

# Frequently Asked Questions about the PHOENIX 4.0 Call (Frequently Asked Questions about the PHOENIX 4.0 Call)

---

Frequently Asked Questions about the PHOENIX 4.0 Call

## Q1: Can trainers involved in the PHOENIX 4.0 project apply to the PHOENIX 4.0 Call for Competition with their own project?

**A1:** No. Trainers who are involved in the implementation of PHOENIX 4.0 project activities (including training, mentoring, coaching, or advisory roles) are not eligible to apply to the Call for Competition, either as lead applicants or as partners. This restriction is in place to avoid any potential conflict of interest and to ensure fair and transparent selection procedures.

## Q2: Can an organisation participate in more than one project under the PHOENIX 4.0 Call?

**A2:** To ensure fair competition, each organisation may participate **in only one application** under the PHOENIX 4.0 Call for Competition, either as a lead applicant or as a partner, and must **not have received financial support** under other projects funded by the SMP-COSME-2023-TOURSME Call for Proposals.

## Q3: Is equipment eligible under the PHOENIX 4.0 Call?

**A3:** Equipment is not automatically eligible. It **may be considered eligible only if it qualifies as consumables or goods under the call rules**, clearly contributes to resilience, green or digital transformation, and arises directly from capacity-building activities carried out within the project (such as training, coaching, or tailored consulting).

The purchase must be clearly justified, directly linked to the project's objectives and deliverables, and remain within the maximum 30% limit applicable to consumables and goods.

Infrastructure investments, large-scale or permanent equipment, and equipment replacing normal operating costs are not eligible.

## Q4: Are salaries and staff costs eligible expenses under the project?

**A4:** No. Salaries and internal staff or personnel costs are not eligible expenses under this Call. The financial support is provided as a lump sum and is intended to cover external services, software, certification, promotion, and other eligible costs as defined in the Call documentation.

### Q5: Is VAT an eligible cost?

**A5:** No, VAT is not considered an eligible cost under the project and cannot be reimbursed, regardless of whether it is recoverable or non-recoverable under national VAT legislation.

### Q6: How does the project financing work in practice, given that internal labour costs are not eligible?

**A6:** The PHOENIX 4.0 financial support is provided as a lump sum to support the implementation of project activities, not to reimburse internal labour or salary costs.

While the lead tourism SME receives the grant, parts of the budget may be allocated to other eligible project partners, as defined in the budget breakdown. Each partner that receives a share of the budget may independently contract and pay external service providers for activities under their responsibility. Partners are not financed through salaries, but through access to funded external services and project activities that support their needs and the project objectives. All roles, tasks and budget allocations must be clearly described in the project proposal.

### Q7: What “Contribution to the Transition Pathway for Tourism Objectives” means in practice?

**A7:** The approved projects, at the end of the project, will have to submit a pledge on the EU Tourism Platform <https://transition-pathways.europa.eu/>. Pledges are stakeholder commitments to concrete actions within the Transition Pathway for Tourism, each with a clear target and linked to a specific area of focus.

### Q8: What is the difference between partners and service providers?

**A8:** Partners are part of the partnership to jointly achieve project objectives, address a shared challenge and strengthen their own businesses through collaboration. They co-create and implement the project.

Service providers (suppliers) are contracted to deliver a specific service (e.g. consultancy, development or certification). They carry out the service but are not part of the partnership and do not participate in project design or decision-making.

### Q9: Is there a limit on the purchase of consumables and goods within the project budget?

**A9:** Yes. The purchase of consumables and goods is limited to a maximum of 30% of the total project budget.

### Q10: Is subcontracting subject to any limit?

**A10:** No. Subcontracting costs are not subject to a predefined percentage limit. Please note that if a project allocates most of its budget to subcontracting, it is technically eligible. However, this type of budget allocation could raise concerns during the evaluation

phase. Specifically, the project may be assessed as lacking efficiency and cost-effectiveness, which would negatively impact its evaluation outcome.

### Q11: What are the requirements regarding partnership composition and budget distribution?

**A11:** Within the overall partnership, tourism SMEs must represent at least 50% of the total number of partners (this refers to the number of partners, not the number of partners receiving a budget allocation).

The Lead Partner receives the full grant amount and the Partnership Agreement must clearly define how funds are distributed under one of the following two options:

- Option 1: The Lead Partner manages 100% of the grant, while the other partners participate without receiving a budget allocation.
- Option 2: The Lead Partner receives the grant and redistributes it according to these limits:
  - Tourism SMEs (including the Lead Partner) must manage at least 70% of the total budget.
  - Other partners (non-tourism SMEs) may manage up to 30% of the total budget.
  - It is allowed to include partners without a budget allocation.