



BE > FUTURE



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Guidelines for applicants

Call for the selection of innovative projects to be awarded financial support under the Acceleration Programme of the **BEFuture Project**

Date of publication of the call:
5th December 2024
Deadline for submission of applications
to the call: 5th February 2025





Disclaimers

These Guidelines set out the rules for submission and selection of the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) financed under this Call, in conformity with the Call for projects 'SMP-COSME-2022-TOURSME', particularly Section 2 (pages 11 to 13 of the Call). The conditions for awarding financial support to third parties are laid down in Article 9.4 of the Grant Agreement¹ signed between the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) and the coordinator of the Catalan Tourist Board.

This Call 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 and/or EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



¹ Article 9.4 Grant Agreement: If the action includes providing financial support to third parties (e.g. grants, prizes or similar forms of support), the beneficiaries must ensure that their contractual obligations under Articles 12 (conflict of interest), 13 (confidentiality and security), 14 (ethics), 17.2 (visibility), 18 (specific rules for carrying out action), 19 (information) and 20 (record-keeping) also apply to the third parties receiving the support (recipients). The beneficiaries must also ensure that the bodies mentioned in Article 25 (e.g., granting authority, OLAF, Court of Auditors (ECA), etc.) can exercise their rights also towards the recipients.



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Acronyms

- **AI** – Artificial Intelligence
- **BE** – Business Events
- **EC** – European Commission
- **FAQ** – Frequently Asked Questions
- **GDPR** – General Data Protection Regulation
- **IBTM** – Incentives, Business, Travel and Meetings (in Barcelona)
- **IMEX** – International Meeting and Exhibition (in Frankfurt)
- **IoT** – Internet of Things
- **MICE** – Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events (Conventions and Exhibitions in the original list)
- **MVP** – Minimum Viable Products
- **NACE** – Nomenclature of Economic Activities
- **SDG** – Sustainable Development Goal
- **SME** – Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
- **SMP** – Single Market Programme
- **TRL** – Technology Readiness Level
- **TTP** – Tourism Transition Pathway
- **VR** – Virtual Reality

1. Introduction

Are you ready to shape the future of Europe's business events sector?

BEFuture is excited to announce the launch of its Acceleration Programme through this Call for projects, a dynamic opportunity for your company to propel your innovative project forward.

This Programme aims to support a **minimum of 80 groundbreaking innovative projects across six European countries**². The financial support provided to these projects is between €20 000 and €30 000.

In these Guidelines, you will find **all the details you need to know** to participate in this Call for projects. In addition, BEFuture has published a **web page with all the key information** and a **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page**.

For Catalonia, please refer to the **regulatory bases** for more details.

Timeline

The Call is open from **5th December**, and is set to close on **5th February 2025, at 17:00 CET**³.

Below is a table with key dates associated with the Call and implementation of the selected innovative projects:

TIMELINE of the BEFuture Acceleration Programme		
Event	Date	Description
Opening of the Call for projects	5 th December 2024	The date the online application page is accessible at BEFuture Acceleration Programme: Call for projects – BEFuture (be-future.eu)
Informative Session of the Call for Innovative Projects Under the Acceleration Programme.	10 th December 2024, 10:00 CET Online	Webinar for potential applicants and partnering entities where you can learn more about the Programme requirements and ask questions.
Local Q&A Sessions	Check updates at: BEFuture upcoming activities	Seminars organised by the Local Contact Points for potential applicants and partnering entities where you can learn more about the Programme requirements and ask questions - BEFuture (be-future.eu)
Deadline for submitting your application	5 th February 2025, 17:00 CET	Final date for submitting your application. Late submissions will not be accepted
Notification of the results	Estimated at the earliest 4 weeks after the closure of the Call	Date you will be notified of your application results after evaluation
Project Start	1 st April 2025	Official start date for selected innovative projects

2 Belgium (Flanders), France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain (Catalonia) and Italy.

3 There is flexibility for extending the deadline if deemed necessary by the BEFuture project.



TIMELINE of the BEFuture Acceleration Programme		
Event	Date	Description
Final Event	November 2025, IBTM World 2025	Expected date of the BEFuture final event, which will have the participation of all the innovative projects
Project Closing	30 th November 2025	Expected completion date for all selected innovative projects
Final Report submission	31 st December 2025	Deadline for submitting final reports and deliverables of the selected innovative projects

Contact

For any questions, please get in touch with the BEFuture team in your country **before 31 January 2025** by emailing call-inquiries@be-future.eu. Responses to your requests for clarification will be published within 3 days. All questions and requests received from potential applicants and partnering entities will be included and addressed in the **Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) related to the BEFuture Acceleration Programme – BEFuture (be-future.eu)**.

STAY TUNED! You can also visit **BEFuture** and follow our **Social Networks** for all updates!

2. Why should you apply?

2.1 BEFuture overview

BEFuture ‘Shaping the Future of Europe’s Business Events sector’ is a 3-year project co-funded by the European Commission (EC) under the Single Market Programme (SMP). The project aims to transform the European Business Events (BE)⁴ sector by driving it **towards sustainability, inclusivity and resilience** (see *Annex I Glossary of terms and definitions*). BEFuture envisions an industry that not only thrives on innovation and technology, but also prioritises regenerative practices, ensuring a positive and lasting impact.

BEFuture will facilitate innovation and collaboration within the industry, and secure Europe’s future as a frontrunner in hosting environmentally and socially responsible corporate events. Key actions to be undertaken, in addition to implementation of the BEFuture **Acceleration Programme for innovative projects**, are:

- Supporting an open innovation space for ideas and knowledge exchange for the progress of the industry.
- Developing and empowering talent within SMEs⁵ and the industry.
- Leveraging significant industry and industry association events (IBTM World, IMEX, Mobile World Congress, etc.) to enhance communication and raise awareness.

2.2 BEFuture Acceleration Programme

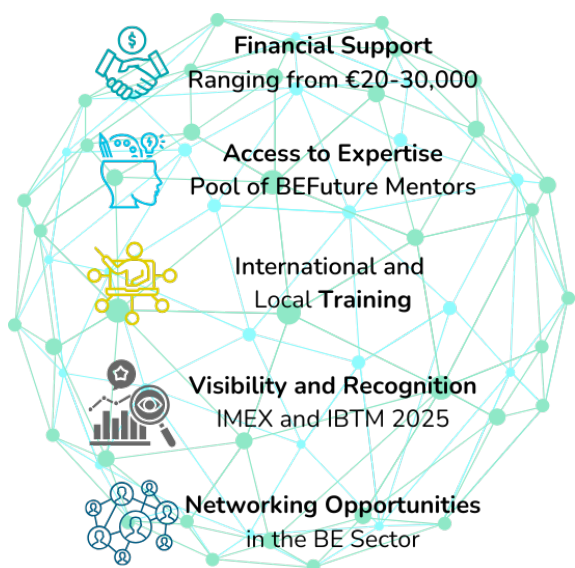
The BEFuture Acceleration Programme aims to support the development and scaling of **innovative products, processes, services and business models** that can contribute to spearheading the transformation of the European BE sector.

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4 In these Guidelines, the terms MICE (referring to Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Events) and BE (Business Events) are used interchangeably.

5 In these Guidelines, the terms SME and enterprises/companies are used interchangeably.

Call for innovative projects to the Acceleration Programme



These Guidelines set out the rules for participation in the Call for the **selection of innovative projects** that will be awarded financial support under the Acceleration Programme.

By applying for the Programme's Call for projects, you will be looking to receive the following support:

- » **Financial support** to implement your innovative project, ranging from €20,000 to €30,000, providing essential resources to turn your vision into reality.
- » **Training** programme to educate, inspire and support BE professionals towards a digital and sustainable transition. The Programme includes sessions at events such as **IMEX Frankfurt** (20-22 May 2025) and **IBTM World** (November 2025), and local training in BEFuture partnering countries.

- » **Access to expertise** from mentors and industry experts to enhance your projects, overcome challenges and accelerate their development towards market readiness. The BEFuture Pool of Mentors has been built for the Acceleration Programme through a **specific Call for mentors**. Check **Call for mentors: Join the Acceleration Programme – BEFuture (be-future.eu)**
- » **Networking opportunities** connecting you to like-minded professionals and potential collaborators within the BE industry and other related sectors, taking advantage of the **Marketplace – BEFuture (be-future.eu)**.
- » **Visibility and recognition** by exhibiting your innovative solution on a global stage at prominent industry events such as **IMEX Frankfurt** and **IBTM World 2025**.

More information about all these advantages is available at **BEFuture Acceleration Programme: Call for projects – BEFuture (be-future.eu)**.

Objectives of the Acceleration Programme

The objectives of the Programme are to:

- **Facilitate innovation and development of minimum viable products (MVPs)**
Transforming innovative ideas into functional prototypes or MVPs, using advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), Blockchain, Robotics and sustainable materials.
- **Enhance scaling and commercialisation of proven innovative solutions**
Assisting solutions that have demonstrated potential in pilot or initial stages for scaling up, entering the market and developing robust business models that ensure their feasibility.
- **Strengthen collaboration within the ecosystem**
Encouraging collaboration and joint initiatives that spur innovation within the industry and between the BE sector and related sectors.

Scope of the innovative projects

The BE industry is at a critical juncture, requiring significant innovation to address current and emerging challenges. The following table defines the **scope of the innovative projects** to be supported by the Acceleration Programme:

	Climate Change and Circularity	Talent and Inclusion	Governance and Impact	Event Experience	
Innovation	Carbon Neutrality	Upskilling and Future Capabilities	Regenerative Business Models with a lasting impact	Digital Integration	Digitalisation
	Circular Economy	Accessibility	Cross-Sector & Local Communities' Platforms	Immersive Technologies and Interaction	
	Sustainable Mobility	Inclusion and Diverse Participation	Profitability and Tech Access	Personalization and Community Building	

To provide you with some more information about the meaning of each area, you can find a definition of each topic in **Annex II Scope of the innovative projects**.

Available budget for innovative projects

The **total budget available is €2 400 000**. Specific budget allocation per country can be found in the table below:

Country	Country budget	Innovative projects expected per country
France	€450 000	Minimum 8 projects and maximum 15 projects of €30 000
Germany	€450 000	Minimum 8 projects and maximum 15 projects of €30 000
The Netherlands	€300 000	Minimum 8 projects and maximum 10 projects of €30 000
Italy	€300 000	Minimum 8 projects and maximum 10 projects of €30 000
Catalonia (Spain)	€450 000	Minimum 8 projects and maximum 15 projects of €30 000
Flanders (Belgium)	€450 000	Minimum 8 projects and maximum 15 projects of €30 000

We reserve the right not to award all available funds and/or to redistribute them between the participating countries, depending on the quality of proposals received and the results of the evaluation.



3. Who can apply?

3.1 Eligibility criteria

If you are ready to lead with innovation and make a lasting impact, we encourage you to apply and join us in shaping a sustainable and inclusive business events industry.

You should consider first the following requirements concerning **eligibility**:

1. Type of participation. You can apply as:

- **A single SME:** Applications can be submitted by **a single (1) SME** (see below an accepted definition of SME under the eligibility requirements for participants);
- **A consortium:** Applications can be submitted by **a consortium of a maximum four (4) entities**, following these different options:
 - » A partnership of a minimum two (2) and maximum four (4) SMEs.
 - » A partnership comprising a minimum two (2) and maximum four (4) partners, including a minimum one (1) SME and minimum one (1) public or private entity that is/are instrumental for the realisation of an innovative project for the BE industry. **Note that at least 70% of the financial support** must be dedicated to the SME/s participating in the application.

The consortium **cannot** be transnational, and, as such, the Lead Applicant and Partners (hereafter, the partners) must be **all based in the same eligible country** (see below for geographical eligibility of the participants).

2. Type of participants. Regarding the **eligibility of participants**, the following conditions apply:

- **For SMEs:**
 - » They must comply with EC Recommendation 2003/361/EC⁶ defining the criteria for qualifying as a small and medium-sized enterprise. In this sense, self-employed professionals, start-ups, micro and other small and medium-sized enterprises, or any other entity that is regularly engaged in an economic activity, may be considered an enterprise.
 - » If you are unsure about your enterprise's status, you may consult the **SME user guide** and run the **SME self-assessment questionnaire**.
- **For all participants:**
 - » From a geographic point of view, they must be registered as an enterprise in one of the territories of the partnership: **France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Catalonia (Spain) and Flanders (Belgium)**.

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

- » Your activity should be registered under one of the following **NACE⁷ categories** (or their corresponding national equivalents in the eligible countries for participation) listed below (the list is indicative and non-exhaustive):

H4910 – Passenger rail transport, interurban

H4932 – Taxi operation

H4939 – Other passenger land transport n.e.c

H5010 – Sea and coastal passenger water transport

H5030 – Inland passenger water transport

H5110 – Passenger air transport

I5510 – Hotels and similar accommodation

I5520 – Holiday and other short-stay accommodation

I5610 – Restaurants and mobile food service activities

I5630 – Beverage serving activities

N7710 – Renting and leasing of motor vehicles

N7721 – Renting and leasing of recreational and sports goods

N79 – Travel agency, tour operator reservation service and related activities

N82.3 – Organisation of conventions and trade shows

R90 – Creative, arts and entertainment activities

R91 – Libraries, archives, museums, and other cultural activities

R93 – Sports activities and amusement and recreation activities

Other activities relevant to the BE industry are eligible as well, especially from the **technology** and **digital sector, construction, energy, mobility, food and beverages, social economy, and audiovisual**, amongst others.

If your application is selected, you will be asked to present your company statutes or another unequivocal alternative justification as proof of this (i.e. NACE or national equivalent registration).

- In addition, to be eligible, all applying entities participating must:
 - » not have been declared bankrupt or not have initiated bankruptcy procedures;
 - » not have had convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practice;
 - » not be in liquidation or in difficulty according to Commission Regulation No 651/2014 Article 2.18;
 - » not be excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of either a national or an EU authority;
 - » be up to date with tax obligations as mandated by their respective jurisdictional tax authorities.

7 NACE codes are the standard European nomenclature of productive economic activities. If the applicant is registered in a country that is not using NACE codes, please send an email to call-inquiries@befuture.eu



Other eligibility requirements:

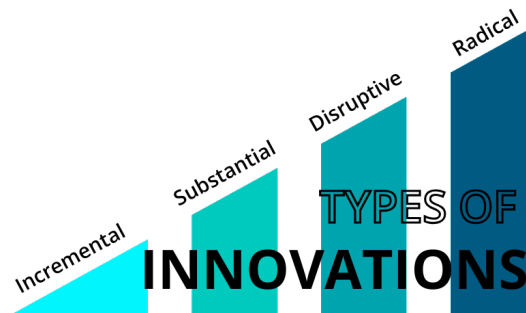
- You can only participate in **one application**.
- You must not have received financial support under other projects funded by the Call for projects *SMP-COSME-2022-TOURSME*.

Note on the State aid 'De minimis regime': The 'Commission Notice on the notion of State aid as referred to in Article 107(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union' clarifies that funding coming directly from the European Union, including from an Executive Agency, is not considered to be State Aid. However, it is recommended that each applicant checks with the relevant national/regional authorities whether the same regime is applicable for them.

An **eligibility check** will take place in application procedure Step 1 Registration and Administrative information (refer to section 5. *How do you apply?*).

4. What can be done?

4.1 Type of innovative projects



Innovative projects under this Programme are financed as a **lump sum** (see *Annex I Glossary of terms and definitions*), the amount of which depends on the type of innovative project selected – **Radical, Disruptive, Substantial** or **Incremental** – based on their impact and novelty⁸. In your application, you will be required to indicate which type of innovative project you are aiming for.

A project must deliver tangible results, such as a **functional prototype** or a **pilot**, to demonstrate its feasibility and impact in real-world conditions, proving its potential to transform the professional events sector.

In all cases, innovations should align with the overarching goals of the BEFuture project – outlined in the **White Paper**.

Radical Innovative projects

Projects creating new markets and transforming existing ones by introducing groundbreaking technologies or models that challenge and redefine industry standards. These innovations should offer solutions that not only differ significantly from current methods but also have the potential to replace them entirely, by establishing new ways of conducting business within the events sector, addressing underserved needs or disrupting traditional event frameworks.

Disruptive Innovative projects

Projects involving significant technological or methodological advancements which substantially improve performance or efficiency over existing solutions. These innovations should leverage cutting-edge technology to push the boundaries of what is currently possible, by enhancing the competitive edge of businesses within the BE sector, without necessarily creating new markets.

⁸ These categories are based on Christensen, C. M., McDonald, R., Altman, E. J. & Palmer, J. E. (2018), 'Disruptive innovation: An intellectual history and directions for future research' *Journal of Management Studies*, 55*(7), 1043-1078 (<https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12349>)



Substantial Innovative projects

Projects that enhance existing products, services or methods to significantly boost performance and efficiency, contributing to increased productivity, competitiveness and measurable benefits in terms of efficiency, customer satisfaction or environmental impact.

Incremental Innovative projects

Projects that refine and optimize existing products, services, or processes. These innovations should focus on making meaningful improvements that enhance efficiency, functionality, or user experience of existing solutions.

For further information, refer to *Annex III Examples of radical, disruptive and substantial innovative projects within the BE sector* for examples of projects falling under each category.

4.2 Type of activities

Innovative projects under this Programme are developed through activities that necessitate **the purchase of multiple services and/or supplies from external providers**⁹. The resulting costs are incurred within the project duration¹⁰ to ensure the project objectives are met and the funds utilised effectively.

The purchases include, but are not limited to:

- **Services to implement a business idea:** hiring technical expertise for:
 - » **Product Development:** design and develop a prototype based on new event technologies or sustainable materials.
 - » **Market Studies:** research to identify market needs and trends in the BE sector to ensure that the product or service meets real-world demands.
 - » **Development and Analysis of Business Plans:** strategic planning and financial forecasting necessary for new ventures.
 - » **Intellectual Property Development:** securing patents or trademarks to protect innovative ideas and investments.
 - » **Other Services** provided they are fundamental to implementing the business idea.
- **Software purchase and/or licence** necessary for the creation and testing of new event technologies or services, and/or sustainability tracking applications.
- **Registration and certification:** supporting the costs of obtaining:
 - » Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) registration.
 - » EU Ecolabel Certification for products and services that meet high environmental standards, enhancing market appeal.
 - » Other Recognised Certification Schemes (i.e., industry-specific sustainability standards, such as ISO certifications for quality management or environmental management).

9 Note that financial support cannot be used to purchase services provided by (i) partners of the BEFuture consortium, (ii) any persons having powers of representation within the SME participating in a selected innovative project or, (iii) for partnerships, service providers affiliated with any of the partners listed in the partnerships.

10 After the starting date and before the ending date of the project, as clearly defined in the contract.

- **Training for Staff:**
 - » **Professional Development Workshops** focused on new technologies, sustainability practices and regenerative models, or customer service enhancements.
 - » **Certification Courses** necessary for the deployment of specialised services or compliance with industry standards.

Note: This category must be limited to a maximum **15%** of the grant amount.

- **Promotion and Communication Activities:** hiring specialists in:
 - » **Marketing Services** to boost product visibility and market penetration.
 - » **Public Relations** to build brand reputation and handle communication with stakeholders and the media.
 - » **Digital Marketing:** social media management, content creation and digital campaign execution to reach a broader audience.

Note: This category must be limited to a maximum **10%** of the grant amount.

In addition, **all innovative projects must include** in their budget breakdown the following compulsory activities:

- **Mentorship fees** covering at least 20 hours to be used throughout the project duration. At the outset, projects will be required to select a mentor from the BEFuture Pool of Mentors.
- **Travel costs to attend the BEFuture Showcase event at IBTM World 2025** (Barcelona, November 2025). At this event, you will have the opportunity to pitch your innovative project in front of BE industry professionals. Attendance at this event is compulsory for at least one representative, and optional for an additional representative. This activity has a fixed allocation of €1 000 per participant. No costs can be claimed for organisations based in the event's country.

The allocation of activities and their associated costs must be clearly indicated in the budget breakdown of your application.

4.3 Amount of funding

The amount of funding that can be requested is between €20 000 and 30 000. However, innovative projects may propose a higher budget should they intend to secure additional resources from other sources and/or aim to demonstrate the feasibility of a more complex project. Applicants must ensure that any additional funding sources ("Own resources") proposed for the project do not include other EU funds, in accordance with the principle of no double funding, meaning the same activities cannot be funded twice through EU support.

You will then need to complete the budget breakdown, justifying how the requested funds will be utilised to ensure the feasibility of the project and the achievement of the project objectives in a cost-effective manner.

If the application is submitted by a partnership, it is mandatory that **at least 70%** of the grant amount is allocated to SMEs. This allocation must be clearly indicated in the budget breakdown provided with your application.



5. How do you apply?

You **must apply online** through the submission platform accessible at **BEFuture**.

For organisations registered in Catalonia, the submission link will be the following one **<https://act.gencat.cat/projectes-i-xarxes-europees/befuture>**

Note that the application procedure is organised in **two steps**:

5.1 Step 1 Registration and Administrative information

On the **submission platform**, you must complete the Registration, including general information about the partner/s and the consortium, to proceed with the **eligibility check**.

5.2 Step 2 Project description

You must prepare a project description, which includes the application form and a pitch deck of the innovative project you are proposing, as well as a budget breakdown.

To help you develop your application (Step 2), we provide a courtesy application form, a pitch deck template and a budget breakdown, which correspond to Annex A.1, Annex A.2 and Annex B of the Application Pack. They are available for download **on our web page**. It is highly recommended to use the Word version of the courtesy application form, as you will not be able to retrieve or save your application in the submission platform. You can then paste the contents from your file into the submission platform.

Language of the application

We advise you to complete your application in **English**. However, you can also submit your application in any of the other languages supported by the program (Spanish, Catalan, Italian, French, Flemish, Dutch, German). We understand that some applicants may not be native English speakers, so applications will be evaluated based on the content provided, not the language proficiency.

If your organisation is registered in Catalonia, please refer to specific rules as outlined in the regulatory bases published **here**.

Submission of the application

Only by one partner (the Lead applicant) on behalf of the partnership.

6. What will be assessed and how?

Before your application is evaluated, it will go through an admission and eligibility check. In detail, the **evaluation steps** followed are:

6.1 Admission criteria check

This step checks that your application is compliant with the time and form of submission, which means it has been submitted within the deadline, and through the **submission platform**, with all forms and supporting documents filled in.

6.2 Eligibility check

If your application is admitted, the eligibility conditions outlined in section **3.1 Eligibility criteria** will be assessed.

Those applications marked as not admitted or ineligible will receive a rejection letter that will include the reasons for the decision. No further feedback will be given in this case.

6.3 Award criteria evaluation

If your application is considered eligible, it will be judged against six award criteria: **relevance, innovation potential, feasibility, exploitation, participants' capacity and team competence, and cost effectiveness**. Regarding the scoring, note that:

- The **total maximum score** that can be achieved is 600 points.
- Each award criterion has an **individual threshold of 50 points out of a possible 100 points**, prior to any weighting being applied. Thus, the **overall threshold required** to pass the evaluation process is **300 points out of the total 600 points**, before the weighting is applied.

Applications that surpass the minimum threshold will have the weighting applied. This means that, to obtain the final ranking of applications, the importance of each award criteria will be considered.

Award criteria and weighting are further developed in **Annex IV Award criteria**.



6.4 Evaluation procedure

If your application is admitted and eligible, it will undergo a thorough assessment conducted by **three independent evaluators** based on the award criteria. Evaluators are seasoned professionals within the BE industry and relevant sectors, as well as innovators themselves, and are committed to maintaining a neutral and unbiased judgement, ensuring a fair and transparent evaluation process that is solely directed towards assessing the merits of the application based on the predefined award criteria.

Each evaluator will write a brief Evaluation Report for each application. The individual reports will be consolidated to provide a unified evaluation outcome for each application.

6.5 Selection procedure

Following the evaluation against the award criteria, your application will be ranked based on the following set of rules:

Rule 1: Ranking is set per country and based on the overall score (which is the sum of all the scores of the award criteria) obtained by each application.

Rule 2: If, following rule 1, there are applications in the same position on the list, priority will be given to applications that have a higher score in 'Innovation potential'.

Rule 3: If, following rule 2, there are applications in the same position on the list, priority will be given to applications that have a higher score in 'Relevance'.

Rule 4: If, following rule 3, there are applications in the same position on the list, priority will be given to applications that have a higher score in 'Participants' capacity and team competence'.

In the event that applications remain in the same position on the list, the applicant that can demonstrate having a higher percentage of women in their management and administration bodies will be selected.

At the end, a **minimum of 80 innovative projects** will be selected to participate in the Acceleration Programme. If your application is not among the selected projects, it will be placed on a reserve list. Should any selected applicants withdraw, those on the reserve list will have the opportunity to join the Programme.

In the event of selection of a lower number of innovative projects (80) and/or a total amount of funding below the call's available budget (**€2 400 000**), the BEFuture project will re-launch the Call for projects.

Redress procedure:

You will receive notification of the evaluation results (including your score) via email, regardless of whether your application is selected or not. Within 10 working days of the delivery of the notification, you may submit a request for redress if you believe the award criteria of the evaluation have not been correctly applied. BEFuture experts will review the complaint and recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the final funding decision, it is possible that all or part of your application will be re-evaluated.

7. If you succeed... what happens?

Once your application passes the evaluation stage and is selected, you will be invited to sign a detailed contract (the grant contract). The objective of this contract (the template of which is part of Annex V) is to make sure that the legal requirements of this Call for projects are respected.

In brief, the steps to be completed before signing the contract are the following:

7.1 Preparation of the contract

After you have been notified, the contract preparation phase is launched and you must be prepared to amend your application based on the Evaluation Report's feedback, if applicable. Any amendments will be specifically aimed at clarifying the deliverables and expected achievements of the innovative project outlined in your application.

Administrative duties

To validate the status information of selected SMEs, the following documents will be required:

- An **SME declaration** form signed and stamped (if applicable) in which the SME must confirm it qualifies as an SME.
- In cases where the number of employees and/or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting documentation which demonstrates the headcount and ownership, such as payroll details, annual reports, national/regional association records, etc.;
- A document that verifies the bank account information of the SME. It is signed by the SME's legal representative and the bank representative.

You will have to provide a valid VAT number¹¹ at the time of the contract signing¹². Failure to provide a valid VAT number will automatically result in the rejection of your application.

The deadline for submitting the above requested documentation will be communicated in the notification of the results and will be a maximum of 10 working days. If you fail to provide the documentation within this period, your application will be automatically rejected and the next application on the reserve list will be invited.

11 To be checked at the European Commission services, such as: **Vies on-the-Web - European Commission (europa.eu)**

12 https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vies/#/faq

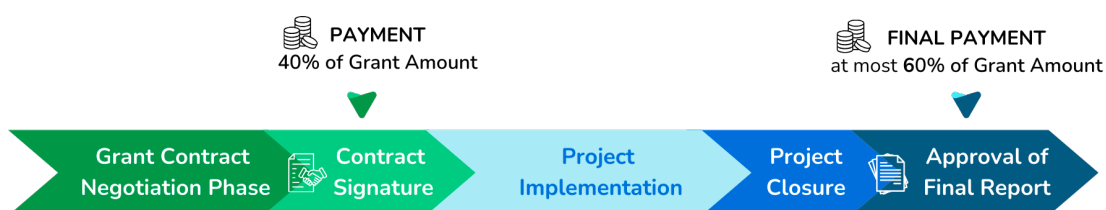
Signing of the contract

After submission and review of the documentation listed above, you will be invited to sign the contract with the Local Contact Point. By signing the contract, you will accept the grant and agree to implement the project under your own responsibility and in accordance with the contract, with all obligations and terms and conditions it sets out. The signing of the contract is a condition for proceeding with any payment as specified below in *7.2 Implementation of the contract*.

7.2 Implementation of the contract

The estimated date for starting your project is **1 April 2025** (tentative), and the maximum duration is expected to be 8 months (**30 November 2025**).

Payment conditions



The payment scheme will consist of two instalments: **40%** upon the contract being signed; then after approval of the final report, the **final balance** (equal to or less than **60%** depending on performance and quality of the deliverables provided. See “Reporting procedures” below).

Reporting procedures

During this period, you may be required to supply documentation and information at any time to facilitate project monitoring in accordance with the contract¹³. Such requirements might take the form of a brief questionnaire, report and/or simple request for documentation.

As a minimum, you will be asked to provide:

- **Inception questionnaire**, to be completed 1 month after starting the project.
- **Mid-term questionnaire**, and possibly a brief interview to be completed 3 months before finishing the project.
- **Final Report**, and possibly a brief interview to be provided within 1 month after finishing the project, including proof of the deliverables set out in your application.

Supplying the documentation required is a condition for activating the payment of the **final balance** of the grant (lump sum). Payments will be made after positive assessment of the documentation required.

It is strongly advisable to ensure proper accountability by retaining records of all invoices, irrespective of whether the financial support is provided as a lump sum.

Non-compliance with the activities and deliverables set out may include the application of penalties or the initiation of a recovery procedure for the funds granted. The terms are clearly outlined in the template of the contract, under Annex V Model of contract.

13 Please be aware that contract terms and financial justifications may vary by country. Any such differences will be clearly specified in the contract.

Data protection

The personal data of participants will be processed by BEFuture for the sole purpose of administering the Call. Said processing will be governed by this clause and by the legislation governing data processing. Specifically, BEFuture will process the personal data supplied by the participants to administer their applications to take part in the Call, as well as (with their consent) to inform them of and send them communications about the activities, projects and new developments in the BEFuture project which may be of interest to them, via electronic and other similar methods. The legal basis for processing their data is to administer their application to take part in the Call and the Programme process, or in the case of sending them communications, it is the consent given by the participants. The data will be processed under all circumstances in accordance with a level of protection that is appropriate for the applicable data. Following the selection process, BEFuture will keep the data supplied by the participants so that the candidates can be taken into consideration in future project events or programmes, if they consent to this. Participants may revoke their consent to receiving commercial communications at any time by sending an email to **contact@be-future.eu**. If personal data are supplied, users warrant that they have informed those parties of the content of this clause before supplying them, and they are personally liable vis-à-vis BEFuture for any losses that may arise in the event of a breach. They may, at any time, exercise their rights to view, correct or delete their data, to request restrictions on processing, to object to processing or to request the portability of their data, in accordance with the provisions of current legislation, by sending an email to **contact@be-future.eu** clearly stating the right they wish to exercise and attaching their national ID number or other similar ID documents as proof of their identity.



Annexes

Annex I Glossary of terms and definitions

Award Criteria: criteria defined to objectively assess the merit and potential impact of each application submitted, covering all details about the evaluation of this Call for projects.

BEFuture: project funded by the EU and dedicated to driving positive change in the **Business Events (BE)** sector across Europe. Aligned with the European Tourism Transition Pathways and Sustainable Development Goals, the project priorities are sustainability, inclusivity and lasting impacts. The project is implemented by nine (9) partner organisations: the Catalan Tourist Board – Catalan Convention Bureau, leading the action, and Visit Flanders Convention Bureau, B.Link Strategic Projects, Linkeus (Provence Alpes Côte d’Azur Convention Bureau), VDVO (Mice Innovation Association), NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Università degli Studi de Milano Bicocca and Tipik.

Call for projects: competition for participating in the Acceleration Programme.

Deliverables: a tangible or intangible output that is produced as a result of the work undertaken during the innovative project. Deliverables are measurable, specified outcomes that must be achieved to meet the objectives of the Acceleration Programme. These can include prototypes, pilot programmes, reports, software, and training sessions, amongst others, that contribute to the project’s goals.

Lead Applicant: main entity submitting the application on behalf of the partnership in the application process. This role is crucial, as it involves not just the submission of the application, but also the coordination and communication responsibilities among the participating entities, management of the project, and compliance with the funding requirements outlined in these Guidelines.

Local Contact Point: contact person in each territory covered by the Call for projects (Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Spain).

Lump sum: simplified form of funding by which payments are made based on results provided, such as deliverables. The BEFuture Acceleration Programme is based on a lump sum model as explained in the **Funding scheme** section of these Guidelines.

Inclusivity: refers to the proactive strategies and practices implemented to ensure that all potential BE participants, regardless of their physical abilities, cultural backgrounds, socio-economic status, or any other differing characteristics, have equal opportunities to participate fully in events. Inclusivity aims to remove barriers that could prevent individuals from engaging and contributing, thereby enhancing the diversity and richness of the event experience for everyone involved, as stated in the BEFuture White Paper.

Innovation: according to the Oslo Manual, defined as the implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service) or process, new marketing method or new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations. In the Acceleration Programme, this concept manifests through three distinct types of innovation: **Radical, Disruptive and Substantial**. Radical innovation transforms or creates new markets with groundbreaking technologies; Disruptive innovation enhances performance or efficiency within existing markets without creating new ones; and Substantial innovation improves existing products or methods to boost performance and competitiveness. Each category reflects a different aspect of the Oslo Manual’s broad innovation framework, tailored to specific impacts and levels of novelty, as defined in the **Scope of the innovative projects** section.

Mentor: seasoned industry professionals, successful entrepreneurs, academic leaders and technical experts who have a proven track record in the Business Events sector and related fields. Innovative projects selected under the Acceleration Programme will be accompanied by mentors, chosen from a pool built by BEFuture to ensure proper guidance and support.

Minimum Viable Products: simplest version of a product that a company can create to test its hypothesis about market needs. It can help gather valuable feedback from actual users.

NACE: stands for 'Nomenclature of Economic Activities' and is used to classify business activities.

Resilience: refers to the ability of event planners, venues and associated businesses to effectively adapt to and recover from various challenges and disruptions. These challenges may include economic downturns, technological changes, environmental crises and global health emergencies such as pandemics. Resilience involves both proactive strategies to prevent disruptions and reactive measures to respond to and recover from them efficiently. An Action Map for fostering a resilient BE business model is envisaged in the BEFuture White Paper.

SME: as outlined in the User Guide for the SME definition, and based on an extract of Article 2 of the annex to Recommendation 2003/361/EC¹⁴, *'The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.'*

Sustainability: ability to meet the needs of the present generation within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems, without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs, according to the thrivability principle presented in the BEFuture White Paper.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL): Technology Readiness Level (TRL) is a scale that measures the maturity of a technology or project from concept to market deployment. Originally designed for technological systems, the TRL framework can be adapted for various types of innovation. It helps assess how ready a project, idea, or technology is for real-world use, guiding decisions on investment, risk management, and the transition from research to commercialisation.

VIES: stands for VAT Information Exchange System and is a tool used by the European Union to monitor and control the application of VAT (Value Added Tax) within its internal market.

Annex II Scope of the innovative projects

Climate Change and Circularity

- **Achieving Carbon Neutrality:** Projects focused on reducing the carbon footprint of events through innovative solutions such as zero-emission event technologies and sustainable event logistics specifically designed for large gatherings. It is key to supporting digitalisation and integrating technologies to help create solutions that are data-driven.
- **Circular Economy and Resource Management:** Systems and tools that enable the complete reuse and recycling of materials at events, and the implementation of resource-efficient practices that minimise waste. This can include energy and water management systems using data and indicator knowledge.
- **Sustainable Mobility:** Solutions that promote the use of sustainable transportation options for attendees, such as shuttle services using electric vehicles, partnerships with green transit companies, and digital platforms for facilitating shared transportation options. This can also include sustainable methods of transport used for the creation of events.

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14 Small and medium-sized enterprises (europa.eu)



Talent and Inclusion

- **Upskilling and Future Capabilities:** Upskilling in the BE industry improves employees' skills, while future capabilities involve adopting new technologies and strategies to meet industry demands. This approach not only provides global solutions that support the entire industry and are accessible to everyone, but also plays a crucial role in attracting young generations and encouraging the return of young talents.
- **Accessibility:** Innovations to make event spaces and technologies accessible to all attendees, including those with disabilities, integrating advanced assistive technologies and inclusive design principles into event planning.
- **Inclusion and Diverse Participation:** Strategies and tools to enhance diversity among event staff and attendees, ensuring equitable participation and representation from various demographic and cultural backgrounds.

Governance and Impact

- **Regenerative Business Models with a Lasting Impact:** Model of BEs that goes beyond sustainability to create a positive impact on the community and the biodiversity of the local ecosystem. This can be translated into projects that create a platform or a model that allows the industry to move towards a regenerative model and create a long-lasting positive legacy, enhancing local empowerment of the destination and the sector that creates.
- **Cross-Sector and Local Communities' Platforms:** Creating platforms that facilitate integration and collaboration between the BE sector and local communities and well as other industries such as technology, sustainability and local government to foster holistic event solutions.
- **Profitability and Tech Access:** This category focuses on business models for organisations in the BE value chain that leverage technology to optimise operations, improve event experiences and increase revenue streams in order to reinvest in the transformation of the transition towards a regenerative model. These models also prioritise equitable access to technological resources, ensuring that all stakeholders, including local communities and small businesses, benefit from advancements.

Event Experience

- **Digital Integration:** This category focuses on the integration of digital and physical elements to create seamless hybrid event experiences. Key concepts include the use of AI as a facilitator and content creator, digital twins for virtual meetings, digital automation and process facilitation, and smart data for hybrid and online experiences. The goal is to leverage technology to enhance event formats, ensure valuable encounters in both online and offline settings, and make experiences more authentic and personalised.
- **Immersive Technologies and Interaction:** This category emphasises the incorporation of advanced technologies to create engaging and interactive event experiences. Concepts include the use of AR, VR, IoT and gamification to meet shifting expectations in a hybridised and digitised world. These technologies aim to provide more immersive, personalised and interactive experiences for participants, enhancing overall engagement and satisfaction. Additionally, customer-centric event designs and delegate persona journeys are integral to ensuring that events are tailored to individual needs and preferences.
- **Personalisation and Community Building:** This category focuses on creating personalised and engaging experiences for event participants while fostering a sense of community. Concepts include community building, delivering on-demand content through various channels, designing delegate persona journeys and ensuring authentic and meaningful interactions. The emphasis is on catering to individual behaviours and preferences to create a sense of belonging and connection among participants. Furthermore, placing culture and identity at the heart of the experience, and promoting 'pleasure, purpose-driven' activities to enhance well-being, are crucial for creating holistic and memorable events.

Annex III Examples of radical, disruptive, substantial and incremental innovative projects within the BE sector

Example of radical innovative project falling within the area of Climate Change and Circularity

Using cutting-edge 3D printing technology for customisable event infrastructure on-site

The innovation allows for on-site production of event materials, minimising waste by printing only what is necessary. Additionally, using recycled materials feeds into the circular economy model, where resource input and waste, emissions and energy leakage are minimised through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing and recycling. This approach drastically reduces the need for extensive logistics and transport typically associated with traditional event set-ups, thereby lowering the carbon footprint.


It is a radical innovative project as it could potentially create a new market within the event planning industry, introducing a novel concept of 'just-in-time' manufacturing. This technology allows for customised, scalable solutions that can adapt quickly to different event sizes and themes, offering a flexibility previously unavailable with traditional materials and methods. Further, this innovation challenges the norms of event set-up logistics, timing and resource utilisation.

Example of disruptive innovative project falling within the area of Talent and Inclusion

Creating Virtual Reality (VR) event platforms for inclusive access

This innovative project creates a fully immersive virtual reality (VR) event platform that enables remote attendance with the same level of engagement as physical presence. VR technology can enhance diversity within event planning teams and attendee demographics by providing a virtual venue where diverse groups can interact on an equal footing, overcoming some of the biases and obstacles present in physical settings.

This is a disruptive innovative project offering a significant technological advancement using the latest developments in VR hardware and software to transform people's experience of events. It reduces the need for travel, which can be costly and time-consuming, and provide environmentally friendly alternatives to large physical gatherings. It further provides a competitive edge for event organisers as they can attract a broader audience.



Example of substantial innovative project falling within the area of Governance and Impact

Artificial Intelligence-Driven Community Engagement Platform for event planning

This project introduces an AI-Driven Community Engagement Platform, specifically designed to empower local communities in the event planning process. The platform utilises AI to analyse community feedback, preferences and needs, facilitating a more inclusive and responsive event planning approach. By integrating AI tools, the system ensures that local voices are heard and incorporated, making events more community-focused and culturally relevant.

This is a substantial innovative project that leverages AI for community engagement. The platform incorporates natural language processing to understand community feedback, machine learning algorithms to detect patterns and preferences, and predictive analytics to forecast community responses to proposed event plans. These technologies ensure that the platform is not only innovative but also highly effective in delivering tailored event solutions.

Example of incremental innovative project falling in the area of Event Experience

Conference Engagement App - To improve attendee engagement and streamline event logistics using a mobile app

This incremental innovation in the form of a Conference Engagement App helps enhancing the attendee experience by incorporating several integrated features. This app allows attendees to create a personalized agenda by selecting sessions and networking events that align with their interests. It also provides real-time updates and reminders, alongside interactive venue maps for easy navigation. Networking tools within the app enable attendees to connect and schedule meetings based on shared interests. Additionally, the app offers a platform for immediate feedback collection through in-app surveys and facilitates the sharing of resources like presentation slides and videos after the event.

The Conference Engagement App is an example of incremental innovation because it enhances and refines existing event management technologies rather than introducing radically new concepts. It improves familiar features like personalized agendas and real-time notifications, making them more effective and user-friendly. By integrating interactive maps and networking tools, it boosts the user experience and logistical efficiency of attending events. Additionally, the app includes features for feedback collection and resource sharing, which build on existing capabilities to provide more value to both organizers and attendees. This approach of making iterative improvements allows for easy adoption and reduced risk and costs, typical of incremental innovations.

Annex IV Award criteria

Criterion	Description	Scoring	Weight
Relevance	How relevant is the project presented in the context of this call:	From 0 to 100 points Projects that clearly align with and actively promote the key themes of the TTP and priorities of the Call and demonstrate a strong relevance to the ongoing needs and future direction of the BE industry will score well.	10%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent does the project align with the specific objectives mentioned in the Tourism Transition Pathway and the BEFuture White Paper, such as advancing sustainability, digitalization, and the positive impact on the business tourism, meetings, and professional events sector? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project contributes to the three goals of sustainability, digitalization, and positive impact: 100 points The project contributes to two of the goals: 70 points The project contributes to one of the goals: 50 points The project does not contribute to the goals: 0 points 	
Innovation potential	Type of innovation represented by the project:	From 0 to 100 points Score depending on the type of innovation under which each innovative project falls:	35%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radical Innovation: Does the project introduce a groundbreaking change that creates a new market or significantly transforms existing ones? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Radical Innovation: 100 points. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruptive Innovation: Does the project offer a new approach or technology that significantly improves performance or efficiency without necessarily creating a new market? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disruptive Innovation: 80 points. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial Innovation: Does the project enhance or refine an existing product, service or method to significantly boost its performance and competitiveness? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Substantial Innovation: 70 points. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental Innovation: Does the project introduce improvements or upgrades to existing products, services, processes, or methods that enhance efficiency, productivity, and competitive differentiation? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incremental Innovation: 50 points. 	



Criterion	Description	Scoring	Weight
Feasibility	To what extent is the project technically and economically feasible? The following key aspects will be considered:	From 0 to 100 points Projects that demonstrate well-planned strategies, market knowledge and sound budgeting will receive higher scores.	25%
	Project Readiness Level:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRL4: 25 points • TRL5: 18 points • TRL6: 12 points • TRL7: 5 points • Other TRLs: 0 points 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRL4: Is the project based on Concept Validation and will conduct small-scale pilot studies or develop early-stage prototypes to assess the feasibility of their ideas in real-world scenarios? • TRL5: Is the project in a development phase and has progressed from a mere concept to a tangible prototype or model that can be rigorously tested in a controlled environment? • TRL6: Is the project a refined version of a product, service, or business model that is actively being tested in specific markets or with selected user groups? • TRL7: Is the project a demonstration of the system or prototype in a real environment, conducting the pilot test to evaluate manufacturing issues and the final operations? 		
	Market demand:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is existing or potential market demand (i.e. identified potential and/or existing clients): 25 points • There are studies and a marketing plan with feasible market penetration projections: 15 points • They have a defined market and have assessed the challenge it holds: 5 points • There is not a market study or client identified: 0 points 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the existence of market demand for the proposed product or service, supported by market studies or data, or is there a capacity to generate this market through an innovation that can be implemented quickly? 		
Economic Viability:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost Estimation and Financial Projections: Are the cost estimates and financial projections detailed, reasonable and sustainable? • Revenue Potential: How realistic are the revenue projections? Are they well-supported by market data? • ROI: Does the expected return justify the investment based on financial analysis? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If all answers are positive from the 3 questions asked: 25 points • If 2 questions are positive: 15 points • If 1 question is positive: 5 points • If no questions are positive: 0 points 	
Risk Assessment and Mitigation:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk Identification: What are the main risks associated with the project's technical and economic dimensions? • Mitigation Strategies: What measures are in place to effectively address these risks? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The projects present risks with evaluations and mitigations appropriate to the objectives set by the project: 25 points • The projects present the risks but lack the evaluation and mitigation: 15 points • No risks are presented: 0 points 	
Exploitation	The potential for exploitation of the project presented within the scope of this call:	From 0 to 100 points Projects that demonstrate legacy and impact potential, as well as potential to be scaled or transferred to different conditions and geographies within the BE sector, will score higher.	15%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the project results contribute to new developments in the Business Events industry and bring benefits to those involved (event planner, participants and the broader community, including government, academia, business and residents)? (Impact) • To what extent can the idea be replicated in similar settings or industries? (Replicability) • To what extent can the idea be transferred to other sectors or geographical areas? (Transferability) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answers all questions and the answers are correctly justified and aligned with the project: 100 points • Answers two questions and those are correctly justified: 80 points • Answers one question correctly and it is justified and aligned with the project: 50 points • No questions answered or correctly justified and aligned with the project: 0 points 	



Criterion	Description	Scoring	Weight
Participants' capacity and team competence	Capacity and competence of the individuals participating in the project	From 0 to 100 points Teams with proven expertise, relevant skills and a strong commitment to their project's longevity and impact receive higher scores.	10%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent are the necessary skills, experiences and resources in place to develop and implement the innovative project? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A team member demonstrates at least 5 years of experience aligned with Climate Change and Circularity; Talent and Inclusion; Event Experience; Governance and Impact and/or Professional Meetings and Events Tourism: 100 points A team member demonstrates at least 3 years of experience aligned with Climate Change and Circularity; Talent and Inclusion; Event Experience; Governance and Impact and/or Professional Meetings and Events Tourism: 80 points A team member demonstrates at least 2 years of experience aligned with Climate Change and Circularity; Talent and Inclusion; Event Experience; Governance and Impact and/or Professional Meetings and Events Tourism: 60 points A team member demonstrates at least 1 year of experience aligned with Climate Change and Circularity; Talent and Inclusion; Event Experience; Governance and Impact and/or Professional Meetings and Events Tourism: 50 points Those who do not demonstrate the afore-mentioned experience: 0 points 	
Cost Effectiveness	How economically resources are used to achieve a goal	From 0 to 100 points Projects which budget is effectively aligned with the project ambition and that demonstrate an efficient use of resources will receive higher scores.	5%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the budget breakdown demonstrate a cost-effective use of resources in relation to the project's objectives and deliverables? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The budget is justified in relation to the project's objectives and the deliverables are clearly identified: up to 100 points The budget is justified in relation to the project's objectives, but more detail is needed in the justification of the line items and the expected deliverables are not clearly identified: from 51 to 70 points The budget shows some discrepancies with the project's objectives, with poorly justified line items and without clearly identifying the expected outcomes: from 1 to 50 points The budget shows discrepancies with the project's objectives, with unjustified line items and without clearly identifying the expected deliverables: 0 points 	

Annex V Model of contract

Scheduled for imminent publication on the BEFuture platform.

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