1. **GRO/SME/20/B/07- TRAINING FOR SME-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN CENTRAL PURCHASING BODIES**

***Type of applicants targeted***

Consortium including an established Central Purchasing Body operating at national level and a university to build programmes to have personnel better trained on Public Procurement within Central Purchasing Bodies (CPBs).

***Description of the activities***

***Total amount of the action:*** EUR 500,000

***Rate of co-financing:*** 90%

***Description of activities:***

Public buyers have a major role to play to ensure access of SMEs to public procurement and to help SMEs grow their business. Central Purchasing Bodies (CPBs) are among the largest buyers at national level since they launch and manage large calls used by all relevant public authorities to procure certain goods or services. By aggregating demand, CPBs may reduce SMEs access to PP markets and therefore it is essential that CPBs buying practices allow for SMEs access to public procurement markets.

The objective of the activities is to contribute to the professionalization of staff working for large public buyers (called central purchasing bodies, CPBs) covering in particular SMEs' access to public procurement (PP) markets and increase their knowledge of public procurement.

After 2 training sessions – a very successful pilot followed by a new call for proposals, respectively funded under the COSME work programme for 2017 (GRO/SME/17/B/06) and 2019 - a third call for proposals would be launched to increase the impact of the action. Public buyers from participating countries could also participate in the action.

The action aims at ensuring participation in a specialised university programme on public procurement to have personnel better trained on Public Procurement within CPBs.

The action foresees funding for one or two universities and an established CPB operating at national level, possibly located in a city well connected with countries that have systemic problems in public procurement.

Funding to the beneficiary of the grant will cover tuition fees for the training programme, travelling cost, and accommodation. The beneficiary will take care of managing travelling and accommodation of participants, and will organise a conference at the end of the course, where the cohort would meet with best practitioners in public procurement.

The content of the action should include public procurement law and practical tendering processes, as well as strategic procurement and supply chain management, to ensure CPBs can benefit from private sector procurement efficiencies while maintaining compliance within public procurement legislation and guidelines. Strategic Procurement also allows for policy areas, such as assisting SMEs with access to public procurement markets, as well as Green and Social procurement.

Target participants of the programme would be, in particular, staff from newly established CPBs. Where CPBs do not exist, or there are no candidates from these bodies, staff working in policy and regulatory bodies relevant for public procurement would be eligible.

***Expected results of the action:***

The expected results of the programme will include:

Approximately 35 staff from across Member States (or participating countries) to have completed the programme and increased their knowledge and understanding of procurement.

The establishment of a pan-European network of highly skilled public procurement officials that have taken part in the programme.

The development of knowledge-sharing initiatives in their own Member State (or participating country) to further professionalise CPB personnel.

***Implementation***

Implemented by EASME.

***Additional information***

***Specific objective:***

Ease access of SMEs to procurement market.

Create a business-friendly environment by reducing the administrative burden on SMEs (improving conditions for businesses).

In particular, this proposal contributes in the following way:

- It is a training programme that seeks to enhance the professionalisation of CPB personnel will provide detail on how to access and aggregate markets for public procurement;

- It is a professionalisation programme will also help personnel to manage markets, and in particular to assist with the inclusion of SMEs in public procurement competitions;

- The centralisation of public procurement functions may affect the broader market, at a local, regional and European level. Training of personnel to understand and manage is imperative.

***Indicative implementation timetable:***

Launch of the call: Q2 – 2020.

Award: Q3 – 2020.

Signature of the agreement: Q4 – 2020.

Duration: 14 months.

***Qualitative and quantitative indicators for the actions:***

- Number participants in the training courses, per country, per year.

- Number of Priority Countries included in the training course.

- Number of knowledge sharing initiatives developed at CPB level by beneficiaries.

- Satisfaction Level of the participants, survey.

- Knowledge of public procurement increase in participants.