

# GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS S4FASHION CALL FOR PROPOSALS



**Opening date for submission of proposals: May 19, 2021, 00:00 (Brussels time)**

**Deadline: October 29, 2021, 17:00 (Brussels time)**



**The purpose of the call for proposals is to select and provide funding and support to 25 transnational partnerships that aim at creating a new innovative product or service directly improving the take-up and adoption of sustainability and circularity models and practices in the fashion sectors.**

The selected partnerships will receive direct funding of up to EUR 15.000 for their innovative projects and will also benefit from additional business support services such as training workshops, mentoring, brokerage events, and investment forums to ensure the innovative projects develop into a marketable product, service or business model.

The S4Fashion Open Call for proposals is supported by S4Fashion-Sustainability for Fashion sector project, funded by COSME programme, under Grant Agreement 958038.



**The S4Fashion Call for proposals is seeking innovative collaborative projects aiming to pilot novel processes to create a product, service or business model with scale-up potential for sustainable or circular fashion.**

### What are the benefits of the selected projects

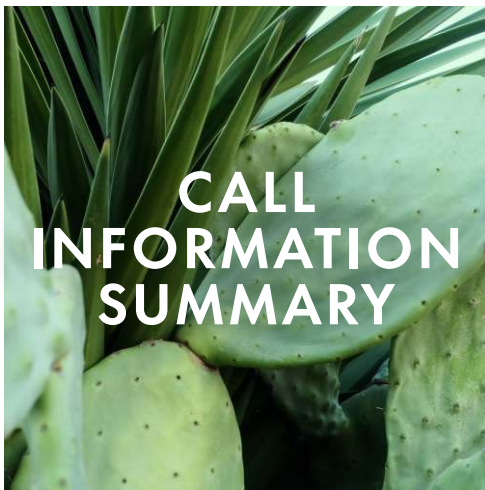
S4Fashion offers to transform your sustainable and circular business ideas into reality through collaboration with transnational partners and be part of a the global Sustainable Fashion Ecosystem.

The selected projects will get:

- 1-year tailored coaching program including
  - Personal mentor;
  - Tailor made expert coaching;
  - Peer to peer coaching;
  - Focused training sessions;
- Financial support up to €15.000;
- Access to respected designers and fashion personalities engaged in sustainability and circular fashion
- Additional support activities
  - Networking with investors, retailers, brands and potential customers;
  - Webinars with designers and fashion brands;
  - Matchmaking events with ecosystem players;
  - Fashion events, summits, conferences
- Access to the shared ecosystem mapping, knowledge base and community via the S4Fashion platform
- Follow-up service and help desk facility.

'Sustainable' is limited to the impact of business operations/activities and human activities on the environment.

'Circular' refers to a system of production and consumption that is restorative and regenerative, and in which resource input, waste, emissions and energy use are minimised.



**Total budget of the call:**

€ 275.000

**Opening date:**

Wednesday, 19th of May 2021

**Deadline:**

Friday, 29th of October 2021 at 17:00 CET (Brussels time)

**Number of proposals to be funded:**

at least 25 selected projects

**Number of organisations per proposal:**

at least 2 organisations from at least 2 different eligible countries

**Funding per proposal:**

€ 10.000 for proposals with up to 3 partners, € 15.000 for proposals with 4 partners or more

**Funding rate:**

100% of eligible costs

**Duration of the projects:**

12 months

**Type of participants:**

Micro and Small Enterprises of the fashion sectors (textiles, clothing, footwear, leather and accessories), Designers and Startups.

Academia and Technology Centres are eligible only as partners.



## The following eligibility criteria must be individually met:

- Lead partners and partners must be active or want to become active in sustainable or circular fashion;
- Lead partners and partners must be legally established according to the national law of an eligible EU member state or COSME associated country (Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia) and UK and they shall meet the eligibility criteria indicated in the next article.
- Lead partners and partners must be legally established for at least six months prior to the date of the application deadline;
- Eligible lead partners and partners are: micro and small companies, designers, start-ups. Academia and technology centres can participate as partners.
- All lead partners and partners must have registered on the S4Fashion Platform and refer in the application to their (complete) company profile and (if applicable) to a product profile featuring their work of their most relevant collection.
- The same organisation can be involved in only one proposal. In case an organisation is mentioned in more than one proposal, only the first submitted project will be evaluated and all the other concerned proposals submitted will be considered ineligible under this call.
- Organisations that have already been awarded under a call for proposals published by any of the following three projects: Fashion for Change (Grant agreement number: 958039) , Circular InnoBooster (Grant agreement number: 958135) and SmallButPerfect (Grant agreement number: 958060), can participate in this call only if the project idea is completely different from the one already awarded.
- Absence of conflict of interest. Lead partners and partners shall not have any potential conflict of interest with the S4Fashion selection process. All cases of potential conflict of interest will be assessed case by case.



## The following eligibility criteria must be met by the project proposal:

- The following eligibility criteria must be met by the project proposal:
- Proposals must include at least two organisations (partners) coming from at least two different eligible countries.
- Proposals must present innovative and collaborative new processes, products or services in the sectors: textiles, clothing, footwear, leather and accessories, new business models for sustainable and/or circular fashion.
- Each proposal must have a lead partner and up to four (4) partners. The total number of partners, including the lead partner, must not exceed five (5).
- To be considered admissible, a proposal must be:
  - (a) submitted in the electronic submission system ([platform.s4fashion.eu](https://platform.s4fashion.eu)) before the deadline stated in the Call;
  - (b) written in English language only;
  - (c) readable, accessible and printable;
  - (d) complete in all its parts;
  - (e) respecting the page limits and layout requirements set out in the template of the Call;
  - (f) including all supporting documents specified in the section Submission Procedures.
- Project activities that have already been funded or are being funded by other funding instruments will be rejected. Double funding is not allowed.
- Already existing products without a clear development or improvement or innovation beyond the state-of-art will be rejected.

Failure to comply with the above eligibility requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

## MATCHMAKING

S4Fashion provides the following tools to facilitate the interested organizations to find a partner:

- Matchmaking via S4Fashion platform
- Call for Proposal Info days

## SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

Proposals have to be submitted through the S4Fashion Platform <https://platform.s4fashion.eu/>

Applications submitted by any other means will not be considered for funding.

Each – submitted through the online platform – must include the following documents:

- Project Proposal Application Form
- Declaration of honour of the Lead Partner and all the Partners– signed and stamped by the legal representative - confirmation of the exclusion criteria; absence of conflict of interest to be accepted by the Applicant and the Partners; consent for processing of personal data (in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation, EU2016/679)
- Creative material (e.g. video, presentation, pitch deck)

Additional material, which has not been included in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation of the proposals. Proposals will be evaluated as submitted. Information not included in the proposal will not be considered. The data provided will remain confidential and will only be shared within the S4Fashion Steering Board members.

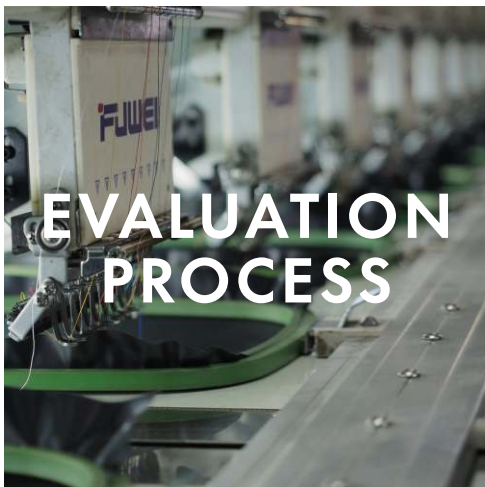
The Applicants are strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including extenuating circumstances, will result in rejection of the proposal. The Applicants are solely responsible for verification of the completeness of the form.

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS TIMELINE

- S4Fashion call for proposal will open on May 19th 2021
- The deadline for proposal submission is October 29th 2021 at 17:00 (CET)
- The pre- selected “finalist” proposals will be notified within 2 months after the closure of the call for proposals
- Pre-selected “finalist” proposals will be invited to the Pitching Day that will take place in February 2022
- The selected proposals will be notified within 2 weeks after the Pitching Day
- The finally selected projects are expected to start in May 2022.

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted.

After the call closure no additions or changes to received proposals will be considered.



**After submission, all partners and proposals will be evaluated based on specific selection criteria and subject to a two-phases selection procedure carried out by the Steering Group of the Consortium with the support of a group of external experts that constitute the Steering Board.**

**The Steering Group will evaluate the technical content of the applications (2nd phase of evaluation) of the proposals that score above the threshold. The Steering Board must be independent of the applicant and do not have any conflict of interest.**

### **1st Stage Eligibility Check**

The first phase consists of the eligibility criteria of applicants and proposals. Applicants will be checked for their administrative compliance to confirm that they are eligible and can take part in the S4Fashion Call for Proposals.

Applicants will be checked for their compliance with the eligibility criteria to confirm that the minimum requirements are met. These criteria examine whether the partners and the proposals fulfill the minimum requirements on e.g. the legal status, the country of origin etc. Eligibility criteria can be answered with a “Yes” or “No”. This check will be carried out by the Consortium and is an on/off procedure. Proposals that do not meet the eligibility criteria are rejected.

Results of the administrative and eligibility assessment will be approved by the Consortium and applicants will be informed on the eligibility status via automated email. Partners of the rejected applications will be informed accordingly. As a result, the 'Eligible Applications List' will be produced, containing all Eligible Applications.

### **2nd Stage Quality Assessment**

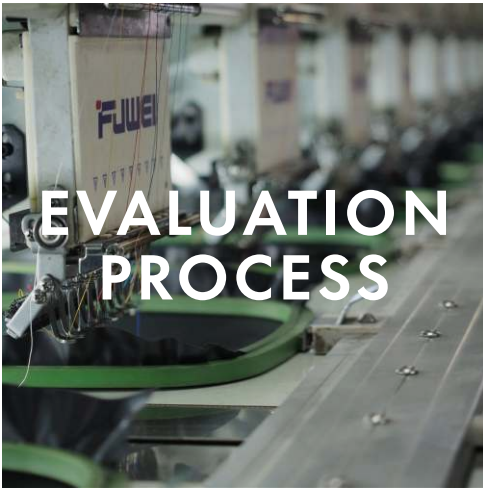
Eligible proposals will be evaluated by 2 (two) members of the Steering Group who are experts with wide expertise in sustainable and circular fashion. Each evaluator will rank the application assigning a score from 0 to 5 for each criterion and produce an Individual Evaluation Report. The final score will be calculated as the sum of the individual assessments provided by the Evaluators.

The experts score each award criterion on a scale from 0 to 5 (half point scores may be given).

- 0 = Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information
- 1 = Poor – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses
- 2 = Fair – proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
- 3 = Good – proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present
- 4 = Very good – proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present
- 5 = Excellent – proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The default threshold for individual criteria is 3 out of 5.

The default threshold for the application as a whole, across all 8 criteria is 32 out of 40.



## The proposals will be evaluated based on the following award criteria:

### (1) EXCELLENCE will evaluate:

- a) Ambition. The applicants have to demonstrate to what extent their proposal is going beyond the current State of the Art, contributing to a substantial impact on the development and adoption of sustainable and circular fashion.
- b) Innovation: applicants should provide information about the level of innovation (incremental to disruptive) in terms of sustainability and circularity aspects and about the degree of differentiation that this proposal will bring with respect to current linear models applied in the fashion industry.

### (2) IMPACT will analyse:

- a) Market and Environmental impact: The Applicants have to indicate the expected market potential of the new/improved product/service/process (e.g. because it solves a specific problem in their value chain). Applicants should provide evidence of their current position on the market and their go to market strategy if they will enter a new market.
- b) Replicability/Scalability: The Applicants have to demonstrate the level of replicability/scalability of the new/improved product/service/process (e.g. it is not addressing a specific problem, but able to be commercialised to solve a structural problem in a specific sector/value chain/etc).
- c) Social Impact: Social Impact will be also considered by evaluators when scoring the proposals. Does this project address typical problems in an innovative way regarding society? Does this project address typical problems in an innovative way regarding the environment?

### (3) IMPLEMENTATION will consider:

- a) Team the partnership: Applicants should describe 3-5 leading team members, including also the strategic managers.

- b) Strategy level. Each partner will have to explain the fit of the project within their development strategy. Each partner needs to state their involvement in the implementation phase and their contribution to the commercial success of the new/improved product/service/process.
- c) Previous experience. Portfolio, credentials and track record of the applicant and partners.
- d) Feasibility of the implementation plan. The applicants have to provide a clear action plan, with timeline and KPIs to measure success.

The proposals that scored above the threshold will be evaluated by 2 members of the Steering Board using the same evaluation process. A shortlist of pre-selected “finalist” projects will be created across all Fashion industry sectors to ensure a balanced representation of each sector.

Shortlisted projects will be invited to join the Sandpit event. The Sandpit Event is the last stage of the evaluation process to reach the final verdict of which partnerships will be proposed to receive funding. Therefore, evaluation process will consist of:

- Evaluation of the drafted project proposal
- On-site pitch for the Steering Board (during the Sandpit Event)
- On-site evaluation interviews with the Steering Board (during the Sandpit Event)
- Final resolution will be based on a collegiate decision by the whole Steering Board, considering the applicants performance during the Sandpit event activities.

All applicants will be informed about the result of the assessment only after the Steering Board's final decision by email.





**Only costs generated during the lifetime of the project can be eligible.**

**Costs described in the submitted budget must be determined in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the beneficiary.**

**Eligible costs are:**

- Direct personnel costs: costs hours of the staff of the beneficiary dedicated to actual work under the project.
- Subcontracting costs: work carried out by a provider which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with the beneficiary.
- Other direct costs: further direct incurred costs can be claimed for travel, equipment, etc. Only the part of equipment costs used for the project, and the usual depreciation rules of the company have to be applied.
- Indirect costs: costs incurred within the context of a project that cannot be attributed directly to the project, e.g. room rent, energy costs or general administration costs. A flat rate of 7% of the direct eligible costs shall be applied.
- Period of costs' eligibility is from the project starting date until the end of the project. Expenditures incurred before the signature of the grant agreement are not eligible. Expenditures incurred after the reporting period are not eligible.



**Selected projects will be requested to provide the documents listed in the table below in order to receive the payment.**

The payment will be effectuated by the S4Fashion coordinator, the European Creative Hubs Network (ECHN), as a lump sum to the beneficiary as follows:

Percentage of Payment	Period	Submission of Documents
30%	Before the project starts	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Signed Grant Agreement by the Lead Partner</li> <li>2. Partnership Agreement signed by all partners</li> <li>3. Profit &amp; Loss account and/or Financial identification form of Lead Partner</li> <li>4. Legal Entity Form of Lead Partner</li> </ol>
30%	On the 6th month of the project	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technical Report- this report will contain a description of the pilot project's efforts towards the desired outcome.</li> <li>2. Payment Request</li> </ol>
40%	After the project's completion	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Final Technical Implementation Report - with the final proof of concept of the product, service or business model -with high scale up potential for the sustainable or circular fashion- developed within the project.</li> <li>2. Financial Statement</li> <li>3. Payment request</li> </ol>

**1st Report:**

Interim Technical Report. 15/11/2022

**2nd Report:**

Final Technical & Financial Report

If the technical reporting is not considered satisfactory by the ECHN, this second payment will not be carried out.

## BENEFICIARIES' OBLIGATIONS

- The partners must — for a period of five-years after the payment of the balance — keep records and other supporting documentation in order to prove the proper implementation of the action.
- They must make them available upon request or in the context of checks, reviews, audits, or investigations.
- If there are on-going checks, reviews, audits, investigations, litigation or other pursuits of claims under the grant agreement, the consortium must keep the records and other supporting documentation until the end of these procedures.
- The partners must keep the original documents. Digital and digitised documents are considered originals if they are authorised by the applicable national law. Non-original documents may be accepted if they offer a comparable level of assurance.

## RIGHT TO APPEAL

If a prospective applicant considers that they have been adversely affected by any of the provisions of this Call, a request for a revision concerning such provisions shall be submitted within 20 calendar days after the publication of the Call itself and addressed to ECHN, ([info@creativehubs.eu](mailto:info@creativehubs.eu)) with a clear specification of the reasons for such appeal. However, the submission of a request for revision does not waive the obligation to submit the application by the set deadline if the requestor wishes to be considered as a valid applicant to the Call. Likewise, a complaint against the decision of the Steering Board on the final ranking of received applications may be lodged to ECHN at the same address specified above within 20 calendar days after the publication of the ranking and will be examined in the next 20 days. Against the final decision an appeal can be lodged before the European Court of Justice and/or the European Ombudsman.

## IPR

The ownership of all IPR created by the projects, via the S4Fashion Call for Proposals, will remain with the beneficiaries. Results are owned by the Party that generates them.

## COMMUNICATION OBLIGATIONS

Any communication or publication of the Beneficiaries shall clearly indicate that the project has received funding from the European Union and the S4Fashion project, therefore displaying the EU and S4Fashion logo on all printed and digital material, including websites and press releases. Moreover, Beneficiaries will agree that certain information regarding the projects selected for funding, can be used by S4Fashion Consortium for communication purposes. Additionally, Beneficiaires commit to actively contribute to the communication and dissemination strategy of S4Fashion.

## SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

For more information about the S4Fashion Open Call, please check the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section included at <https://s4fashion.eu/open-call/>

For further information on the Call, in case of any doubts regarding the eligibility rules, the information that is to be provided in the Application Form, or if you encountered problems with the Application Form, please contact the Helpdesk email: [info@s4fashion.eu](mailto:info@s4fashion.eu).

For technical issues please contact [platform@s4fashion.eu](mailto:platform@s4fashion.eu).



# S4FASHION



With the contribution of the COSME Programme of the European Union

