SMURF
THE FOREST OWNERS' PROJECT

1st SMURF open call for small forest owners' organizations

CASCADE FUNDING
Full call details

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1. VERSION HISTORY

Version history				
Version	**Date**	**Author**	**Partner**	**Description**
1.1	29/08/2024	Elena Moreno Álvaro Picardo Adela Trassierra	Cesefor	Launch version
1.0	21/08/2024	Elena Moreno Álvaro Picardo	Cesefor	To be shared with REA
0.2	06/08/2024	Elena Moreno Adela Trassierra	Cesefor	Second Internal Draft shared with REA
0.1	02/08/2024	Elena Moreno, Adela Trassierra	Cesefor	First Internal Draft

2. SUMMARY OF THE CALL

This call for Cascade Funding aims to enhance the participation of organisations of small forest owners in the activities of the SMURF project to get accurate and on the ground information about forest ownership, management practices, forest types, business opportunities and challenges, legal regime, resources and support systems of the small forest holdings across Europe.

For more information on the **SMURF project**, look at:

https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101135516

The call will try to fund 40 organisations facilitating knowledge-exchange and enabling lasting institutional networking.

Consequently, this call encourages and supports small forest owners across Europe to provide their insights and 'real life' knowledge to the **SMURF project**.

The specific **objectives for this first call** are:

1. **Enlarge the number of entities participating in the SMURF project' activities**: At least **40 forest owners associations and cooperatives, representing the 27 member states, will become collaborators** of the project.
2. **Obtain direct information about European Small Forest Holdings** (Eu SFH) **and Forest Owners**, to map their situation in Europe (**SMURF** T2.2.)
3. **Capture the diversity of forest associations and cooperatives throughout Europe and benefit from their experience in** the support of Small Forest Holdings and engage them in the **Hub of Eu SFH** (**SMURF** T2.1)

4. **Get to promote the SMURF project' activities in as many countries and regions of Europe as possible**, in order to extend the project actions and objectives (**SMURF** T7.2).

3. INTRODUCTION

Cascade funding, also known as **Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP)**, is a European Commission mechanism to distribute public funding to assist European projects in the development and implementation of the planned innovations. For more detail, look at: https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/funding-tenders-opportunities/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=25559615

This document aims to assist applicants submitting applications for the first Cascade Funding Call under the **SMURF** project.

It contains information regarding the eligibility criteria, submission requirements, evaluation procedures, and timeline for the call.

4. CALL TITLE

"1st SMURF open call for small forest owners' organisations"

5. CONTEXT OF THE CALL

The **SMURF** project, in line with the EU Forest Strategy, will help promote sustainable and profitable forest management and conserve European forests, developing a set of solutions focused on small forest holdings:

1. new tailored organisational and business models, based on forestry practices closer to nature (CNS – Closer to Nature Sylviculture), which promote new ecosystem services (carbon cultivation and biodiversity) and the valorization of wood and non-wood forest products.
2. training, digital tools and others supporting structures/instruments and
3. guidelines to support policy makers in establishing standardised remuneration policies and systems at regional, national and European level through the creation of a harmonised European Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) system.

With a translational, multidisciplinary and multi-actor approach, thanks to its complementary and multi-purpose consortium members composed of private, academic and public stakeholders, and considering sometimes neglected socio-cultural and demographic factors, **SMURF** will provide sustainability solutions for the entire forest-based value chain.

This first **SMURF** open call of grants to third parties is launched to ensure the participation of the necessary stakeholders for the development of the **SMURF** project.

It has been conceived to achieve adequate involvement of small forest owners, via the organisations that cluster them (associations, federations, confederations, cooperatives, etc.).

Thanks to the grants it is intended that at least 40 organisations, representing small scale forest owners across Europe, will be involved in the project. In the design of the criteria for awarding the grants, it is intended that *at least one national organisation from each of the EU27 countries* is represented.

Future calls within the **SMURF** project will further support other activities of the project, developing sustainable and profitable forestry solutions for small forest holdings, involving the whole forest-based value chain.

6. KEY INFORMATION

General information	
Reference	
Title of the call	1st **SMURF** open call for small forest owners' organisations
Total funding	200.000 €
Funding per grant	Lump sum ranging up to €5,000
Number of grants to be funded	40
Target applicants	Associations, federations, confederations or cooperatives of small forest owners
Opening of the call	02/09/2024 - 08.00 CET
Closing of the call	30/10/2024 - 17.00 CET
Communication of results	20/12/2024
Duration of the grants	until 31/12/2025
Start of the activities	Immediately after sign grant agreement - January 2025

7. AVAILABLE FUNDING

The total maximum funding allocated for this Call is **€200,000**.

Up to 40 applicants will be selected, with a **maximum grant of €5,000 per applicant**.

This will allow for wide, varied, and territorially distributed participation of the forest sector in the project.

If the entire budget is not used up in this first call, the process will be restarted to provide another opportunity to complete the consumption of the funds, in a second call.

It is important to indicate that the funds attached to the Grant Agreement come directly from the funds of the Horizon Europe Project **SMURF**, which has been funded by the European Commission number **101135516**.

8. LANGUAGE

The language of this granting process is English.

Applicants must submit their applications in English.

Applications done in any other language will not be admissible and will not be evaluated.

The grant management process (including the submission of documents and deliverables) will be conducted in English.

9. ACTIVITIES TO BE SUPPORTED BY THE GRANT

The following are a clear and exhaustive list of the types of activities that qualify for receiving financial support.

Please note that **by applying to this call you will be indicating that you plan to get involved in all the activities specified in the table below**:

Activity number	Activity title	Time to performe the task (month)	Forecasted Start	Forecasted End	Budget (€)	Number of activities per association
1st CALL ACTIVITIES					
1	Small Forest Holdings and associations characterization					
1.1	1 Survey to characterize the association/cooperative	3	M13	M15		1
1.2	1 Interview to characterize the association/cooperative	3	M18	M20		1
1.3	15 Basic surveys to characterize associates (forest owners)	4	M13	M16		15
1.4	3 Detailed surveys associates (forest owners) on forest holdings accountability and registries	2	M18	M20	3.000,00 €	3
1.5	3 Detailed interview associates (forest owners) on forest holdings accountability and registries	2	M18	M20		3
1.6	1 Detailed interview with the national (or regional) forest authority	5	M18	M22		1
1.7	1 Detailed interview with the national (or regional) support system	5	M18	M22		1
1.8	Review documents: the resulting national profile of characterization, legal regime and support systems.	2	M20	M22		3
2	Attending conference and networking					
2.1	Attending the European Conference on Small Forest Holdings	1	M17	M17	1.000,00 €	1
3	Communication and dissemination activities					
3.1	Communication and dissemination activities to the associates on 2025	11	M13	M24	1.000,00 €	1
TOTAL BUDGET					5.000,00 €	

A final report informing of the results of each of the three activities, and including the texts and images, should be prepared. For the communication activities report, the revised translation of the materials to English should be included.

9.1 Detailed description of the activities

A comprehensive delineation of the activities encompassed in the project is as follows:

1. **Small Forest Holdings and associations characterization (3.000 €):**

   Surveys and interviews will refer to **small forest holdings (< 500 ha)** to characterise associations, forest ownership, management practices, forest types, holdings and business opportunities and challenges, legal regime, resources and support systems of the applicants and their members.

   1.1 <u>Survey to characterise the association/cooperative</u>: **1 survey** to be completed by the organisation director, coordinator or someone from its team, following the given template.

   1.2 <u>Interviews to characterise the association/cooperative</u>: **1 Detailed interview** with Cesefor following the given guidelines to accurately characterise the association; forest ownership, management practices, forest types, holdings and business opportunities, legal regime, resources and support systems.

   Also, the applicant will identify a national (or regional) forest authority and one national (or regional) support organisation that serves as reference for the applicant.

   1.3 <u>Basic surveys to characterise associates (small forest owners)</u>: **15 Basic surveys** to 15 different members of the organisation will be completed following the given template from the association to their associates to characterise forest owners and forest holdings.

   The organisations might have members that are not forest owners, like farmers, or forest owners with larger states, but these surveys should be focused on the small forest owners. They should try to show the diversity of forest owners, considering their types (public or private, individual or collective, etc.), their legal entity and business model, their territorial distribution, their sex, age and other key facts of their sociological characters, etc.

   Examples of references for the surveys are:

   - Private Forest Structure Survey for France, coordinated by <u>RESOFOP, the French Observatory of Private Forests</u>, maintained by CNPF and Fransylva, in the framework of the <u>Interprofessional Forest Organization France Bois Foret</u>
   - <u>Ownership of forest land for Finland</u>, by LUKE, the Natural Resources Institute for Finland.
   - <u>National Woodland Owner Survey (NWOS)</u> of the USA, by the <u>Family Forest Research Center</u> of the USDA Forest Service.

   The specific templates will be provided by the **SMURF** team.

   1.4 <u>Detailed surveys associates (forest owners) on forest holdings accountability and registries</u>: **3 Detailed surveys** to 3 different members of the organisation will be completed following the given template on different forest holdings representative of their diversity to characterise their accountability procedures, registries and its economic activity and profitability.

The main reference is the [Farm Accountancy Data Network (FADN)](#) and previous initiatives to create a Forest Accountancy Data Network. For more information look at [Toscani, P. and Sekot W. (2018)](#)

1.5 <u>Detailed interviews associates (small forest owners) on forest holdings accountability and registries:</u> Conduct **3 detailed interviews** following the given guidelines and templates on different forest holdings representative of their diversity, to accurately characterise their accountability procedures, registries and its economic activity and profitability. One of the three interviews (the first one) will be conducted by Cesefor to ensure that the goals of the project are fully considered, leading to a more effective and relevant outcome. In addition, a report should be submitted following the given template to provide a detailed, contextual, and nuanced understanding that is crucial for effective analysis of the interview.

1.6 <u>Detailed interviews with the national (or regional) forest authority:</u> Attend 1 detailed interview (conducted by Cesefor) with the national or regional forest authority proposed by the association (in the Activity 1.2). In addition, a report should be submitted following the given template to provide a detailed, contextual, and nuanced understanding that is crucial for effective analysis of the interview.

1.7 <u>Detailed interviews with the national (or regional) support system:</u> Attend 1 detailed interview (conducted by Cesefor) with the national or regional support system proposed by the association (In the activity 1.2). In addition, a report should be submitted following the given template to provide a detailed, contextual, and nuanced understanding that is crucial for effective analysis of the interview.

1.8 <u>Review documents: the resulting national profile of characterization, legal regime and support systems:</u> Provide revision on 3 documents provided by the **SMURF** team:

- national small forest holdings and forest owners characterization,
- legal regime on the country and
- support systems for small forest holdings in the country.

2. **Attending conference and networking (1.000 €):**

2.1 <u>Attending the European Conference on Small Forest Holdings:</u> Attend the conference organised in the framework of the project in spring 2025 (1 person belonging to the organisation, preferably a member, employee, or person responsible for the entity).

3. **Communication and dissemination activities (1.000 €):**

3.1 <u>Communication of association/country information to the **SMURF'** team in 2025:</u>

At least 3 posts in total (300 hundred words each) presenting the organisation activities or explaining challenges or solutions regarding management and sustainability of forest resources in the country or region. Any national or regional news affecting forest owners might also be shared to be published in the **[SMURF project website](#)**.

At least **2 minivideos** (1 to 2 minutes) and **10 original photographs** presenting the organisation or their members activities.

The organisation should **identify 3 national webs** that are a positive reference for their members **and** the name and credentials of **3 experts in forest communication in the country**.

3.2 Communication and dissemination of **SMURF** activities to their associates and other national forest owners: Disseminate the collaboration of the association in **SMURF** project' actions (informing the activities that are being conducted and funded with the cascade funding) through their official channels (bulletin, social media, email, website). Announce the participation in the European Conference on SFH to associates through association channels.

At least 10 posts in total in the organisation's social media channels (Instagram, Linkedin, X or others) **using the project hashtags** and citing the **SMURF** social media profiles.

At least 4 posts in total in the association´ website and **insert a visible link to SMURF website in the association´ website**.

At least **1 news or report** on a national (or regional) level media (press, radio or television).

The **language** for the communication material could be English or any European language but it is ***strongly recommended to use the applicant's native language*** to ensure proper communication among its associates. **A revised English translation** of all the communication material should be provided.

9.2 Execution of activities

The execution of the activities detailed above may be carried out by the organisation, using their own resources, or with the support of a collaborating entity. These entities, which may include individual forest owners, forest consultants, contractors, companies, universities, start-ups, etc., may be partially subcontracted by the organisation to conduct the activities, with the exception of attendance at the European Conference on Small Forest Holdings, as specified in section 9.1 of this document.

In the case of subcontracting the activities, a copy of the contract with the third party must be sent to the **SMURF'** team, prior to the start of the affected activities.

10.   COST ELIGIBILITY

Up to €5,000 will be provided upon the justified completion of the three activities and the submission of the corresponding reports as indicated in section 9. Recipients will receive **up to €5,000, as a lump sum,** to cover staff, materials, travel, and equipment needed for the required activities.

Cascade Funding will be aimed at covering costs that are exclusively considered eligible by the provisions of the Horizon Europe programme.

11. GRANT DISBURSEMENT

Payments will be disbursed in two phases of meeting designated milestones and delivering specific outputs:

Payment schedule	Amount	Date
1st payment	50% (2,500€)	January 2025, after signature of grant agreement
2nd payment	50% (2,500€)	After the activities are completed, deliverables are sent and verification of execution is made by Cesefor

The payment will be made according to the justification of activities with the activity final report.

The payment method would be bank transfer, so it is mandatory that the association has a legal bank account in its name.

12. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must, by the deadline for submission of the Application, meet the following criteria to be eligible for the grant:

Criteria	Description of criteria	Clarification
E1	Applicant is a legal entity based in an EU27 country.	This call is not open for applications from natural persons. The legal entity must have a **VAT number** and an **active European bank account**.
E2	The applicant is a legal organisation dedicated to representing forest owners	Organisations representing small forest owners, public or private, across 27 EU Member States (like associations, federations, confederations, cooperatives or others similar) at local, regional, national, supranational or European level.

Applicants must be legal organisations representing small forest owners in any of the 27 European Member States. More specifically:

-   It includes associations, federations, confederations and cooperatives of small forest owners.
-   It covers local, regional, national, supranational or European levels.
-   It considers public or private forests, owned by individuals or collectivities.

At this level, lacking a precise definition and characterisation of small forest owners, a forest holding is considered **small if it has less than 500 hectares of forest area in the country**.

The cascade funding program is designed to benefit one organisation per application; therefore, consortia of applications between organisations will not be admitted for consideration.

Applications not fulfilling the above stated eligibility criteria will be rejected.

13. AWARD CRITERIA

The **evaluation committee** will assess applications following the award criteria defined in this section, which are; territorial level of the applicants, type of forest properties represented in the association (public/private), number of associated forest owners and gender balance of associated forest owners.

By presenting the application and signing the commitment letter, the applicant affirms the accuracy of the declared information.

At any stage of the evaluation process or during the term of the grant agreement, Cesefor reserves the right to request verification of the information provided by the applicants.

Where applicable, applications that meet the eligibility requirements at a supranational level will be identified. All other eligible applications will be categorised by EU member states and by NUTS classification levels (NUTS1, NUTS2 or NUTS3).

Subsequently, the award criteria will be applied according to the following steps and scoring:

Step 1. If there are supranational applicants, up to three recipients may be selected.

1.1. If the number of candidates exceeds three, the applications will be evaluated according to the criteria listed below:

Criteria 1 Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organisation	Scoring
Public & private	5
Only Private	4
Only Public	3

Criteria 2 Number of associated forest owners	Scoring
>10.000	5
1.000-10.000	3
0-1.000	1

Criteria 3 Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring
>40% women	5
20-40% women	3
0-20% women	1

1.2. The total score will be calculated as the sum of the scores for the three criteria, giving the same weight to all criteria. The application with the highest total score will be awarded.

1.3. In the case of equal scores, funding prioritisation will be based on **the largest area represented** by each applicant. Ultimately, **the submission order of applications** will be used to break any ties regarding forest area.

Step 2. With respect to national candidates, one award recipient will be selected per country according to the following procedure:

2.1. In countries where the applicant is the only candidate, they will be selected as the grant recipient.

2.2. In cases where there are multiple applicants per country, they will be prioritised based on NUTS classification levels, in the following order: National has priority over NUTS1, NUTS2 and NUTS3 levels, NUTS1 and NUTS2 are considered to have the same priority; NUTS1 and NUTS2 have priority over NUTS3. The applicant with the highest-priority NUTS level will be selected.

2.3. If there are several candidates per country at the same highest-priority NUTS level, the applications will be evaluated according to the criteria listed below:

Criteria 1 Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organization	Scoring
Public & private	5
Only Private	4
Only Public	3

Criteria 2 Number of associated forest owners	Scoring
>10.000	5
1.000-10.000	3
0-1.000	1

Criteria 3 Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring
>40% women	5
20-40% women	3
0-20% women	1

2.4. The total score will be calculated as the sum of the scores for the three criteria, giving the same weight to all criteria. The application with the highest total score will be awarded.

2.5. In the case of equal scores, funding prioritisation will be based on the largest area represented by each applicant. Ultimately, the submission order of applications will be used to break any ties regarding forest area.

Step 3. Once one award recipient has been selected per country, the remaining candidates will be prioritised according to the following procedure:

3.1. Applicants will be prioritised based on NUTS classification levels in the following order: NUTS3 takes priority over NUTS1, NUTS2 and National level; NUTS1 and NUTS2

are considered to have the same priority. NUTS1 and NUTS2 take priority over the National level. The applicant with the highest-priority NUTS level will be selected.

3.2. If multiple applicants have the same highest-priority NUTS level, their submissions will be evaluated according to the criteria listed below:

Criteria 1 Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organization	Scoring
Public & private	5
Only Private	4
Only Public	3

Criteria 2 Number of associated forest owners	Scoring
>1.000	5
100-1.000	3
0-100	1

Criteria 3 Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring
>40% women	5
20-40% women	3
0-20% women	1

3.3. The total score will be calculated as the sum of the scores for the three criteria, giving the same weight to all criteria. The application with the highest total score will be awarded.

3.4. In the case of tied scores, funding prioritisation will be based on the largest area represented by each applicant. Ultimately, the submission order of applications will be used to break any ties regarding forest area.

3.5. The highest-ranked applications will be selected sequentially until the overall budget for the call is exhausted (until a total of 40 recipients is reached). **In any case, no more than four applicants per country may be selected**.

14.   APPLICATION PROCESS

14.1 Application timeline

Relevant dates	
Opening of the 1st call	02/09/2024 - 8:00 CET
1st Online information session	18/09/2024 - 11:00 CET Register here
2nd Online information session	16/10/2024 - 11:00 CET Register here
Closing of the 1st call	30/10/2024 - 17.00 CET
Communication of results to the applicants	20/12/2024

14.2 Application requirements

Only one application per organisation is allowed.

Applicants are requested to submit their applications online through the project website. The **application form** will be entirely filled on the online **SMURF project** website as specified on the application platform. The information requested in this form can be found in **Annex 1**.

Also, an **Application signature and commitment letter** is required and for this document, the use of the template is mandatory (**Annex 2**) – please refrain from deleting any sections and adhere to the specifications stated in the documents font-size Century Gothic 10. This document should be **signed by an authorised representative** of the organisation and submitted in **pdf format**.

The application is considered complete if the following items are submitted:

1) Online Application form.

2) Application signature and commitment letter signed by applicant representatives to comply with the project activities (Annex 2).

For the application to be admissible, it is mandatory to complete all fields in the online application form and also, to check all the fields indicated in the commitment letter. Incomplete applications will not be admitted for consideration.

On receipt of the application, the applicants will receive an email with an acknowledgment of receipt to the application.

After the submission process is completed, the applicant will not be able to modify the application.

The **deadline for this call is the 30th of October at 17:00 CET**.

Once the deadline is finished the applicant will not be able to submit an application and an email with a "call closed" message will be received.

14.3 Application admissibility and eligibility

Once the call for applications has closed, Cesefor will confirm the admissibility and eligibility of the received applications.

For the applications to be admissible, it is mandatory to submit both the application form and the commitment letter, with **all requested fields completed**. For the applications to be eligible, the applicants must meet the criteria stated in the eligibility criteria section of this document.

Non-admissible or non-eligible applications will not be considered and will be rejected at this stage.

This process will result in a **list of accepted and a list of rejected applications**. The accepted applications will proceed to the evaluation phase. Applicants will receive an

email informing them whether their application has been accepted for evaluation or rejected for not meeting the admissibility or eligibility criteria of the call.

Phase	Description process	Timeline	Output
Closing of the 1st call		30/10/2024 - 17.00 CET	List of applications submitted
Admissibility and eligibility check	Performed by Cesefor to verify the admissibility and eligibility of the applications	15/11/2024	List of applications accepted for evaluation and list of applications rejected

14.4 Further information and assistance in the application process

Read through the **Annex 4**-FAQ related to the Call.

Should you have any questions please contact us using the call identifier "1st SMURF open call for small forest owners' organisations" through the following channels:

- Email: info@smurfproject.eu
- Contact: Cesefor - 0034 975 21 24 53

15.   EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process will follow different stages. Firstly, Cesefor will randomly distribute the accepted applications among the evaluators from the evaluation committee.

The evaluation committee will evaluate the applications considering the award criteria defined in previous sections of this document and the phases outlined in the table below.

Phase	Description process	Timeline	Output
Assignment of the applications to the evaluators	Applications will be randomly distributed among two evaluators from the evaluation committee	18/11/2024	
Individual evaluation	Each eligible application will be reviewed independently by the two evaluators	29/11/2024	Applications individual evaluations
Joint evaluation and list with scores	The value of the two evaluations for each applications are compared and a list of applications with scores is made by Cesefor	6/12/2024	Integrated list of applications with scores

Phase	Description process	Timeline	Output
Final evaluation of applications and ranked list of evaluations	The overall ranking of applications is conducted, and final selection decisions are made	13/12/2024	List of applications granted
Communication of results to the applicants	Results will be communicated to the applicants via email with feedback from the consensus reports	20/12/2024	**Publication and communication of granted applications**

15.1 Evaluation Committee Composition

The evaluation committee for the **SMURF project** will be composed of experts from the partners of the **SMURF** consortia:

- CESEFOR: **2 evaluators**
- IWOOD: **2 evaluators**
- XYLOFUTURE: **1 evaluator**
- UNIFI: **2 evaluators**

Prior to the evaluation, Cesefor will elaborate a specific guide and conduct training sessions for evaluators to ensure comprehensive understanding and accurate application of the award criteria. This will ensure the consistency of the evaluation process.

15.2 Individual Evaluations

Blind applications will be randomly distributed among the evaluators by Cesefor. Each eligible application will be reviewed independently by two partners and then the value of the evaluations shall be checked to ensure that they match and if not, a third evaluation shall be made by the third member of the evaluation committee.

To ensure impartiality, evaluators will review applications from countries other than their own. For example, CESEFOR (Spain) will evaluate applications from other European countries, not from Spain.

All reviewers will provide a table with the scores for each criterion and the information contained in the application of each candidate reviewed following the application score form below (that can also be found in **Annex 5**).

Cesefor will perform a final verification to ensure that all evaluations are complete, and that the evaluation process has been followed correctly.

Application score form	
Reviewer	
Date of revision	
Number of applicant reviewed (assigned automatically at the reception of the applications to anonymize the process)	
Country	
Organisation' territorial level (NUTS and others)	
Date and time of submission	
[1]Forest Area (ha) represented by the organisation	
CRITERIA 1 - Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organisation	Scoring
CRITERIA 2 - Categories of number of associated forest owners	Scoring
CRITERIA 3 - Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring

15.3 Joint Evaluations and final assessment

The value of the two individual evaluations for each application will be compared, and Cesefor will create an integrated list of applications with scores.

Cesefor will then follow the evaluation procedure, considering the **three-step process** outlined in the award criteria and the scores assigned by the two evaluators. This will result in the overall ranking of applications and the final selection decisions, producing a list of granted applications.

The **results** will be communicated via email to both the granted recipients and the rejected applicants, and they will also be **published on** the **SMURF website**, **by Friday, 20th December.**

The three-step selection process for candidates is summarised in this table (also found in **Annex 5**):

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[1] Forest area refers to the area of Forest and Other Wooded Land (FOWL) according to the legal definition in the country, of the forest owners integrated in the organisation.

SELECTION OF CANDIDATES					
Step 1 (Maximum of 3 candidates will be selected)	SUPRANATIONAL	Number of candidates ≤3	All candidates are selected		
		Number of candidates >3	Application of criteria	Criteria 1 - Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organization	Scoring
				Public & private	5
				Only Private	4
				Only Public	3
				Criteria 2 - Number of associated forest owners	Scoring
				>10.000	5
				1.000-10.000	3
				0-1.000	1
				Criteria 3 - Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring
				>40% women	5
				20-40%	3
				0-20%	1
				If tied scores, funding prioritization will be based on the largest area represented by each applicant and ultimatel, in the submission order.	
Step 2 (One candidate per country will be selected)	NATIONAL	1 candidate per country	All candidates are selected		
		> 1 candidate per country	Candidates are prioritized based on NUTS classification levels	National > NUTS1-NUTS2 and NUTS3 levels	
				NUTS1- NUTS2 > NUTS3	
		If there are several candidates per country at the same highest-priority NUTS level	Application of criteria	Criteria 1 - Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organization	Scoring
				Public & private	5
				Only Private	4
				Only Public	3
				Criteria 2 - Number of associated forest owners	Scoring
				>10.000	5
				1.000-10.000	3
				0-1.000	1
				Criteria 3 - Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring
				>40% women	5
				20-40%	3
				0-20%	1
				If tied scores, funding prioritization will be based on the largest area represented by each applicant and ultimatel, in the submission order.	

Step 3 (Remaining candidates until 40 candidates are finally selected)	Once one award recipient has been selected per country, the remaining candidates will be prioritized based on NUTS classification levels		NUTS3 > NUTS1-NUTS2 and National levels	
			NUTS1- NUTS2 > National	
	If there are several candidates per country at the same highest-priority NUTS level	Application of criteria	Criteria 1 - Public-private diversity of forest owners represented within the organization	Scoring
			Public & private	5
			Only Private	4
			Only Public	3
			Criteria 2 - Number of associated forest owners	Scoring
			>10.000	5
			1.000-10.000	3
			0-1.000	1
			Criteria 3 - Gender balance of associated forest owners	Scoring
			>40% women	5
			20-40%	3
			0-20%	1
			If tied scores, funding prioritization will be based on the largest area represented by each applicant and ultimatel, in the submission order.	

15.4 Feedback and Communication

All applicants submitting an application will be informed of the outcome of the selection process by **20th December 2024**. A brief evaluation report narrative comments from the evaluation committee report will be provided, whether successful or not, to help them understand the strengths and weaknesses of their applications and improve future submissions.

Results will be communicated to the applicants via the email provided for communication and the **final list of granted applicants will be published on the SMURF project website**.

16.   GRANT AGREEMENT

Once an entity has been selected for funding, they will be required to sign a dedicated Grant Agreement with the **SMURF** Coordinator (Cesefor).

The Grant Agreement sets out the terms and conditions of awarding and paying the grant to each recipient of the call. In this document, the specific arrangements that should be complied by the recipients of the call (e.g. specific reporting and feedback obligations in respect to the implementation of the supported activities; specific arrangements for providing the financial support; specific rights to access and use the results of the supported activities).

The Grant Agreement template can be found in the Annex 3.

17.   DATA PROTECTION

SMURF Cascade Funding Call requires access to Personal and Entity Data to process and evaluate applications.

As open call coordinator, CESEFOR will act as the Data Controller for all data submitted through the call for this purpose.

To ensure the safety and security of this data, the submission platform which is the project website https://www.smurfproject.eu/ operates under strict compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

Therefore, all applicants are required to accept the **Data protection terms** during submission to ensure full coverage.

For more information regarding the data privacy policy and security measures implemented by the **SMURF project**, please contact: info@smurf.projec.eu.

18.   QUESTIONS / CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about the call, you can check the specific section about cascade funding in the project website:

https://www.smurfproject.eu/cascade-funding-smurf-project/

A FAQ section and support contacts are available on the **SMURF project** website for addressing common questions and issues during the application process.

It is recommended to read through the FAQ related to the Call.

Furthermore, there will be **two online information sessions** to attend specific doubts about the call.

Online information sessions		
First session	**18/09**/2024 at 11.00 CET	Register here
Second session	**16/10**/2024 at 11.00 CET	Register here

Should you have any questions please **contact us** using the call identifier "1st SMURF open call for small forest owners' organisations" through the following channels:

- Email: info@smurfproject.eu

19. ANNEXES

- **Annex 1**. Information requested on the application form (.pdf)
- **Annex 2**. Application signature and commitment letter (.docx)
- **Annex 3**: Grant Agreement template (.pdf)
- **Annex 4**: Frequently Asked Questions (.pdf)
- **Annex 5**. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring Sheet (.pdf)