



AIBC EUROCLUSTERS

Project: 101074645 – SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA

organised by AIBC EUROCLUSTERS - July 15th to July 17th, 2024 - for European SMEs and start-ups working on AI and Blockchain



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GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIBC EUROCLUSTERS	Artificial Intelligence & BlockChain for a greener and more digital economy supported by EUROpean CLUSTERS
AI	Artificial Intelligence
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Consumer
BC	Blockchain
EC	European Commission
ECCP	European Cluster Collaboration Platform
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
ESTA	Electronic System for Travel Authorization
EU	European Union
FPI	Fondazione Piemonte Innova (Project Coordinator)
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
SMP	Single Market Programme
TX	Texas
TWIN TRANSITION	Green & digital transitions
USA	United States of America



1. ABOUT THE PROJECT

AIBC EUROCLUSTERS stands for Artificial Intelligence & BlockChain for a greener and more digital economy supported by EUROpean CLUSTERS. It is an EU funded project (GA 101074645) focused on the Open Strand, which invites proposals focused on cross fertilisation of various industrial ecosystems with no specific focus on one industrial ecosystem. Indeed, the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS Project is centred on the Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain (BC) technologies and aims to:

- Further support the development of AI and BC solutions by European Single Market SMEs and start-ups, especially those solutions that support digitalisation.
- Support the uptake of AI and BC applications by different industrial ecosystems (manufacturing, mobility, logistics, energy) in need of digitalisation, resilience and green transition implementations.
- Help EU AI and BC SMEs access third markets and generate growth from international activities.
- Contribute to the reskilling and upskilling of the cluster human capital across the EU.

The AIBC EUROCLUSTERS Consortium is coordinated by Fondazione Piemonte Innova – FPI (IT), bwcon research (DE), ICT Cluster (BU), Asociacion Cluster de Movilidad y Logistica de Euskadi – MLC (ES), Environment Park - ENVIPARK (IT) and Bydgoszcz Industrial Cluster - BIC (PL).

The AIBC EUROCLUSTERS support is targeted to European SMEs and start-ups working on the AI & BC technologies, and from the manufacturing, mobility, logistics and energy industrial ecosystems interested in adopting AI & BC solutions to be more digital, resilient and green. The project implements Open Calls to select companies and project and thus provide Financial Support to Third Parties on the following activities:

- **Internationalisation:** mission to Austin, USA (**this call**) & participation to events (call closed)
- **Training** (calls closed)
- **Digitalisation services and product development** (call closed)
- **Project proposals** (call closed)

Furthermore, the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS project implements an analytic approach for supporting the:

- integration and valorisation of information from SMEs, start-ups, local stakeholders from different ecosystems.
- identification of the most promising opportunities related to AI, Blockchain and twin transition.
- Definition of support programmes and services to accelerate SMEs from digitalisation and developments of new/improve products and services.
- Improvement of management, coordination, and collaboration capacity of EU clusters among different industrial ecosystems in the EU single market.



2. OVERVIEW OF THIS OPEN CALL

This document presents [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA](#) which is targeted to **European SMEs and start-ups working on AI & BC technologies**, from the digital, manufacturing, mobility, logistics and energy industrial ecosystems, interested in participating to **AIBC Internationalisation Mission in USA**. The mission will be held from **Monday, July 15th to Wednesday July 17th, 2024, in Austin, Texas** with an optional welcome meeting on Sunday, July 14th afternoon. Participating SMEs must have implemented at least a little of AI and BC in their business to enable being more digital, resilient, and greener. See [ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA](#) section for further details.

AIBC has destined an overall budget of 30.000,00 EUR for supporting in-person participation of SMEs to this International Mission in USA. Thereby, a **maximum number of 15 companies** will be chosen to participate to this mission and will receive the **financial support of 2.000,00 EUR**, in the form of lump sum, after **taking part to the 3-day Mission organised by the project Consortium**. For organisation purposes, only 1 person per SME will be admitted to participate in the Mission (there are 15 slots available). At least two AIBC EUROCLUSTERS partners will take part in the mission, to oversee the organisation as well as deepen the knowledge of AI and BC, together with the participating companies.

The Mission provides the opportunity to take part to a structured business program, to meet potential partners and local technology and market experts in person, and to develop potential collaborations and cooperation opportunities with different stakeholders in the AI and BC fields from the United States. Furthermore, the mission will allow to explore collaborations between the European SMEs participating in the mission.

2.1. THE TOPIC OF THE MISSION: Digital transformation – data-based Value generation

The platform economy and data-driven businesses initiated in the US in the 90ies such as Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple are the large players on international stock markets today. The shift towards a data-driven economy started in the B2C part of our economy, but Europe has missed this trend completely and is lacking behind north American and Chinese thinking.

Now, using the acronym “digital transformation”, this data driven mentality has started to spill-over to the traditional industries, also covering the B2B sectors of the European industry.

But the basic mechanisms and concepts (programming skills) are not the differentiating factor of the trend of data-driven value generation. It is the mentality, the overall approach on how to apply the technologies in the different markets and how to potentially stimulate disruption.

The B2B digital transformation has been stimulated by companies mainly located in California, especially in the Silicon Valley. Nevertheless, in the recent years it can be observed that starting



from the SXSW conference, the City of Austin gained momentum and each month around 10.000 software engineers move from Silicon Valley to the Austin area.¹

For this reason, and to get stimulated with the mindset of this new data-driven value generation, AIBC EUROCLUSTERS is organising a Mission consisting in a **study visit to Austin, Texas** with a local matchmaking and training program. The mission organisation is supported by [Dr. Bernhard Koelmel](#), Professor of Global Process Management from the Pforzheim University, Germany, Chair of Strategic Technology at The International School of Management and visiting professor at the McCoy College of Business at Texas State University. He has resided in Austin for over a year where he contributes to academic affiliations, actively participated in the SXSW 2024, and delivered 10 keynote speeches in the fields of business models for regenerative operation, digital business models and circular economy.

Start-ups and SMEs can apply for joining AIBC in this mission, the selected companies will receive 2.000,00 EUR each, in the form of a lump-sum, as financial support intended to contribute to travel, accommodation and subsistence costs. The participation in this program is free of charge for the selected companies. The application process and requirements are described in the sections below.

2.2. THE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

The 3-day (three day) Mission to Austin, TX, preliminary program includes the following activities:

- Overview about recent technology trends in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Blockchain (BC) technologies.
- Overview about core business models based on AI and BC technologies.
- Matchmaking between USA companies and European companies.
- Visits to companies
- Common ideation workshop for exploring future capabilities of AI and BC

In the following table, the preliminary agenda for the Mission is shown.

Table 1 - Mission program (some changes in the program may occur)

	DAY 0: Sunday, July 14th optional	DAY 1: Monday, July 15th	DAY 2: Tuesday, July 16th	DAY 3: Wednesday, July 17th
MORNING 9 am – 12 pm		Visit Austin sights (optional)	Visit Austin sights (optional)	Sessions on future management

¹ See Articles „Why is Austin called a tech hub and considered a new Silicon Valley?“ ([Apptension](#)); “Austin emerges as a city of unicorns and tech giants“ ([TechCrunch](#)); “The astonishing transformation of Austin“ ([The New Yorker](#)).



	DAY 0: Sunday, July 14th optional	DAY 1: Monday, July 15th	DAY 2: Tuesday, July 16th	DAY 3: Wednesday, July 17th
EARLY AFTERNOON 12 pm – 5 pm	Welcome meeting starting at 4 pm	Keynote and workshop on trends in AI and BC <i>this session will provide a comprehensive overview of recent trends in AI and BC.</i>	“Design Thinking for Decision Makers” <i>interactive lecture focusing on the application of design thinking principles, including the AI-Sweetspot concept.</i>	B2B Matchmaking
LATE AFTERNOON 5:30 pm – 8 pm	Public concert Dinner	Matchmaking and networking	Matchmaking and networking	Design Thinking Workshop for AI/Blockchain business models & Wrap-up of mission
EVENING	Free	Free	Free	Free

Once the companies beneficiaries of this call are selected, their profiles will be shared with the organisers for them to consolidate the agenda accordingly and to identify further US companies and partners for the meetings and visits.

Matchmaking and networking activities will involve Executive students from MBA and Master of Science in Data Analytics and Information Systems (MSDAIS) that all have around 10-20 years of job experience, and companies from tech sector.

3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

3.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The eligible applicants for AIBC open calls are companies and start-ups, both in the form of Small and Medium Companies (SMEs) as defined by the EU, from the ICT, manufacturing, mobility, logistics and energy industrial ecosystems and that are working with AI and/or BC technologies.

A SME will be considered as such if coherent with the [Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC](#) and the [SME user guide](#).

As a summary, the criteria which define an SME are:

- Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU): less than 250.
- Annual turnover: less or equal to €50 million or
- Annual balance sheet total: less or equal to €43 million.

The AIBC project Consortium has the right to request formal registration documents from the applicants. In case the Consortium request is not answered within 7 working days, the applicant will be considered as ineligible.



SMEs that are under liquidation, in difficulty, or excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority are not eligible to apply for funding.

Double funding shall be avoided! The applicants must not be or have been funded by national or European public funds for the same activities related to what they candidate to by applying to this call. This is a fundamental principle for public expenditure in the EU: no costs for the same activity can be funded twice from the EU budget.

3.2. ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

SMEs and start-ups established in the Member States of the European Union (EU) and Countries participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP) are eligible to apply to this call.

The list of SMP participating countries is available here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf

Please bear in mind the VISA processes and specific constrains requested by USA related to your country, to assure that you can participate to the mission.

Information on specific countries

Hungarian companies

According to Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506 it is prohibited to enter into legal commitments with specific entities involving Union funding. This prohibition applies to the entire chain of Union financing.

This Decision stipulates that legal commitments must not be signed with any public interest trusts established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust. This applies as of 16 December 2022 for as long as the measures are in place.

In practical terms, regarding financial support to third parties, Hungarian entities receiving AIBC FSTP funds must demonstrate not being part of the entities linked to the Decision, starting from the ones listed in this [link](#) (list is not exhaustive).

3.3. ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

The **AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA** provides financial support for SMEs and start-ups interested in taking part in the Mission organised by the AIBC consortium.

Reimbursement is assured only for SMEs and start-ups (responding to the EU definition: see 3.1) attending the entire mission program (from Monday July 15th 9:00 am, until Wednesday, July 17th 8:00 pm; taking part on the first gathering meeting on Sunday, July 14th starting at 4pm is optional). Thus, all travel arrangements must be planned accordingly.

For more information check the following sections.



3.4. LANGUAGE

The application form must be filled in English, the official language for **AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALLS**. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the programme. This means any requested documentation will have to be submitted in English in order to be considered eligible.

3.5. ABSENCE OF CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Applicants shall not have any actual and/or potential conflicts of interest with the AIBC Consortium, during both the selection process and the whole project development. All cases of potential conflicts of interest must be declared and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Applicants cannot be AIBC Consortium partners or affiliated entities nor their employees or co-operators under a contractual agreement.

4. FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED

Each beneficiary of this call will receive 2.000,00 EUR in the form of a lump sum.

Lump sum funding is a fixed payment defined up-front and set out in the agreement that will be signed between the AIBC project and the beneficiary SME, stating all conditions for funding. The lump sum will be paid upon completion of activities, and no financial reporting is needed.

To be noted that beneficiaries can be companies that have activities funded by other **AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALLS**, but the same SME cannot receive more than 60.000,00 EUR overall from the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS project.

The lump-sum will be paid within two months after the end of the 3-day mission.

Further information on Payment modalities can be found in Section 7.2 of this document.

4.1. ELIGIBLE COSTS

A financial support of **2.000,00 EUR** will be provided to 15 selected SMEs. Reimbursement is assured only for SMEs and start-ups attending the entire mission program. Please check sections **THE PRELIMINARY PROGRAM** and **ACTIVITIES ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING** for the detailed program of the Mission, to plan all travel arrangements accordingly.

The financial support provided by this call is meant to be covering part or all of the costs for travel expenses, meaning **flight, accommodation, and subsistence (meals, transfers, ...)** costs of **1 person** participating in the Mission. Direct costs related to the mission, such as transfers and meals, are not included. Light catering services during the workshops are included.



5. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

5.1. APPLICATION FORM

The submission of applications to the [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA](#) must be done exclusively through the EU Survey platform at the following link:

https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/AIBC_International_Mission_2024

Moreover, the following documents must be uploaded to access the evaluation step:

- CV of the person participating to the Mission (in pdf).

Please, be sure of having it ready to be uploaded when filling and submitting the online application.

Furthermore, a document outlining the information requested in the application form is also available, to allow participants to prepare their application before introducing the information in the online form. It is intended as a supporting document to help participants develop their application offline, but it will not be eligible as such. It is available for download here:

https://piemonteinnova.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/AIBC-Mission-Austin-Application-Form_def.docx

Only the application form filled in and submitted online will be considered eligible.

We warmly suggest you download a copy of the submitted application form, as it will support the project development in case you are selected and might be useful in case of complaints.

Gender Equity, Diversity and Social Inclusion

The AIBC EUROCLUSTERS project seeks gender balance, diversity protection and social inclusion. Therefore, applicants to [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALLS](#) are invited to take all measures to promote equal opportunities within their staff in the implementation of the action as well as address diversity.

Please include information on how you plan to address these aspects directly in your application.

5.2. NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS

Only one application per SME will be evaluated (and possibly selected for funding). In the case of multiple submissions by the same applicant, only the last one received (as per timestamp of the IT system) will enter the evaluation process, the rest will not be considered, meaning, they will be declared non-eligible.

If the submitted application is declared non-eligible or fails to reach the thresholds needed to proceed to the evaluation, the applications that were submitted earlier by the same applicant will not be considered for evaluation either.



5.3. DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

This [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA](#) has one deadline: 16 May 2024 at 17:00 CET.

The AIBC Consortium reserves the right to extend the deadline in case the minimum number of applicants is not reached.

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted. After the call closure, no additions or changes to received proposals will be considered.

Further details about timeline and deadlines are available in the following section.

6. EVALUATION PROCESS

6.1. PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE

The [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA](#) will be open for submission until 16th May 2024.

Only applications drafted in English and submitted via the link provided in Section APPLICATION FORM will be considered eligible.

The following table shows all the main dates for the open call management.

Table 2 - Main dates for this AIBC Open Call

Open Call	Date
Publishing date	Friday, March 15 th , 2024
Deadline for submission	Thursday, May 16 th , 2024 17:00 CET (Brussels time)
Evaluation period	~2 weeks from closing date
Information to applicants	End of May 2024
Acknowledgement of the selection outcome and acceptance of funding agreement terms and conditions (successful applicants) via email to aibc@bwcon.de	Within 3 working days of receiving communication Beginning June 2024
Preparation and signature of the Agreement (deadline)	Beginning of June 2024



Preparation workshop (mandatory)	Online meeting end of June 2024 (exact date will be communicated once finalised)
Mission to Austin, TX, USA	From Monday, July 15 th until Wednesday, July 17 th with an optional welcome meeting on Sunday, July 14 th afternoon
Payment of the lump-sum	~60 days after attendance to the Mission to USA.

Questions can be asked via email to aibc@bwcon.de from the day the call is published until 5 days before the submission deadline.

6.2. SELECTION AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

Companies that want to participate must fill in an online form (available [here](#)) that will allow the profiling and mapping of the company and its solution to have a better knowledge and understanding of its offering, competences, and experiences in terms of internationalisation and AI/BC perspectives.

Companies applying to [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA](#) will be ranked according to the evaluation criteria shown in the table below.

Only full points will be awarded, no half points.

Table 3 - Evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria	Points
SECTION 1 – Company profile	30
<p>Please describe the company profile. Is your company a:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> SME/start-up that has implemented a little of AI and BC in their business to enrich their products (adopt) SME/start-up developing/offering AI or Blockchain solutions (offer) <p>Define the specific scope of the mission in terms of company profile: robotics, etc.</p>	10
<p>How does your company contribute to a greener European economy? As examples, does your company incorporates some of the following strategies?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business models for regenerative operations Digital business models Circular economy 	10
Where do you see you company within the next 5 years	5



Name your clients/customer profiling / Competitors' knowledge	5
SECTION 2 – AI / Blockchain vision, competences, and experience (technology)	35
Please describe how and where AI and/or BC technology potentially strengthens the competitiveness of your company.	20
How many people within your company are familiar with AI and /or BC technologies so far. Please provide at least 1 and up to 3 competence profile/short bio/ LinkedIn.	10
Please provide the profile of the person who will participate in the mission, describing the role in the company and the competences related to AI/Blockchain/Data.	5
SECTION 3 – Objectives and goals to participate to this mission (future business)	35
Describe the goals of your company and the aim for participating to this mission	15
Describe, how this mission could contribute to the further development of your company: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How would AI and/or BC change your value generation system (business model)? • Which kind of prototype, new/improved solutions could you think of in the future? • In which ways do you aim to integrate AI and/or BC in order to boost a green and digital European economy? 	20
TOTAL SCORE	100

The best 15 candidates will be selected to be supported. A minimum score of 60 points is required to be admitted to the International Mission. Furthermore, a minimum of 10% of the total available funding is reserved for participants outside the countries of the Consortium members, namely Italy, Spain, Germany, Bulgaria and Poland to ensure a balanced representation of non-Consortium-member-countries. In case the ranking according to the scores does not satisfy this requirement, the AIBC Consortium reserves the right to skip ranking order, prioritising the country where company comes from.

The evaluation phase (see Figure 1) will start after the deadline with an eligibility check of the Application Form that will take maximum 3 working days. The eligibility check will be carried out by the project coordinator and/or bwcon research (partner in charge of the management of the present call). The applicants will receive an e-mail about the outcome of the eligibility check after it is finalised.

The applications of eligible SMEs, following the admissibility and eligibility checks, will be evaluated by an Evaluation Panel, consisting of 2 representatives of the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS project consortium not belonging to the country of the applicant. The Evaluation Panel will take into consideration the defined criteria and will take up to 7 working days from the communication of the eligibility. All applicants will be informed of the final results of the evaluation procedure within ~10 working days after the call deadline.



Prioritisation in case of equal scores

In case some applicants score equal points, the prioritisation will be carried out as follow:

- 1st criterion: Applications ranked based on the less represented countries, to assure a balanced participation from companies coming from different EU Member States and SMP Associated countries.
- 2nd criterion: Applications ranked based on the scores obtained in section 3 of the evaluation criteria (higher to lower).
- 3rd criterion: Applications ranked based on the scores obtained in section 2 of the evaluation criteria (higher to lower).

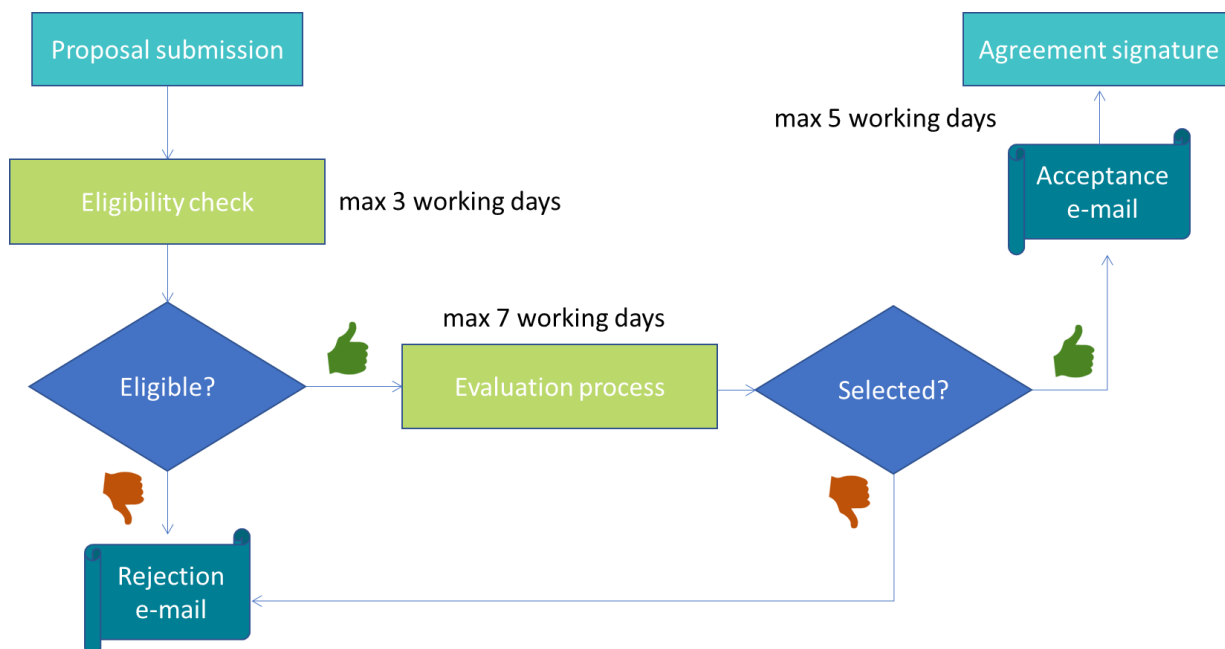


Figure 1 Evaluation process for the Participating in the International Mission call

6.3. ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

If, after receiving the results of the evaluation, you consider that a mistake has been made, you can send your complaint in English by email to aibc@bwcon.de including at least the following information:

- contact details (including email address).
- the subject of the complaint.
- explanation and evidence regarding the complaint.
- Copy of the submitted application form.



Companies will have five calendar days to submit their complaint starting from the day after the communication of the results was sent. The AIBC Consortium will review the complaint within no more than seven calendar days from its reception. If we need more time to assess the complaint, we will inform the company by email about the need for an extension.

We will not consider nor review anonymous complaints, nor complaints with incomplete information.

6.4. CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION TO THE MISSION

Each selected company must confirm its commitment to the Mission by sending via email to aibc@bwcon.de its flight itinerary (flight number, arrival, and departure dates) by June 14th, 2024, assuring its participation to the planned activities.

A contract will be signed between bwcon research (AIBC partner) and each selected company, stating all the requirements and conditions linked to the participation to the mission and the payment of the lump-sum.

6.5. CONTACT POINT

For any information, please send an email to aibc@bwcon.de specifying the topic of the request and the question/doubt/information needed.

Information about the project, its objectives and activities can be found on the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS webpage <https://clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/euroclusters/aibc-euroclusters>.

7. AGREEMENT

7.1. PREPARATION AND SIGNATURE OF THE AGREEMENT

Once the beneficiaries have been selected, they will receive the agreement proposed by the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS defining the total lump sum to be received and the timeline for reporting and payments.

The agreement will also contain all the relevant information related to the company, and about AIBC EUROCLUSTERS' coordinator. It will also include principles and obligations² to be fulfilled by the beneficiaries SMEs, related to:

- **Conflict of interests:** The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity,

² Following the requirements of the Grant Agreement (Art. 9.4) signed by the AIBC Consortium related to providing financial support to third parties (FSTP).



economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest ('conflict of interests'). They must formally notify the AIBC Consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The AIBC Consortium may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

- **Confidentiality and security - Sensitive information:** The beneficiary SME must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as sensitive in writing ('sensitive information') – during the implementation of the action and for at least until the time-limit set out in the [Privacy policy](#). Unless otherwise agreed between the parties signing the agreement, they may use sensitive information only to implement the Agreement. The beneficiaries may disclose sensitive information to their personnel or other participants involved in the action only if they: (a) need to know it in order to implement the Agreement and (b) are bound by an obligation of confidentiality. The AIBC Consortium may disclose sensitive information to its staff and to other EU institutions and bodies. It may moreover disclose sensitive information to third parties, if: (a) this is necessary to implement the Agreement or safeguard the EU financial interests and (b) the recipients of the information are bound by an obligation of confidentiality. The confidentiality obligations no longer apply if: (a) the disclosing party agrees to release the other party (b) the information becomes publicly available, without breaching any confidentiality obligation (c) the disclosure of the sensitive information is required by EU, international or national law. Specific confidentiality rules (if any) will be set out in the agreement.
- **Classified information:** The parties must handle classified information in accordance with the applicable EU, international or national law on classified information (in particular, Decision 2015/44417 and its implementing rules). Deliverables which contain classified information must be submitted according to special procedures agreed with the granting authority. Action tasks involving classified information may be subcontracted only after explicit approval (in writing) from the granting authority. Classified information may not be disclosed to any third party (including participants involved in the action implementation) without prior explicit written approval from the granting authority. Specific security rules (if any) will be set out in the agreement.
- **Ethics:** the activities must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles. Specific ethics rules (if any) will be set out in the agreement.
- **Values:** the beneficiary must commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities). Specific rules on values (if any) will be set out in the agreement.
- **Visibility of the EU emblem:** conditions and requirements will be included in the agreement following what stated in COMMUNICATION OBLIGATIONS.
- **Specific rules** for carrying out the action, settled in the agreement.
- **Keeping records and supporting documents:** the beneficiaries must – at least until the time-limit set out by the AIBC Consortium in the Agreement (5 years after the end of AIBC project, i.e.: 31/12/2024) – keep records and other supporting documents to prove the proper implementation of the action (meaning, the participation to the event). In addition, the beneficiaries must – for the same period – keep the following to justify



the amounts declared: adequate records and supporting documents to prove proper implementation and fulfilment of the conditions as described in the agreement.

- **Consequences of non-compliance:** If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under the agreement, the lump-sum may be reduced or terminated.

A template of the agreement will be made available at least one month before the calls deadline at the following link: <https://piemonteinnova.it/bandi/aibc-international-mission-austin/?lang=en>

The beneficiaries must complete the agreement with the required information and the SME's legal representative must sign it. The agreement must be signed using a certified electronic signature (encrypted digital signatures, such as those produced using e-signature software) and sent via email to aibc@bwcon.de within 5 working days after its reception. It will then be counter-signed by bwcon research, and a fully signed copy will be sent back via email to the company.

In case the company prefers to sign the contract by hand, this must be notified to Piemonte Innova when the communication of selection is received, thus before receiving the agreement. In this case, the signed Agreement must be sent by post.

In all cases mentioned above, a signature indicates acceptance of the agreement and all its terms.

7.2. PAYMENT

The lump sum, as set in the agreement will be paid after the company has participated in the Mission to USA (complete program).

The payment will be carried out by bwcon research, partner of AIBC EUROCLUSTERS within 60 days (2 months) after receiving the reporting documents. These reporting documents consist of: a report related to the participation to the mission and how it contributed to the SME beneficiary in terms of innovation, training and internationalisation, it will also include a feedback about the organisation and content of the Mission., as well as the documentation (namely attendance sheets provided by bwcon research) proving that the representing party of the company participated in the whole three-day mission. AIBC Consortium will provide a template for the report, which must be submitted within 2 weeks after the end of the Mission.

7.3. COMMUNICATION OBLIGATIONS

For dissemination of the activities funded by AIBC, the recipients must credit the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS project through proper citation and appearance of the AIBC logo, the EUROCLUSTERS logo and the EU emblem, with the disclaimer "This activity has received funding from the AIBC EUROCLUSTERS project that is co-funded by the European Union".

The AIBC project will provide a communication package to all beneficiaries and this information will be also included in the agreement.



8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND GDPR DATA PROTECTION

By submitting the application, the company consents that the content of the application form will be shared with AIBC EUROCLUSTERS partners. The privacy policy is available [here](#) as well as linked in the application form.

AIBC EUROCLUSTERS consortium has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the activities, materials and documents received from the beneficiaries for policy, information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes – during the project implementation and afterwards. All this information will be included in the sub-grant agreement that will be signed by the beneficiary and a partner of AIBC EUROCLUSTERS.

9. ANNEX: SME checklist

In order to submit a complete application to [AIBC EUROCLUSTERS OPEN CALL FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE INTERNATIONAL MISSION TO AUSTIN, TX, USA](#), SMEs must present the following documentation:

1. CV of the person participating to the mission.

A document of the application form is available as a support document to help participants to organise and develop the application to be presented to this call.

All the call related information is also available here: <https://piemonteinnova.it/bandi/aibc-international-mission-austin/?lang=en>

All documents can be downloaded at this link: https://piemonteinnova.it/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/AIBC-Mission-Austin-Application-Form_def.docx