

# ST&ER

Scaling **T**win **T**ransition in **T**ourism by harnessing the  
**E**xperience **E**conomy for greater **R**esilience



Deliverable 3.1:

**Open Call for Expressions of Interest for  
the establishment of a pool of mentors to  
provide services to SMEs under the  
ST&ER project**

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## Disclaimer

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## 1. Background Information on the ST3ER Project

ST3ER ([www.st3er.eu](http://www.st3er.eu)) is 3-year project (September 2023–August 2026) with an overall budget of €3.1m and is co-funded by the European Union to enhance the competitiveness and resilience of tourism SMEs.

The main objectives of the ST3ER project are to facilitate tourism SMEs green and digital transition, build capacity in tourism SMEs, support SME development/scaling up, foster innovative solutions for sustainable tourism (new business models, innovative services, heightened resilience) and promote best practice exchanges, knowledge sharing and transfer.

Overall, a total of **1.960.000€** in grants will be provided directly to **72 innovative projects** which will be implemented by tourism SMEs.

To achieve this, the project brings together six partners in five different countries, Ireland, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain, and Denmark.

1. Údarás na Gaeltachta, Ireland (Co-ordinator)
2. WestBIC, Ireland
3. UPTEC – Associação de Transferência de Tecnologia da Asprela, Portugal
4. Fundacion Bahia de Cadiz para el Desarrollo Economico, Spain
5. Razvojni center Srca Slovenije, d.o.o., Slovenia
6. Fonden Creative Business CUP, Denmark

The target SMEs in the project will have to demonstrate an association with the following NACE codes:

- I - Accommodation and Food Service Activities,
- R-Arts, Entertainment and Recreation,
- J- Information and Communication, and
- S-Other Service Activities.

The target SMEs will benefit extensively from the advanced business support models developed to fast-track their innovation projects, develop best practice,



new systems, structures, and tools, as well as data-driven and carbon reducing challenge-based innovation methods, case studies, role models, cross-sectoral and intra-territorial learning which will create an excess of 300 new linkages.

Mentors are required to provide mentoring support to the selected SMEs in the implementation of their innovative digital or green transition projects as described below.

## 2. Call for Mentors / Experts within the overall ST3ER Project

Are you an experienced mid-career/senior entrepreneur, investor, innovator or professional motivated to contribute to the significant role of scaling the twin transition (green and digital) in tourism? Then we want you as a mentor in the ST3ER project!

The ST3ER Project is launching a fully-fledged impactful tourism-oriented programme for SMEs to boost resilient and sustainable tourism businesses, capable of growing and developing coordinated responses to support the achievement of European goals.

To boost the tourism-oriented SMEs at the nexus of the experience economy, targeting elements of culture, heritage and creativity\* within the digital and sustainability context, ST3ER will provide mentoring, access to finance, training, business support resources, as well as new connections and co-creation opportunities with other relevant stakeholders.

Each SME enrolled in the programme will be provided with financial support to implement a proposed innovative project plan. In brief, SMEs will be selected through two Open Calls:

- Open Call # 1 (Anticipated for February 2024, closing June 2024)
  - Individual SME Innovation Projects with a support of a €25000 grant/each - Specifically aimed at tourism-oriented SMEs at the nexus of the experience economy, targeting elements of culture, heritage and



creativity within the digital and sustainability context focusing on thematic twin transition challenges;

- Collaborative Innovation Projects involving 2 SMEs with the support of a €30,000 grant / project - Specifically aimed at tourism-oriented SMEs at the nexus of the experience economy, targeting experimental (innovative) carbon footprint reduction measures.
- Open Call #2 (Anticipated for February 2025, closing May 2025)
  - This call will focus on scaling propositions. The focus will be on SMEs/start-ups driven by small teams, not individual founders. Intense support will be provided over 6 months, comprising programmed events and intensive mentoring, with a support of a €30,000 grant / project. The specialism of the accelerator will be focusing on digitalised and data-driven solutions for smart, secure and sustainable tourism.

Each SME selected for support by the ST3ER project will be mentored. All SMEs will be obliged to complete a mentoring programme lasting at least 30 hours, giving them access to one-on-one advice in relevant topics identified as part of their innovative project plan submissions with respect to their green or digital transition. This 30-hour mentoring programme will be coordinated by the ST3ER consortium partners. In some cases, more than one mentor may be assigned to an SME within the confines of the budget allocated, depending on the specific supports they require.

Please be aware that the cost for mentoring services quoted by prospective mentors will be shared with all the successful SMEs to facilitate their search for appropriate mentoring support. The hourly rate quoted will need to adhere to the range quoted for the country in which the mentor is located. This price range is presented in Annex 2. Higher hourly rates than those presented in Annex 2 can be accepted, however, they must be justified. The ST3ER consortium reserves the right to reject hourly rates if such are not in line with industry norms.

To this end, the ST3ER project welcomes motivated and experienced mid-career and senior entrepreneurs, investors, innovators, and professionals with competencies in the digital or green sectors to apply for admission to join the pool of mentors.



The mentor and the tourism SME beneficiary will sign a “Mentoring Agreement” detailing the task that will be carried out and the desired outcomes, the value of the contract, the duration of the service provision and payment conditions.

For mentors working with selected SMES in Call 1, the 30 hours of mentoring will be distributed over 12 months and shall include at least 1 one-to-one session per month.

For mentors working with selected SMES in Call 2, the 30 hours of mentoring will be distributed over 6 months and shall include at least 2 one-to-one sessions per month and at the agreed quotation price per working hour, including VAT if applicable.

A session of mentoring is defined as time for face-to-face mentoring plus the time needed for the mentor to prepare and/or report. A session will be up to one hour and a half face-to-face time, and the corresponding preparation and reporting time should not exceed one hour. All sessions need to respect this ratio, and other details agreed by the SME and mentor as defined in the Mentoring Agreement.

Within the number of mentoring hours, the agreement covers the time devoted for reporting purposes to the ST3ER partners namely, preparation of the inception and final feedback forms, and participation in the mid-term and final interviews.

In the event of more than one mentor being assigned to an SME, the total amount of mentoring under this programme will not exceed 30 hours. A pro-rata distribution of the budget available, based on the number of hours agreed with each mentor, should be applied.

\*Creative industries are defined here as: knowledge-based creative activities that link producers, consumers, and places by utilizing technology, talent, or skill to generate meaningful intangible cultural products, creative content and experiences. They comprise many different sectors, including advertising, animation, architecture, design, film, gaming, gastronomy, music, performing arts, software and interactive games, and television and radio.



### 3. Application Procedure and Admission Requirements for Mentors/Experts

The following application procedure applies to this call:

- Applications will be accepted from prospective mentors on a rolling basis until 15<sup>th</sup> June 2024, at this [form](#). An extension of the period may take place, in the event of the required number of mentors and/or the required profiles not being achieved with any such extension being publicly promoted.
- Applications must be submitted online exclusively. Applications submitted by any other means (via e-mail or other) will not be considered. (The structure and content of the application form is available at Annex 1 for information purposes only).
- Applications should be completed and submitted in English.
- Once an application is received, an automatic email will be sent to confirm that the application was received.

The mentors / experts expressing their interest must comply with the following minimum requirements to be admitted to the pool:

- Application (all fields) must be fully completed.
- Have appropriate working knowledge of English (minimum B1).
- Have a minimum of 3 years' experience in any of the target areas of the Project supporting SMEs in their digital or green transformation, and should include a minimum of one of the following:

Digital practices:

- Artificial Intelligence,
- Internet of Things,
- Augmented and Virtual Reality,
- Cloud Computing,
- Blockchain,
- Other digital practices related to tourism.





### Green practices:

- Developing a Biodiversity action plan,
  - Carbon Foot printing and carbon reduction,
  - Circular Economy thinking and transition to circular economy business models/ Waste prevention/recycling,
  - Climate Adaptation,
  - Environmental Management System,
  - Green Procurement,
  - Life Cycle Assessment,
  - Sustainability Benchmarking,
  - Sustainable Logistics,
  - Sustainable Packaging,
  - Sustainable strategy including Renewable technology/Energy efficiencies strategy,
  - Other green practices related to tourism.
- 
- Agree with the processing of their personal data according to ST3ER privacy policy;
  - Agree to share their personal data with the SMEs;
  - Agree to the sharing of the hourly rate quoted for mentoring services with all successful SMEs;
  - Agree to comply with the reporting requirements of the ST3ER project and this mentoring programme;
  - Be a resident (or a registered service provider in case of an established company represented by 1 staff member) in one of the countries participating in the COSME strand of the SMP<sup>1</sup>.

If mentors comply with the requirements for admission/eligibility, they will receive an acceptance email within a month of application.

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<sup>1</sup> Check the eligible participants in the [Call document](#), page 18.



If mentors do not comply with the requirements/eligibility, they will receive a rejection email within a month of application.

Beyond these basic criteria, the following preference criteria will be considered advantageously:

- Professional background in tourism;
- Previous experience working as a mentor supporting tourism SMEs in their digital or green transition;
- Knowledge of other languages of the project regions (Spanish, Irish, Danish, Slovenian, Portuguese);

Mentors (individuals or registered service providers) are excluded from participation if:

- They are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement of a competent party of a Member State which has the force of *res judicata*;
- They have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting party can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
- They are not in compliance with their obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting party or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- They or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over them have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of *res*



*judicata* for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, money laundering or any other illegal activity, where such an illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;

- They are subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the information required by the contracting party as a condition of participation in a procurement procedure or failing to supply information, or being declared to be in serious breach of their obligation under a contract covered by the budget;
- They have a conflict of interest in connection with a possible contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest;

#### Post admission procedure

- The mentors selected to the pool will be required to become a member of the ST3ER online community (My Creative Networks) and set up a personal profile. For companies, one representative of the company needs to set up a profile.
- The mentors selected to the pool agree to have their name, expertise and LinkedIn profile published on the ST3ER website<sup>2</sup>.
- The pool of mentors' profiles will be shared with the SMEs selected for innovation projects and the consortium partners may support and advise on the matching process, although the mentor selection shall be performed by the SMEs.
- There is no commitment from the ST3ER project to any mentor admitted to the pool of a positive matching with approved SMEs.
- The selected mentors by each approved SMEs will be directly contacted by the SMEs to arrange an agreement and start the mentorship.
- The location of the mentoring must be agreed between SMEs and mentors.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.st3er.eu/>



- A Mentoring Agreement must be signed between SMEs and mentors including the number of hours agreed, including the scope of the work, number of hours and the hourly rate agreed.
- The selected mentors shall agree to invoice the respective SME(s) in a timely manner, and in the case of final invoices, no later than 2 weeks.

#### 4. Timetable and contact data

The following timetable provides mentors with a timeline for mentors of the different stages for the mentoring process.

OPEN CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A POOL OF MENTORS TO PROVIDE SERVICES TO SMES UNDER THE ST3ER PROJECT	
APPLICATION FORM	<a href="#">Link</a> , hosted at a landing page
PHASES	DATES
DISSEMINATION AND OPENING OF THE CALL FOR THE MENTOR PANEL	February 15th 2024
DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS	June 15th 2024
COMMUNICATION REGARDING ADMISSION OR EXCLUSION TO THE MENTOR PANEL	Within a month of submission
LAUNCH OF THE MENTORING PROCESS WITH SMES	Call 1: Up to 1 month after the SMEs approval, that should take place in Spring 2024 and Call 2: Up to 1 month after the SMEs approval, that should take place in Spring 2025
END OF THE MENTORING PROCESS WITH SMES	Call 1: up to 12 months after mentoring kick-off (as agreed individually with the SMEs)



and

Call 2: up to 6 months after mentoring kick-off (as agreed individually with the SMEs)

Below are the contacts from each member of the consortium that can be contacted regarding any queries in relation to the mentoring process.

**List of local monitoring ST3ER partner:**

1. Ireland, Údaras na Gaeltachta  
Caitlín Breathnach, [c.breathnach@udaras.ie](mailto:c.breathnach@udaras.ie)
2. Ireland, WestBIC  
Eunan Cunningham, [ecunningham@westbic.ie](mailto:ecunningham@westbic.ie)
3. Portugal, UPTEC – Associação de Transferência de Tecnologia da Asprela  
Rita Reis, [rreis@uptec.up.pt](mailto:rreis@uptec.up.pt)
4. Spain, Fundacion Bahia de Cadiz para el Desarrollo Economico  
Ana Suárez Lena, [asuarez@ceeicadiz.com](mailto:asuarez@ceeicadiz.com)
5. Slovenia, Razvojni center Srca Slovenije, d.o.o.  
Mojca Štepic, [mojca.stepic@razvoj.si](mailto:mojca.stepic@razvoj.si)
6. Denmark, Fonden Creative Business Cup (CBN)  
Catarina Reis, [car@cbnet.com](mailto:car@cbnet.com)



## Annex 1

### Online Application Form

1. Personal data
  - Name
  - Surname
  - City of residence
  - Country of residence
  - Nationality
  - Phone number
  - Email
  - LinkedIn profile

2. Education and expertise

Educational background (*select all relevant fields*):

- Business Administration & Management
- Education
- Engineering
- Environmental Sciences/Sustainability
- Information Technology
- Law
- MINT (Management in Innovation and New Technology)
- Medicine & Healthcare
- Media & Communications
- Sales & Marketing
- Social Sciences
- Other (please specify)

Professional Background (*select all relevant fields*):

- Academia & Teaching
- Coaching
- Consultancy
- Corporate
- Data Analytics
- Engineering
- Environmental Sciences/Sustainability
- Government
- Human Resources
- Industrial Research
- Investment Banking
- Project Management



- Marketing & PR
- Non-Governmental Organisation
- Sales
- Software Engineering
- Start-up (Employee)
- Start-up (Founder)
- Tourism
- Venture Capital
- Other (please specify)

3. Current function / position / organisation (*open field*)

I confirm that I have a minimum of 3 years' experience as a mentor/expert in the target area(s) of the project supporting SMEs in their digital or green transformation:

Please give details including links, if available, to relevant past experience and programmes.

4. Please upload your CV (*pdf file, max 2 pages*)

5. Motivation and Expectations

Briefly describe how you can support the selected SMEs in the context of their digital or green transition.

*(open field, max. 1000 characters)*

6. In addition to English (mandatory), I can mentor in the following languages (*more than one answer is possible*):

- Danish
- Irish
- Portuguese
- Slovenian
- Spanish
- Other (please specify)

7. I am available for the following mentoring formats (*more than one answer is possible*):

- Distance mentoring
- In person mentoring

8. Provide your hourly rate, following the ranges listed in Annex 2, for providing mentoring services (indicating VAT where applicable).

*(open field)*



9. In case you are applying as a *freelancer*, please provide proof of residence for the country you are located. If you are applying with an affiliation to a company, please provide a proof of establishment of the company stating the headquarters' country.

(pdf file)

I agree (*check boxes - mandatory*):

- By participating in this programme, I agree to the conditions specified in the present call.
- To the processing of my personal data provided as part of this registration. This data will be accessible to all the ST3ER consortium and all SMEs benefiting from the ST3ER financial supports. The ST3ER beneficiaries will process personal data under the Grant Agreement (Article 15 Data Protection) in compliance with the applicable EU, international and national law concerning data protection (in particular, Regulation 2016/67919). Additional information on the processing of your personal data can be obtained by contacting [foh@udaras.ie](mailto:foh@udaras.ie) Fionnán Ó hÓgáin, Údarás na Gaeltachta, representative of the ST3ER Co-ordinator.
- To enter a Mentoring Agreement with SMEs, if selected, prior to the commencement of any mentoring.
- To invoice SMEs for the agreed amount, VAT included, if applicable.
- I have the right to withdraw my consent regarding the sharing of my data as outlined above at any time during the recruitment process, without any reason. Once I have entered into an agreement with an SME, I understand that terminating that agreement will be in line with its relevant terms as agreed between the two parties. I am aware that, in the event of me withdrawing such consent, I will no longer remain in the mentoring pool.





## Annex 2

### Hourly rate ranges per categories of countries

The hourly rate ranges below reflect industry norms for mentoring services in the category countries. The countries are categorised according to the European Innovation Scoreboard 2023<sup>3</sup>.

Category	Countries	Hourly Rate Range in EUR
A	Denmark	85 - 100
	Sweden	
	Finland	
	Netherlands	
	Belgium	
B	Austria	75 - 90
	Germany	
	Luxembourg	
	Ireland	
	Cyprus	
	France	
C	Estonia	65 - 80
	Slovenia	
	Czechia	
	Italy	
	Spain	
	Malta	
	Portugal	
	Lithuania	
	Greece	
	Hungary	
	D	
Slovakia		
Poland		
Latvia		
Bulgaria		
Romania		

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<sup>3</sup> Available at [this link](#).



**STÆER**

Partners:

**UPTEC** SCIENCE AND  
TECHNOLOGY PARK  
OF UNIVERSITY  
OF PORTO



**Údarás na  
Gaeltachta**



**RAZVOJNI CENTER  
SRCA SLOVENIJE**

DEVELOPMENT CENTRE  
OF THE HEART OF SLOVENIA



*Centro Europeo de  
Empresas e Innovación*

**WestBIC**



**Creative  
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