



CALL FOR PROPOSALS N° GR/001/23

Ideas powered for business SME FUND

Intellectual property vouchers

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

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1 GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

1.1 Introduction and background

Intellectual property rights (IPRs) are crucial to help European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) protect and commercially exploit their intangible assets coming from their innovation efforts. European SMEs represent over 99 % of all European enterprises and provide 67 % of total employment in Europe. Therefore, their role is decisive to strengthen EU resilience to the challenges we are currently facing, boost industrial competitiveness, drive the EU economy and improve the lives and the well-being of European citizens.

Considering this, the European Intellectual Property Office's 'the EUIPO' or 'the Office' current Strategic Plan (SP2025) aims at improving how the European IP system works for businesses and especially for SMEs. Through the SME programme, the EUIPO tackles the need to make IP services more accessible to small businesses and supports the competitiveness of SMEs through better use and protection of their IP.

As a quick response to the challenging business environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the EUIPO, together with the European Commission (EC) and with the support of the central industrial property offices of the EU Member States, including the Benelux Office, for Intellectual Property (MS IPOs), launched in January 2021 the 'Ideas Powered for Business SME Fund 2021' under the flagship of the EU programme for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (COSME), with a budget of EUR 20 million.

This pilot initiative aimed to make IP protection more accessible to SMEs by co-financing the costs for IP Scans through a participating MS IPO and for trade marks and designs directly through the national, regional and/or EU IP systems.

Building on this success and the lessons learned from this pilot initiative, the Office, in collaboration with the EC and with the support of MS IPOs, launched the SME Fund 2022 in January 2022, which was the first call for proposals under the new initiative "Multiannual SME Fund 2022-2024". This scheme is part of the EC's Single Market Program (SMP) which aims to boost the competitiveness of EU SMEs while supporting the EU's goal of green and digital transitions. The SME Fund 2023 is the second call for proposals launched under the SME Fund multiannual initiative.

1.2 Objectives and priorities

SMEs are the backbone of the European economy. The general objective of this action is to contribute to the strengthening of EU SMEs' growth and competitiveness thereby allowing a faster recovery of the EU economy and greater resilience despite the challenging business environment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

The action specifically aims at helping European SMEs leverage their intellectual property assets by providing financial support for IP-related costs. With this financial support, the SMEs that may be going through an economic crisis will hopefully be deterred from cutting costs on their IP assets and/or on their protection.

The objective of the SME Fund 2023 is to financially support EU SMEs that wish to:

- benefit from an IP Scan and/or
- wish to directly protect their trade marks and designs through national, regional, European or international systems.

As in 2022, financial support will be provided in the form of vouchers and the funding will be implemented by the EUIPO through grants awarded to EU SMEs in accordance with the EU and the EUIPO's financial regulations. It will finance the activities described in this call for proposals.

The SME Fund 2023, which is based on the success of the 2022 scheme while bringing further improvements is expected to have the following benefits:

- economic support to SMEs during the post-pandemic recovery;
- increased awareness of the benefits of IPR among EU SMEs;
- increased investment in IP-related activities such as IP advice and IP protection;
- stronger competitive advantage due to better management of intangible assets, including the increased protection of the intellectual property of EU SMEs in the EU and beyond;
- promotion of the EU's objective of supporting the EU's economic recovery, as well as the resulting reputational benefits for the Member State Intellectual Property Offices (MS IPOs) and the EU.
- increased support for SMEs involved in the ecological transition and the EC's Green Deal objectives.
- harmonisation of IP Scan service practices in Europe.

1.3 Eligible activities

a) IP Scan – VOUCHER 1

Voucher 1 will cover IP Scan - IP pre-diagnostic audit (IPPPDA) services for a maximum grant amount of up to EUR 1 350 per beneficiary.

IP Scan or IP pre-diagnostic audit (IPPPDA) services aim to advise SMEs on the potential of IP to develop their businesses, identifying the types of IP assets that may be valuable and should be protected. They also aim to identify any IP that is already protected and that could be further exploited to gain additional benefits to support the growth of their business.

IP Scan services are offered by experts appointed by the participating MS IPOs, under their coordination and at the request of the SMEs. For IP Scan, under the SME Fund scheme, SMEs must be established in an EU Member State where eligible IP Scan services can be provided.

The list of Member States offering the service and the maximum grant amount per Member States are available in annex 1 of the present call for proposals.

EU SMEs will be entitled to apply for **reimbursement of 90 %** of the costs of the mentioned service (provided by experts designated by the IPOs).

b) Trade mark and design protection – VOUCHER 2

Up to EUR 1 000 per beneficiary for:

- trade mark and design protection within the EU (national, regional, EU levels).

Eligible IP rights are trade marks and designs filed directly and electronically (where possible) at the EUIPO and at MS IPOs.

Respecting the principle of co-financing of the European Commission's Programmes, eligible EU SMEs can apply for a **75 % reimbursement of the trade mark and design fees** for acquiring trade mark or design protection in the EU (including application, class, examination, registration, publication and deferment of publication fees). IP rights similar to trade marks are included depending on applicable legislation (e.g. logotype protection under Portuguese law is covered).

- trade mark and design protection outside of the EU.

To support EU SMEs' growth on a more international scale, the eligible fees for international trade mark and design administered by WIPO may be **reimbursed by up to 50 %**. This activity intends to extend the support currently offered to EU SMEs, assisting them in the internationalisation process, while boosting the innovation and competitiveness of EU SMEs globally.

The fees subject to reimbursement are the fees charged for applications (including basic fees, designation fees and subsequent designation fees) under:

- the international trade mark system (Madrid System);
- the international design system (The Hague System).

Designation fees of EU countries are excluded, as well as the handling fees charged by the office of origin. Designation fees of the European Union are excluded since they are managed directly at the EUIPO, by submitting an EUTM or an RCD application.

An exhaustive list of fees per type of IP activity is available on the SME Fund webpage at the following address:

<https://euipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/web/guest/online-services/sme-fund>

1.4 Available budget and funding rules

The total budget available for the co-financing of actions under this call for proposals is estimated at **EUR 25 million**.

The Office reserves the right not to distribute all the available funds, to increase the budget or to reuse, either fully or partially, the budget of those vouchers which have not been used and have expired.

Each SME can request one voucher per type of IP activity within the rules and limits for funding provided in the following table:

Voucher	IP activities	Budget (EUR)	Value (EUR)	Fees included	Coverage	Reimbursement
1	IP Scan	25.000.000	Up to 1.350 ⁽¹⁾	IP Scan	National	90 %
2	Trade marks and designs		1.000	Application, class, examination, registration, publication and deferment of publication fees	National, regional and EU	75 %
				Basic, designation and subsequent designation fees	International	50 %

(1) Depending on the applicable fees at national level for this service (see Annex 1)

1.5 Timetable

The call for proposals will be opened according to the provisional timeframe below:

Call submission period	from 23/01/2023 to 08/12/2023
Start of evaluation of the submitted applications	Weekly cut-off: every Friday
Evaluation and notification of results	10 working days from cut-off

The weekly cut-off means that all the applications submitted during the preceding week will go through the evaluation step. So, all applications received from one Friday to the next Friday will be evaluated in the following week.

In the event that the Office contacts the applicant during the evaluation process to request complementary information, suspension of the evaluation and notification period takes effect on the date the Office sends the request. The period resumes from the date on which the requested information or revised documents are received.

For any voucher, should the budget be exhausted before the end of the call submission period, the online application system (eForm) will be closed for that voucher and applicants will be informed of this on the website.

In case additional funds are made available before the end of the call submission period, the online application system (eForm) will be re-opened for that voucher and applicants will be informed of this on the website.

Applicants that subscribed to the SME Fund Newsletter will also be notified accordingly.

1.6 Who can get the voucher?

To be eligible, applicants must be **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) established in one of the EU Member States.**

'Small and medium sized enterprise ([SME](#)) means a micro, small or medium-sized enterprise as defined in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises ⁽¹⁾, that is:

- engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form (including, in particular, self-employed persons and family businesses engaged in craft or other activities, and partnerships or associations regularly engaged in an economic activity) based on the following thresholds:

Enterprise category	Headcount: annual work unit (AWU)	Annual turnover	or	Annual balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ EUR 50 million	or	≤ EUR 43 million
Small	< 50	≤ EUR 10 million	or	≤ EUR 10 million
Micro	< 10	≤ EUR 2 million	or	≤ EUR 2 million

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 124, 20.5.2003, p. 36.

A legal entity is considered to be engaged in an 'economic activity' if it proves to be involved in any form of trade or activity done for remuneration or pecuniary interest on the market. Therefore, in general, any activity consisting in (directly or indirectly) offering goods or services on a given market is an economic activity.

In the online application form (eForm), applicants will have to self-declare being an SME based on the above set rules and will be requested to upload a recent Value-Added Tax (VAT) or National Registration (TIN) extract from the competent National Authority.

Beneficiaries must also self-declare that they have not and will not receive funding from other EU schemes for the same activities.

The applicant may authorise **an external representative** (third person) to submit the application on its behalf. In such a case, the applicant must fill in and sign the declaration on annex 3 of the present call for proposals.

This declaration is valid for any subsequent application submitted on its behalf under the present call for proposals. If the applicant wishes to use another external representative when submitting an application for another voucher, it must submit a new declaration.

1.7 How does the voucher work?



As a principle, vouchers are not retroactive, costs for activities executed before receiving the voucher cannot be reimbursed.

It is important to follow the sequential order of the process in the steps as described below.

In step 1, applicants must only apply for the grant (voucher). **Please do not start implementing (requesting the IP Scan or applying for IP rights registration) any of these activities before receiving your vouchers**, otherwise related fees will be considered ineligible and therefore not refundable.

In step 2, applicants will be notified of the result. The grant decision related to specific voucher(s) will take effect on the date of its notification to the beneficiaries.

In step 3, beneficiaries may implement the IP activities related to the voucher(s) awarded. **Do not forget that you have a limited period to activate your voucher(s)** (see section 4).

In step 4, beneficiaries request the reimbursement(s) of IP activities implemented, **up to the limit** of the voucher(s) amount.

The application process will be also published on the [SME FUND web page](#) to ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and have access to the same information.

2 PROCEDURE FOR SUBMISSION

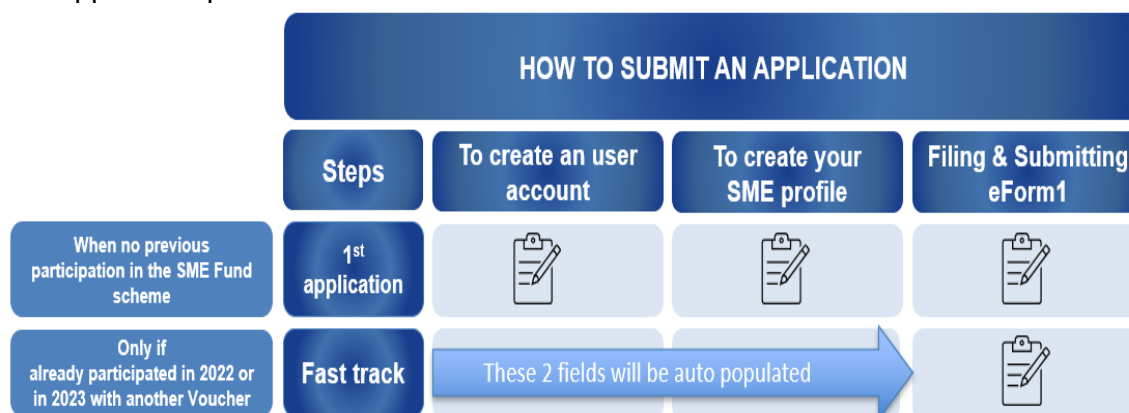
2.1 How to submit an application

Applicants must use the online application form (eForm) available from the Ideas powered for business SME FUND web page at:

<https://euipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/online-services/sme-fund>

Proposals sent to the Office by other means such as email or paper will not be accepted.

The application process is as follows:



2.1.1 Step 1 - creation of a user account and SME profile

This step applies to first-time applicants only, with no prior participation in the SME Fund scheme in 2022.

For other applicants, who have already been beneficiaries under the 2022 SME Fund or have previously been awarded a voucher under the current 2023 call, the FAST TRACK option takes you directly to step 2 'submission of the application'.

To use the eForm (the only way to apply), applicants must first create an EUIPO login user account.

Once the user account is created, the applicants will have access to their SME Fund user account, where they can create their SME profile by filling in the necessary data and uploading the related and mandatory documentation.

Please pay particular attention to provide the correct email addresses of all contact persons as all communications related to this procedure will be sent only by email to the contact persons provided.

The documentation to upload in the SME profile is:

- a **VAT or TIN certificate**. In the SME FUND web page, there will be links to examples of accepted certificates from all EU Member States.
- a bank statement which must be issued for a **bank account that accepts currency in euro and SEPA bank transfers**.

Please upload legible versions of these documents as they will be used during the application evaluation process and for making the payments.

2.1.2 Step 2 - submission of the application

This step applies to all applicants, that is to say:

- **first-time applicants, with no previous participation in the SME Fund scheme;**
- **FAST TRACK applicants, who have already been awarded a voucher under the 2022 SME Fund or having been previously awarded another voucher under the current 2023 call.**

Submission of an application can be done in a few simple steps. SMEs must access the eForm and:

- select which vouchers they are interested in;
- check the accuracy of the prefilled mandatory information regarding the applicant

- If there are no changes or errors, the applicant may continue with the application process.
- In case of changes or errors, the applicant must return to the *My SMEs* section to correct the information and/or upload updated supporting documents.

Please pay particular attention to check that the correct data, and especially the email addresses of the contact persons, are still valid, as all communication related to this procedure will be sent electronically to these contact persons.

- Upload the declaration on honour document for external representatives (see annex 3) **only** if an external representative submits the application on behalf of the applicant SME. This document must be signed by an authorised member of the SME (the owner, the Director General, the CEO, etc.) giving the external representative the right to act on behalf of the company.

NB: if the applicant has already submitted a declaration on honour during a prior application under the 2023 call for proposals and the representative has not changed, the declaration does not need to be submitted again.

- Confirm the statements concerning the grant principles of co-financing, prohibition of double financing and of administrative sanctions in case of false declarations before submission.

Once all the information has been completed and the supporting documents have been uploaded, please review your proposal and **submit it**.

2.2 Confirmation of submission

Once an eForm is submitted, the application will display the status 'in process' in the SME Fund user account and the applicant will be informed via automatic email that the proposal has been successfully received. However, this acknowledgement of receipt should not be taken as an indication that the proposal is admissible but only that the proposal has successfully been submitted for evaluation at the EUIPO.

If you do not receive this confirmation email within an hour, please contact the following mailbox: information@euipo.europa.eu for further information.

If there is a need for further clarification regarding the application data and/or supporting documents, the Office will contact the applicant during the evaluation process. The SME must reply by the fixed deadline given, otherwise the application may be rejected.

2.3 Withdrawal of application

If an applicant wants to withdraw its application before it reaches the award/notification stage, an email must be sent to grants@euipo.europa.eu specifying the reference number of the application.

The withdrawal takes effect on the date of the confirmation email sent by the Office. Once withdrawn, the SME may apply again for voucher(s) they are interested in.

2.4 Contact during the submission period

All questions related to this call must be addressed to the EUIPO Information Centre at: information@euipo.europa.eu

or by calling [+34 965139100](tel:+34965139100)

Should you have any questions, please first consult the **SME Fund FAQ section** as the Office will regularly use it to publish answers to any questions submitted, in order to ensure all potential applicants are treated equally.

2.5 Data protection

Participation in the present call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data. This data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System of the Commission, should the beneficiary be in one of the situations mentioned in Articles 136 and 141 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046.

Beneficiaries authorise the Office to share his/her personal data with the European Commission, the National Intellectual Property Offices (NIPOs) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). The transmitted data is limited to that strictly necessary for the management and execution of the SME Fund. There are no data transfers outside of the EU/EEA.

For more information please refer to the SME Fund 2023 [Privacy statement](#).

3 AWARD PROCEDURE

The Office (the EUIPO) is responsible for the evaluation and selection of proposals submitted under this call for proposals.

The evaluation process is based on the following key principles:

- equal treatment – all proposals are evaluated in the same manner against the same criteria, and;
- transparency – adequate feedback is provided to applicants on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals.

3.1 Admissibility requirements

All applications are first checked for compliance with admissibility requirements. These checks aim to assess:

- whether the application has been submitted electronically using the online application form (eForm);
- whether it has been submitted before the deadline (see Section 1.5 – Timetable);
- whether it is complete;
- whether no similar voucher under the same call for proposals was already granted to the same applicant.

3.2 Eligibility checks

Eligibility covers –

- **Eligibility of applicants:** applicants that are not a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) as defined in the [EU recommendation 2003/361](#) established in one of the EU Member States, are not eligible.
- **Exclusion criteria:** applicants in certain situations will be excluded (e.g. applicants that are bankrupt or being wound up, applicants that have been guilty of grave professional misconduct, etc.).

The exclusion situations are in Article 136(1)a to h of the Financial Regulation⁽²⁾ and are described in annex 2 of the present guidelines. The EU's Early Detection and Exclusion System may be consulted by the Office to check the status of applicants.

- **Selection criteria:** applicants not having the capacity to maintain their activity throughout the duration of the grant to implement the eligible activities described in section 1.3. will not be considered as eligible applicants.

The above criteria (eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria) will be checked on the basis of a self-declaration and/or appropriate supporting documentation, as follows.

Applicants will be requested to declare that they have read the declaration of honour embedded in the eForm and to certify that:

- the applicant is fully eligible and has the capacity in accordance with the criteria set out in the call for proposals;

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union

- the applicant is not in one of the situations of exclusion set out therein.

In addition, applicants will be requested to provide a recent VAT or TIN certificate issued by their competent national authority demonstrating the legal existence of their company.

The Office reserves the right to request further documentation to prove the veracity of this declaration. Administrative sanctions may be imposed on applicants if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

In case any further clarifications are needed, applicants may be contacted during the evaluation process.

Proposals which do not meet the admissibility or eligibility requirements will be rejected, and applicants will be duly informed of the ground(s) for rejection.

3.3 Evaluation/Final selection process

Admissible and eligible proposals will be assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

- **any identified/identifiable risks of double-funding from EU schemes or other EU-funded national schemes for the same activities.**

This requirement is fulfilled only if applicants tick the appropriate box in the online application form (eForm) indicating they have not applied for, or received funding from EU schemes or EU funded national schemes for the same action. If double funding is detected, the proposal will be rejected.

- **first come, first served basis.**

The proposed action(s) must conform to the set objectives and priorities of the call, and applications received first will be given priority, as recognition of the motivation and speed of purpose of the applicants. Proposals will be funded in chronological order based on the application date and time (registration number) until the budget is exhausted.

During the evaluation process, a list of those proposals recommended for funding will be drawn up. Another list will be drawn up for those proposals that have been denied funding.

The award decision related to a weekly cut-off is then adopted. This will list all the proposals selected for funding, the respective maximum amounts of funding per action(s) and the beneficiaries of the grant.

3.4 Notification of the outcome

Applicants will be notified individually about the results of the evaluation process after the award decision has been adopted.

Applicants whose proposals are rejected will be duly informed of the ground(s) for rejection.

Applicants whose proposals are selected for funding will receive a grant decision, drawn up in euro and detailing the general conditions and the level of funding. The decision should neither be signed nor returned to the Office.

The grant decision will take effect on the date of its notification to the beneficiary.

The model grant decision available in annex 4 is not negotiable. The applicants understand that submission of a grant application implies acceptance of the provision of the present guidelines, the grant decision and the general conditions.

This formal notification will be sent by email to the contact person(s) provided in the eForm. It is the responsibility of the applicant to provide valid email address(es).

Additionally, the voucher(s) awarded together with their status will be visible in the user account under the Voucher section.

3.5 Publicity and dissemination of results

Information on the awarded grants and on the beneficiaries may be disclosed to the public in accordance with Article 38 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 to publish information on the outcome of grant procedures.

The beneficiary authorises the Office to publish the following information in any form and medium, including via the internet:

- the beneficiary's name and location,
- the subject and purpose of the grant,
- the amount awarded.

4 PROCEDURE FOR IMPLEMENTING THE GRANT DECISION (VOUCHER)

The grant decision will take effect on the date of its notification to the beneficiary ('the starting date').

The grant decision is divided into two periods: activating and implementing the voucher(s) as follows:



- Activation period

The activation period runs for a period of **2 months** from the day following the date of notification of the award of the voucher(s).

The Voucher 1 must be activated within this period by requesting the IP Scan service from the EU Member State Intellectual Property Office of the beneficiary’s country. Therefore, Voucher 1 (IP Scan) is activated automatically, but through direct notification sent by the relevant MS IPO to the EUIPO, confirming that the SME has requested the service.

The Voucher 2 must be activated within this period with at least one IP activity implemented and the corresponding request for payment submitted by the beneficiary.

In case this first request for payment is rejected by the Office, beneficiaries will be notified of the non-activation of the voucher. Another request for payment may then be submitted, still within the activation period, in order to activate it.

Activation of the voucher triggers the implementation period (please see following subsection).

The activation period may be extended prior to expiration under the same conditions, by clicking on the relevant button (see below image) via the SME Fund user account. This extension will be granted automatically and will be reflected in the user account. The new expiry date will be displayed in the granted voucher.



The extension will run for a period of **2 months** for both vouchers 1 (IP Scan) and 2 (Trade marks & Designs).

If the voucher is not activated within the activation period, including, where relevant, its extension, it will be considered as expired and access to the eForm section dealing with requests for reimbursement will not be available anymore.

- Implementation period

The implementation period starts on the first day following its activation for a period of up to **6 months** for both Voucher 1 (IP Scan) and Voucher 2 (Trade marks & Designs).

During this period, beneficiaries may implement the IP activities covered by their voucher(s) and submit the related requests for payments.

- Termination of the voucher by the beneficiary

Beneficiaries may terminate the voucher(s) once all the IP activities they wanted to do and for which all related request(s) for payment and corresponding reimbursements have been made, even if there is a remaining balance left, that they will not use during the implementation period.

By renouncing the voucher via the SME Fund user account, beneficiaries will no longer be able to use the remaining balance or submit another application for the same voucher during the current year of the call. Beneficiaries accept that the remaining amount will be returned to the SME Fund budget in order to contribute to the funding of other applicant SMEs.

The voucher will end either:

- **at the end of the activation period if no request for payment was submitted ('the expiry date')** or
- **at the end of the implementation period ('the ending date');**
- **upon request from the beneficiary to terminate the voucher (see above).**

Only in the case of **activated** voucher(s), an additional seven calendar days after 'the ending date' of the voucher are available, **solely for the purpose of requesting payments related to IP activities that were implemented and paid before the ending date**. Once this period has elapsed, the link to access the electronic payment request form (see section 5) will be deactivated for this specific voucher.

Contact during the implementation period

Please first consult the SME Fund website and the **SME Fund FAQ section** where additional information and guidance on the implementation of voucher(s) can be found. Otherwise, any specific questions must be addressed to the EUIPO Information Centre at: information@euipo.europa.eu

5 PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING PAYMENT

5.1 Submission of requests for payment

Beneficiaries must request the payment of eligible activities under the vouchers using the link to the electronic reimbursement request form (eForm) available in the user account.

The information submitted in this payment request form must provide details of the activity or activities implemented and the related fees actually incurred and claimed by the beneficiary.

Please make sure you register your IP right(s) (or request the service in case of IP Scan) and pay in full the related fees before submitting any request for reimbursement under the voucher. In case a payment is still needed to complete the registration process (or IP Scan service), be aware that your request for reimbursement will be suspended until that payment is issued and confirmed by the pertinent IP offices.

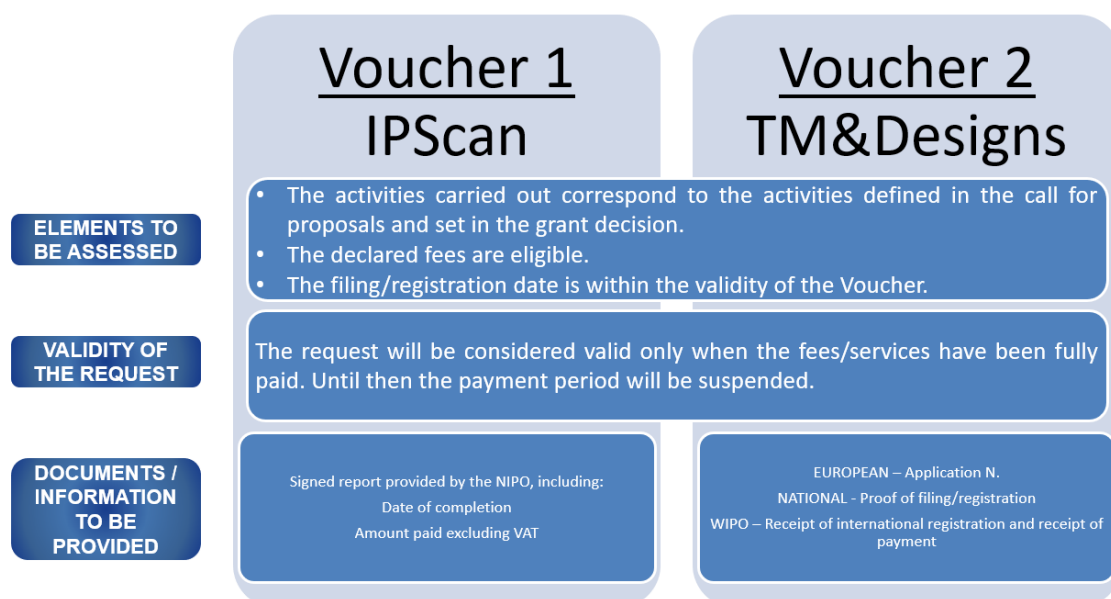
The beneficiary must certify that the information provided in the request is complete, correct and true. The beneficiary must also certify that the costs incurred are eligible and that the request for payment is substantiated by adequate supporting documents.

Please note that once the total amount of the voucher has been spent, no further request for payment will be possible.

5.2 Assessment of requests for payment

Payments are subject to the approval of the payment request and of the accompanying documents.

The assessment of the request includes the following elements:



*Payments done in a currency different from € will be converted using the date of payment

Any conversion into euros of costs incurred in other currencies will take place automatically in the request for payment form and will be made at the monthly applicable accounting rate published by the Commission (see link below) of the month when the costs were incurred.

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/inforeuro/inforeuro_en.cfm

If the request is incomplete or requires further clarification, the Office will contact the beneficiary and specify the data/form that should be submitted with the additional information. The beneficiary must reply by the set deadline indicated therein, otherwise the Office reserves the right to reject the request for reimbursement. Note that in case the request is rejected, the SME still has the right to submit another request provided the voucher has not expired yet.

Declared fees may be judged ineligible during assessment for any of the following reasons:

- services not corresponding to the eligible activities;
- services delivered outside the period of validity of the voucher;
- a lack of supporting documents relating to expenses claimed.

The Office calculates the amount due as follows:

Step 1 — It applies the reimbursement rate to the eligible costs set in section 1.4;

Step 2 — It deducts the amount due from the amount still available under the voucher.

Payments are **LIMITED** to the maximum grant amount stated in the voucher. In the event of multiple requests, this amount will be checked against the amount already accepted for the previous activities.

5.3 Payment execution period

The amount due will be paid by the Office to the beneficiary's bank account (indicated in the application or amended in the request for payment) within 30 calendar days of receipt of a valid request for payment.

The payment period will begin running from receipt of the request for payment, only if fees (services in the case of IP Scan) are fully paid to the issuing Offices (NIPO, the EUIPO and WIPO) validating the registration process or the service provided. If a payment is still needed to complete the filing, the request for payment is not considered valid and the payment period is suspended until that payment is issued and confirmed by the above Offices.

This payment period is also suspended when the Office requests additional information from the beneficiaries. Suspension takes effect on the date the Office sends this request. The remaining payment period resumes from the date on which the requested information or documents are received and validated by the Office.

The Office will notify electronically the completion of the payment to the beneficiary.

The payment period ends when the payment has been completed by the Office to the beneficiary's bank account. Should the Office need to perform any extra action to process the payment again, due to external factors such as the payment is rejected/returned by the destination bank, these additional steps will not be part of the payment period.

5.4 *Ex post* verifications — Irregularities and/or false declarations

The EUIPO and/or other EU bodies (European Court of Auditors, the European Public Prosecutor's Office, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) or a body mandated by them) reserves the right to carry out — at any moment — checks, reviews, audits or investigations.

If participants already received EU funding for the same activities as those for which a request for payment of the voucher is made, undue amounts paid will be recovered.

In case of irregularities or false declarations, participants may moreover be fined and excluded from future funding (grants/tenders, prizes, contribution agreements, etc.; see Articles 135 to 145 of the EU Financial Regulation). In addition, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) may be informed.

Annexes

Annex 1 — List of maximum amounts by EU country for IP Scan

Annex 2 — Exclusion situations

Annex 3 — Declaration for representatives

Annex 4 — Model of grant decision (voucher)