



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

293/G/GRO/PPA/18/10482

Speeding up EU industrial modernisation by improving support for pan-European demonstration facilities – the 3D printing case

GRANT PROGRAMME 2018

The present call for proposals is composed of a set of Grant Submission Documents, which form an integral part of this call:

- The call for proposals,
- The Guide for Applicants
- The Submission Set

The terms set out in the call for proposals document shall take precedence over those in the other parts of the Grant Submission Documents.

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INTERESTED PARTIES ARE INVITED TO READ CAREFULLY THE BELOW INSTRUCTIONS, AND TO USE THE QUESTIONNAIRE PROVIDED IN CHAPTER III OF THE GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT APPLICATIONS ARE COMPLETE WHEN SUBMITTED.

1. CONTEXT

Industry is a key driver of innovation and a cornerstone of economic prosperity in Europe. As highlighted in the Commission's recent communication on a renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy¹, a range of initiatives looking to improve the EU's industrial base provides a key policy focus, not least in terms of upgrading industry for the digital age. The strategy looks to reinforce Europe's industrial leadership in the context of increasing globalisation, sustainability challenges and rapid technological change. Additive manufacturing² (AM)³, or 3D printing, is one of so-called advanced manufacturing technologies and has been the subject of a number of recent studies looking to take advantage of innovative opportunities, particularly for SMEs in the context of prototype feasibility and commercialisation of new products, as well as part of increasingly interlinked global and regional value chains. Industrial modernisation not only requires the development of innovative manufacturing technologies, but depends on the ability of industrial companies to absorb and successfully implement such technologies.

Different stages can be distinguished in the process of developing and deploying new technologies. There is mounting evidence that a market failure occurs in the demonstration stage of the innovation process: between applied research, prototyping and market entry. Testing and validation of prototypes in an industrial environment and certifying new applications remain both very costly and highly uncertain. In many cases, this prevents or delays market uptake of very promising innovations from research and industry. On the one hand, industrial companies very often do not have all the necessary equipment and competences to carry out further prototyping activities, validation tests, certification procedures, cost-comparisons or other post-prototyping activities needed before full production and market launch.

In a regional context, initiatives looking to take advantage of smart specialisation strategies to boost new growth through bottom-up entrepreneurial innovation and industrial renewal focus on a range of priority areas, including advanced manufacturing. Developing key facilities and appropriate economies of scale can be problematic, particularly in a relative immature sector such as 3D printing. Commercial opportunities, mapping of facilities and information dissemination can be critical in the development and application of such technologies. In a broader context, improved growth and resource allocation can follow from such targeted manufacturing technologies.

There is a strong need and rationale to establish an interregional innovation structure, with pan-European shared demonstration facilities accessible by industry and able to speed up technology deployment in and by industrial companies. Shared demonstration facilities can be established by connecting and upgrading the complementary facilities which already exist in the regions.

A number of EU initiatives have begun to focus on additive manufacturing, including in the context of the priority on Industrial Leadership under Horizon 2020⁴, the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation⁵, and dedicated studies on specific industrial applications for 3D printing⁶, as well as in the context of open innovation in industry⁷, for example.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:479:FIN>

² Ibid.p.9. The Industrial Policy Strategy highlights additive manufacturing as one of several key innovation areas.

³ Additive manufacturing is a process where materials are joined, layer by layer, to make objects from 3D model data.

⁴ <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/what-work-programme>

⁵ <http://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/industrial-modernisation>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/content/report-3d-printing-current-and-future-application-areas-existing-industrial-value-chains-0_en

⁷ European Parliament (2015): Open Innovation in Industry, Including 3D Printing. IP/A/ITRE/2014-12 http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/563445/IPOL_STU%282015%29563445_EN.pdf

Various regions in the past, as well as ongoing activities such as those within the Vanguard Initiative⁸, have often experienced that setting up 'shared demonstration facilities' usually contains a non-profitable component. This funding gap occurs while setting up the shared facilities and in relation to the first operating costs. Once this funding gap is secured, industrial demonstration activities can take place. If these are successful, companies can then subsequently upscale their production, generate revenues in the market place and hence generate growth and jobs. In order to speed up technology deployment and industrial modernization, there is thus a need for stronger public intervention to unlock the innovation and growth potential. At his moment, there is no suitable instrument in cross-regional, pan-European setting to support the very much needed investments in innovation infrastructure.

This initiative is based on the European Parliament Preparatory Action voted by the Parliament under the 2018 budget. The purpose of this action is to establish a virtual support platform connecting a number of existing 3D printing demonstration facilities in the EU. This will allow innovative SMEs in different industrial sectors willing to apply 3D printing solutions in their products (or production lines) to get high quality services such as testing of new 3D printing solutions, validation, and certification, which are not provided by one single demonstration facility. Through the establishment of the platform, this action will aim to help test and validate a large number of industrial demonstration 3D printing-based projects in different application fields. It will also support promotional activities to attract innovative SMEs from different EU countries to use the services provided. This will also include the identification of associated barriers, necessary skills, investment needs, and help defining better business models.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE CALL

2.1 General Objectives and scope

An increasing number of SMEs today are willing to develop 3D-printing-based applications, integrate 3D-printed components into their products, or improve their manufacturing process by adopting 3D printing techniques in view to develop more customised products and reduce waste. Considering the potential of additive manufacturing for the modernisation of the European industry, the objective of this Call is to establish a virtual support platform connecting a different 3D printing-related centres in Member States to improve services in this area to innovative SMEs and to facilitate the testing and validation of 3D printing industrial projects. Before investing in 3D printing solutions, SMEs need to explore the technical feasibility of such solutions, identify potential bottlenecks, and overall assess the appropriateness of these solutions from a technical and financial point of view. Therefore having access to appropriate infrastructures and professional services that would be able to assist them along this exploratory phase is of paramount importance; for SMEs this is a crucial phase towards the adoption of such solutions in this area. In many cases, such services are not available in their location or require a combination of complementary services, which often are not offered by a single facility centre.

To cope with this, an easily accessible tool that can offer complete and comprehensive information of such facility centres at EU level would assist SMEs identify the most appropriate infrastructure and accredited services at EU level. Such a tool would allow a direct comparison of the services provided across all EU countries and permit SMEs to better select the most efficient and appropriate solutions that address their specific requirements.

A pan-European platform can fill this specific gap and become an effective tool for SMEs in the next years in this area. At the same time, such a platform will establish an efficient and direct way for facility centres to develop new contacts at EU level with interested SMEs and to increase their client base. In this context, the scope of this Preparatory Action should complement and extend ongoing 3D printing activities, such as those under the Vanguard Initiative and the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platform on Industrial Modernisation. While the latter and its inter-regional partnerships are instrumental for initiating inter-regional collaboration for technology uptake, this Action will support the development of investments, operations & services, and coordination costs for shared demonstration facilities serving a customer base throughout Europe.

⁸ www.s3vanguardinitiative.eu

2.2 Specific objectives and related tasks

This Call for proposals aims to address the following three specific objectives:

1. The **first specific objective** is to support the development of a pan-European platform of existing facilities (including available infrastructure and services provided) that are used particularly by SMEs for testing, validating and eventually integrating new 3D printing solutions into their products and process;
2. The **second specific objective** is to test and validate a number of industrial demonstration 3D printing-based projects in different application fields on this pan-European platform;
3. The **third specific objective** is to draw a set of concrete recommendations about how to ensure the sustainability of this platform at EU level in the future, and conduct a gap analysis of available support services for 3D printing at national level.

Activities foreseen under the project need to demonstrate a clear European added value by supporting European integration and transnational cooperation. Proposals should contain a description of the management structure and processes of the project and the role of the lead applicant in the project management and implementation, what measures will be taken to ensure that high quality standards are applied by all consortium partners, how the achievement of objectives will be monitored, and appropriate corrective measures (such as redistribution of tasks and budget) will be taken, if needed. The main risks that might be encountered and the corresponding mitigating measures should also be described.

The following tasks should be covered and described in detail in three separate work packages (WPs).

WORKPACKAGE 1 – DATA COLLECTION, DATABASE DESIGN, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLATFORM

This task includes all actions needed to set up the pan-European platform of 3D printing facility centres.

- The work would start by a **complete and comprehensive mapping** of 3D printing facility centres across the EU level. In the context of this Call, "3D printing facility centre" refers to any public, semi-public, or private entity (including specialised 3D printing companies) that offers appropriate infrastructure and accredited services allowing SMEs to test and validate 3D printing solutions. The mapping can be built upon existing mapping activities that have been conducted in the context of other projects and initiatives, and by combining information from additional sources such as recent studies and specialised publications; the applicant can propose additional sources based on their own experience in the field. Regarding geographical coverage, the mapping should cover all EU countries where such facility centres exist and offer such services to SMEs. The mapping should provide detailed information on all the activities and services the centres on a standardised and comparable basis. The integration of facility centres covering all EU countries into the platform can be done progressively but it should be completed by month 12 of the project when a mapping report including all relevant information per country should be submitted. The mapping should provide detailed information on all the activities and services of each centre on a standardised and comparable basis, and should be updated throughout the duration of the project;
- The project should develop a **list of datasets that will be provided by the platform** in terms of 3D printing technologies, infrastructure and services provided by the facility centres at EU level. Based on this list, the project should start contacting the facility centres and collecting the required information. At the same time, the project should propose and encourage 3D printing facility centres to join the platform, by presenting the benefits, but also their obligations in particular regarding the update of the information provided by the platform. The applicant should provide in the proposal, an indicative list of information that should be collected and how they intend to contact the facility centres to collect the information requested;
- At the same time, the project should start **developing a database** that will be accessible through a **user-friendly web interface**. The database should be built by using the latest software solutions to provide all necessary query facilities and offer a reliable and user-friendly web-based interface allowing future users to easily identify which is the best facility centre (or a possible combination of

existing centres) that could address their requirements. The applicant should describe in the proposal possible ways of structuring the database and the platform's interface, taking into account different criteria including for instance the level of services required and the geographical location;

- To facilitate the **connectivity between the facility centres** that are registered in the database, the project should develop a virtual support platform allowing interested SMEs to introduce a request for a specific work requiring the combination of different 3D printing technologies and related services that could be offered by several facility centres in a complementary way. Once the SME introduces a specific demand into the system, all registered facility centres in the database should receive it automatically, and those centres with the relevant and complementary expertise **should make a joint offer to the SME**. Each offer should involve at least two facility centres from different Member States. The SME will then be responsible to decide which offer fits better with its request and budget. The project should develop and integrate this virtual support platform into the web-based interface including all associated technical tools and forms required for that purpose.
- An awareness campaign should be developed with the aim of maximising the dissemination process and informing as many SMEs as possible about the objectives and the services offered by the Platform. The methodology should describe how a wide community of SMEs would be reached through concrete actions such as involvement of associated SMEs associations, related clusters, and specialised media (publications, social media etc.) as well as relevant business fora and other technology-focused events. The methodology should also cover communication activities focused on all facility centres dealing with 3D printing technologies and how to encourage them to join the Platform and provide the required information. The campaign should cover all EU countries and key industrial sectors, particularly those having the greatest potential for using 3D printing technologies. It should also include a description of all key user groups and how these will be targeted.

WORKPACKAGE 2 – TEST AND VALIDATION OF CONCRETE DEMONSTRATION 3D-PRINTING INDUSTRIAL PROJECTS

- This work package aims to help and financially support a number of SMEs in order to test and validate their industrial demonstration 3D printing-based projects. This phase will demonstrate the full functionality and usefulness of the pilot support scheme that could be scaled-up after the end of the pilot action. More particularly, the project will be responsible for selecting 10 SMEs (using a set of award criteria (see guidance in the annex) which have obtained an offer from any facility centre(s) via the virtual support platform that will be developed under Work package 1. In line with the objective of connectivity between facility centres described in work package 1, and in order to ensure a complementary and tailored service based on the most appropriate European 3D printing facilities available, the offer to SMEs to test and validate their 3D printing projects obtained via the platform should involve two or more facility centres based in at least two different Member States. Offers from an individual facility centre or from facility centres based in a single Member State will not be eligible for financial support;
- The proposal should describe a clear methodology for selecting these 10 SMEs. The methodology should include different stages starting from the provision of information in the web site about this supporting possibility for SMEs, the selection process (criteria to be used that should be fully in line with the provisions given in section 4.5), as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the whole process;
- The selected SMEs should come from at least five different EU countries. The amount of financial support to each SME will cover up to 100% of eligible costs but must not exceed EUR 40.000 (see point 4.5) that should be used by the SME to cover part of its costs for using the infrastructure and services of the chosen facility centres identified via the virtual support platform.

WORKPACKAGE 3 – GAP ANALYSIS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SUSTAINABLE MODEL FOR THE FUTURE

In this task, the project should provide a gap analysis incorporating barriers associated with the facilities, skill requirements, investment needs, and a definition and categorisation of the business models employed. In

addition, an assessment and proposal for alternative strategies with respect to the sustainability of Platform in the future should be developed. More precisely,

- The project should provide an analysis of the gaps in the provision of appropriate services for 3D printing availability and the level of uptake per EU Member State. This work will be particularly helpful for policy makers seeking to support facility centres and further promote the adoption by SMEs of new technologies, in particular in the area of 3D printing.
- The project should conduct an analysis of overall missing support services for SMEs at EU level that have been observed to date, such as particular technical skills, specific expertise on standards, etc. and how these gaps can be addressed at EU level. The results of this analysis should be described in detail in the corresponding WP3 report for which a draft should be submitted in month 18 of the project.

2.3 Deliverables

The selected project is expected to produce three (3) reports covering the periods listed in I.4.1 of the grant agreement, which should be submitted in English, namely:

- 2 interim technical report and financial statements including a breakdown between each beneficiary.
- 1 final technical report. This report will include all deliverables, a final evaluation of project activities, lessons learnt and recommendations for the future, and a financial statement including a summary financial statement and a breakdown between each beneficiary: within 2 months following the closing date of the action.

The coordinator will also prepare two short presentations:

- at a project kick-off meeting in Brussels which will take place within 1 month after the starting date of the implementation. This presentation will outline the work that will be carried out during the project.
- at a final meeting two months prior the closing date of the implementation. The coordinator will present the results achieved.

A maximum of three representatives of the consortium can participate to both meetings and the related costs can be included in the estimated budget.

3. TIMETABLE

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (1) | Scheduled start-up date for the action: 1/12/2018 |
| (2) | Maximum duration of action is: 36 months. |

No applications will be accepted for projects scheduled to run for a longer period than that specified in this call for proposals

The period of eligibility of costs will start at the earliest the first day of the month following the signature of the agreement by both parties. If a beneficiary can demonstrate the need to start the action before the agreement is signed, the expenditure may be eligible as from a date before the agreement is signed. Under no circumstances can the eligibility period start before the date of submission of the grant application.

	Stages	Date and time or indicative period
a)	Publication of the call	8/05/2018
b)	Deadline for submitting applications	2/08/2018
c)	Information to applicants	October 2018
d)	Signature of grant agreement or notification of grant decision	November 2018
e)	Starting date of the action/ work programme	1/12/2018

4. EU FINANCING

Maximum budget allocated for EU financing under this call: 800.000 €

Indicative number of projects: 1

Maximum EU financing rate of total eligible costs: 80 %

Maximum EU financing amount per project: 800.000 € of which a maximum of 320.000 € should cover financial support to third parties. The maximum EU financing amount per third party for financial support: 32.000 €)

Proposals with an EU co-financing beyond any of the above two maxima will not be eligible.

The Commission reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicant. In such a case, applicants will be asked either to increase their co-financing, propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal. Grants will not be awarded for more than the amount requested.

Publication of the call (on the Commission Internet site and/or in the Official Journal) does not guarantee the availability of funds for the above action.

4.1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES OF EU FUNDING

Non-cumulative award

Each action may give rise to the award of only one grant from the budget to any one beneficiary. In no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice by the Union budget.

Applicants have to inform the Commission immediately of any multiple applications and multiple grants relating to the same action. The applicant shall inform about sources and amounts of EU funding received or applied for the same action or for part of the action. Applicants shall indicate if they receive EU funding for their functioning during the financial year in which the action takes place.

Non-retroactivity

No grant may be awarded retrospectively for actions already completed.

A grant may be awarded for an action which has already begun, provided the applicant can demonstrate the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed. In such cases, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application.

Co-financing

Grants shall involve co-financing, which implies that the resources necessary to carry out the action or the work programme shall not be provided entirely by EU contribution. EU financing may not cover 100% of the total costs of the action.

Co-financing of the action or of the work programme may take the form of:

- the beneficiary's own resources,
- income generated by the action or work programme,
- financial contributions from third parties.

Non-profit rule

EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action of the work programme of the beneficiary.

Where a profit is made, the Commission is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred. For this purpose, profit shall be defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred, when the request for payment of the balance is made.

Balanced budget

The estimated budget of the action or work programme is to be attached to the application form. It should include a breakdown of all relevant costs for each work package and the main activities and staffing costs within the work packages. The budget must have revenue and expenditure in balance.

The budget must be drawn up in euros. Applicants, who foresee that costs will not be incurred in euros, are invited to use the exchange rate published on the Info-euro website available at http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/infoeuro_en.cfm.

4.2. ELIGIBLE COSTS

In order to be eligible for funding, costs should be actually incurred by the beneficiary and meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the duration of the action or work programme, as indicated in the grant agreement, with the exception of costs relating to the request for payment of the balance and the corresponding supporting documents (audit certificates);
- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the action or work programme;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the action or of the work programme, in accordance with the description of the action, attached to the grant agreement;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The costs made by affiliated entities can be eligible, provided that:

- the entities concerned are identified in the grant agreement;
- the entities concerned abide by the rules applicable to the beneficiary under the grant agreement with regard to eligibility of costs and rights of checks and audits by the Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors.

Please note that the exact scope of the eligibility of costs is defined by the grant agreement, which will be signed with the successful applicants.

4.2.1. Eligible direct costs

Direct costs of the action are those specific costs which are directly linked to the implementation of the action and can therefore be attributed directly to it. They shall not include any eligible indirect costs.

The following categories of costs can be considered as eligible direct costs:

- the costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the action, comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual policy on remuneration. Those costs may also include additional remunerations, including payments on the basis of supplementary contracts regardless of the nature of those contracts, provided that they are paid in a consistent manner whenever the same kind of work or expertise is required, independently from the source of funding used.
- salary costs of the personnel of national administrations to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority would not carry out if the project concerned were not undertaken.
- costs of travel and related subsistence allowances, provided that these costs are in line with the beneficiary's usual practices on travel;
- the depreciation costs of equipment or other assets (new or second-hand) as recorded in the accounting statements of the beneficiary, provided that the asset has been purchased in accordance with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts and that it is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the usual accounting practices of the beneficiary
- costs of consumables and supplies, provided that they are purchased in accordance with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts;
- costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the grant agreement (dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the action, audits, translations, reproduction), including the costs of requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts;
- costs entailed by subcontracts, concluded for the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action or workprogramme as described in the proposal, provided that the conditions with the conditions applicable to implementation contracts are met;
- duties, taxes and charges paid by the beneficiary, provided that they are included in eligible direct costs, and unless specified otherwise in the Agreement.
- costs relating to a pre-financing guarantee lodged by the beneficiary of the grant, where that guarantee is a condition for the payment of a pre-financing;

4.2.2. Eligible indirect costs

A flat-rate amount of 7 % of the total eligible direct costs of the action is eligible under indirect costs, representing the beneficiary's general administrative costs which can be regarded as chargeable to the action/project.

Indirect costs may not include costs entered under another budget heading.

Indirect costs are not eligible for beneficiaries that receive an operating grant from the European Commission.

4.2.3. Non-eligible costs

In addition to any other costs which do not fulfill the conditions set out in Article II.19.1, the following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses;
- costs of transfers from the Commission charged by the bank of a beneficiary;
- costs declared by the beneficiary in the framework of another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget (including grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by other bodies than the Commission for the purpose of implementing the Union budget);
- in particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible under a grant for an action awarded to a beneficiary which already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT.
- participation by any staff of the institutions in actions receiving grants
- any other costs which have been specified as ineligible in the call for proposal

In addition to the above, the Commission can refuse to finance certain costs included in the proposal. The beneficiary can decide to maintain and finance these costs out of his own resources, but they will not be taken into account as eligible costs.

4.3. CO-FINANCING AND JOINT AND SEVERAL RESPONSIBILITY

The beneficiary has to supply evidence of the co-financing provided. It can be provided either by way of own resources, or in the form of financial transfers from third parties,

In case of a joint application, all partners shall agree upon appropriate arrangements between themselves for the proper performance of the action.

In particular, they shall accept joint and several responsibility for repaying any debt up to the maximum amount of the grant, as stipulated in the Special Conditions of the draft grant agreement.

The final grant agreement shall be signed by each applicant. Alternatively it shall be signed by the appointed co-ordinator, provided that a power of attorney has been conferred to this entity (Annex IV of the draft grant agreement).

4.4. IMPLEMENTATION CONTRACTS/SUBCONTRACTING

Where the implementation of the action or the work programme requires the use of contracts (implementation contracts), the beneficiary must ensure that the contract is awarded to the bid offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity of contracting authorities shall abide by the applicable national public procurement rules, in the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU on the coordination of procedures for the award of public work contracts, public supply contracts and public service contracts or contracting entities in the

meaning of Directive 2014/25/EU coordinating the procurement procedures of entities operating in the water, energy, transport and postal services sectors.

Sub-contracting for the purpose of the action

Sub-contracting refers to contracts concluded for the externalisation of specific tasks or activities which form part of the action or work programme as described in the proposal. Such contracts must satisfy the conditions applicable to any implementation contract and, in addition, the following conditions:

- Subcontracting may only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action up to **30 %** of the total eligible costs.
- It must be justified having regard to the nature of the action and what is necessary for its implementation;
- The proposal should clearly identify the subcontracted activities

Subcontracting does not in any way limit the responsibility of beneficiaries for the implementation of the action. Please note that the beneficiary(ies) should have the necessary capacity to perform the project. Only tasks that are not core business can be sub-contracted to consultants.

It is not necessary to have already selected subcontractors at the time the proposal is submitted. However, cost of contractors not selected in accordance with the applicable rules for procurement will not be eligible.

4.5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTIES

It is envisaged that applications will include provision of financial support to third parties as follows:

- a) The types of activities for which third party financing is envisaged relate to the feasibility, testing and validation of a 3D printing prototype by an SME. These activities may include the use of equipment and related materials, and the manpower that is made available by the facility centres. Costs related to any purchases by the SMEs themselves are not eligible.
- b) The third parties which may receive financial support are SMEs wishing to benefit from the activities in 4.5(a), having fulfilled the selection criteria described in the annex and 4.5(c) below.
- c) The criteria for awarding financial support should be based on a clear methodology and specific award criteria, to be proposed by the applicant, as described in work package 2, and should include an assessment of the quality and value of proposals to examine the feasibility, undertake testing, or validate a 3D printing prototype, tailored specifically to the needs of the SME. The award criteria should be developed and included in the application, and should be published as part of a call for proposals on the platform which will be developed in work package 1.
- d) The amount of financial support per third party paid by the beneficiary (consortium) can cover up to 100% of eligible costs (see point 4.2.1) but must not exceed EUR 40.000 (**forty thousand euro**).

The amount of support will be based on an estimate of the costs to the third party SME of the activities in 4.5(a) above. The final financial support will be calculated on the basis of actual costs incurred to implement the activities.

The financial support will be paid by the beneficiary (consortium) in two instalments amounting to 40% at the commencement of the activity and 60% on completion of the activity. Third party SMEs will have to provide relevant evidence to justify the eligibility of the costs. The amount of financial support will be indicated in the contract for each third party SME.

The EC contribution to the beneficiary (consortium) will be 80% of the final support.

Estimated costs related to this support should be declared under the heading Heading 1.2.c “Other expenditures”.

As illustrative examples:

- *an SME which submits a request for financial support of EUR 60.000 could receive a maximum of EUR 40.000 from the beneficiary (consortium). The SME should contribute EUR 20.000 itself. In this case, the EC contribution to the beneficiary (consortium) will be EUR 32.000.*
- *an SME which submits a request for financial support of EUR 30.000 could receive a maximum of EUR 30.000 from the beneficiary (consortium). In this case, the EC contribution to the beneficiary (consortium) will be EUR 24.000.*

4.6. FINAL GRANT AND PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The draft grant agreement annexed to this call for proposals specifies the calculation of the final grant and the payment arrangements.

Your attention is in particular drawn to the General Conditions of the grant agreement, where the eligibility of costs is described. Detailed explanations and a description how costs should be budgeted and reported can be found in the Guide for Applicants.

EU grant may not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the action of the work programme of the beneficiary. Where a profit is made, the Commission is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred. For this purpose, profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiary, when the request is made for payment of the balance. Where such a surplus occurs, the Commission is entitled to recover the percentage of the profit corresponding to the EU contribution to the eligible costs actually incurred by the beneficiary.

The Commission may require the beneficiary to lodge a guarantee for grants exceeding € 60 000, based on a risk analysis.

In the event that the applicant's financial capacity is not satisfactory, a pre-financing guarantee for up to the same amount as the pre-financing may be requested in order to limit the financial risks linked to the pre-financing payment.

The financial guarantee, in euro, shall be provided by an approved bank or financial institution established in one of the Member State of the European Union. When the beneficiary is established in a third country, the authorising officer responsible may agree that a bank or financial institution established in that third country may provide the guarantee if he considers that the bank or financial institution offers equivalent security and characteristics as those offered by a bank or financial institution established in a Member State. Amounts blocked in bank accounts shall not be accepted as financial guarantees.

The guarantee may be replaced by a joint and several guarantees by a third party or by a joint guarantee of the beneficiaries of an action who are parties to the same grant agreement.

5. ELIGIBILITY


APPLICATIONS MUST COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA SET OUT IN THIS SECTION.

5.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

1. Applications from legal entities established in one of the following countries are eligible:

- **EU Member States.**

(Proposals including an entity from a non EU Member State in the consortium will not be eligible).

 **For British applicants:** Please be aware that eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article II.17.3.1 of the grant agreement.

2. Several applicants, submitting a joint proposal should choose within their midst a lead organisation, referred to as the coordinator. The coordinator and its partners must satisfy the same eligibility criteria.
3. Applications must be submitted by a legal person.
4. The **consortium** (i.e. the coordinator plus its partners) must be composed of a **minimum of three (3) different legal entities** located in **at least three (3) Member States**.
5. Applicants should demonstrate that they have proven experience in relation to all of the tasks and work packages described earlier in section 2.1 of the call text. This should include the provision of assistance to SMEs in the application of additive manufacturing techniques and the development of new products using this technology. **Proposals should not, however, include applicants that are themselves facility centres or are directly involved in the day-to-day operations of such centres.**
6. The participation of the same partner in more than one proposal is not permitted; proposals with a member that participates in more than one consortium submitting a project proposal are not eligible and will be excluded from the call. Therefore applicants are encouraged to take the necessary measures to ensure that their partners will not participate in more than one proposal.

Corporate bodies must be properly constituted and registered under the law. If a body or organisation is not constituted under the law, a physical person must be designated to provide the legal responsibility.

Legal entities having a legal or capital link with applicants, which is neither limited to the action nor established for the sole purpose of its implementation, may take part in the action as affiliated entities, and may declare eligible costs. For that purpose, applicants shall identify such affiliated entities in the application form. The affiliated entities will have to comply with the eligibility and exclusion criteria.

Several entities that form together one entity, whether or not this entity is established for the purpose of implementing the action, may apply as a sole beneficiary. The entities will be considered as affiliated entities, which each will have to comply with eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria.

Supporting documents

Subject to the eligibility criteria indicated above, the applicants should provide the following supporting documents to establish their eligibility:

- **private entity:** extract from the official journal, copy of articles of association, extract of trade or association register, certificate of liability to VAT (if, as in certain countries, the trade register number and VAT number are identical, only one of these documents is required);

- **public entity:** copy of the resolution or decision establishing the public company, or other official document establishing the public-law entity;
- **consortium:** in addition to the supporting documents referring to their legal status, consortium members will submit letters confirming their participation to the project;
- **entities without legal personality:** documents providing evidence that their representative(s) have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf.

5.2. ADMISSIBLE AND ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Applications must comply with the following conditions in order to be eligible for a grant:

- Applications must be sent no later than the deadline for submitting applications referred to in section 9.
- Applications must be submitted in writing, using the application form and the electronic submission system, as indicated in the Guide for Applicants.
- Applications must be drafted in one of the EU official languages. If your proposal is not in English, a translation of the full proposal would be of assistance to the evaluators. An English translation of an abstract may be included in the proposal (see Guide for Applicants).
- Proposals must be submitted in conformity with the call specifications.
- Only projects that are strictly non-profit-making and/or whose immediate objective is non-commercial shall be eligible.
- Applications must respect the maximum rate for EU co-financing.
- Applications must respect the maximum amount for EU co-financing.
- Applications must respect the maximum duration of projects.
- Applications must respect the requirements set for the start date.
- Applications may not include contributions in kind as part of their co-financing
- Applications may include financial support to third parties

Any project directly or indirectly contrary to EU policy or against public health, human rights, citizen's security or freedom of expression will be rejected.

6. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

6.1. EXCLUSION FROM PARTICIPATION

An entity will be excluded from participating in the call for proposals procedure if :

(a) it is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, where its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, where it is in an arrangement with creditors, where its business activities are suspended, or where it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under national laws or regulations;

(b) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the entity is in breach of its obligations relating to the payment of taxes or social security contributions in accordance with the law of the country in which it is established, with those of the country in which the contracting authority is located or those of the country of the performance of the contract;

(c) it has been established by a final judgment or a final administrative decision that the entity is guilty of grave professional misconduct by having violated applicable laws or regulations or ethical standards of the profession to which the applicant belongs, or by having engaged in any wrongful conduct which has an impact on its professional credibility where such conduct denotes wrongful intent or gross negligence, including, in particular, any of the following:

(i) fraudulently or negligently misrepresenting information required for the verification of the absence of grounds for exclusion or the fulfilment of selection criteria or in the performance of a contract;

(ii) entering into agreement with other entity with the aim of distorting competition;

(iii) violating intellectual property rights;

(iv) attempting to influence the decision-making process of the contracting authority during the procurement procedure;

(v) attempting to obtain confidential information that may confer upon it undue advantages in the procurement procedure;

(d) it has been established by a final judgment that the entity is guilty of any of the following:

(i) fraud, within the meaning of Article 1 of the Convention on the protection of the European Communities' financial interests, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 July 1995;

(ii) corruption, as defined in Article 3 of the Convention on the fight against corruption involving officials of the European Communities or officials of Member States of the European Union, drawn up by the Council Act of 26 May 1997, and in Article 2(1) of Council Framework Decision 2003/568/JHA, as well as corruption as defined in the law of the country where the contracting authority is located, the country in which the applicant is established or the country of the performance of the contract;

(iii) participation in a criminal organisation, as defined in Article 2 of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA;

(iv) money laundering or terrorist financing, as defined in Article 1 of Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council;

(v) terrorist-related offences or offences linked to terrorist activities, as defined in Articles 1 and 3 of Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA, respectively, or inciting, aiding, abetting or attempting to commit such offences, as referred to in Article 4 of that Decision;

(vi) child labour or other forms of trafficking in human beings as defined in Article 2 of Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council;

(e) the entity has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations in the performance of a contract financed by the budget, which has led to its early termination or to the application of liquidated damages or other contractual penalties, or which has been discovered following checks, audits or investigations by an authorising officer, OLAF or the Court of Auditors;

(f) it has been established by a final judgment or final administrative decision that the entity has committed an irregularity within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2988/95.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

6.2. EXCLUSION FROM AWARD

Grants will not be awarded to applicant who, in the course of the grant award procedure is:

(a) is in a situation of exclusion established in accordance with Article 106 FR

(b) has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procurement procedure or has failed to supply that information;

(c) was previously involved in the preparation of procurement documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

6.3. SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Applicants must sign a declaration on their honour certifying that they are not in one of the situations referred to by filling in the “**Exclusion Criteria Form**” (**form B4**)

Administrative and financial penalties may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, who are guilty of misrepresentation.

By using the “Exclusion Criteria Form” applicants shall declare on their honour that they are not in one of the situations referred to in Articles 106 and 107 of the Regulation (EC, Euratom) n° 966/2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (Financial Regulation, as amended).

Please note that administrative and financial penalties may be imposed by the Commission on applicants who are excluded in relation to points a) to g) of the form in question.

For grants with a value exceeding € 60 000, the Commission may require further evidence, as indicated in article 143 Rules of Application.

7. SELECTION

7.1. FINANCIAL CAPACITY

Applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the action is being carried out or the year for which the grant is awarded and to participate in its funding. The applicants' financial capacity will be assessed on the basis of the following supporting documents to be submitted with the application:

For grants < EUR 60 000:

- a declaration on honour

For grants ≥ EUR 60 000,

- a declaration on honour and,
- form B/5 provided for in the submission set, filled in with the relevant statutory accounting figures. Other documents may be submitted if needed (see IV.4 Guide to applicants)

Please note that the amount of EUR 60.000 refers to the total amount requested by all applicants taken together.

For grants for an action ≥ EUR 750 000 or operating grants ≥ EUR 100 000, in addition:

- **an audit report produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last financial year available.**

In the case of affiliated entities forming together **one** sole applicant, the above requirements apply to each of the affiliated entity.

7.2. OPERATIONAL CAPACITY

Applicants must show they have the **operational (technical and management) capacity** to complete the operation to be supported and must **demonstrate their capacity to manage scale activity** corresponding to the size of the project for which the grant is requested. In particular, the **team responsible** for the project/operation must have **adequate professional qualifications and experience**.

In this respect, applicants have to submit a declaration on their honour and the following supporting documents:

- curriculum vitae or description of the profile of the people primarily responsible for managing and implementing the operation (accompanied where appropriate, like in the field of research and education, by a list of relevant publications);
- the organisations' activity reports;
- an exhaustive list of previous projects and activities performed and connected to the actions to be carried out (as described in section 2.1 above) ;

In the case of affiliated entities forming together a sole applicant, the above requirements apply to each affiliate entity. This obligation does not apply to secondary or higher education establishments. The selection procedure is described in further detail in the Guide for Applicants.

8. AWARD

An evaluation of the quality of proposals, including the proposed budget, will be carried out in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in annex 3 to this call for proposals.

The evaluation procedure is described in further detail in the Guide for Applicants.

9. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

Please note that only electronic submissions are allowed for this call.

Please consult the Guide for Applicants for the modalities of preparing the proposal.

Submission of a grant application implies acceptance of the conditions of the grant agreement, attached to this call.

The deadline for submission of proposals is:

2/08/2018 [17.00:00 Brussels local time]

10. CONTACTS

Contacts between the contracting authority and potential applicants can only take place in certain circumstances and under the following conditions only:

Before the final date for submission of proposals,

- At the request of the applicant, the Commission may provide additional information solely for the purpose of clarifying the nature of the call.
- Any requests for additional information must be made in writing only to the coordinates stated below.
- The Commission may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or other clerical error in the text of the call for proposals.
- Any additional information including that referred to above will be published on the internet in concordance with the various call for proposals documents.

After the deadline for submission of proposals:

- If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, the Commission will contact the applicant provided the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.
- If the authorising officer finds that proposals listed for award need limited adaptations, the applicants will receive a formal letter setting out the requested modifications. Any such modifications must stay within the limits of the request. This phase will not lead to a re-evaluation of the proposals, but a proposal might be rejected if the applicant does not wish to comply with the modifications requested.

Contact coordinates for the call:

European Commission

Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Directorate F: Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

Unit F1: Innovation Policy and Investment for Growth

E-mail address: GROW-CFP18293-3D-PRINTING@ec.europa.eu

Office address:

European Commission

Directorate-General Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs

Directorate F: Innovation and Advanced Manufacturing

Office : N105 – 09/023 (Financial Team)

B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

11. DATA PROTECTION

The reply to any call for proposals involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as name, address and CV). Such data will be processed pursuant to Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data. Unless indicated otherwise, the questions and any personal data requested are required to evaluate the application in accordance with the specifications of the call for proposal will be processed solely for that purpose by Unit GROW.F.1: Innovation Policy and Investment for Growth".

Details concerning the processing of personal data are available on the privacy statement at:

http://ec.europa.eu/dataprotectionofficer/privacystatement_publicprocurement_en.pdf

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if the applicant is in one of the situations mentioned in Article 106 of the Financial Regulation. For more information, see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm

12. PUBLICITY

Beneficiaries must clearly acknowledge the European Union's contribution in all publications or in conjunction with activities for which the grant is used.

In this respect, beneficiaries are required to give prominence to the name and emblem of the European Commission on all their publications, posters, programmes and other products realised under the co-financed project.

To do this they must use the text, the emblem and the disclaimer available at http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/communication/services/visual_identity.

If this requirement is not fully complied with, the beneficiary's grant may be reduced in accordance with the provisions of the grant agreement or grant decision.

With the exception of scholarships paid to natural persons and other direct support paid to natural persons in most need, all information relating to grants awarded in the course of a financial year shall be published on an internet site of the European Union institutions no later than the 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded.

The Commission will publish the following information:

- name of the beneficiary;
- address of the beneficiary (legal persons) or reference to the region (natural persons);
- subject of the grant;
- amount awarded.

Upon a reasoned and duly substantiated request by the beneficiary, the publication shall be waived if such disclosure risks threatening the rights and freedoms of individuals concerned as protected by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union or harm the commercial interests of the beneficiaries.

13. ANNEX 1 SUBMISSION SET

The Submission Set is composed of :

- ✓ Form B1- B2 Budgetary Forms
- ✓ Form B3 - Co-financing statement form
- ✓ Form B4 - Exclusion form
- ✓ Form B5 - Financial Statement Form
- ✓ Form B6 - Description of the project
- ✓ Form B7 - Curriculum Vitae
- ✓ Form B8 - Professional references
- ✓ Form B9 - Miscellaneous

And is available in the eSubmission tool "SEP" – see link in call page.

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/index_en.htm

14. ANNEX 2 GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

The Guide for Applicants can be downloaded from the following page:

http://ec.europa.eu/growth/contracts-grants/calls-for-proposals/about-our-grants/index_en.htm

15. ANNEX 3 EVALUATION CRITERIA

When assessing the below evaluation criteria, the evaluation committee generally pays attention to the elements indicated below each criterion. Please note that these elements, which are indicative and non-exhaustive, are given on the basis of transparency and in order to help applicants to improve their applications.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND KEY ELEMENTS LIKELY TO BE ASSESSED BY THE EVALUATION COMMITTEE	MAX. SCORE
1. Relevance	15
To what extent does the proposal address the general objectives of the call?	
To what extent does the proposal cover all the Work Packages presented in the call?	
How clearly are the target groups defined and do these correspond to those outlined in the call?	
2. Visibility	10
To what extent will the Community involvement in the project or activity be publicised?	
To what extent will the activities and outcomes of the project be widely disseminated?	
To what extent would the proposed dissemination strategy fulfil the objectives of the informational and communication requirements of the call?	
3. Impact	25
Geographical coverage: is the country coverage sufficient to ensure the widespread impact of activities?	
To what extent do the proposed activities demonstrate a clear European added value?	
Sustainability: to what extent do the structure of the project and its implementation strategy allow for, or facilitate a continuity of the activity after the end of EU funding (either by the applicant or by other organisations)?	
Are concrete and objectively verifiable indicators for project outcomes proposed within the proposal?	
To what extent is the project likely to have a tangible impact on SMEs?	
4. Quality	35
How coherent is the overall project design?	
Is the proposal well-balanced? Does it satisfactorily address the Work Packages presented in the call?	
Does the proposal present clear strategies to address the objectives highlighted in the Work Packages of the call, and does it propose realistic and concrete actions?	
To what extent is the methodology proposed to develop actions under this call likely to deliver high quality results?	
To what extent does the proposal contain specific elements contributing to its added value, e.g. innovative approaches, a high level of ambition, proposals for good practice dissemination and replication?	
To what extent measures are foreseen to ensure the overall quality of project management, including quality control and risk management?	
5. Budget and Cost-effectiveness	15
To what extent is the budget clear and detailed?	
Does the breakdown of the budget, category by category, offer a way of ensuring that the amount of the grant awarded is well-allocated?	
To what extent is the proposed expenditure relevant and/or necessary for the implementation of the project?	
Maximum total score	100

If a total score lower than 70 points or a score lower than 50% for any of the above five criteria is obtained, the proposal will not be evaluated further.

16. ANNEX 4 - AGREEMENT

- [Multi-beneficiary Grant agreement for action](#)

17. GUIDANCE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTY

Guidance for the submission and evaluation process of third parties' offers to receive financial support from the beneficiary

Beneficiaries from this pilot action may award financial support to third parties in line with the conditions laid down in Article II.12 of the Model Grant Agreement.

In the context of this Pilot Action, **third parties** shall be 10 SMEs from EU countries that have introduced a demand in the virtual Platform developed by the Pilot Action for acquiring specific services on 3D printing solutions, have evaluated all offer(s) received. Third parties shall be selected through open call(s) to be published on the Platform web site which should meet transparency, equal treatment, confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest requirements.

It is the responsibility of the applicants to define the rules for publishing the Call and for evaluating and selecting the third parties that may receive financial support.

Nevertheless, these guidance notes aim to assist beneficiaries to consider and develop into their proposal the main steps for the submission and evaluation process for the provision of financial support to third parties (SMEs) as well as of the criteria that should be used for the evaluation of these offers.

The applicant is encouraged **to suggest additional criteria that** could be important in their opinion to ensure the successful implementation of the action.

SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION PROCESS FOR THE PROVISION OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTIES

Publication of the Call

1. Once the platform is fully operational, the beneficiary should publish and promote on the web site a Call addressed to any SME that intend to introduce a request into the virtual platform, to inform them about the possibility to get a financial contribution for the services that be provided to them by the facility centres.
2. The beneficiary should clearly explain in the Call text the submission process as well as how the offers will be evaluated by the beneficiary based on a set of selection and award criteria provided in the next section.

Request for services

3. Each interested SME should introduce into the virtual platform a request using a standard template, developed by the beneficiary and made it available on the web site. One or more offers will be provided to the SME via the platform by the facility centres concerned within a month. Each offer will involve complementary services to be provided by at least two facility centres in separate Member States;
4. The SME should evaluate the offer(s) and select the one that best meets its requirements;

Submission process

5. Any SME that has received and selected an offer through the Platform can respond to the Call by respecting the submission deadline and request financial support. The beneficiary will only consider for evaluation the offers submitted before the submission deadline.

Evaluation process

6. The evaluation should be conducted by the beneficiary according to the rules announced in the Call, and ensuring transparency, fairness, impartiality, efficiency and confidentiality.
7. The beneficiary should establish a ranking list based on the award criteria.
8. In order to ensure a good geographical balance, no more than 2 individual facility centres should be involved in the retained offers and no more than 2 SMEs should come from the same Member State. In such cases, the highest ranked offers will prevail.
9. If the evaluation is positive, the beneficiary will provide
 - a template of the agreement that should be signed between the SME and the beneficiary. Particular attention should be paid to the financial guarantee as regards the possible recovery of amounts due to the Commission.
 - a template of the contract to be signed between the SME and the facility centre(s).

Once both contracts are signed, the beneficiary can provide the first part of the financial support to the SME that will be used to cover the first activities of the work foreseen by the contract;

10. If the evaluation is negative, the beneficiary should inform the SME about the reasons for the rejection within two weeks after the end of the evaluation process;

Additional actions (if necessary)

11. Finally, if the target of 10 SMEs is not reached, additional awareness actions addressed to SMEs should be launched one month after the end of the evaluation process and a second Call should be organised.

SELECTION AND AWARD CRITERIA FOR FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THE THIRD PARTIES

Selection criteria

1. **Legal aspects:** The third party should have the status of the SME according to the official definition of an SME⁹, and be registered in the official registry system of the Member State. In this respect, the SME should provide all necessary evidence to the beneficiary before the evaluation. If this is not the case, their offer will be automatically excluded.
2. **Geographical location:** the SME should be located in an EU country.

⁹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:124:0036:0041:EN:PDF>

Award criteria

1. **Relevance:** the beneficiary should check the relevance of the work foreseen regarding the feasibility, testing and validation of a 3D printing prototype.
2. **Quality:**
The beneficiary should evaluate that the offer in terms of quality and completeness of the solution proposed (type of technologies, type of material, certification process etc.).
3. **Budget:**
Costs should be related to the use of equipment and related material, and the manpower that will be made available by the facility centres. Costs related to any purchases by the SMEs are not eligible.

Offers that have not obtained a satisfactory evaluation should not be retained for financial support.

The beneficiary should elaborate in its proposal the above award criteria in more detail, taking into consideration some more technical specificities regarding the services that should be provided by the facility centres, and the quality level of the offers to ensure that the offers supported will be of high quality. Additional award criteria can also be proposed.

The applicant should provide, as part of the proposal, a draft of the Call text that could be used for the selection of the third parties.

Financial support to third parties

All selected SMEs taken together should come from at least five different EU countries.

The financial support to each SME can cover 100% of the total eligible costs with a maximum amount of EUR 40.000 per SME.

The amount of financial support per third party paid by the beneficiary (consortium) can cover up to 100% of eligible costs (see point 4.2.1) but must not exceed EUR 40.000 (**forty thousand euro**).

The amount of support will be based on an estimate of the costs to the third party SME of the activities in 4.5(a) above. The final financial support will be calculated on actual costs incurred to implement the activities.

The financial support will be paid by the beneficiary (consortium) in two instalments amounting to 40% at the commencement of the activity and 60% on completion of the activity. Third parties SME will have to provide relevant evidence to justify the eligibility of the costs. The amount of financial support will be indicated in the contract for each third party SME.

The EC contribution to the beneficiary (consortium) will be 80% of the final support.

As illustrative examples:

- *an SME which submits a request for financial support of EUR 60.000 could receive a maximum of EUR 40.000 from the beneficiary (consortium). The SME should contribute EUR 20.000 itself. In this case, the EC contribution to the beneficiary (consortium) will be EUR 32.000.*
- *an SME which submits a request for financial support of EUR 30.000 could receive a maximum of EUR 30.000 from the beneficiary (consortium). In this case, the EC contribution to the beneficiary (consortium) will be EUR 24.000.*

The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants **based on the reimbursement of actual costs incurred by the recipients when implementing the supported activities**. The beneficiary will attribute 40% of the support to each SME on signature of the contract established between the facility centres and the SME, and 60% after the completion of the work foreseen in the contract.