



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME)

Unit A1 - COSME

COSME Programme

Call for Proposals

**Strategic alliances for the uptake of advanced technologies by SMEs
on the economic recovery**

COS-STRAT-2020-3-05

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Questions and Answers

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Important:

The deadline for the submission of applications is 02/02/2021 at 17h00 Brussels time. Please do not wait with the submission to the last day, last minute. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be admissible.

Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME), B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel, BELGIQUE/BELGIË

<http://ec.europa.eu/easme/cosme>

1. Introduction and Background

No questions.

2. Objective(s) – Theme(s) – Activities – Outputs

Question 1: Is an alliance made from two traditional SMEs which connect with at least one tech-savvy SME?

Reply 1: According to the call text, section 2.3(b) “Core mandatory activities”: “... consortia are requested to:

- (1) Build strategic alliances between traditional SMEs facing similar challenges for the uptake of advanced technologies in their industrial ecosystem, first within individual clusters and then pooling them across clusters within each ecosystem. Cluster organisations are strongly encouraged to reach out to clusters in their ecosystem that are not part of the consortium, and especially clusters in regions with strong industrial transition needs. Clusters shall help these alliances of SMEs to identify and define their adaptation needs;*
- (2) Support the established strategic alliances in bridging with EU tech-savvy SMEs, which can provide solutions, both directly and via hackathons...”.*

Moreover, in the call text, section 2.4 it is mentioned that “Consortia shall develop at least fifteen strategic alliances between traditional SMEs facing similar challenges for the uptake of advanced technologies in their industrial ecosystems. In addition, they shall connect each alliance with at least 10 tech-savvy SMEs that could provide potential solutions. Each alliance should include at least 10 SMEs from at least three cluster organisations, and demonstrate that it reached out to SMEs from other clusters that are not part of the consortium”.

3. Timetable

No questions.

4. Budget available and funding of projects

No questions.

5. Admissibility requirements

No questions.

6. Eligibility criteria

Question 1:

Are Universities eligible as partner in the consortium?

Reply 1:

According to the call text, section 6.1, "Applicants must be legal entities and shall be representatives of industry, research community, and technology providers". Consequently, Universities are eligible as partner in the consortium.

Question 2:

Can a project proposal be led by a UK organisation (provided that min 3 EU Member States are part of the consortium)?

Reply 2:

According to the call text, section 6.3, "Please be aware that following the entry into force of the EU-UK Withdrawal Agreement³⁰ on 1 February 2020 and in particular Articles 127(6), 137 and 138, the references to natural or legal persons residing or established in a Member State of the European Union are to be understood as including natural or legal persons residing or established in the United Kingdom. UK residents and entities are therefore eligible to participate under this call for proposals". Consequently, a proposal can be led by a UK organisation.

Question 3:

Are the following entities eligible?

- Foundations
- Association of clusters (association grouping different clusters)
- SMEs and business supporting organisations
- National development agencies
- Technological centres

Reply 3:

According to the call text, section 6.1, "Applicants must be legal entities and shall be representatives of industry, research community, and technology providers". If the entities you are referring to fall under industry, research community and technology providers, they are eligible.

Question 4: Are Fab Labs eligible partners in this call, as the definition of the "technology centre" in the Call for proposals document is not clear?

Reply 4: The term "technology centre" is explained in the call text, section 6.1 and in footnote 27 in particular, where reference is also being made to the report of the European Commission (2014) "Setting up, managing and evaluation EU Science and Technology Parks: An advice and guidance report on good practice" (https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/stp_report_en.pdf). If the Fab Labs you are referring to fall under "technology centres", as elaborated in the call text, they are eligible.

Question 5: Do the projects have to focus on specific industrial ecosystem or is it recommended for the partnerships to represent several industrial ecosystems?

*Reply 5: According to the call text, section 6.1, “The different clusters in the consortia applying for this call for proposals may represent groups of SMEs from the same **industrial segment or related industrial sectors** that offer scope for cross-fertilisation”. Moreover, in the call text, under Section 6.1 and in footnote 28 reference is being made to the industrial sector list from EUROSTAT.*

Question 6: Does a project have to focus on only one specific sector such as sports, agrifood, metal, etc. or can cover more than one sector from the same industry?

*Reply 6: According to the call text, section 6.1, “The different clusters in the consortia applying for this call for proposals may represent groups of SMEs from the same **industrial segment or related industrial sectors** that offer scope for cross-fertilisation”. Moreover, in the call text, under Section 6.1 and in footnote 28 reference is being made to the industrial sector list from EUROSTAT.*

Question 7: According to the “Guide for Application” there are two types of participants, mono-beneficiary and multi-beneficiary. If one applies as a mono-beneficiary, should the "consortium part" be skipped? If yes, please explain the steps to be followed in order to participate as a mono-beneficiary

Reply 7: According to the call text, section 6.2, “Proposals must be submitted by consortia composed by eligible legal entities (as defined in section 6.1) established in a minimum of three different EU Member States.

Consortia must choose within their midst a lead organisation, referred to as the Coordinator”. Moreover, in the call text, section 6.1, it is mentioned that “Applicants must be legal entities and shall be representatives of industry, research community, and technology providers”. Therefore, a proposal submitted by a single entity is not eligible.

Question 8: Regarding the reply 6 of the FAQ and the reference to the sector list from EUROSTAT (footnote 28 in the call text), in the EUROSTAT list there is no mention of the health sector. Is the health sector part of the section 11 “Professional, scientific and technical activities”, or does it mean that the healthtech industry is not eligible to this call?

Reply 8: The healthcare sector is considered a key sector for the economic recovery. The participation of healthcare sector in this call is welcome

Question 9: Is a BSO, LTD, that is established by the City and it is a public company that manages two incubators eligible applicant?

Reply 9: According to the call text, section 6.1, “Applicants must be legal entities and shall be representatives of industry, research community, and technology providers”. If the entity you are referring to fall under industry, research community and technology providers, it is eligible.

7. Exclusion criteria

No questions.

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8. Selection criteria

No questions.

9. Award criteria

No questions.

10. Legal commitments

No questions.

11. Administrative review procedures

No questions.

12. Financial provisions

Question 1: Are subcontracting and cascade funding allowed for this call? If yes, to what extent?

Reply 1: In the call text, section 12.1 (e) the financial provisions for subcontracting are elaborated. Moreover, in the call text, section 12.2, it is mentioned “B. Direct costs of subcontracting (including related duties, taxes and charges, such as non-deductible value added tax (VAT) paid by beneficiaries that are not public bodies acting as public authority) are eligible if the conditions set out in the grant agreement are met”.

Cascade funding is not foreseen in this call.

13. Reporting requirements

No questions.

14. Publicity

No questions.

15. Data protection

No questions.

16. Procedure for the submission of the proposals

Question 1:

Is there a page limit for the DoA (Technical Annex I)?

Reply 1:

No, there is no page limit for the DoA.

17. Annexes

No questions.

18. Other questions

Question 1:

Is an information workshop/webinar going to be organised?

Reply 1:

No, there is not going to be an information workshop/webinar.

Question 2:

Can EASME perform a pre-assessment of proposals of project ideas?

Reply 2:

EASME cannot perform a pre-assessment of proposals of project ideas.