

PRESS RELEASE

OTIE extends the I-STARS Open Call for Tourism SMEs More time to apply, more tourism businesses to benefit.

Following the demand from SMEs dedicated to pioneering sustainable practices within the tourism sector, OTIE is pleased to announce the **extension of the I-STARS open call period until December 6th, 2023, 5pm Italian time**. This extension offers a unique opportunity for tourism SMEs to apply for grants of up to 5,600 euros, emphasizing the manifold benefits of integrating sustainability into their operations.

Sustainability in tourism is not just a buzzword; it's a strategic imperative. Tourism SMEs play a pivotal role in shaping the industry's future, and embracing sustainable practices can yield numerous advantages. By participating in the I-STARS open call, SMEs stand to gain:

- 1. Financial Support:** Grants of up to 5,600 euros, 100% funded, to support the implementation of sustainable initiatives. De minimis rule does not apply.
- 2. Enhanced Reputation:** Consumers are increasingly conscientious about supporting environmentally responsible businesses. Participating SMEs will not only contribute to a greener future but also enhance their brand image and appeal to environmentally conscious travellers.
- 3. Operational Efficiency:** Integrating sustainable practices leads to increased operational efficiency, reducing costs in the long run. This, in turn, enhances the overall competitiveness and resilience of SMEs in the dynamic tourism market.
- 4. Access to Networks and Resources:** Successful applicants will join a network of like-minded businesses, gaining access to resources to further advance their sustainability goals.

As the tourism industry grapples with environmental challenges, the role of SMEs in driving positive change is more critical than ever. The extended open call period presents an ideal opportunity for SMEs to not only secure financial support but also to position themselves as leaders in sustainable tourism.

OTIE urges eligible tourism SMEs to seize this opportunity and submit their applications before the extended deadline in 4 simple steps:

1. Read all details <https://ccci.org.cy/istars-project/#grants>
2. Contact the I-STARS Sustainability Expert of your choice <https://bit.ly/ISTARSExperts>
3. Register on the I-STARS eLearning Platform <https://bit.ly/ISTARSePlatform>
4. Fill in and submit your Application Form online <https://bit.ly/ISTARSApplication>

Together, we can foster a more sustainable, resilient, and vibrant tourism industry for the benefit of all.

For more information, please contact OTIE helpdesk, **Tel:** +39 3513064307,
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