

## GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

### Open Call 3

Version November 15, 2020

*The present document provides information to interested applicants in the 3rd open call of the SmartX – European Smart Textiles Accelerator programme. Please read the below information carefully before starting the application process. In case of additional questions, please consult the Frequently Asked Questions section of our website [www.smartx-europe.eu/faq](http://www.smartx-europe.eu/faq) or send an email to [hello@smartx-europe.eu](mailto:hello@smartx-europe.eu).*

Before formally applying to the SmartX calls, the on-line submission of an **expression of interest form (Eoi) is compulsory**. It will allow the SmartX secretariat to allocate each project concept to a coach (member of the SmartX consortium) who will check the principle eligibility of the project idea and, in the affirmative case, support the SME throughout the application process. The Eoi submission facility for the second call is available at <https://www.smartx-europe.eu/expression-of-interest-O/> from 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

### **What is the SmartX Project**

SmartX – European Smart Textiles Accelerator, is a 3-year programme with a budget of nearly € 5 million funded by the European Commission under the HORIZON 2020 Programme. The SmartX consortium consists of 13 European partners: European Textile Technology Platform (coordinator), Centexbel (Belgium), CITC (France), Citeve (Portugal), DITF (Germany) , DSP Valley (Belgium), Euramaterials (France), IFM (France), Po.In.Tex (Italy), Smart Textiles (Sweden), Sourcebook (Germany), Steinbeis (Germany) and Texfor (Spain). More information about the project at [www.smartx-europe.eu](http://www.smartx-europe.eu)

### **Who can benefit from SmartX Acceleration Funding and Coaching?**

During the project a total amount of € 2.4 million is available to directly fund innovation projects of SMEs (including start-ups)<sup>1</sup> active in the smart textiles manufacturing value chain in Europe. The support consists of a maximum direct financial contribution (lump sum grant) of up to € 60,000 € per SME and up to 200 hours free-of-charge coaching during the application, project implementation and post-project exploitation stages, provided by internal staff or externally contracted experts linked to any of the 13 SmartX consortium partners. Applicant SME's are expected to implement their project together with other SME partners, specialised technology or service providers or potential customers and preferably with partners from other EU or associated countries. Innovation projects should tackle any of the following emerging end markets for smart textiles in Europe: health and well-being, protection and sports or industrial applications including transport, architecture or interior. SmartX specifically supports projects with **high potential to develop the manufacturing value chain for smart textiles in Europe** to drive high value-added smart textile products and related services faster to market.

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<sup>1</sup> See details at [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en)

**Scope of the proposals, activities that qualifying for financial support and Expected impact.**

- The project clearly addresses smart textiles, defined as materials, components, products or services using a combination of textile fibres, yarns or fabrics with (micro)electronic components such as conductive wires, microsystems, sensors, actuators, energy capture or storage devices, heat, light or sound-emitting devices etc. to realise a smart function that adds value to the end user of the enables product or service. **Projects addressing primarily or exclusively software or service developments are out of scope for SmartX funding.**
- The technological maturity of the project at the time of application is at technology readiness level (TRL) 6-8. (TRL 6 represents a functional prototype tested in a real use environment)
- The project should be fully implementable in a time frame of 10-12 months from signature of the contract and allow the company to make a significant step towards near-term market introduction of the innovative solution developed.
- The project, if successfully implemented, can have a strong positive impact on manufacturing of the developed/enabled materials, components or products in Europe and/or closes an important gap in the current European smart textiles manufacturing value chain
- The project develops materials, components, products or services clearly targeted at one or several of the following end markets (1) protection and sports, (2) health and well-being or (3) industrial applications in the manufacturing, transport, logistics, energy, agriculture, building or interior markets. Projects primarily targeted at other markets such as fashion, entertainment, gaming etc. are out of scope.

**How to apply for SmartX Acceleration Support?**

The direct funding to SMEs will be allocated through an open call procedure. 3 open calls for applications are foreseen between late 2019 and early 2021. The calls are announced on the project webpage and the Commission's dedicated webpage for calls for financial support to third parties.

The full call text details will be published on the project's webpage [www.smartx-europe.eu](http://www.smartx-europe.eu). The 3rd call for applications has been launched on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2020 and remains open until 15<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 7 p.m. CET (Brussels time).

Approximately one month before the opening of a call for applications, SmartX opens a call for expression of interest (Eoi). The expression of interest stage ends on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021. After this date, no Eoi as a pre-condition for applying to the 3rd open call will be accepted anymore. Through completion of a simple on-line form available on the SmartX website, potential SME applicants must provide a brief description of their project idea. Each SME submitting an expression of interest will be promptly contacted by a SmartX partner for a first assessment of principle eligibility of their project idea and, in the positive case, will be assigned an application coach (SmartX partner) to support the SME free of charge during the application preparation and formal submission process.

**Eligibility criteria and maximum funding levels**

The following eligibility criteria must be met for a project to be included in the formal evaluation process:

- The SmartX funding programme is open to SMEs (fulfilling the EU SME definition<sup>2</sup>) legally based in EU member states, the United Kingdom or H2020 associated countries (Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Israel, Moldova, Switzerland, Faroe Islands, Ukraine, Tunisia, Georgia and Armenia)
- Beyond the minimum requirement of having one SME as applicant (project leader), this SME is encouraged to work with other SME's preferably in another EU or associated country building a consortium. They SME can also work with a larger enterprise, research centre, university, end user in the spirit of establishing a longer term technology or business development partnership beyond the funding project duration. If needed, SMEs can also work with companies outside the EU member states or H2020 associated countries. It is however important to note that support (funding and coaching) can only be offered to SMEs legally established in the EU, UK and H2020 associated countries. The SME must be the project leader and remain responsible for managing the project and reporting on progress/results.
- Applicant SME's must have been an operational entity for at least 12 months (from date of legal establishment) and have a book value (calculated as all assets minus all liabilities) of at least 2 times the amount of funding requested at the moment of submitting the application. Selected SME's will be asked, during the contract preparation process, to provide a declaration confirming their financial capacity (sufficient book value) signed by a registered accountant.
- Start-ups with less than 5 years as an operational entity (from the date of legal establishment) that lack the necessary book value, can apply as partner of a consortium, led by another SME with the necessary financial capacity. Such start-up partners can request up to € 30,000 of funding without the need to provide a formal financial capacity declaration.
- In project consortia with several participating SMEs, each SME partner can receive direct financial support of up to € 60,000 if the project application convincingly shows that such multiple SME support is warranted. For example, a consortium of 2 SME's could receive up to €120,000 of funding. However a consortium of 3 or more SME's cannot receive a total funding of more than € 150,000 as this is the maximum funding amount allowed per project. (Each participant SME, except start-up's, have to individually declare their financial capacity corresponding to their requested funding amount.)
- SME's can apply several times during the 3 open calls of SmartX and can be part of several consortia, however the total amount of cumulative funding received by one single SME across all 3 SmartX calls cannot exceed € 60,000.

### **Admission criteria for proposals**

Before applying formally to the calls, every SME must first fill in an Expression of Interest form (available at [www.smartx-europe.eu/expression-of-interest-O/](http://www.smartx-europe.eu/expression-of-interest-O/)) to be admitted to the application

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<sup>2</sup> See note 1

coaching process. The call for expressions of interest will be open at least one month before opening of the calls and will close on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

The application process involves the submission of (the compulsory documents are in bold):

- **Application form (compulsory for admissibility)**: Total length of 10 pages max., of which max. 5 pages describing the innovation, business model, target market and motivation of the partnership to bring the innovation to market, max. 3 pages describing the partnership's technological, financial and human resource capacities and providing information about the requested funding amount and its intended detailed use, max. 2 pages describing the European dimension of the project and the motivation and capacities of the partnership of exploiting the innovation at European/international level
- **6 slide pitch deck (compulsory for admissibility)**: 1<sup>st</sup> slide to introduce the project title and applicant organisation(s), 2<sup>nd</sup> slide to describe the innovative solution and the user problem(s) it solves, 3<sup>rd</sup> slide to describe the current solutions in the market and how the innovative solutions can successfully compete with them, 4<sup>th</sup> slide to describe the business model, market potential and exploitation strategy, 5<sup>th</sup> slide to describe the technical & operational excellence and the intended use of the requested funding 6<sup>th</sup> slide for EU/international dimension of the project and its European Smart Textiles Acceleration potential.
- **Declaration of honour (compulsory for admissibility)** – one signed form per applicant SME or start-up
- **Declaration of conflict of interest with any organisation or individual involved in the project selection process (compulsory for admissibility)** – one signed form per applicant SME or start-up

Project applications must be written in English. Submissions done in any other languages will not be evaluated. Applications must include all mandatory parts described in the Guide for Applicants and must be submitted electronically via the SmartX call platform before the formal closure of the open call.

We recommend applicants to submit their expressions of interest and project applications well ahead of the respective deadlines. The SmartX consortium declines any responsibility for technical issues experienced during application submission but will venture to promptly resolve any problems of which it becomes aware.

### **Evaluation and Selection Process**

The application will allow the project applicants to thoroughly explain their project and demonstrate how they intend to implement it, to reach their target markets and to successfully compete with their innovative solutions. As such, the whole selection process will endeavour to assess the innovation and market potential of the proposed idea and planned implementation, the operational and technological excellence of the consortium, the maturity and management capacity of the company/consortium to successfully develop the project towards market introduction, and the potential of the proposed solution to scale-up in the international market in Europe and beyond.

After the eligibility and admissibility check carried out by the SmartX Coordinator (Textile ETP), all formally eligible proposals enter the pre-evaluation process carried out by the SmartX

consortium members. The highest ranked applications resulting from the pre-evaluation process will be forwarded to the formal evaluation process carried out by the 11 internationally recognised project consortium-independent experts from the SmartX Selection Committee (SC). The members of the Selection Committee can be viewed at [www.smartx-europe.eu/selection-committee](http://www.smartx-europe.eu/selection-committee).

**The Open Call evaluation process will be organised as follows:**

**Pre-evaluation process**

The technical application document will be reviewed by at least 2 members of the SmartX consortium while the pitch presentation will be reviewed and scored by up to 11 consortium partners (except the SmartX coordinator, the application coach or any organisation considered conflicted with the applicant). The pre-evaluation process will be completed in a meeting or webinar in which all applications will be discussed and then secretly scored according the below simplified scoring sheet.

<b><u>Criteria</u></b>	<b><u>Points</u></b>	<b><u>Weight</u></b>
<b><u>Business innovation potential</u></b>	<b><u>0/1/2/3/4/5*</u></b>	<b><u>50%</u></b>
<b><u>Operational &amp; technological excellence</u></b>	<b><u>0/1/2/3/4/5*</u></b>	<b><u>35%</u></b>
<b><u>European Smart Textiles Market Acceleration</u></b>	<b><u>0/1/2/3/4/5*</u></b>	<b><u>15%</u></b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>*0=none, 1=poor, 2=weak, 3=fair, 4=good, 5=excellent</b>	<b><u>max 5.00</u></b>

Up to 25 project applications with the highest pre-evaluation scores will be forwarded to the Selection Committee for full evaluation and selection

**Evaluation process**

- 1) The full application documents of each project will be remotely reviewed by at least 2 Selection Committee members.
- 2) All 11 Selection Committee members will come together for a 1-day Selection Committee meeting, chaired by the SmartX coordinator, during which they will listen to the presentation of each project, provided by the applicant (by video-link) using the 6-slide pitch deck. After each presentation, the SC will have a short clarifying discussion, starting with comments of the 2 SC members having reviewed the full application. Then all 11 members of the Selection Committee (except those considered conflicted with the applicant) will individually and secretly score each application according to the evaluation criteria and scoring system described below.
- 3) After collection of all scores, the Selection Management Committee, composed of Textile ETP, IFM and DSP Valley, will compile all scoring and establish a ranking list from highest to lowest scored proposal. In function of the previously agreed minimum threshold and the available funding for the call, the highest ranked proposals will be selected for funding.
- 4) After completed selection process, the selected applicants will be contacted directly within a few days and will be asked to provide all information necessary for preparation of their grant agreement incl. the financial capacity declaration signed by a registered accountant. Selection results will be announced no later than 2 months after closing of the open call. Within 4 weeks

after announcement of the selection results, the project contracts are expected to be signed and information about the successful applicants will be published on the SmartX website and social media.

5) Non-selected projects will be promptly contacted and will receive information about the total evaluation score and brief comments about the main shortcoming(s) of their applications.

### Evaluation criteria in detail

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Weight</u>
<b><u>Business innovation potential</u></b>	<b><u>0/1/2/3/4/5*</u></b>	<b><u>max 25</u></b>
1.1	Compelling solution addressing a clear market need	
1.2	Competitive advantage over existing solutions	
1.3	Quality of the business model, scalability and growth potential	
1.4	Quality of customer/user relationship and market research	
1.5	Motivation of the partnership	
<b><u>Technological and operational excellence</u></b>	<b><u>0/1/2/3/4/5*</u></b>	<b><u>max 15</u></b>
2.1	Technology and application readiness (incl. IP strength)	
2.2	Soundness of the project plan and appropriateness of the budget	
2.3	Operational capacity of the partnership and team(s)	
<b><u>European Smart Textiles Market Acceleration</u></b>	<b><u>0/1/2/3/4/5*</u></b>	<b><u>max 10</u></b>
3.1	European dimension of the partnership	
3.2	Impact on critical gaps in the European smart textiles value chain	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>*0=none, 1=poor, 2=weak, 3=fair, 4=good, 5=excellent</b>	<b><u>max 50</u></b>

*Minimum Thresholds: Business Innovation Potential 15, Operational Excellence 9, European dimension 5*

### **To what extent do you judge that:**

1.1: the innovation is clearly described and will, when fully developed, represent a compelling solution that will meet a significant demand from the market

1.2: the solution is significantly better (including aspects of function, cost and user-friendliness) than existing ones available on the market today

1.3: the business model is clear, potentially profitable and can likely be successfully scaled internationally and/or in adjacent end markets

1.4: the proposed innovation is based on a sound understanding of the value-chain and the needs and value drivers in the targeted end market

1.5: the project partnership shows a convincing motivation and the individuals involved have the right incentives to implement it

2.1: the proposed innovation is technologically well described and can be implemented by the partnership based on their technical capacities and ownership or safe access to intellectual property. A description of the added value to the manufacturing value chain industry must be described.

2.2: the development steps and milestones, as well as the expense/investment plan (within the project duration) that should lead to the expected outcome are fully described, accurate and realistic incl. contingencies in case of unexpected risks/difficulties.

2.3: the project partnership and team(s) involved will be able to dedicate sufficient time, energy and other resources to carry the project to its successful end

3.1: the partnership demonstrates a European dimension in terms of access to best available technology and willingness/capacity to market the resulting innovation at European/international level

3.2: the innovation targeted will fill current gaps in the smart textiles value chain in Europe and can strengthen the European manufacturing capacity for smart textiles materials/components/products

### **SME Application – step by step**

1. Interested SMEs first need to register on the SmartX website - community ([www.smartx-europe.eu/register](http://www.smartx-europe.eu/register)). In this step, SME's provide basic information about the company, its activities and contact details. After completed registration, the SME receives a login and password to connect to the SmartX collaboration platform for further application steps.

2. Registered SMEs with a project idea for which they would like to explore SmartX support possibilities need to fill an on-line Expression of Interest form via [www.smartx-europe.eu/expression-of-interest-0/](http://www.smartx-europe.eu/expression-of-interest-0/), providing some basic details about their project idea. Promptly after submission, a member of the SmartX team will contact the SME to assess the principle eligibility of the project idea and to assign a SmartX coach to guide the SME through the application process.

3. With the help of the SmartX application coach, the SME will develop the project concept in more detail, assess the need for partners or external technology/service providers needed to realise the project, establish a project implementation and financing plan and finally complete the application documents and, once approved by the application coach, submit the application on-line on the SmartX project submission facility before the end of application deadline.

### **Project Implementation**

After signature of their contract, supported project holders will have to commit themselves to some key actions and attitudes. These include:

- Rapid and continuous engagement with the assigned process coach;
- Participation in the project induction workshop and 1<sup>st</sup> completion of the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) for smart textile innovation readiness (in month 1 of the project);
- Delivery of public promotion material to announce the project on the SmartX platform (in month 2 of the project);;
- Establishment of a successful milestone incl. a detailed coaching plan, together with the process coach as basis to trigger the 2<sup>nd</sup> advance payment (in month 3 of the project);
- Prompt and transparent communication with the process coach in cases of unexpected difficulties or delays in the project implementation and available to rapidly find contingency solutions;
- Participation in at least 1 value-chain cross-fertilisation or project results dissemination workshop in the mid-to-late stages of the project;
- Establishment of the final project report with the process coach and 2<sup>nd</sup> completion of the Self-Assessment Tool as a basis to release the final project payment.

### **Payment schedule**

M 1 Initial pre-financing payment of 10,000 € (or 30% of the total funding amount for participants requesting less than 30,000 € of total funding) within 30 days after contract signature.

M 3 Second payment of 50% of remaining funding amount, after successful reach of a pre-defined 3-month milestone. Within 30 days after 1<sup>st</sup> milestone report submission by the project coach.

M 12 Final payment of remaining funding amount, after successful completion of the project and submission of the final project report approved by the process coach. The final payment will be made with 45 days from final project report submission.

Example payment schedule for a 60,000 € grant:

M1 10,000 €, M3 25,000 €, M12 25,000 €

### **Confidentiality issues**

All SmartX consortium members (see here <https://www.smartx-europe.eu/about-smartx/#programme>) and external Selection Committee members have signed non-disclosure agreements. No other business nor individual will be granted access to your project data.

Data and information provided in the Expression of Interest will be available to all SmartX consortium partners to make sure the most relevant coaching service is provided to help you deliver your formal application.

Full access to the data and information provided in the application will be granted to Textile ETP, the application coach, a specialist coach and a 3 non-restricted members 3 members of the consortium for evaluation (all involved organisations are available to sign an Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) upon request. They can be accessible to any Selection Committee member, which all signed collective non-disclosure agreements.

You may choose to restrict access to parts of your application to individual SmartX project partners, except the project coordinator Textile ETP, or to individual Selection Committee members, by completing the “Restricted Information” section in the application form. In such cases, the full 10-page application form will not be disclosed to the parties for which access has been restricted. Access to the 6-slide pitch deck cannot be restricted.

### **Data Protection**

SmartX partners are committed to protect and respect applicants' privacy. The personal data collected in the context of the present Open Call will be processed in accordance with The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) (EU) [2016/679](#). Applicants files will be retained in SmartX archives until the end of the project. It is possible to exercise your access, rectify, cancel or opposition rights by contacting SmartX data controller by sending an email to [hello@smartx.eu](mailto:hello@smartx.eu)

### **Redress procedure**

An applicant that disagrees with the qualitative evaluation of the project proposal by the Selection Committee can send a request for re-evaluation within 3 working days from the date following the outcome of the evaluation to the SmartX coordinator. This request must provide clear evidence of a shortcoming of the assessment of the evaluation criteria that led to the non-funding decision of the application. Based on the presented evidence, which cannot be based on new information that was not included in the original application, a final evaluation result will be determined by the SmartX consortium that must be considered as definitive.