Guidelines for applicants

Boost4Health vouchers

Version 3, December 2017

1. Background

Boost4Health is a European project that connects 11 leading business support organisations in 7 countries across Europe. They have joined forces to help SMEs (small and medium size enterprises) accelerate their international growth. By sharing expertise, networks, and providing practical and financial support, Boost4Health will help businesses expand into new markets. Please check the Boost4Health website at www.Boost4Health.eu

Boost4Health provides SMEs with:

- Coaching for international growth
- Matchmaking events
- Access to international experts
- Financial support:
    o Internationalisation vouchers
    o Travel vouchers

→ **These guidelines explain how SMEs can apply for Boost4Health vouchers.**

Boost4Health regions, partners and contact data:

Region	Partner	e-mail	Additional contact data
Wallonia, Belgium	Interface Entreprises - Université de Liège	Wallonia@Boost4Health.eu	Annick Pierrard Tel: +32 4 349 85 36 Mob: +32 474 83 47 95
Denmark (whole country)	Biopeople	Biopeople@Boost4Health.eu	Niels Westergaard +45 2383 9939 Randi Krogsgaard +45 2381 1453
Bretagne, France	ID2Santé	ID2Sante@Boost4Health.eu	Céline Quéron Mob: +33 638958526
Pays de la Loire and Centre Val de Loire, France	Atlanpole Biotherapies	Atlanpole@Boost4Health.eu	Roza Puzio +33 240 25 27 30
Hauts-de-France, France	Eurasanté	Eurasante@Boost4Health.eu	Nicolas Labadie +33 3 28 55 90 60
Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany	BioRegio STERN	STERN@Boost4Health.eu	Margot Jehle +49 711 870 354 29
North Brabant, Netherlands	BOM Business development & foreign investment BV	Brabant@Boost4Health.eu	Ria Hein +31 6526 07187
Province of Gelderland and Overijssel, Netherlands	Oost NL	Oost@Boost4Health.eu	Rik Luimes +31 6 4247 0739 Friso Hennings Backer +31 6 4247 5007
Catalonia, Spain	Biocat	Biocat@Boost4Health.eu	Roi Villar + 34 933103330
Kent, United Kingdom	Kent County Council	KCC@Boost4Health.eu	Emily Paulding +44 300 041 5956
Manchester, United Kingdom	Manchester Growth Company	MGC@Boost4Health.eu	Lindsay Hallworth +44 161 359 3050

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2. Internationalisation vouchers

2.1. What is an internationalisation voucher?

An internationalisation voucher is meant to support SMEs interested in attracting services from a European expert (service provider). SMEs must contact their regional Boost4Health partner (listed in the previous table) that will support in finding an appropriate service provider.

There are two kinds of "internationalisation vouchers":
- **"Market access" worth € 3000** (excluding VAT), to explore other European markets (e.g. to benefit from a market study)
- **"Product validation" worth € 5000** (excluding VAT), to progress in product validation (technical support, prototyping, demonstration, regulatory support, usability validation, scale-up etc.)

The service provider will be directly paid by the Boost4Health project partner (€ 3000 or € 5000) for the service provided to the SME.

Examples of actions which can be funded with an internationalisation voucher:

- An SME developing a new drug may identify and access a specific cellular model in another country to start toxicity tests.
- An SME developing implants may benefit from engineering services to validate the stability of the implant material.
- An SME developing a non-invasive diagnostic device may access key opinion leaders in foreign hospitals, to check the added value of the device against current diagnostic practices and methods.

2.2. Eligibility criteria

To apply for an internationalisation voucher, the applicant must comply with the following criteria:
- The applicant is an SME, **complying with the European SME definition**: less than 250 employees and an annual turn-over less than € 50 million, or less than 250 employees and annual balance less than € 43 million.
  Full definition here:
  http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en
  (the European Commission website has an SME self-assessment questionnaire which can check SME compliance).
- The SME is **located in one of the Boost4Health regions** listed in the table on page 2 of this document.

- It develops innovative products or services in one of the eligible life science sub-sectors: **biotechnology, medical technology, pharmaceuticals and nutrition for human and animal health.**
- It must not have received State aid above the "de minimis" ceiling **(see chapter 2.6 State aid)** and it must not be in receivership or under liquidation at the time of receiving the voucher.

The international expertise to be hired has to comply with the following criteria:

- Actions funded by an internationalisation voucher must relate to the internationalisation strategy of the SME and/or to the validation of an innovative product or service to be launched in a foreign market, preferably within Europe.
- The service provider may be from any legal entity (a company, a research institute, a University, etc.)
- The service provider must be located in a Boost4Health participating region.
- The SME and the service provider must not be located in the same country.
- The action to be funded is not eligible if the SME has worked with the service provider in the past 2 years. Boost4Health vouchers are actually dedicated to initiating new collaborations to expand across borders.

2.3. Application

Before applying, it is strongly recommended that the SME gets in touch with its regional Boost4Health partner (mentioned in the table on page 2 of this document).

To apply for an internationalisation voucher, first the SME must complete an on-line expression of interest at http://www.boost4health.eu/expression-interest

Then the SME receives an invite by e-mail to create an account. When logged in, the SME can complete an application form at http://boost4health.eu/application-internationalisation-voucher

Forms shall be completed in English.

Note that the application form includes a final question about a reciprocal favour, which the SME will have to offer to an SME from another country within the Boost4Health regions. This is a specificity of the Boost4Health community, where SMEs that have received support are asked to help other SMEs in taking a step further towards internationalisation. Favours might include taking a phone call from a foreign company to provide some basic advice, offering to host a short visit from a foreign company, providing a case study, etc.

2.4. Cut-off dates

SMEs may apply for an internationalisation voucher at any time. Nevertheless, evaluation of applications takes place after specific cut-off dates.
The cut-off dates are:
- June 30 and September 30, 2017
- January 15, March 31 and June 30, 2018

2.5.   Evaluation and selection

Evaluation and selection is completed by the Boost4Health selection committee within 1 month after each cut-off date. The decision cannot be disputed or appealed. When an application is rejected, the SME can contact its regional Boost4Health partner to discuss the possibility of a new application.

Important: The evaluation is based on the following criteria:
- Contribution to the internationalisation of the SME, in particular through facilitating access to European partners and markets
- Contribution to the innovation strategy of the SME
- Capacity of the action to up-grade the TRL* by one level of at least one product or service of the SME
- The added-value of linking with an entity from another European country

*TRL stands for Technology Readiness Levels. It is a scale from 1 to 9 that estimates the technology maturity of a product. Please look at the annex for explanation.

2.6.   State aid

The value of the voucher provided to the SME complies with the State Aid rules under the De Minimis exemption detailed in EC Regulation 1407/2013.
Under the De Minimis exemption scheme, an SME can receive up to €200,000 of State Aid in a rolling three year period (the current financial year and the two previous financial years).
The SME must provide a *De minimis* self-declaration to its regional Boost4Health partner, using a dedicated template available at http://boost4health.eu/de-minimis-self-declaration
This self-declaration must be manually signed by a duly authorized person from the SME, and sent by e-mail to the regional Boost4Health partner.

2.7.   Agreement

If a voucher is awarded, an agreement must be signed before the action actually starts between the SME, the service provider and the Boost4Health partner from the region where the SME is located. The agreement will be sent to the SME by the Boost4Health regional partner after the application has been approved. The agreement has to be signed and returned to the Boost4Health regional partner as soon as possible.
The application and the SME *De minimis* self-declaration are annexed to the agreement.
The agreement also specifies the timeline (start deadline, end deadline, reporting deadline) for the action. The action cannot start before the positive notification is sent to the SME. The normal duration of an action is up to 6 months. If a project hasn't started within two months after the agreed starting deadline, the voucher amount may be reallocated to another SME.

2.8. Reporting, invoicing and payment

As soon as the action is finished, the SME must complete a short report using a dedicated template. Then, the service provider sends an invoice to the SME and a copy invoice to the regional Boost4Health partner. Importantly, the invoice (without VAT) must mention specific items (Boost4Health project, SME name, address and VAT number, reference to art. 196 of the European VAT Directive).
Finally, The Boost4Health partner from the region where the SME is located pays the service provider. No money is transferred to the SME. Advance payments are not possible.

3. Travel vouchers

3.1. What is a travel voucher?

A travel voucher is an amount of up to € 500, that can be reimbursed to an SME who would like to travel abroad to strengthen its internationalisation potential. With a travel voucher, an SME may travel to another European country to attend an international event or meet specific experts or partners.

3.2. Eligibility criteria

In addition to the SME eligibility criteria described on p. 3, additional criteria apply for travel voucher applications:

- **Travel must be to one of the Boost4Health regions (listed on p. 2)**
- **Travel must be to another country than the one where the SME is located**

3.3. Application and selection

To apply for a travel voucher, first the SME must complete an on-line expression of interest at
http://www.boost4health.eu/expression-interest

Then the SME receives an invite by e-mail to create an account. When logged in, the SME can complete an application form at http://boost4health.eu/application-travel-voucher

The application must be completed before the meeting or event to be attended.

Forms shall be completed in English.

The SME will receive a notification within 3 weeks of application.

3.4. Eligible costs

Only costs incurred during the trip and related to the purpose of the trip are considered eligible.

Categories of costs:

- Public transport fares (plane, train, buses) in economy class or equivalent
- Car: car rental (including fuel); kilometrage/mileage: only if expenses are reimbursed to the car owner by his/her employer and at the employer's rate (and upon evidence of reimbursement by the employer).
- Parking costs
- Accommodation costs: hotel (incl breakfast), other accommodation upon regular invoice.
- Event entrance costs (subject to prior acceptance).

As the voucher is funded by public money, expenses need to be reasonable. For example, hotel costs should not exceed €150 per night.

Not eligible: Subsistence/Food and drink (except when it is included in an accommodation invoice).

3.5. Reporting and Reimbursement

Reimbursement will be done only further to the submission of a short written report within 2 weeks of the trip end date using a dedicated template and upon evidence of travel and associated costs. **This means that the person who travels must keep all evidence documents, such as tickets / boarding passes, hotel invoices, etc.**
The SME gets reimbursed only for actual costs, up to €500 including VAT. Costs without supporting evidence cannot be reimbursed. Advance payments cannot be made.
Reimbursement will be done within one month after the complete report and all evidences have been received by the regional Boost4Health partner.

3.6. State aid

The value of the voucher provided to the SME complies with the State Aid rules under the De Minimis exemption detailed in EC Regulation 1407/2013.
Under the De Minimis exemption scheme, an SME can receive up to €200,000 of State Aid in a rolling three year period (the current financial year and the two previous financial years).
The SME must provide a *De minimis* self-declaration to its regional Boost4Health partner, using a dedicated template available at http://boost4health.eu/de-minimis-self-declaration
This self-declaration must be manually signed by a duly authorized person from the SME, and sent by e-mail to the regional Boost4Health partner.

4. Confidentiality

All information given by the applicant SME to Boost4Health partners is deemed confidential and will not be disseminated without prior consent of the SME. For communication purposes, the Boost4Health partners may write and disseminate publicity articles related to the actions funded by vouchers. These articles will not contain any confidential information.

Annex

Technology Readiness Levels

TRL 1 – basic principles observed

TRL 2 – technology concept formulated

TRL 3 – experimental proof of concept

TRL 4 – technology validated in lab

TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment

TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment

TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment

TRL 8 – system complete and qualified

TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment