
ETC CO-OP PROGRAMME 2024

Co-branding of promotional campaigns

Terms and Conditions

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GLOSSARY

- **Applicants:** Partners who jointly submit an application to the programme.
- **Consortium:** A group of a minimum of three and a maximum of six partners that jointly submit an application, co-fund and implement the campaign.
- **Coordinator:** The partner who leads the consortium and is responsible for submitting the application and liaising with ETC on behalf of all other partners in the consortium.
- **FIT:** Free Independent Traveller.
- **KPI:** Key Performance Indicator.
- **Passion community:** A group of individuals who are connected by a common passion point or interest.
- **Passion point:** An emotional driver of consumer choice that plays a big role in determining the products they buy, the content they consume, the brands they embrace and the places they travel to.
- **Partner(s):** A legal entity (either a public, private or public-private body) that contributes to co-fund the campaign by means of its own financial resources.
- **Supplier(s):** A third party that sells goods or services to the partners for the implementation of the campaign.

1. INTRODUCTION

The European Travel Commission's (ETC) co-operative programme *Co-branding of Promotional Campaigns* supports Europe's travel and tourism ecosystem by investing in industry-led communication and promotional initiatives. The programme aims to generate widespread cooperation in the promotion of Europe's sustainable tourism offering by fostering transnational public-private partnerships. These partnerships leverage resources, reach and impact, taking advantage of economies of scale.

The programme is presented by ETC in the framework of an ad-hoc grant of the European Union (EU) with the aim to strengthen the image of Europe as a safe and secure tourist destination in long-haul source markets, in order to contribute to maintain its share of the world market, reinforce the recovery of the intra-EU tourism by focusing on new ways of traveling, better disperse and diversify (in terms of geography and seasons) travellers flows while taking into account residents' aspirations.

Initiatives that receive support from this programme shall produce an added value to ETC and the EU's efforts to put forward the objectives and related actions of the Transition Pathway for tourism¹.

1.1. About the European Travel Commission

The European Travel Commission² (ETC) is an international non-profit making association of official National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) in Europe. The organisation was established in 1948 and is headquartered in Brussels (Belgium).

ETC's mission is to empower its members, stakeholders, and the industry to shape the future of tourism in Europe for the benefit of all. For its member NTOs, ETC provides a broad portfolio of promotional and market intelligence services and encourages the sharing of best practices. ETC is established as a private body (AISBL) under the law of Belgium.

1.2. Objectives

The objectives of the co-branded promotional campaigns are to **strengthen Europe's global perception as a sustainable and inclusive travel destination** and **encourage responsible travel behaviours**.

1.3. Budget available

The total available budget under this programme is 400,000 EUR (four hundred thousand euros). The above-mentioned amount is in no way binding on ETC. Subject to the availability

¹ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/tourism/eu-tourism-transition_en

² Further information about ETC can be found on the website: www.etc-corporate.org

of funds, ETC reserves the right not to allocate all available funds, and/or to redistribute the available funds in a different manner depending on the number and quality of applications received.

2. REQUIREMENTS

ETC is seeking to co-invest into communication and promotional campaigns, hereinafter referred to as **co-branding promotional campaigns**, conceived, developed, and executed by a group of public or private partners in close cooperation with ETC.

These co-branding promotional campaigns must comply with the requirements outlined in the following sections. Applications that do not meet these requirements will be excluded from further evaluation.

2.1. Themes

The co-branding promotional campaigns must showcase experiences and stories that focus on one of the following pan-European themes that appeal to the passion points of niche global communities of travellers:

- **Nature and the Outdoors:** Inspiring experiences and stories framed around human or nature-powered journeys that connect with the outdoors in line with the ethos of the **Slow Adventure movement**³. This includes nature experiences that provide a better understanding of the environment, but also of the local culture, food, people and traditions, especially in rural areas (ecotourism).

This passion point connects with the community of **Immersive Explorers**⁴; 18-34-year-old couples with children, and solo travellers (male bias) who find togetherness in the wilderness and enjoy experiencing nature at their own pace. They want to learn about new cultures, experience new adventures and expand their perspectives from what they learn when travelling.

- **Creative Cities:** Inspiring experiences and stories framed around the local cultural scene and lifestyle, with a focus on contemporary arts, architecture and design, handicrafts, fashion, music, festivals, gastronomy, street and performing arts (creative industries) as well as high-end products in small or medium-size urban areas.

This passion point connects with the community of **City Life Enthusiasts**⁵; 18-34-year-old couples with children, and solo travellers (female bias) who swap landmarks for local

³ Please see the Slow Adventure Guide for a detailed overview of the ethos of the Slow Adventure movement: https://etc-corporate.org/uploads/2020/03/The_Slow_Adventure_Guide_compressed.pdf

⁴ For further information on the profile the community of Immersive Explorers see <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities-immersive-explorers/>

⁵ For further information on the profile the community of City Life Enthusiasts see <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities-city-life-enthusiasts/>

life, trade the well-worn path for a secret side street and crave a culture of creative contrast and artistic reinvention. They want to “live like a local” while developing their own creativity and put emphasis on the atmosphere of the places they visit.

- **History and Ancestry:** Ancestry and heritage-related experiences and stories in connection with historical places and events (places of memory, contemplation and commemoration) which exerted an influence on world history.

This passion point connects with the community of **Explorers of Cultural Identity and Roots**⁶; 35+ year-old couples with children and empty nesters (Male bias) who step beyond borders into the theatre of world history, learning from the stories of yesterday with a desire to discover their own roots.

In addition to the above themes, the co-branding promotional campaigns may also showcase experiences and stories that relate to local gastronomy and lifestyle. Particular focus can also be given to experiences across all themes that promote sustainable modes of transport (e.g., cycling/hiking) and rail travel in particular.

2.2. Geographical scope

For the purpose of this programme, Europe is defined as the ensemble of the following countries:

- A) EU Member States⁷
- B) Non-EU Member States (third countries) participating in the Single Market Programme⁸
- C) ETC Member States⁹

The geographical scope of the co-branding promotional campaign must encompass **at least three Single Market Programme’s countries (EU or non-EU Member States)**, with at least **two of those being an EU Member State**.

ETC welcomes in particular campaigns whose geographical scope includes the countries most severely impacted by the consequences of the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Note that the campaign must be based on a clear European narrative and not on just the addition of individual national or local narratives.

⁶ For further information on the profile the community of Explorers of Cultural Identity and Roots see <https://etc-corporate.org/reports/tourism-passion-communities-explorers-of-cultural-identity-and-roots/>

⁷ Including the outermost regions of the European Union.

⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf

⁹ <https://etc-corporate.org/our-members/>

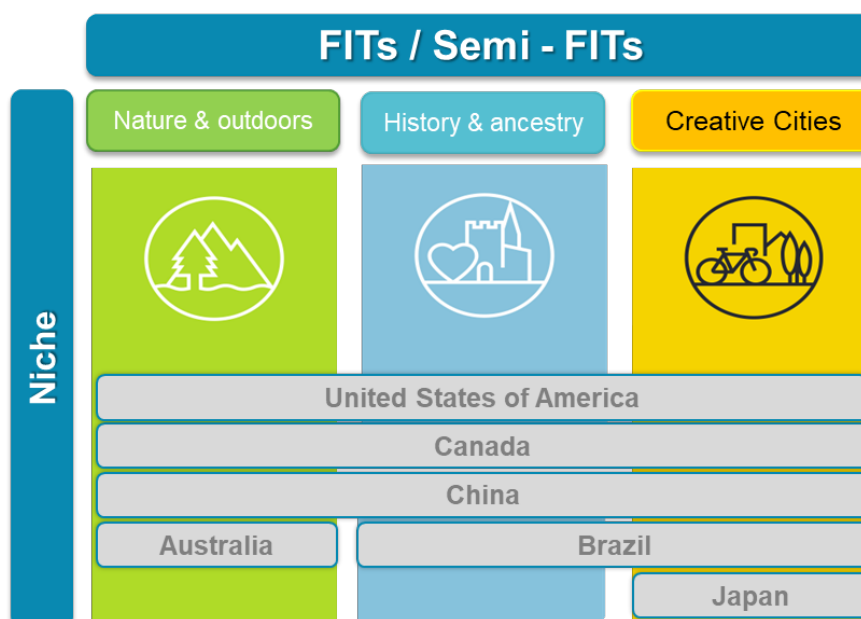
2.3. Target groups

Within each of the niche global communities of travellers described in 2.1 Themes, the co-branding promotional campaigns must specifically target high-net-worth **Free Independent Travellers** (FITs). A FIT is an individual or a small group (<10) of individuals who travel independently (not in an organised group). They book individual products and services arranged by a tour operator or advisor for use by independent travellers.

The co-branding promotional campaigns must target FITs who are at the **dreaming, consideration and/or sharing stages** of their travel cycle and shall help drive them down the path to purchase. There is a preference for engaging repeat visitors to Europe as opposed to first time visitors.

The co-branding promotional campaigns must target consumers in one or more (multi-market) of the long-haul outbound markets per theme listed in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Global target groups



The list of long-haul markets in Figure 1 is not exhaustive, and applicants may propose to target other relevant long-haul¹⁰ outbound markets as long as they can provide sound market research evidence to support their case.

¹⁰ By long-haul outbound market, ETC understands non-European outbound markets. Outbound travel from the Russian Federation is not considered long-haul.

2.4. Types of actions

The co-branding promotional campaigns must contribute to reach the objectives outlined in *1.2 Objectives*. They must use the right messages, channels, and tactics to effectively engage the target groups. Consumer and trade campaigns that include one or more of the activities listed below are eligible to receive financial support:

- **Digital consumer marketing activities.** These include communication and promotional activities using consumer digital channels and tactics (B2C and C2C), such as:
 - Content marketing
 - Video
 - Social media
 - Influencer marketing
 - Programmatic display advertising
 - Email marketing
 - Digital out-of-home advertising
- **Trade promotional activities.** These include communication and promotional activities using travel trade and other business-to-businesses (B2B) channels and tactics, such as:
 - Familiarisation trips
 - Press trips
 - Content marketing
 - Videos and webinars
 - Email marketing
 - Bespoke B2B sales events (workshops, roadshows, etc.)

See examples of past co-funded campaigns in the links below:

- [Reboot Nordic Tourism in USA](#)
- [Creative Cities and Wild Soul of Europe campaigns](#)

The following types of actions will not be considered:

- Product or destination development activities;
- Academic conferences and seminars;
- Offline activation consumer events;
- Fairs and exhibitions;
- Expenses concerning participation in business or consumer groups, events or the activities organised by these (i.e., membership fees, registration fees, etc), including the travel expenses of the staff of the partners to participate in these;
- Actions not focusing on the priority themes (see *2.1. Themes*);

- Actions not focusing exclusively on Europe (see 2.2. *Geographical Scope*);
- Actions already completed or ongoing;
- Actions not being measurable and result-focused;
- Actions with an explicit commercial purpose or effect of producing a profit;
- Actions providing financial support to third parties (re-granting schemes).

2.5. Implementation period

The implementation period is expected to start in **March 2024** and shall not extend beyond the end of **December 2024**, unless otherwise agreed between ETC and the partners.

Within this period, applications must specify the expected timeframe for the execution of the campaign based on the type of campaign, its goals and in general when it is expected to have the highest impact.

The following table provides an indicative timeline for the programme:

Table 1: Timeline

Applications open	23 November 2023
Deadline for submitting applications	31 January 2024
Evaluation of applications and notification to applicants	February 2024
Signature of agreements with partners	March 2024 – April 2024
Public procurement of third-party suppliers	March 2024 – May 2024
Campaign implementation	April 2024 – December 2024
Deadline for completing reporting requirements	30 calendar days after the completion of the campaign

2.6. Publicity

The co-branding promotional campaign must clearly acknowledge ETC's and the European Union's financial contribution. In this respect, the partners are required to give prominence to the following logos on all communication materials (videos, posters, publications, reports, etc.) produced in the framework of the co-branded campaign:

Logo of Europe-visiteurope.com



Name and emblem of the European Union



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

The guidelines for the use of the Europe-visiteurope.com logo and the EU emblem as well as the respective graphic files are available for download at the following link:

- <https://etc-corporate.org/publicity-guidelines/>

In addition, ETC may request the use of specific visuals, hashtags and/or handles on communication materials in order to maximise cross-promotion and leverage opportunities with other promotional activities of ETC.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, ETC's financial contribution to the co-branding campaign will be reduced.

2.7. Co-funding requirements

In line with the co-funding principle, both ETC and the consortium of partners must contribute their own funds to finance the campaign; non-monetary (in-kind) contributions are not accepted.

ETC will cover a maximum of 50% of the total campaign costs up to a maximum of EUR 100,000 (one hundred thousand euros). The remaining share of campaign costs must be collectively funded by the consortium of partners with a minimum contribution of EUR 45,000 (forty-five thousand euros). Each consortium member decides their financial contribution to the campaign.

Applicants must submit a budget estimate (refer to *Annex 1. Budget Form [Excel file]*). The amount of the financial contribution from each partner and the requested contribution from ETC should be specified in the section "Contributions" of the budget form. The expenses foreseen for the implementation of the campaign should be specified in the section "Costs" of the budget form. Note that these expenses must involve third-party suppliers, different from the campaign partners. Note that expenses related to the staff of the partners (i.e., salaries, travel expenses, per diems, etc.) are not eligible costs.

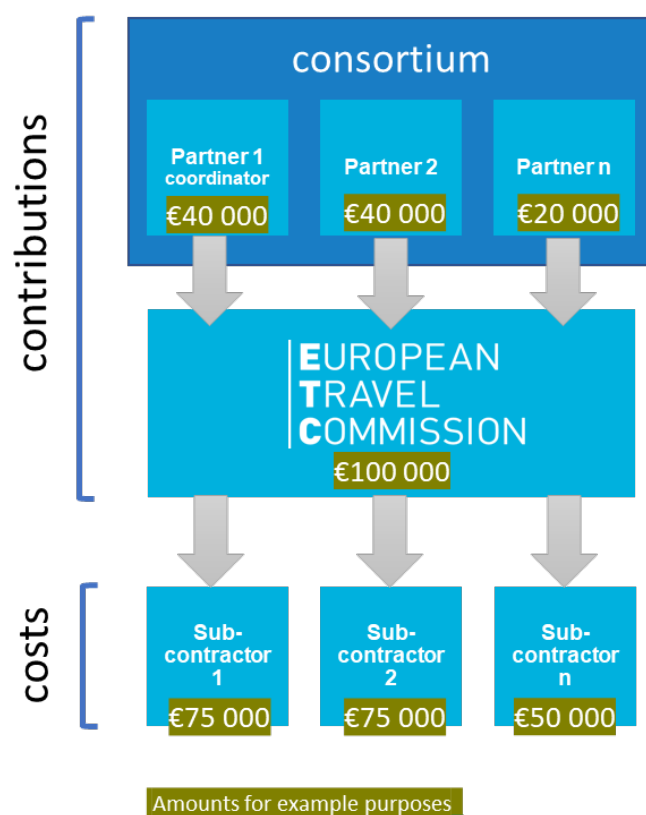
The budget estimate must be comprehensive, coherent, and cost-effective based on the proposed activities. ETC reserves the right to invest a lower ratio than the requested amount depending on its evaluation of the application, the overall availability of funds and demand for funding.

2.8. Payment and administration requirements

ETC shall be responsible for the administration of the co-branding promotional campaign and the overall supervision of its implementation. This includes conducting public procurement procedures, as necessary, following ETC's procedures¹¹ for selecting third-party suppliers and entering into contractual agreements with them, which must be respected by the campaign partners. Expenses procured directly by the partners are not considered eligible expenses. Any decisions on the technical requirements of the procurement, the selection of suppliers, and award of contracts will be jointly managed by ETC and the partners, unless otherwise agreed. The partners will be responsible for the execution and reporting of the campaign.

ETC is also expected to execute all payments to suppliers and other third parties in relation to the expenses of the campaign, covering with its own financial resources (which are partly co-funded by the European Union) its part of the contribution to the campaign (see 2.7. *Co-funding requirements*). Figure 2 below illustrates the payment flows of the programme.

Figure 2:



¹¹ The partners should consider public procurement procedures for the selection of suppliers when planning their campaign. Note that public procurement procedures may take up to 60 calendar days to complete depending on the amount of the contract with the supplier. Please contact ETC for further information.

Note that ETC will not be able to make advance payments to suppliers, for example, kick off the campaign. ETC's contribution should, therefore, be expected to be part of intermediate and/or final payments to suppliers.

ETC shall invoice each campaign partner separately or the consortium coordinator in full (see 4.2. *Eligibility criteria*) for the amount in Euro (EUR) of their contribution to the campaign. The contribution from each campaign partner will be fully due and payable shortly after the signature of the agreement between ETC and the campaign partners.

2.9. Reporting requirements

The partners and the third-party suppliers will be expected to provide ETC with regular updates on work progress as well as a final implementation report, including a detailed overview of the activities performed, description and justification of any changes in the work programme, description of all campaign outputs and related supporting documents¹² (deliverables), results against set goals and KPIs as well as expected future impacts to be generated by the campaign. A final report must be submitted to ETC no later than 30 calendar days after the completion of the campaign.

All reports and supporting documents must be written in English in a clear, concise and accurate manner.

Furthermore, during the implementation of the Campaign as well as afterwards, ETC reserves the right to request additional documentation related to the campaign implementation. ETC, the European Commission or any other EU institution in charge of inspections (such as OLAF) shall have the right to carry out technical, financial checks and audits to determine whether the consortium is implementing the campaign properly and is complying with its obligations. The consortium needs to keep all original campaign-related documents for six years after the agreement with ETC ends.

3. SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

Applications must be written in English and should be **concise and clear**, so there can be no doubt as to word meaning and figures. Applications should include detailed information of the campaign objectives, target audience, key message(s), creative idea, tactics, channels, and expected outputs. Furthermore, a specific emphasis should lie on the

¹²Such as any campaign visuals, promotional materials, content, etc.

monitoring and evaluation of the campaign performance. Therefore, the application must include a table of expected key performance indicators and their specific targets.

3.1. Documents to be submitted

Each application must contain the following documents:

- 1) Completed online application form (see *reference document 1. Online Application Form*¹³)
- 2) Budget form (see *Annex 1. Budget Form [Excel file]*)
- 3) Project timeline (no template provided)

3.2. Deadline for submission

Applications (together with the documents listed above) must be submitted via the online form on ETC's website:

<https://etc-corporate.org/co-branding-campaigns-registration/>

Applications must be received by **31 January 2024 at 23:59 (CET)**. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

Applications must be valid for at least three months after the submission deadline.

4. SELECTION PROCEDURE

The applications will be assessed by the staff members of ETC. ETC reserves the right to seek the European Union's approval of the selection of partners and the scope of the campaign. For that purpose, ETC may share the information about the partners and the documents of the application with the European Union.

The selection shall be based on the fulfilment of the criteria listed in sections 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 below.

4.1. Exclusion criteria

Applications shall be excluded if they fail to comply with the requirements described in *section 2. Requirements* as well as with any of the following underlying principles:

¹³ Only intended for reference, to help you plan your application. Do not submit this form. Please complete the form online to submit your application.

- **Non-profit rule.** The proposed campaign may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit.
- **No double funding.** The campaign shall rely on European Union financing exclusively deriving from this programme. In no circumstances shall the same expense be funded twice by the European Union budget. In this regard, applicants shall inform ETC about any sources and amounts of European Union funding applied for the same campaign or for part of the campaign.
- **Non-retroactivity.** No campaign that has already been completed will receive funding from ETC.

Furthermore, individual applicants shall be excluded from the programme under the following circumstances:

- have been sentenced by final judgment on one or more of the following charges: participation in a criminal organisation, corruption, fraud, money laundering;
- are in a situation of bankruptcy, liquidation, termination of activity, insolvency or arrangement with creditors or any like situation arising from a procedure of the same kind, or are subject to a procedure of the same kind;
- have received a judgement with *res judicata* force, finding an offence that affects their professional integrity or constitutes a serious professional misconduct;
- do not comply with their obligations as regards payment of social security contributions, taxes and dues, according to the statutory provisions of the country where they are established.

Applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in any of the above-mentioned situations. In this regard, ETC reserves the right to ask applicants to supply supporting documents at a later stage.

4.2. Eligibility criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria to be eligible for receiving financial support from ETC and the European Union:

- 1) be a legal entity (either a public, private or public-private body) properly constituted and registered under the National Law of an EU Member State or a third country (non-EU) participating in the Single Market Programme¹⁴;
- 2) be either a Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO), a governmental entity with a clear mandate to promote a European destination; a tourism-related association, a non-profit organisation or a private sector company;
- 3) have sufficient financial capacity¹⁵ (stable and sufficient sources of funding) to maintain its activity throughout the period of campaign implementation;
- 4) have sufficient operational and professional capacity¹⁶, including staff, experience and expertise to carry out the activities described in its application.

Eligible applicants must jointly apply as a consortium. Eligible consortia must comprise **a minimum of three and a maximum of six eligible applicants**.

Note that applicants meeting all criteria except criterion 1 above can still join a consortium and financially support the campaign. Yet, their contribution will not be factored into calculating ETC's financial contribution to the campaign (refer to section *2.7 Co-funding requirements* and *4.3 Award criteria*).

Consortia do not need to have a given legal form to be allowed to apply. All entities in the consortium shall agree upon appropriate arrangements between themselves for the proper management and implementation of the co-branding promotional campaign and shall assume joint responsibility towards its completion and final delivery.

The consortium must be led by one of its partners referred to as the **coordinator**. The coordinator shall be responsible for submitting the application and liaising with ETC on behalf of all other partners in the consortium, for administrative matters and overall command of operations.

Multiple applications from the same partners or consortium of partners are allowed.

4.3. Award criteria

Applications will be firstly assessed based on the quality criteria and secondly evaluated against the financial criterion outlined below.

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf

¹⁵ In this regard, ETC reserves the right to ask applicants to supply supporting documents at a later stage.

¹⁶ *ibid*

Each quality criterion and their respective weights are as follows:

<u>Quality criteria</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Relevance and strategic fit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the campaign is in line with and able to contribute to the objectives of this programme; • The nature, experience and capacity of the partners for implementing the campaign. 	30
Pan-European thematic dimension <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent to which the campaign scope ensures a clear thematic approach in line with the target groups of this programme; • The extent to which the campaign scope pursues appropriate geographical coverage of Europe and a solid European narrative. 	30
Clarity and creativity of the campaign approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of detail, coherence and practicality of the campaign tactics and methodology; • The extent to which the campaign demonstrates a creative, innovative, and sustainable approach; • The extent to which the campaign outputs, KPIs and the estimated impacts on target groups are verifiable and well-defined; • The level of detail and coherence of the timeline and the budget. 	40

Each quality criterion will be given a score in a range from 0 (zero) points to 10 (ten) points in accordance with the following scale:

0 Not available/not provided	The application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1-2 Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
3-4 Fair	The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
5-6 Good	The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
7-8 Very good	The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
9-10 Excellent	The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Proposals must achieve a minimum score of 60 out of 100 points in the quality score. Proposals that score below this threshold will be excluded from further evaluation and will not receive any funding.

The financial assessment will consider the consortium's requested contribution from ETC, expressed as a percentage relative to the total campaign budget. A higher score will be awarded to applications with a lower requested share.

The following formula will be used to calculate the final total score of the application:

$$\text{Final score} = [(\text{lowest requested share/proposal requested share}) \times 100 \times 0.5] + (\text{quality score} \times 0.5)$$

4.4. Notification of the decision and signature of the agreement

ETC envisages that the selection procedure will take up to 4 calendar weeks after the submission deadline to complete (see *2.5. Implementation period*). Upon completion of the selection process, ETC will notify in writing the final decision and next steps to undertake to each consortium coordinator.

The selected consortium of partners will be required to sign an agreement (see reference document *2. Draft Model Agreement*) with ETC within 45 days following the notification to the coordinator. If this agreement is not signed within deadline, ETC reserves the right to cancel its financial support to the co-branding campaign. Applicants are strongly advised to read the draft agreement, in particular its requirements in terms of payment and reporting.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

This document is in no way binding on the European Travel Commission or the European Union. Any contractual obligation commences only upon signature of the agreement between ETC and the selected consortium of partners.

ETC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received as well as to negotiate with all qualified applicants or to cancel this programme, either partially or totally. In the event of cancellation of this programme, this should not entail any financial obligation from ETC towards any applicant.

Submission of an application implies acceptance of the terms and conditions set out in this document.

6. HELP DESK

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact ETC if they need assistance in finding suitable partners, planning and submitting their application or in case they have any enquiries about applicable public procurement procedures or any other matter relevant to the information contained in this document.

Enquires must be made in writing and sent via the contact form on the website <https://etc-corporate.org/co-branding-campaigns-help-desk/>

Brussels, 23 November 2023

European Travel Commission

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www.etc-corporate.org