

## The SMURF Project Launches Second Open Call to Fund Small Forest Owner Organisations Across Europe

After a successful 1st call, where 35 organisations from 16 countries have been funded, the SMURF project launches a second call to incorporate at least 40 new forest organisations to drive innovation, sustainability and profitability in small-scale forestry.

- The Innovative Horizon Europe project SMURF aims to shape the future of Small Forest Holdings in Europe, with strong participation of forest owners' organisations
- This 2nd call for Cascade Funding aims to incorporate more organisations to contribute to SMURF's mission.
- Through this cascade funding scheme, up to **€825,000** will be distributed to organisations representing small forest owners to foster innovation, sustainability, and profitability in small-scale forestry across Europe.
- Applications will be **open until 2 July 17.00 CET** through the project website.

(Madrid, Spain – 13 of June 2025) - The SMURF project, a pioneering 48-month initiative under the Horizon Europe programme, has launched its second open call for applications. The project focuses on **Small Forest Holdings** and forest owners, addressing their challenges and seeking to identify and develop holistic sustainability solutions across the forest-based value chain.

Following the success of the first call, which benefited 35 organisations, this second **Cascade Funding Call** aims to increase the involvement of small forest owner organisations in key project activities.

The goal is to fund **at least 40 legal organisations representing small forest owners, both public and private, in any 27 EU Member States**, broadening SMURF's outreach and enriching its collaborative ecosystem with expertise across Europe.

Successful applicants will actively contribute to SMURF's mission by:

- Establishing **pilot projects** focused on innovative business models and **demonstration stands** for close-to-nature silviculture.
- Piloting projects linked to **carbon credits**.
- Participating in **training sessions**.

- Contributing to national and regional Working Groups.
- Participating in the SMURF Final Conference
- Leading **communication and dissemination activities** throughout 2026 and 2027.

Álvaro Picardo, Project Coordinator at SMURF, highlights the value of this funding: *"SMURF represents a paradigm shift in how we approach forest management in small holdings across Europe. With this cascade funding, we aim to gather direct insights from European small forest holdings, reflecting the diversity of forest associations and cooperatives throughout the continent. It's an ambitious goal, but we want to leverage the real-life experience and knowledge of these organisations to turn ideas into action."*

#### **Key features of the funding initiative:**

- Individual grants of up to **€60,000** per project.
- Targeting **40+ organisations** across the EU.
- Eligible applicants: **Associations, federations, confederations, or cooperatives** of small forest owners.
- Project implementation period: until **July 2027**.
- Application deadline: **2 July 2025 – 17:00 CET**.

For detailed information about the SMURF project cascade funding, eligibility criteria, and application process, please visit the [project website](#).

**About SMURF:** It is a Horizon Europe project, aligned with the EU's Forest Strategy, that addresses the problems of Small Forest Holdings (lack of professionalism, low profitability, fragmented ownership, risk of abandonment and insufficient professional support) attempting to identify and develop viable solutions from across EU and worldwide. Including innovative business models and business opportunities, simple Systems of Payments for Ecosystem Services, Joint Management and Forest Land Consolidation, improved support systems and simplified regulation, that could promote sustainable forest management. By tailoring solutions for small forest properties, SMURF enhances carbon farming, biodiversity, and forest products' valorization. With a multidisciplinary approach and diverse stakeholder engagement, SMURF provides holistic sustainability solutions across the forest-based value chain.

Ten organizations from Spain, Belgium, Italy, France, Portugal, and Denmark collaborate with a translational, multidisciplinary, and multi-actor approach. This project is granted by the European Research Executive Agency (REA) under the Horizon Europe program.

#### **Contact information:**

**Álvaro Picardo.** Coordinator of SMURF project. Cesefor (Soria, Spain). [alvaro.picardo@cesefor.com](mailto:alvaro.picardo@cesefor.com)

**Josefina Trecco.** Communications and Marketing Manager. Contactica (Madrid, Spain). [josefina.trecco@contactica.es](mailto:josefina.trecco@contactica.es)