentiality</b>	All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated confidentially.
<b>v. Efficiency and speed</b>	Evaluation of proposals and award of the financial support will be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework.

An **Evaluation Committee** from the consortium coordinates the evaluation process, which includes the following steps:

Evaluation steps	Description
<b>Eligibility check (pass/fail)</b>	Applications are checked against the eligibility requirements of the relevant step. Only eligible applications proceed to the quality assessment.
<b>Quality assessment and scoring</b>	Eligible applications are assessed against the award criteria of the relevant step through a structured two-phase process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individual assessment:</b> Each application is assessed independently by two evaluators from different consortium partners. For Step 2, one evaluator familiar with the language of the supporting documents may be appointed. All evaluators are required to sign a Declaration on Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest.</li> <li>• <b>Evaluation Committee validation:</b> the Committee validates the results, rankings, and final selection list. In cases of significant scoring discrepancies, the Committee may request clarifications, organize consensus discussions, or appoint a third reviewer to ensure a fair and consistent approach for all applicants.</li> </ul>
<b>Ranking and selection</b>	Applications are ranked based on their final scores. Only proposals that meet the applicable quality thresholds are selected or recommended for funding. Where relevant, a reserve list is established.
<b>Publication of results</b>	The results are published in accordance with cascade funding transparency requirements, including key information on the selected projects and recipients.

**Note:** If clarification of administrative or eligibility information is required, the Evaluation Committee may contact applicants through the official channel, applying a consistent approach to all applicants in comparable situations.

## 5.2 Quality evaluation and scoring approach

For both steps of the Call, the quality assessment follows a common scoring methodology, based on three award criteria: **Relevance, Quality and Impact**.

Each eligible application is assessed by two evaluators using a scale of 0 to 5 per sub-criterion, with **half points allowed** (e.g., 3.5), as described in the table:

Score	Description
<b>0 - None</b>	The information requested is missing or incomplete.
<b>1 - Very poor</b>	The information provided is considered irrelevant or inadequate, compared to the specific call provisions.
<b>2 - Poor</b>	The information provided lacks relevant quality and contains significant weaknesses, compared to the specific call provisions.
<b>3 - Fair</b>	The overall information provided is adequate, however, some aspects are unclearly or insufficiently detailed, compared to the specific call provisions.
<b>4 - Good</b>	The information provided is adequate with good outlined details, compared to the specific call provisions.

**The final score for each sub-criterion is calculated as the sum of the scores assigned by the two evaluators, up to a score out of 100.** Quality thresholds apply both per criterion and overall, as defined in the evaluation grids for each step. Only proposals that pass both eligibility and quality thresholds are ranked and considered for selection.

In Step 2 only, bonus points are added to the final score.

Projects are selected in descending score order.

## 5.3 Step 1 Evaluation and selection criteria

### Step 1 Eligibility criteria

N.	Eligibility criteria	Reference
1	Applicant(s) qualify as an SME(s) according to the EU SME definition.	DECLARATIONS
2	Applicant(s) are established in an SMP-eligible country.	DECLARATIONS
3	Applicant(s) have the financial capacity to manage the project.	DECLARATIONS
4	Applicant/Lead Applicant (in case of a consortium) declares no exclusion situation.	DECLARATIONS
5	Compliance with EU funding obligations.	DECLARATIONS
6	The idea is clearly focused on the Cultural Heritage Value Chain (CHVC).	PART A.
7	Exactly one strand is selected (Strand 1 or Strand 2).	PART A.
8	Applicant(s) participate in only one (1) project idea under this Call (either as a single applicant or as part of a group).	DECLARATIONS + EVIDENCE FROM THE APPLICATIONS

N.	Eligibility criteria	Reference
9	Application submitted in English through the platform and before the deadline.	PART A.
10	Mandatory annexes uploaded (Application Form signed; Financial self-assessment signed for all applicants).	Annexes

### Step 1 award criteria

Criterion / sub-criterion	Reference	Max score
<b>1. RELEVANCE (Threshold 30/50)</b>		
1.1 CHVC relevance: Clarity and relevance of the challenge/need addressed for the CHVC (Safeguarding, Management, Valorisation).	Section 3.2	10
1.2 Fit with selected Strand: Consistency of the idea with the objectives and logic of the selected Strand (Strand 1 or Strand 2).	Section 2; Section 3.2	10
1.3 Innovation ambition: Degree to which the idea represents a credible innovation (new products, services, or processes) beyond the SME's current practice.	Section 3.2	10
1.4 Contribution to the CHVC: Potential contribution to strengthening the CHVC (e.g. innovation, sustainability, resilience, competitiveness).	Section 3.2	10
1.5 Strategic autonomy needs: Clarity of the dependencies/needs addressed (e.g. critical inputs, technologies, digitalisation, sustainability).	Section 4	10
<b>Subtotal Relevance</b>		<b>50</b>
<b>2. QUALITY (Threshold 20/30)</b>		
2.1 Clarity and coherence: coherence between challenge, idea, objectives and expected outputs.	Section 3.2	10
2.2 Feasibility at idea stage: Credibility and realism of developing the idea into a Step 2 collaborative project.	Section 3.2; Section 5	10
2.3 Completeness of the idea: Adequacy of the information provided regarding scope, focus, and defined next steps.	Sections 3.2, 4, 5	10
<b>Subtotal Quality</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>3. IMPACT (Threshold 10/20)</b>		
3.1 Expected CHVC impact: Potential impact on the CHVC in terms of innovation, sustainability, resilience or competitiveness.	Section 3.2	10
3.2 Collaboration & uptake potential: Potential for cross-sectoral and/or cross-level collaboration and future uptake in Step 2.	Section 5	10
<b>Subtotal Impact</b>		<b>20</b>
<b>TOTAL SCORE (max 100 pts)</b>		<b>100</b>

### Quality thresholds:

Relevance	Quality	Impact	Overall
30/50	20/30	10/20	60/100

## 5.4 Step 2 Evaluation and selection criteria

As a result of Step 2 evaluation, the highest-quality collaborative projects will be selected for funding, in line with the Call objectives and available budget for each strand, and according to the process described below. Applications that meet the minimum quality thresholds are ranked by final score within the relevant strand. **Projects are selected in ranking order until the available budget is exhausted for each Strand. 10 projects will be selected for Strand 1, and 10 projects will be selected for Strand 2.**

### Step 2 Eligibility criteria

N.	Eligibility criteria	Reference
1	Consortium of at least two SMEs (qualifying as SMEs according to the EU definition).	Platform fields Section 2
2	Applicants are established in an SMP-eligible country.	Platform fields Section 2
3	Applicant(s) have the financial capacity to manage the project.	DECLARATIONS
4	Applicants declare no exclusion situation.	DECLARATIONS
5	Compliance with EU funding obligations.	DECLARATIONS
6	The proposal has a clear and direct focus on the Cultural Heritage Value Chain (CHVC).	Section 3
7	Exactly one strand is selected (Strand 1 or Strand 2).	Platform fields Section 1
8	None of the applicants participates in more than one project proposal as an Applicant (Lead Partner or Project Partner), regardless of strand selected.	DECLARATIONS EVIDENCE OF STEP 2
9	Application submitted in English through the platform and before the deadline.	EVIDENCE OF STEP 2
10	Lead Partner is a Step 1-selected SME, has completed mandatory Step 1 Capacity Building and Matchmaking activities and has answered to the satisfaction questionnaire provided by the Authority at the end of the Capacity Building and Matchmaking programme.	EVIDENCE OF STEP 1
11	Strand-specific innovation deliverables have been included and clearly defined and will be achieved by the end of the project.	Section 5.3
12	Mandatory networking/ business event participation is envisaged and included in the budget as co-financing cost.	Section 3.2 Annex 5 or 6 (based on the selected strand)
13	The proposal meets the EU-based technologies and/or Innovation Leaders requirement (Option A and/or Option B), with required supporting elements.	Section 4.4
14	The requested EU grant matches the fixed lump sum for the selected strand (€120,000.00 for Strand 1, €77,000.00 for Strand 2).	Platform fields Annex 5 or 6 (based on the selected strand)
15	The maximum EU grant requested per SME is not higher than €60,000.00.	Annex 5 or 6 (based on the selected strand)
16	The co-financing by the applicants equals to at least 15% of the total project budget and all applicants contribute to it.	Platform fields Section 2.1

N.	Eligibility criteria	Reference
		Annex 5 or 6 (based on the selected strand)
17	The project duration is 12 months.	Platform fields Section 1 Section 3.4
18	All mandatory information and annexes submitted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mandatory information fields in the platform;</li> <li>Step 2 Application form (Annex 4), duly completed and signed by the legal representative of each SME requesting funding;</li> <li>Step 2 Budget template, duly completed (Annex 5 or 6, based on the selected strand);</li> <li>Financial viability self-assessment, printed and signed, for each SME requesting funding;</li> <li>Proof of legal registration and Balance sheet and Profit and Loss account for the last two closed financial years, for each SME requesting funding (with English translations where required).</li> </ul>	Platform fields and Annexes

## Step 2 Award criteria

Criterion / sub-criterion	Reference	Max score
<b>1. RELEVANCE (Threshold 25/40)</b>		
1.1 Fit with the CHVC and selected strand: Clarity of the challenge within CHVC functional domains (Safeguarding, Management, Valorisation). Alignment of objectives with the selected strand.	Section 3.1 & 3.2	10
1.2 Deliverables quality: Clarity and credibility of the new-to-the-firm deliverable(s) and their relevance to the CHVC.	Section 4.1 & 5.3	10
1.3 Innovation ambition: innovation of the project for the Cultural Heritage Value Chain.	Section 4.1 & 5.3	10
1.4 EU-based technologies and strategic autonomy approach: credible contribution to reducing dependency on non-EU inputs/technologies/know-how through Option A and/or Option B (EU-based justification; Innovation Leader contribution), giving attention to digital solutions that are designed for specific heritage workflows.	Section 4.4	10
<b>Subtotal Relevance</b>		<b>40</b>
<b>2. QUALITY (Threshold 20/30)</b>		
2.1 Methodology and implementation quality: clarity of activities, deliverables, and feasibility within 12 months; integration of open standards, reusable components, and shared tools to ensure interoperability and scalability.	Section 4.2	10
2.2 Consortium quality and cooperation set-up: partners' experience, clear roles, complementarity, and effective collaboration between technology providers and heritage expertise.	Section 2.3	10
2.3 Workplan and milestones: Quality and realism of the 12-month timetable. Appropriateness of milestones and means of verification (RP1/RP2).	Section 6.1 & 6.2	10
<b>Subtotal Quality</b>		<b>30</b>

Criterion / sub-criterion	Reference	Max score
<b>3. IMPACT (Threshold 20/30)</b>		
3.1 Expected impact on the applicant and on the CHVC: Expected impact on applicant SME competitiveness and digitalisation, and the broader resilience and sustainability of the CHVC.	Section 4.5	10
3.2 Exploitation, uptake and sustainability of results: Credible pathways beyond funding (market access, investment readiness). Evidence of planned IP protection or patenting.	Section 4.3 & 4.5	10
3.3 Readiness and discoverability of the innovation: Realistic TRL/CRL progression within the heritage use case. Strength of the strategy for visibility within the European ecosystem.	Section 4.5	10
<b>Subtotal Impact</b>		<b>30</b>
<b>TOTAL SCORE (max 100 pts)</b>		<b>100</b>
<b>4. Bonus points (Max 16)</b>		
4.1 Cross nationality: the proposal involves applicant SMEs from at least two different eligible countries.	Platform fields Section 2.1	4
4.2 Inclusivity: The proposal involves at least one applicant SME established in an EU-13 or less-developed region, or in a country not represented among the CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE Project Partners.	Platform fields Section 2.1	4
4.3 Cross-sectoriality: the applicant SMEs represent at least two different industrial ecosystems.	Platform fields Section 2.3	2
4.4 Cross-level cooperation: the proposal involves research organizations or public authorities/ entities as Associated Partners.	Platform fields Section 2.2	2
4.5 Higher co-financing: higher than 15% and up to 20% (0.5 point); higher than 20% and up to 30% (1 point); higher than 30% (2 points).	Platform fields Section 2.1 Annex 5 or 6 (based on the selected strand)	Up to 2
4.6 Private Capital/Investor Engagement: Evidence of investor engagement (e.g., letter of interest, commitment to invest, or equivalent).	Section 4.3 + Attached evidence	2
<b>Total Bonuses</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>TOTAL AWARD CRITERIA + BONUS POINTS</b>		<b>116</b>

### Quality thresholds:

Relevance	Quality	Impact	Overall
25/30	20/30	20/30	65/100

## 5.5 Communication results

All applicants will receive an email notification (sent using the contact details provided in the application form) about the outcome of the evaluation. Results will also be published on the [ECCP](#), partner websites, and project channels.

## 5.6 Enquiries and redress procedure

Questions are addressed via National Contact points ([Section 8](#)). Complaints on evaluation outcomes must be sent to [Eurocluster@cr-eu.eu](mailto:Eurocluster@cr-eu.eu) within 5 working days after the publication of the results, including application details, contact information, object and evidence. The Evaluation Committee reviews and replies within 20 working days; its decision is final.

## 6. AWARD, CONTRACTING, IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Sub-Grant Agreement

Funded SMEs sign a **Sub-Grant Agreement** with the responsible consortium partner (“Authority”), defining rights, obligations, payment conditions, reporting and implementation rules and compliance with the EU Grant Agreement and this Call

Obligations include conflict of interest avoidance, confidentiality, DNSH compliance, visibility of EU funding, provision of information and record-keeping.

EU bodies (Commission, OLAF, Court of Auditors) may conduct **checks, reviews, audits, or investigations**; non-compliance may lead to **payment suspension, reduction, or recovery**.

### 6.2 Project Implementation, monitoring and Reporting

The Sub-Grant Agreement sets the **official start date and duration**; modifications require formal approval.

Monitoring may include progress checks, deliverables review, and milestone evaluations.

Reporting obligations are linked to the **lump sum grant** approach:

<b>Interim report (month 6)</b>	covering progress, milestones achieved, and supporting evidence.
<b>Final report (month 12)</b>	documenting completion of project activities and outcomes.

All reports must use Authority templates and provide sufficient evidence.

As part of their reporting obligations, all awarded SMEs will have to fill in a dedicated [feedback survey](#). Copy of the survey will have to be annexed to the final report. This is a mandatory requirement in order for SMEs to receive the final payment.

#### Payment schedule

Instalment	Amount	Timing
<b>1. Pre-financing</b>	40% of the total grant.	within 30 days of signing the Sub-Grant Agreement
<b>2. Interim payment</b>	30% of the total grant.	within 30 days of approval of the interim report
<b>3. Final payment</b>	30% of the total grant.	within 30 days of approval of the final report

The Authority may suspend payments if documentation is missing or unclear.

## 6.3 Communication, Visibility and Dissemination

Funded SMEs must actively promote the project and its results.

- **Mandatory communication materials:**
  - **Project branding** (logo or key visual) by month 6.
  - **Public Summary** (max 1,500 characters) by month 6.
  - At least one **Multimedia Asset** (video, infographic, or photography) by project end.
- **Acknowledgment of EU Support: use of EU emblem, CR.EU.IN.HERITAGE logo, and funding statement in all communication (digital media, publications, events, presentations) and on funded equipment. The mandatory funding disclaimer is:**  
*"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 EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them."*
- **For AI-related projects, compliance with the EU AI Act is mandatory (transparency and safety, particularly for generative content).**
- SMEs must attend at least one pitching or networking event organized by the Authority and are encouraged to tag and re-post the project social media channels.

**Further details on the Sub-Grant Agreement, including templates, rights, obligations, and reporting requirements, are provided in Annex 7 – Sub-Grant Agreement.**

## 6.4 Additional support and project sustainability

Additional support may include: online pitching events for investors, further networking opportunities and guidance on IPR and potential patenting to enhance long-term sustainability and market impact.

## 7. Timeline

**Key dates:**

<b>Step 1 Opening date</b>	19/02/2026
<b>Call Presentation Webinar*</b>	17/03/2026
<b>Step 1 deadline</b>	20/04/2026 at 17.00 CET
<b>Capacity Building Programme</b>	May - June 2026
<b>Step 1 Evaluation period and selection</b>	April - May 2026
<b>Publication of Step 1 results</b>	May - June 2026
<b>Step 2 Opening date</b>	30/06/2026
<b>Step 2 deadline</b>	31/08/2026 at 17.00 CET
<b>Step 2 Evaluation period and selection</b>	September - October 2026
<b>Publication of Step 2 results</b>	October 2026
<b>Signing of Grant Agreement</b>	October 2026
<b>Starting date of awarded projects</b>	November 2026

\* **Call Presentation Webinar:** 17 March 2026 from 13.00 CET to 15.00 CET in English, during event “Culture as an Economic Driver in the New AgoraEU Programme”. Register to the online webinar at this [LINK](#).

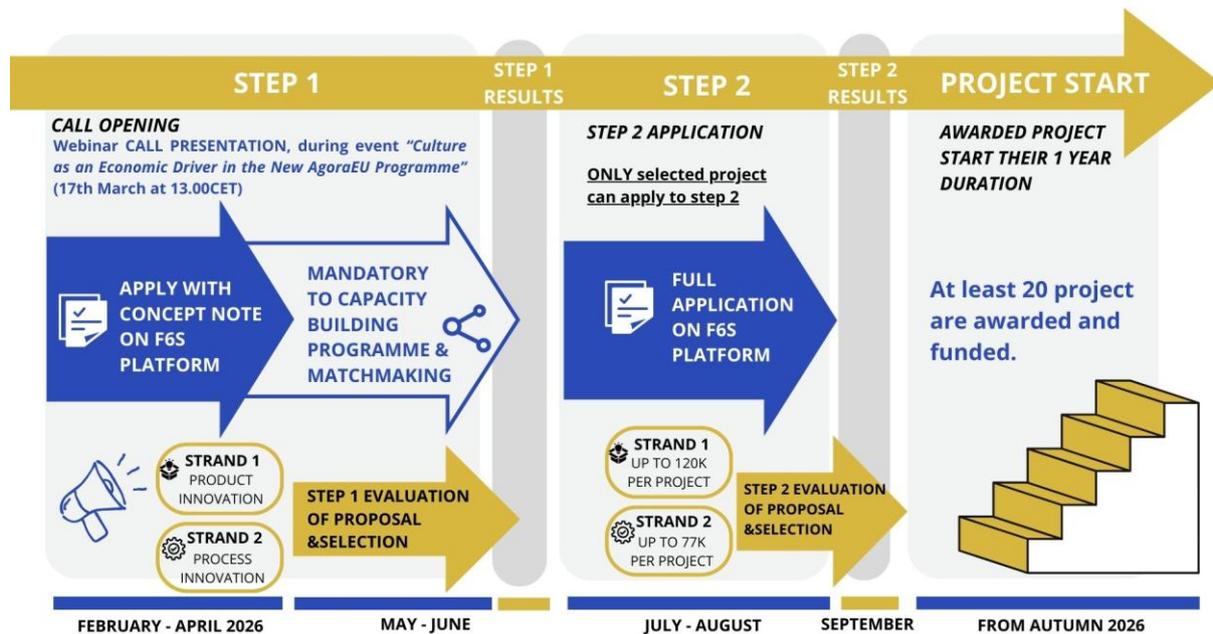


Figure 3: Timeline of the Call process

## 8. CONTACT & SUPPORT

For general questions (Call, eligibility, application process), applicants should contact CR.EU.IN. HERITAGE **National Contact Points** via email, using “CR. EU. IN. HERITAGE enquiry” in the subject line. Requests must be in English and sent at least 5 working days before each submission deadline. No questions are answered by telephone; **FAQs are the only binding clarification source and are regularly updated on the Call page and F6S platform. Applicants must consult them regularly.**

### National Contact Points

N.	Partner	Country	Contact Email
1	VENETIAN CLUSTER SRL (VEC)	ITALY	segreteria@venetiancluster.eu
2	BASILICATA CREATIVA (BAC)	ITALY	cascadefunding@basilcatacreativa.it
3	INNOSKART Nonprofit Ltd. (INNOSKART)	HUNGARY	innoskart@innoskart.hu
4	CLUSTER TWIST ASBL (TWIST)	BELGIUM	info@twist-cluster.com

N.	Partner	Country	Contact Email
5	Athena Research and Innovation Center in Information, Communication and Knowledge Technologies (CORALLIA)	GREECE	cr.eu.in.heritage@corallia.org
6	BALTIC FILM & CREATIVE TECH CLUSTER (BFCT)	LITHUANIA	office@film-creative.tech
7	OPEN HUB ASSOCIATION (OPEN HUB)	ROMANIA	georgiana@openhub.ro
8	French Industrial Districts Club Association (FRANCE CLUSTERS)	FRANCE	anastasiia.legenka@franceclusters.fr
9	Catalan Audiovisual Cluster Association (CAC)	SPAIN	eugrants@clusteraudiovisual.cat
10	Italian-German Chamber of Commerce Munich-Stuttgart (ITALCAM)	GERMANY	europa@italcam.de

## ANNEXES

FOR BOTH STEPS	
Annex 1	How to Apply
Annex 2	Financial Viability Check instructions
STEP 1	
Annex 3	Step 1 Application Form
STEP 2	
Annex 4	Step 2 Application Form
Annex 5	Step 2 Budget Template Strand 1
Annex 6	Step 2 Budget Template Strand 2
Annex 7	Sub-Grant Agreement