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of the European Union



TracE-kEI

TRACE-KEI Project - GA: 731126

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# **Call for Expert Recruitment for Clusters Twinning Programme launched by the EU COSME Project TRACE-KEI**

*This call for expert recruitment is part of the project TRACE-KEI which has received funding from the European Union, EASME, COSME Programme, Call COS-CLUSTER-2015-3-02, under GA 731126.*



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### 1. Background and context

TRANS-national Collaboration Empowering Key European Industries - TRACE-KEI project fits into the EU action for the improvement of cluster management as a mean to strengthen EU SMEs and increase their competitiveness.

Besides that, TRACE-KEI project aims at engaging EU policy-makers in the efforts to define cluster development strategies and to match regional policies with cluster development needs. TRACE-KEI project is a cluster programme to strengthen management and improve the quality of dedicated services for SMEs among cluster managements in the Agro-Food, ICT and Energy sectors.

In order to achieve the overarching objective of the call TRACE-KEI project gathers 7 clusters from 7 COSME (6 EU and 1 non-EU) participating countries (Italy, Hungary, Germany, Portugal, Bulgaria, Romania and Serbia) working together.

TRACE-KEI aims at strengthening the cluster management, in terms of market foresight, strategy definition, and improve the quality of services offered to their associate SMEs firstly in the partner clusters and as a cascade effects in the clusters' territories and countries. The project's aim is to create a spill over effect among clusters and among the involved regions. A more intense cross-sectorial and cross-borders cooperation is one of TRACE-KEI main objectives in order to overcome the economic crisis and to increase the EU enterprises' competitiveness.

TRACE-KEI project's approach is bottom-up and will work at two levels:

- From one side, the cluster managers' needs will be identified and the knowledge gaps bridged through training and mentoring
- From the other side, the needs of enterprises will be evaluated and actions to address these weaknesses will be performed (tailored services set-up, strategy definition, etc.)

TRACE-KEI will be the place where exchanging expertise on management skills in order to increase the global performances of all partner clusters and improve the competitiveness of EU SMEs.

### 2. Objective and scope of the assignment

DISTRETTO AGROALIMENTARE REGIONALE SCRL (D.A.Re.) is the coordinator of TRACE-KEI project and is responsible for the specific task "*Cluster twinning programme*". Cluster twinning programme has been proven to be really effective in improving cluster management performances. The idea is that by putting together *rooky* and *expert* clusters the learning process is faster.

The objective of this call is selecting and recruiting an expert cluster manager that will mentor and support the TRACE-KEI cluster managers in order to enhance their management skills and therefore being able to provide better SMEs support services and clearly define a cluster strategy.

In accordance with the TRACE-KEI project Grant Agreement, the subcontractor will be asked to perform the activity as follows:

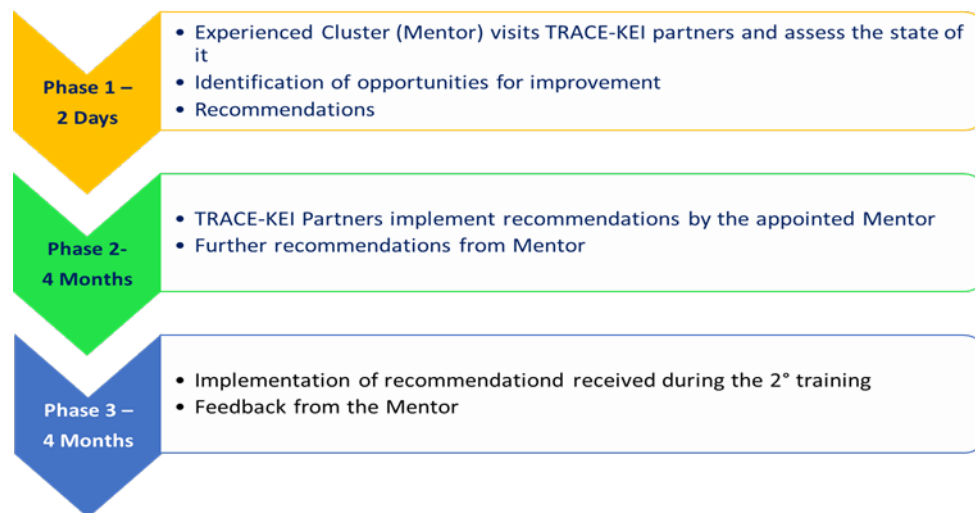
1. Experienced cluster manager visits TRACE-KEI clusters for 2 days and assesses the state of the cluster by that time. Some tailored recommendations will be delivered. The first phase will be completed within 1 month (October – November);
2. Every Cluster implements the improvement recommendations (4 months). Results of the implementation will be analysed in the joint training event that will be performed in Hungary during February 2018. Further recommendations will be delivered and will be implemented in the following 4 months.
3. During the meeting in Hungary, the selected mentor is expected to deliver a specific workshop (about 4 hours) on one of the most important opportunities for a European cluster



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dealing with “Cluster Internationalisation”.

4. From March to July 2018, the TRACE-KEI partner will keep on implementing the improvement recommendations. In July 2018, any partner will provide the mentor with a final report on the recommended activities and improvements. Finally, the mentor will evaluate the individual reports and provide partners with final feedbacks.



The expert mentoring will take advantage from project documentations such as the services delivered, the level of satisfaction of clusters' associates and the strategy draft that will be the starting point of the overall activity.

### 3. Duties and responsibilities of the expert

The selected expert will be responsible for mentoring the seven clusters involved in the TRACE-KEI project as described in the previous paragraph. This means that the expert will assess every partner clusters and provide ad-hoc recommendations with the final aim to improve their management capacities. Moreover, the expert will be asked to organize a workshop (at about 4 hours) specifically addressed to cluster internationalization.

The aforementioned set of activities entails the following duties:

1. To schedule a two days visit in each cluster with the support of the Task leader (DARe)
2. To provide the cluster manager with materials and templates that clusters will adopt to execute the expert recommendations
3. To foresee a monitoring process allowing the cluster managers to adjust their practices along with the expert recommendations
4. To present cluster internationalization strategy, opportunities and examples to be shared during a 4 hours workshops
5. To present an interim (February 2018) and a final assessment (July 2018) in order to provide cluster managers with the suitable strategic orientation. Both assessments will focus on each cluster performance improved (7 reports) and describe the process each clusters undertook to improve (July 2018)



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### 4. Timeframe of the work

The activities will start on the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and will end on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2018 (9 months). The selected mentor will be able to schedule all the visits for the Phase 1 visits with each of the TRACE-KEI partner clusters. However, it is foreseen that the first phase ends by the end of November 2017.

The selected mentor will comply with the schedule agreed by TRACE-KEI partners for the activities related to the training in Budapest.

### 5. Deliverables and reporting

The selected mentor must deliver the following documents to the TRACE-KEI coordinators:

- 7 individual report (1 for each TRACE-KEI clusters) at the end of Phase 1 by the end of November 2017
- 7 short recommendations report at the end of Phase 2 – By February 2018
- 7 Final recommendations reports at the end of the twinning programme – By June 2018

All the reports must have a standard template that will be provided by the mentor.

### 6. Duty Station

The visits will be performed at the premises of each of the TRACE-KEI clusters, as follows:

- DARE established in Via Gramsci, 89/91, FOGGIA 71100, Italy
- Innoskart established in MORICZ ZSIGMOND UTCA 14, SZEKESFEHERVAR 8000, Hungary
- BioMA established in MAX EYTH STRASSE 2, ELLWANGEN JAGST 73479, Germany
- MaPAR established in RUA DOS INVENTORES, CAPARICA 2825 182, Portugal
- AGROCO established in PRESEI, NR. 4, BIROU NR.44, SFANTU GHEORGHE 520064, Romania
- GreSy established in RUSKI 139 BLUD FL 4, PLOVDIV 4000, Bulgaria
- CluEE established in PERE POPADICA 12, NOVI SAD 21000, Serbia

The training session on Cluster Internationalization will be held in Budapest (Hungary).

All travel and living costs will be incurred directly by the selected mentor and are not subject of this contract.

### 7. Terms of payment

An advance payment, equal to 20% of the contract amount, will be paid to the expert upon signature of the contract. The final payment will be made upon approval by the project coordinator.

The payment will include all costs beard by the expert, including travelling to the clusters' premises and seminar venue.

Payments will be made in Euro. The amount paid to the expert(s) shall be gross and inclusive of all associated costs such as social security, income tax, VAT (if due), travel costs, other expenditures etc.



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### 8. Qualification and skills

#### Professional Qualifications:

- At least five (5) years of proven experience as cluster manager
- Previous experience in cluster mentorship
- Previous experience in cluster internationalization
- Full proficiency in writing, reading and understanding English.
- Advanced university degree (i.e., Master and Ph.D.) is an asset.

### 9. Evaluation of applicants

The evaluation will be based on cumulative analysis (i.e. professional qualifications, technical proposal and economic offer). The evaluation will be based on the following weights:

- Professional qualifications (C.V. – education and proven professional experience): max 30 points
- Technical proposal: max 30 points
- Economic offer: max 40 points

Total max score per candidate: 100 points.

Priority in selection will be given to those managers coming from clusters awarded with the gold label at least 3 years ago. Moreover, these managers should have a proven experience and considerable knowledge in Cluster Managing and Internationalization

### 10. Application procedure

Interested candidates must submit the following application documents by stating the reference of this call as the subject of the e-mail, from 1<sup>st</sup>, June, 2017 included to 15<sup>th</sup>, July, 2017 included. All documents and information provided must be in English.

- A one-page Letter of Interest, containing personal contact details of the expert (Full Name, Address, Mobile Telephone, E-mail address, tax code and VAT number, if applicable), explaining why they s/he is the most suitable for the work
- Technical proposal. Technical proposal must not exceed 2 pages.  
The technical proposal shall describe the following aspects:
  - a) The mentoring practice main concepts
  - b) The methodology selected
  - c) The expected results
  - d) The toolbox (templates, activities, etc.) to be used
  - e) The monitoring procedures to assess the clusters' progresses
  - f) The procedures to assess the effectiveness of the workshop
  - g) Tentative key performance indicators clusters have to meet
- Economic offer including expert fee and all costs for travelling or other activities related to the performance of the task assigned.
- A declaration of availability to deliver a half-day seminar in Budapest area in February 2018, and commitment to terminate the task assigned within the deadline indicated in this call.
- Personal CV, including past experience in similar activities.



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- A declaration of honour about personal absence of judgment of conviction.
- A declaration of honour about personal absence of conflict of interest with the organisations of the TRACE-KEI project.

Proposal must be submitted by email to [darepuglia@pec.it](mailto:darepuglia@pec.it) and [g.deseneen@darepuglia.it](mailto:g.deseneen@darepuglia.it) , starting from 1<sup>st</sup>, June, 2017 included to 15<sup>th</sup>, July, 2017 included. Applications received before or after the indicated limit dates will be disregarded.

*Proposals must be submitted via certified mail and addressed to the project financial manager Mr Giuliano de Seneen. In the subject line should be specified: **Expert Recruitment for Clusters Twinning Programme***

For any information, contact Giuliano de Seneen, TRACE-KEI financial manager, [g.deseneen@darepuglia.it](mailto:g.deseneen@darepuglia.it) .