

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

related to

PowerUp NetZero OPEN CALL FOR BUSINESS INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION SERVICES

Version 1.0 – 5/06/2026

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Reference refers to the [Guideline for Applicants](#) document.

1. Eligibility of applicants

1.1 From which countries are SMEs eligible to apply?

As stated in the Guidelines for Applicants, eligible applicants must be SMEs or start-ups (in the form of SMEs) established in an EU Member State or in a country participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP) at the moment of the call launch.

Reference: Section 2.1 – Eligible Applicants and Section 2.2 – Eligible Countries.

1.2 Can a start-up or an entity not yet formally registered as a company be eligible to participate?

Start-ups may be eligible, provided that they are formally established in an eligible country, qualify as an SME, and have at least one closed and validated financial year. Entities that are not yet formally registered as a company are not eligible to apply.

Reference: Section 2.1 – Eligible Applicants.

1.3. Are intermediary organisations eligible to apply?

No. Intermediary organisations are not eligible to apply under this call.

Reference: Section 2.1 – Eligible Applicants.

2. Scope of technologies and eligible activities

2.1 Which Net-Zero Technologies are covered by this call?

The call focuses on five specific Net-Zero Technologies: solar energy; battery and energy storage; H2 technologies; sustainable biogas and biomethane; and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS). Applicants must select at least one of these technologies in the application form and link their activities to the selected ones.

Reference: Section 1.1 – Net Zero Technologies addressed by this call.

2.2 Are other Net-Zero Technologies not explicitly listed in the call eligible?

Technologies not explicitly included in the list of five Net-Zero Technologies are not eligible as standalone topics under this call. However, an activity related to another technology could be considered only if it has a clear, direct and well-justified link to the adoption, improvement, integration or market uptake of one of the five Net-Zero Technologies covered by the call.

Reference: Section 2.3 – Activities eligible for funding.

2.4 What TRL levels are expected in this call? Start and end?

This call focuses on pre-investment, planning and adoption-oriented services linked to Net-Zero technologies, such as feasibility studies, technology adoption roadmaps, integration planning, basic engineering, digital services, ESG/compliance support, and go-to-market or scaling support. Therefore, low-TRL solutions are not expected under this call. The solutions should already be mature, close to market, and ready to be assessed, adopted, integrated or scaled by the applicant company.

In this sense, the expected solutions should generally be above TRL 7 or at a level of maturity that clearly demonstrates readiness for market uptake or business implementation. Highly innovative pilot, demonstration or TRL 6–7 validation activities are not targeted by this call, as they are more appropriate for the separate Innovation Projects call.

Reference: Sections 1.2 and 2.3 – Activities eligible for funding; Section 2.3 – Non-priority / excluded services.

2.5 Does the purchase of equipment, machinery or technological systems qualify for funding under this call?

No. This call does not fund the direct purchase of equipment, machinery or technological systems. The call funds external services that support the adoption, improvement, integration or market uptake of Net-Zero Technologies.

Reference: Section 2.3 – Activities eligible for funding and Section 3.1 – Eligible Costs.

2.6 Can we start the activities before the Agreement is signed?

Any activity and costs to be funded by PowerUp NetZero must start only after the Agreement has been signed. Expenditures incurred before the Agreement signature date, or after the project duration period, are not eligible for remuneration.

Reference: Section 6.2.1 – General payment terms and obligations of beneficiaries.

3. Application, documentation and submission

3.1 Which documents are required to apply to this call?

Applicants must complete the online application form and upload all required supporting documents, including the service provider quotation, the activities timeline/budget/KPIs file, the Declaration of Honour, and the SME Financial Viability Self-Check result.

Reference: Section 4.1 – Application Form and Annex I – SMEs and start-ups checklist.

3.2 Where should the application and required documents be submitted?

Applications must be submitted exclusively through the EU Survey platform indicated in the Guidelines Document. Only applications submitted through the online form will be considered eligible.

Reference: Section 4.1 – Application Form.

3.3 Which currency should applicants select in the SME Financial Viability Self-Check tool?

Applicants should select their country's current currency or in EURO when completing the SME Financial Viability Self-Check tool.

The financial support under PowerUp NetZero is calculated in EURO, and the budget excel to attached to the application related to the service must be fill in EUR.

Reference: Section 3 – Financial Support Provided, Section 4.1 – Application Form, and Annex I – SMEs and start-ups checklist.

3.4 Can I submit two applications with two different service providers?

No. Each SME or start-up may submit only one application to this call. If the same applicant submits more than one proposal, only the first one received, according to the system timestamp, will enter the evaluation process. The other submissions will be declared non-eligible.

Reference: Section 4.2 – Number of proposals per applicant to this call.

4. Funding, duration and project structure

4.1 What is the maximum funding amount per beneficiary?

Each beneficiary can receive up to EUR 20,000 in the form of a lump sum. The grant may cover a maximum of 80% of the total eligible costs.

Reference: Section 3 – Financial Support Provided.

4.2 What is the required co-financing percentage or own contribution?

Beneficiaries must cover at least 20% of the total eligible budget through private financial sources. The PowerUp NetZero grant may cover up to 80% of eligible costs, with a maximum contribution of EUR 20,000 per beneficiary.

Reference: Section 3 – Financial Support Provided and Section 3.2 – Co-funding.

4.3 Are VAT, internal staff costs or in-kind contributions eligible?

No, it does not cover VAT, internal costs of the applicant, staff costs, indirect costs or in-kind contributions. The funding covers only the costs of external services and eligible activities described in the Guidelines and in the Application Form, based on a justified quotation.

Reference: Section 3.1 – Eligible Costs.

4.4 What is the total duration for the activities?

The funded services and business innovation activities may last up to seven (7) months from the signature of the Agreement and must be completed by 27 May 2027 at the latest.

Reference: Section 2.5 – Duration of the activities and Section 5.1 – Procedure and Timeline.

5. Service providers

5.1 Can one proposal include more than one service provider?

Yes, one proposal may include up to three (3) different service providers. The applicant must justify the selection of the provider(s), ensure best value for money and avoid any conflict of interest. Service providers must also respect their limit of applications (see question 5.4 below).

Reference: Section 2.4 – Service Provider.

5.2 Can the selected service provider be changed after approval?

No. Replacement of the selected service provider is not permitted. If the selected service provider is no longer able to deliver the agreed services, changes of service provider are not allowed. In cases of force majeure, the PowerUp NetZero Consortium reserves the right to assess the situation and take a decision.

Reference: Section 2.4 – Service Provider and Section 6.1 – Preparation and signature of the Agreement.

5.3 Can a service provider also apply as a beneficiary?

The Guidelines do not explicitly prohibit an SME from acting as a service provider in other applications while also applying as a beneficiary for its own distinct project. However, the rules on conflict of interest, best value for money and provider suitability must be strictly respected. A beneficiary cannot act as its own service provider, and each applicant must properly justify the selection of its provider. Any actual or potential conflict of interest must be declared and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Reference: Section 2.4 – Service Provider, Section 2.7 – Absence of conflicts of interest, and Section 6.1 – Preparation and signature of the Agreement.

5.4 What is the exact application limit for a single service provider?

The same service provider can provide services to a maximum of two beneficiaries under this call. If more than two applications propose the same service provider, only the two highest-scoring applications will be retained for further consideration.

Reference: Section 2.4 – Service Provider.

5.5 Can a company established outside the EU act as an external service provider?

The Guideline Document does not explicitly state that service providers must be established in an EU Member State or in a country participating in the SMP. However, the selected service provider must be clearly identified in the application, and the applicant must include the

provider's offer and quotation, prove the provider's expertise and quality, justify the selection, ensure best value for money, and avoid any conflict of interest.

Reference: Section 2.4 – Service Provider.

6. Reporting and evaluation

6.1 Who will evaluate the applications?

Proposals will be evaluated by an Evaluation Panel composed of at least two representatives of the PowerUp NetZero project consortium, who must not belong to the same country as the applicant. External experts are not foreseen as default evaluators, but the Evaluation Panel may ask for their support if necessary and if they have proven expertise in the topic of the proposal.

Reference: Section 5.2 – Selection and Evaluation Criteria.

6.2 What happens if several proposals receive the same score?

In case several applicants receive the same score, the prioritisation criteria will be applied as mentioned in the Guidelines: first priority will be given to proposals where the selected service provider is an SME; second priority goes to proposals addressing Net-Zero Technologies not yet addressed by other selected applications; third priority assess if the applicants are coming from EU countries different from the PowerUp NetZero partners (Italy, Spain, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Germany); and fourth priority relates to the earliest submitted proposal.

Reference: Section 5.2 – Selection and Evaluation Criteria, Prioritisation in case of equal scores.

6.3 What reporting obligations will selected beneficiaries have?

Selected beneficiaries must submit an interim report and a final report based on the objectives and goals stated in the application form and in the Agreement. During implementation, PowerUp NetZero partners will agree with each beneficiary a calendar of at least two review meetings to evaluate progress and validate the work carried out. Additional supporting documents may be requested if necessary.

Reference: Section 6.2 – Payments and Section 6.3 – Monitoring and Reporting.