

OPEN CALL 

Guide for Applicants

for GreenTech startups



Climate-Tech



Circular Economy



Clean-Tech



Agri-Food

Closing date for proposals :

13 March 2024, 17:00 CET



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CONSORTIUM

Organisation name	Country	Role
ASOCIATIA SPHERIK	RO	Coordinator
G-Force, s.r.o.	SK	Member
Fasttrack Action, Lta	PT	Member
F6S Network Ireland	IE	Member

TABLE 1 : CONSORTIUM

The SynergistEIC Consortium reserves the right to update, amend or modify any part, section or detail of the document at any point in time without prior information. Updates will be widely communicated using all project communication channels. Additionally, should an update be required during the open call application period, pending and completed applications will be notified through the F6S portal so that they can act if required.

The information and views set out in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein.

TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

This section describes the relevant terms that are used in the open call documentation. Unless otherwise stated, the definition of a term is the one stated in this section.

Term	Definition
SynergistEIC Consortium/consortium	Group of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible for implementing the SynergistEIC project as defined in the Grant Agreement number No 101073761.
Applicant	Company that intends to submit or has submitted a proposal to the funding program.
Beneficiary	Company that has submitted a proposal to the SynergistEIC second Open Call that has been accepted for funding and has signed or is in the process of signing a Sub-grant Agreement.
External Evaluator	An expert that has been selected by the SynergistEIC Consortium to assist in the evaluation of the proposal submitted to the funding program (SynergistEIC open call). Experts cannot have conflicts of interest and are bound by their own confidentiality agreement.
Open Call (OC)	Application process and timeline during which the applicants submit an application to be selected to the program.
Proposal Phase	Period when applicants can submit proposals to the open call. Each open call has a fixed deadline that is automatically enforced.
Evaluation Phase	Period when the consortium evaluates and ranks the applications. At the end of the phase, all proposals are notified of the results of the evaluation.

Contract preparation and signing phase	Period when the selected proposals and the consortium complete the administrative procedures to sign the Sub-grant Agreement and prepare administrative documents.
Implementation phase/ SynergistEIC Programme	Timeline of 6 months during which the growth program is delivered and the services by the impact builders are utilised.
Widening countries	Widening countries are countries with low participation rates in FP7 and H2020 projects. (official list here)
Outermost regions	The outermost regions are islands, archipelagos and one land territory (French Guiana). They are located in the western Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean basin, the Amazonian forest and the Indian Ocean. (more details here)

TABLE 2 : TERMS AND DEFINITION

1. INTRODUCTION

This document provides a full set of information regarding the second SynergistEIC [open call for proposals](#). In addition to these guidelines, the applicants are invited to get acquainted with the following annexes at proposal stage.

All associated Annexes must be considered for the submission of a proposal:

- **Annex 1 - Application form templates** - a separate application form is available for the applicants from the two tracks that SynergistEIC targets:
EIC Accelerator applicants: <LINK>
Non-EIC Accelerator applicants: <LINK>
- **Annex 2 - Technical proposal template** - a technical annex filled in with the text editor of your choice in English language, exported to PDF format without restrictions for printing, and uploaded through the online application form.

2. ABOUT THE PROJECT

[SynergistEIC](#) is an EU-funded digital and deeptech growth program that seeks to ensure the scaling up of EU digital and deeptech startups by providing a custom, industry-focused, 6-months growth program that will act as a catalyst in delivering market-ready technology solutions in 4 key GreenTech impact areas: climate-tech, clean-tech, circular economy and agri-food.

SynergistEIC's long term strategic objective is to help European technology startups scale, contributing towards the competitiveness and strategic autonomy of the EU and fulfilling its ambitious Net Zero goals.

SynergistEIC is looking for startups and SMEs developing digital deeptech solutions (based on AI, Machine learning and language processing, Big data, Advanced Computing, Bioengineering, Next Generation Internet, Blockchain, IoT, etc.).

Special focus will be devoted to attracting high-potential companies from Widening countries and companies led by women (with women in C-level positions).

SynergistEIC main objectives are to:

- Identify promising startups in GreenTech sectors with high potential to access EIC Accelerator, particularly through Startup Europe initiatives.
- Reinforce the activities of the European Innovation Council by targeting high potential startups that have applied for EIC Accelerator but were not awarded the grant yet.

- Accelerate the growth of innovative non-EIC applicant startups.
- Connecting startups with relevant ecosystem stakeholders and raising their readiness for investment.

During its time frame, SynergistEIC will distribute €1.5M via sub-grants to the project beneficiaries.

3. OPEN CALL 2 FOR GREENTECH STARTUPS INFORMATION

This document provides the relevant information regarding the second open call for proposals for the SynergistEIC project, also referred to as SynergistEIC – Open Call 2. The budget available for this Open Call is €750,000 which will be used for sub-grants of value of up to €50,000 each for 15 startups (5 EIC-applicants and 10 non-EIC applicants).

The call is open for submission from 10th of January 2024 to 13th of March 2024, 17:00 CET (Brussels time).

The second SynergistEIC Open Call shares the same focus areas and objectives outlined for the overarching SynergistEIC programme outlined in section 2 above.

The project aims to have min. 50% of selected companies from Widening countries and min. 25% companies led by women (C-level).

3.1. BENEFITS TO THE STARTUPS

The SynergistEIC program brings the following benefits to the selected beneficiaries:

- Up to 50,000€ sub-grants to be used for reaching their development KPIs
- Access to growth services, mentorship and event attendance
- Connections with relevant stakeholders
- Support in fundraising process and intros to investors
- Support in understanding EU funding and public procurement
- General promotion and visibility of the selected companies.

3.2. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYNERGISTEIC OPEN CALL 2

Applicants / types of applicants	digital and deeptech startups and SMEs
Open call timeframe	10th of January 2024 / 13th of March 2024
Official application platform	For EIC Accelerator applicants: LINK For non-EIC Accelerator applicants: LINK
Number of proposals to be selected	10 Non-EIC applicant startups and 5 EIC applicant startups
Evaluation and selection of proposals	remote evaluation + video pitch deck to be presented at the application stage
Duration of SynergistEIC programme	6 months
Maximum budget per applicant	50.000 EUR
Milestones / payments for selected applicants	70% of allocated total will be sent to the startup 2 weeks after signing the subgrantee agreement and 30% of the allocated total budget will be released to the startup after the first report(s) is sent and approved by the SynergistEIC partners.

TABLE 3 : MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SYNERGISTEIC OPEN CALL 2

3.3. ORIGIN OF THE FUNDS

The selected applicants will sign a dedicated Sub-grant Agreement with the SynergistEIC consortium. The funds attached to the Sub-grant Agreement that the startups will be signing when accepted comes directly from the funds of the European project SynergistEIC and therefore remain property of the EU until the payment of the balance, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in SynergistEIC via European Commission Grant Agreement No 101073761.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants must meet the requirements described in this section to be eligible for the SynergistEIC Open Call 2.

4.1. TYPES OF APPLICANTS

The applicants must be part of one of the following **two target groups**:

Category 1: EIC-applicant startups

Digital and deep tech startups in green-tech field that:

- Have applied for EIC Accelerator and were preselected after Step 1, but not selected or have not applied to Step 2
 - Can provide proof of Seal of Excellence or proof of successful Step 1 application for EIC Accelerator and evaluation feedback.

or

- Have implemented an SME Instrument Phase 1 project.
 - Can provide proof of Seal of Excellence OR proof of successful SME Instrument Phase 1 and evaluation feedback.

Category 2: Non-EIC-applicant startups

Digital and deep tech startups in green-tech field that:

- Have not applied for EIC Accelerator or SME Instrument.
- Have not received funding (private or public) more than €500,000 and can provide proof of it.
- Have minimum TRL level 4.

The following additional conditions apply:

1. The accepted applicants are individual legally established entities under the category of start-ups in the form of SMEs or small mid-caps.
2. The project scope conforms to the list of activities and services eligible under the programme action.
3. The technological focus is Digital deep tech startups, notably using AI, Machine learning and language processing, Big data, Advanced Computing, Bioengineering, Next Generation Internet, Blockchain, IoT.
4. The sectoral focus is companies developing innovative solutions addressing ClimateTech, GreenTech, Circular Economy and AgriFood challenges.

5. The participating organisations should not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
6. The organisations or individuals applying should not have convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, and unethical or illegal business practices.
7. The participants must have a 9-number Personal Identification Code (PIC) - Register [here](#) if you don't have one.
- 8. Please be aware that startups can apply simultaneously to SynergistEIC Open Call 2 and to the open calls of the sister projects of SynergistEIC (X2.0 or Ventures Thrive), but they can be selected for and participate in only one programme.** Aside from the sister projects, the startups can apply to different sub-calls for financial support to third parties to receive several vouchers under one or more Startup Europe project(s) as long as the scope of the third party scheme is different and different activities are supported (no double funding), a startup working on one or more Startup Europe projects can receive services from different projects and their calls.

Note: Third parties receiving Financial Support from SynergistEIC through the open call will not become part of the SynergistEIC Grant Agreement. The SynergistEIC Grant Agreement will not need to be amended to include the selected beneficiaries.

4.2. ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

The companies eligible to participate in the SynergistEIC– Open Call #2 for GreenTech Startups are the single legal entities established or operating in Europe and the Widening area, defined by the European Commission as:

- EU member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.
- Associated countries: Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye and Ukraine.
- Outermost Regions (defined in Art. 349 TFEU): Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Mayotte, Réunion, Saint-Barthélemy, Saint-Martin, the Azores, Madeira and the Canary Islands.

Preference will be given to companies founded by individuals from, or incorporated in, Widening Countries or EU Outermost Regions.

4.3. ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES THAT QUALIFY FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

4.3.1. ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES FOR EIC-APPLICANTS

Activities should aim to increase market coverage of selected solutions. It can be achieved through:

- Further development of their product leading to achieving higher TRL level
- Technology improvement to meet market needs
- Marketing and branding costs
- Sales efficiency enhancement
- Pricing model improvement
- Feasibility and Market studies
- Growth hacking experiments, such as experimenting with new products and services as new revenue streams
- Involving end-users/testers in product development process
- Services related to conference/trade show attendance
- Product/service validation services such as personalised demos, pilot test preparation
- Costs related to Collaborations with labs, universities, research centres
- IP - patent application, advisor/patent attorney, market research
- Product - A/B testing, consultant, acquisition of technology, R&D spending, labs or lab equipment, web services (hosting, website optimisation, cloud computing etc)
- Hiring - expanding the team strategically

4.3.2. ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES FOR NON-EIC APPLICANTS

Activities should aim to increase the market readiness of the products or services developed by beneficiaries and their readiness to apply for EIC Accelerator. It can be achieved through:

- Further development of their product leading to achieving higher TRL level
- Testing and piloting the solutions, for instance within specialised infrastructures such as DIHs, pan-European Research Infrastructures, or customer facilities
- Gaining market data that would improve the commercialization strategy
- Engagement of end users, such as industry networks or similar
- Marketing and sales-enhancing services
- Access to specialised EIC Accelerator consulting services
- Services related to conference/trade show attendance
- Financial advisory/tax/due diligence/certification costs
- IP - patent application, advisor/patent attorney, market research

- Product - A/B testing, consultant, acquisition of technology, R&D spending, labs or lab equipment, web services (hosting, website optimisation, cloud computing etc)
- Hiring - expanding the team strategically

5. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION AND SELECTION

The SynergistEIC – Open Call 2 is a competitive funding program. Only one proposal per applicant (legal entity) can be submitted to this open call. In the event of multiple submissions by an applicant, only the last proposal received (timestamp of the system) will enter the evaluation process (and regardless of the track to which a proposal is being submitted to). Any other submitted proposals involving the same applicant will be declared non-eligible and will not be evaluated in any case.

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted. After the call closure, no additions, or changes to received proposals will be considered.

5.1. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

Proposers will need to submit two files as part of their application package:

1. A Technical annex (annotated template is provided by SynergistEIC), aligned with the evaluation criteria.
2. A 3-minutes video pitch in English featuring the founders introducing their product, team, green focus/impact, potential for growth, and results expected from benefiting from the programme action.

5.1.1. PROPOSAL PREPARATION

Applicants must consider the following steps when preparing their proposal:

- For the proposal preparation, applicants are required to apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception).
- Applicants that do not accept the terms and conditions will not be eligible.
- Be specific and concise. Questions in the online form have character limitations.
- It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including communications delays, automatically leads to rejection of the submission. The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

- The failure to submit a proposal on time, for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.
- Additional material, which has not been specifically requested in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation of the proposals. Data not included in the proposal will not be considered.
- SynergistEIC offers a dedicated support channel available for proposers at info@synergisteic.eu or via the F6S Application Page discussion board. Requests or inquiries about the submission system or the call itself, received after the closure time of the call will neither be considered nor answered.
- If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and if the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the SynergistEIC team to re-submit the proposal (for this purpose please contact info@synergisteic.eu).
- Only one proposal will be accepted for funding per start-ups/SMEs. Given the fact this call is a competitive one, and the teams will focus on a specific challenge or project, only one proposal per start-ups/SMEs will be evaluated. In the case of a multi-submission by a start-ups/SMEs, only the last one received (timestamp of the system) will enter into our evaluation process, being the rest declared as non-eligible. If the last submitted proposal is declared then not eligible or fails the thresholds of the evaluation, the rest of proposals will not be considered for evaluation in any case.
- If the **Technical Annex exceeds 10 pages (excluding the ethics table), the excess pages are not to be taken into consideration** by the experts when evaluating the proposal. Total page limit should not be longer than 10 pages (Excluding section 7 Ethics and security). The explanations in the beginning (1 page) should be removed and if they are not removed by the applicant, they are not to be considered by the evaluator as part of the total number of pages of the application.
- If the **video pitch exceeds 3 minutes, the excess minutes and information are not to be taken into consideration** by the experts when evaluating the proposal. Total length limit should not be longer than 3 minutes.

5.1.2. MEANS OF SUBMISSION

The SynergistEIC application forms on the F6S platform, one form for EIC Accelerator applicants ([LINK](#)) and one form for non-EIC Accelerator applicants ([LINK](#)) will be the entry points for the submission of all proposals to the SynergistEIC open calls. Any proposal submitted through other channels will be automatically rejected.

Any documentation that is required and requested by the SynergistEIC consortium should be submitted via a dedicated channel that will be indicated by the consortium during the execution of the sub-granted projects.

The deadline of the open call will not be extended unless a major problem with the F6S platform makes the system unavailable.

5.2. LANGUAGE

English is the official language for the SynergistEIC open call 2. Submissions done in any language other than English will not be eligible or evaluated. English is the only official language during the whole implementation of the SynergistEIC project.

5.3. DOCUMENTATION FORMATS

Any documentation requested in any of the phases of the open call and projects' implementation must be submitted electronically in **PDF format**, in the template provided by the project, without restrictions for printing.

Regarding the 3 minutes video pitch format, there is not a strict requirement, but we recommend MP4. The maximum size of the video can not be more than 30 Mp.

5.4. DATA PROTECTION

To process and evaluate applications, SynergistEIC will need to collect personal and industrial data. F6S Network Limited (F6S) will manage the data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure coverage. It should be noted that SynergistEIC requests the minimum information needed to deliver the evaluation procedures or the implementation of the funding program. Please refer to <https://www.f6s.com/terms> to check F6S platform data privacy policy and security measures.

5.5. PROPOSAL EVALUATION AND SELECTION

5.5.1. STEP 1: ELIGIBILITY VERIFICATION

After closing the open call, SynergistEIC partners will check if applicants and submitted applications meet the eligibility criteria outlined above. SynergistEIC consortium will create and validate the 'Eligible Applicants List', dividing the

applications received by category (EIC-applicant or non-EIC-applicant). Afterwards, eligible proposals will be remotely (external) evaluated

Proposals marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria) will get a rejection letter with a justification. No additional feedback on the process will be given.

5.5.2. STEP 2: EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Eligible proposals will move on to the external evaluation. The external evaluation will be done remotely by external expert evaluators. One application will be evaluated by 2 (two) external experts, independently from each other. The evaluators will be selected from a pool of 5 experts that will be established through a call for Expressions of Interest (Eoi) for external evaluators. The evaluators will have expertise in the domains of GreenTech, professional and/ or academic experience, as well as experience in evaluation of EU proposals.

The proposals will be scored by the external evaluators based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria (EC)	Description
EC1. Excellence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants must demonstrate a clear set of objectives to be reached with the awarded funding. • Need for the innovation, and its scalability. • Level of innovation within the target market and degree of differentiation that the project will bring.
EC2. Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market context: applicants have to demonstrate a clear idea of what they want to do and whether the new/improved product or service has market potential, and how it solves a problem for a specific target customer. • Competition: main competitors outlined, and how the product or service they propose is different and superior compared to alternatives • Pathways towards impact: how bringing the solution to market will contribute to achieving strategic EU goals in the respective industry. • Commercial Strategy and Scalability: well explained and scalable business model behind the solution.
EC3. Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soundness of action plan and KPIs to be achieved thanks to the awarded financial support, services to be contracted and the extent to which they are conducive to the proposed KPIs. • Team: The applicants must demonstrate their management and leadership qualities, along with

		<p>technical and commercialization skills, understanding the market conditions and needs. The applicants should have a balanced and cross-functional team, with a strong industry background.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget: applicants need to demonstrate that the resources to be allocated for the proposed action plan and the services to be contracted are relevant, balanced, calculated in a realistic way and following the best-value-for-money principle.
EC4. impact	Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant has to demonstrate the ability to address inclusiveness and social impact in their proposed project. • The applicant has to articulate and demonstrate how their project will address social issues, contribute to positive social change, and generate meaningful and sustainable impacts on relevant stakeholders or target beneficiaries.

TABLE 4 : SYNERGISTEIC - OPEN CALL 2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

For each criterion under examination, score values will indicate the following rationale:

Score	Rationale
0/UNACCEPTABLE	The criterion cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information. The proposal does not fit the SynergistEIC call topic.
1/POOR	The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2/FAIR	The criterion is broadly addressed, but there are significant weaknesses.
3/GOOD	The criterion is well addressed, but several shortcomings are present and minor weaknesses would need correcting.
4/VERY GOOD	The criterion is very well addressed, but a small number of shortcomings are present and specific improvements are possible.

5/EXCELLENT	All relevant aspects of the criterion are covered very well. Any shortcomings are minor.
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TABLE 5 : SYNERGISTEIC - OPEN CALL 1 SCORING RATIONALE

Each criterion will be scored between 0 and 5. The threshold for each criterion is three (3) and the overall threshold applying to the sum of the four individual scores, is thirteen (13). The total maximum score is 20. The final score of a proposal will be calculated as an average of the individual assessments provided by the two evaluators. If a proposal scores less than 3 in any criterion or in case the overall score is less than 13, the proposal is automatically rejected.

If scores show significant divergence between the two reviewers, and a consensus cannot be reached between them, a third reviewer will be involved to provide an additional independent assessment of the proposal.

5.5.3. STEP 3: RANKING OF PROPOSALS

At the end of the external evaluation process the proposals will be ranked in a Ranking list taking into an account:

- The revised scores provided by the independent external evaluator (where needed).
- The average scores calculated based on the individual scores given by the two evaluators.

The criteria for the ranking of the proposals will be following the rules:

Rule 1: Proposals will be ranked based on their overall score.

Rule 2: In cases where multiple proposals share the same ranking position, tie-breaking procedures will be implemented. Ties will be solved by prioritising proposals with the highest score on EC2: Impact score.

Rule 3: If the provisional group of proposals selected for funding based on rule 2 has a percentage of proposals led by women below 25%, or from Widening countries below 50%, proposals that allow these minimum thresholds to be met will have precedence over other proposals with higher rankings.

5.5.4. STEP 4: CONSENSUS MEETING AND FINAL SELECTION

The top-ranked proposals will be presented and approved in a Consensus meeting inviting the external evaluators and the SynergistEIC Committee.

An evaluation letter indicating the decision, whether the proposal has been accepted, rejected, or placed on the reserve list, along with instructions on the subsequent steps,

will be sent by email to all applicants. **Proposals that do not make the cut but were evaluated above the threshold will receive in addition an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).**

The selected beneficiaries will be invited by SynergistEIC to sign a Sub-grant Agreement.

5.6. REDRESS PROCESS

Within three (3) working days of receiving the evaluation letter informing whether the proposal has been rejected, or placed on the reserve list, the applicant may submit a request for redress if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated. In such a case, the SynergistEIC Committee will examine the applicant's request for a redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants.

Requests for redress must:

- Be related to the evaluation process.
- Clearly describe the complaint.
- Received within the time limit (three (3) working days) from the reception of the rejection letter.

The Committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned only with the general evaluation process. The Committee will not question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria. The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.

All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to the SynergistEIC team at: info@synergisteic.eu

In the case where a proposal under the redress process is re-evaluated and the new evaluation score is higher, it will be compared with the proposal that has entered the funding program with the lowest ranking (in the corresponding track). The comparison will use the ranking rules as detailed in Step 3 (section 5.5.3.). In case the

proposal under the redress process ranks higher, then both proposals will be invited to enter the funding program.

6. PROPOSAL NEGOTIATION AND ONBOARDING

At the end of the evaluation phase, 15 proposals will be selected. The other proposals that were invited to the Step 2 evaluation will remain in a reserve list in case a selected proposal fails to sign the Sub-grant Agreement and the Declaration of Honour.

After the evaluation phase is concluded and the proposals are selected, the subgrant agreement preparation phase will start in collaboration with the representatives of the beneficiaries that have been awarded.

Alongside the documentation to be submitted detailed in section 5.1., for each type of applicant (EIC applicant and non-EIC applicant), the following actions must be carried out in order to enter into the Subgrant Agreement:

1. **Pre-assessment (Legal Check):** Prior to the commencement of the formal agreement process, a comprehensive pre-assessment will be conducted, including a thorough legal check. This step ensures that all necessary legal requirements are met before moving forward.
 - Associated documents: Legal existence and country of establishment. Company Register, Official Journal and so forth, showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and, if applicable, a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
2. **Signing of Sub-grant Agreement and Annexes:** Upon successful completion of the pre-assessment, the selected proposals will proceed to the formalisation stage. The Sub-grant Agreement, along with its annexes including startups/SMEs Declaration form, Declaration of Honor and Bank Account Information form will be signed by the involved parties.
 - Associated documents: **SME Declaration Form**, which evaluates the status of the **SMEs/start-up**: if the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the Funding and Tenders Portal, the PIC number has to be provided. An SME checklist form will be required to prove the status as an SME if the applicant has not been fully validated as an SME on the Portal; **Bank account information:** the account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via form signed by the SME and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the SME; **Sub-grant agreement template**, which provides a template of the Subgrant Agreement that the successful applicants will be

requested to signed; **Declaration of Honor**, which refers to a written statement or pledge in which an individual asserts their commitment to honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviour.

3. **Establish and Sign Work Plan, Budget, and KPI Sheet:** Following the signing of the Sub-grant Agreement, the Beneficiary and SynergistEIC will collaborate to establish and sign the detailed Work Plan, Budget, and Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Sheet. This step ensures a clear roadmap for the implementation phase, outlining tasks, financial allocations, and performance metrics.

***IMPORTANT!** The Subgrant Agreement will have no legal effect and will not give any rights whatsoever to the Beneficiary unless the Beneficiary fulfils its obligation and signs Work Plan, Budget, and KPI Sheet.*

At the end of the subgrant agreement preparation and negotiation phase, the contract will be signed between the SynergistEIC consortium represented by its coordinator (Spherik) and the Beneficiary.

The request of the above listed documentation by the SynergistEIC consortium will be sent to the beneficiaries, including deadlines by which information and documentation should be sent. In general, the subgrant agreement negotiation should be concluded within 2 weeks. An additional week may be provided by the SynergistEIC coordinator in case of a relevant reasoning. In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the proposal is automatically rejected and the next proposal in the reserve list is invited to initiate the contract preparation.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING

7.1. IMPLEMENTATION

Each applicant will be able to apply for up to €50,000 in the form of sub-grants to be used over the duration of the activity (6 months). This funding cap is a pivotal factor to consider when designing and detailing the project proposal, ensuring that all budgetary requests and financial planning align with this upper limit. By adhering to this grant ceiling, the proposal will meet the project's financial boundaries and enhance its eligibility for funding consideration. It is essential to demonstrate how the project's goals, objectives, and budget are within this grant limit, providing a comprehensive financial and narrative plan that effectively utilises the available funding to achieve the intended outcomes.

Subsequent to the Establish and Sign Work Plan, Budget, and KPI Sheet phase, the implementation of approved projects will commence in accordance with the outlined roadmap. Throughout the implementation period, regular monitoring and evaluation mechanisms will be employed to ensure adherence to the agreed-upon timelines,

budgets, and performance indicators. This ongoing assessment will provide valuable insights and enable timely adjustments, fostering a dynamic and responsive execution of the applicants' projects. Additionally, communication channels will be established between the Beneficiary and the SynergistEIC Coordinator to facilitate continuous collaboration and address any emerging challenges or opportunities.

SynergistEIC programme of the OC2 will last 6 months and will start in May 2024 and finish in October 2024. The timeline split by phases is presented below:

Phase	Duration	Details	Associated Reports
Phase 1	Month 1	Set-up of the programme	Work Plan + KPI establishment
Phase 2	Month 3-4	Mid-term check point	Financial document package: signed contract including terms and conditions, list of services, deadlines and guarantees, invoices, payment confirmations, service delivery acts, contractor reports. User acquisition reports Revenue growth reports New pilot projects contracted Progress in product development reports Relevant certificates Patent applications submitted/received <i>*for each applicant might be different based on the KPIs set</i>
Phase 3	Month 6	Finalisation of growth programme	Financial document package: signed contract including terms and conditions, list of services, deadlines and guarantees, invoices, payment confirmations, service delivery acts, contractor reports. User acquisition reports Revenue growth reports New pilot projects contracted

			Progress in product development reports Relevant certificates Patent applications submitted/received <i>*for each applicant might be different based on the KPIs set</i>
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TABLE 6 : GROWTH PROGRAM TIMELINE

By entering the SynergistEIC Open Call, applicants agree to comply with the program outline and deliver the results expected in each phase.

Phase 1

Description	Expected outcome and report	Funding
Within this stage, individual growth programs are planned and detailed between each applicant and SynergistEIC consortium. SynergistEIC partners will oversee this.	The applicant will together with SynergistEIC team members produce a KPIs Annex which will be a plan of the activities and services to be delivered and indicating their goals and outcomes	70% of allocated total will be sent to the startup 2 weeks after signing the subgrantee agreement

TABLE 7 : GROWTH PROGRAM TIMELINE PHASE 1

Phase 2

Description	Expected outcome and report	Funding
Within this stage, the proposals embark on the service delivery, event attendance, and their developments to realise the defined work plan from Phase 1.	First phase report(s) summarising the progress, KPIs and outcomes achieved, the problems encountered, the potential deviation,	i. 30% of the allocated total budget will be released to the startup after the first report(s) is sent and approved by the SynergistEIC partners. ii. Those not passing the consortium's examination won't

	the lessons learned and a budgetary-related subsection.	receive the next payment immediately, having the possibility to show progress within the next two weeks. Should these beneficiaries not reach the threshold during the re-evaluation, they will be invited to leave the program.
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TABLE 8 : GROWTH PROGRAM TIMELINE PHASE 2

Phase 3

Description	Expected outcome and report	Funding
This phase is the continuation of the Phase 2 and focuses on finalisation of the service delivery and event attendance.	Second phase report(s), summarising the progress, KPIs and outcomes achieved, the problems encountered, the potential deviations, the lessons learned and a budgetary-related subsection.	N/A

TABLE 9 : GROWTH PROGRAM TIMELINE PHASE 3

Each proposal will go through 2 reviews, each one highlighting the end of a phase. The reviews will be organised by the SynergistEIC consortium. The applicant should deliver at least 1 week in advance the reports so that the reviewers will be able to read them. The tentative timeline of phases and reviews may be subject to changes in accordance with service delivery plan and the reviewers' availability.

If required, and for any stage, a meeting may be scheduled to further assess the progress of the proposals and clarify any doubts on the deliverables provided. The payment associated with each phase will be disbursed once the respective deliverables have received positive assessment (up to 15 calendar days after the report has been approved).

7.2. REPORTING

The Sub-grant Agreement will establish the KPIs and deliverables that will be considered when evaluating the selected startups' performance at the checkpoint review. A Review committee will be created, composed of task leaders and selected mentors, chaired by the project manager, that will review the performance at the mid-term checkpoint at month 3 of the respective cohort of beneficiaries. The review will be carried out according to the following criteria and their weights in the final score:

- Deliverable quality (35%)
- Progress towards set KPIs (50%)
- Deadline Compliance (15%)

According to this final score, sub-grantees over threshold (70%) will successfully receive the next payment and continue in the program. Sub-grantees under threshold will be reviewed by the Selection Committee who will take the final decision taking into account all possible objective reasons for underperformance (i.e. external factors which might have influenced the performance of sub-grantees). Those not passing this examination won't receive the next payment immediately, having the possibility to explain why the underperformance occurred, within the next 2 weeks. Should these beneficiaries not reach the threshold during the re-evaluation, they will be invited to leave the program.

Sub-grantees will receive 70% of the funding upon the Sub-grant Agreement signature, and 30% in M4 after the mid-term checkpoint at M3.

In addition to the progress towards established KPIs, the process of contracted services will be reviewed and evaluated for cost-benefit and relevance towards reaching the metrics. This review will include revision of selection procedure, contracting process, contractor track record in similar projects, as well as a document package as follows: signed contract including terms and conditions, list of services, deadlines and guarantees, invoices, payment confirmations, service delivery acts, contractor reports.

Note: *A non-favourable review of the work carried out at the end of any stage may lead to the early termination of the contract and suspension of payments. In the event that the Beneficiary fails to achieve the indicators agreed together with the SynergistEIC partners in the process of signing the Sub-grant Agreement, within the specified timeframe, or they leave the programme between M1 - M4, the Coordinator shall have the right to request a full or partial refund of the amount paid by the Coordinator to the Beneficiary under this contract.*

7.3. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the proposal is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

Applicants cannot be legally connected to any member of the SynergistEIC consortium.

Applicants shall not have any potential conflict of interest with the selection process. All such potential cases will be assessed case by case.

Applications will not be accepted from entities who are partners (beneficiaries) or linked-third parties in the SynergistEIC consortium or who are formally linked in any way to the partners/ linked-third parties of the consortium. This excludes, for example, entities that have already engaged with and/ or contributed to the project through specific activities/ initiatives who remain independent from the project. Any individual/ entity with a previous link to an SynergistEIC beneficiary (e.g., spin-off), will not be accepted, unless a minimum of 2 years (as of the 5 jan. 2023) has passed since the termination of the link.

Applicants must not have any current and/or potential conflict of interest with the SynergistEIC – Open Call 2 selection process and during the whole program. Applicants must formally and immediately notify the SynergistEIC coordinator (via info@synergisteic.eu) of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective evaluation and implementation of the project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). If a conflict of interest is discovered and confirmed at the time of the evaluation process, the proposal will be considered as non-eligible and will not be evaluated.

They must formally notify the SynergistEIC consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The SynergistEIC coordinator will verify if the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specific deadline. If the sub-contract consortium member breaches any of its obligations, the sub- contract may be automatically terminated. Moreover, costs may be rejected.

7.4. CONFIDENTIALITY

During implementation of the proposal and for four years after the end of the proposal, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at sub-contract signing time ('confidential information').

If a beneficiary requests it, the EC and the SynergistEIC consortium may agree to keep selected information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial four years. This will be explicitly stated in the sub-contract.

If information has been identified as confidential during the proposal implementation or only verbally, it will be confidential only if this is accepted by the SynergistEIC coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the verbal disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the agreement. The proposal consortium may disclose confidential information to the SynergistEIC consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

7.5. PROMOTING THE ACTION AND VISIBILITY TO THE EU FUNDING

The beneficiary must promote the proposal, the SynergistEIC project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC.

Unless the EC or the SynergistEIC coordinator agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible (requiring a valid justification), any promotion activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity (including at a conference or seminar) or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the sub-grant must:

- display the EU emblem.
- display the SynergistEIC logo.
- Include the following text:

For communication activities: "The [proposal acronym] has indirectly received funding from the European executed under the SynergistEIC project (grant agreement 101073761).

Any publicity made by the beneficiary regarding the proposal, in whatever form and or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or the Synergist EIC project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the SynergistEIC consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information regarding the beneficiary:

- The name of the beneficiary.
- Contact address of the beneficiary.
- The general purpose of the proposal.

For communication activities: “The [proposal acronym] has indirectly received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation action program, via the SynergistEIC Open Call #2 issued and executed under the SynergistEIC project (grant agreement No 101073761)”.

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the beneficiary is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page.

Any publicity made by the beneficiary regarding the proposal, in whatever form and or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author’s views and that the EC or the SynergistEIC project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the SynergistEIC consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information regarding the beneficiary:

- The name of the beneficiary.
- Contact address of the beneficiary.
- The general purpose of the proposal.
- The amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the proposal; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution received.
- The geographic location of the activities carried out.
- The list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground.
- The details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if founded within the proposal, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication.
- The publishable reports submitted to the SynergistEIC consortium.

- Any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and SynergistEIC in the framework of the proposal.

The beneficiary shall ensure that all necessary authorizations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and SynergistEIC does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a suitably justified request by the proposal coordinator on behalf of any proposal member, the SynergistEIC consortium, if permission is granted by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

7.6. FINANCIAL AUDITS AND CONTROLS

The EC will monitor that SynergistEIC consortium and the open call beneficiaries comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 of the SynergistEIC GA and may take any action foreseen by the GA in case of non-compliance of the beneficiary concerned. Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the SynergistEIC project and up to 5 (five) years after the end of the SynergistEIC project, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such audits may cover financial, systemic, and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The beneficiary shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorised by it, with a view of verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise and complete.

The beneficiary shall keep all proposal deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the proposal contract for up to five years from the end of the project. These shall be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

To carry out these audits, the beneficiary shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the proposal applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the proposal. They shall ensure that the

information is readily available during the audit and, if so requested, that data be handed over in an appropriate form.

Based on the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorised representative to the beneficiary concerned, which may provide observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The EC may decide not to consider observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the beneficiary within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

Based on the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures that it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction. The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the EC to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

7.7. PROPOSAL COMMUNICATION

The proposal official representative should:

- Onboard on the SynergistEIC Discord Channel with at least one representative.
- Provide any notice relevant to the programme activity in writing to the SynergistEIC Coordinator.
- Notify immediately of any change of persons or contact details to the SynergistEIC coordinator. The address list shall be accessible to all concerned.

8. CONTACT INFORMATION

The SynergistEIC consortium will provide information to the applicants via <https://synergisteic.eu/open-calls/open-call-2/>, so all information (questions and answers) will be accessible to all potential applicants.

No binding information will be provided via any other means (e.g., telephone or email).

- More info at: <https://synergisteic.eu/>
- FAQ: <https://synergisteic.eu/about-us/faq/>
- Apply via:

- <https://www.f6s.com/synergisteic-oc2-eic-applicants/apply> (for EIC Applicants)
- <https://www.f6s.com/synergisteic-oc2-non-eic-applicants/apply> (for Non-EIC Applicants)
- F6S support team (for platform issues during the application): info@synergisteic.eu
- Other support: info@synergisteic.eu