

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

related to

PowerUp NetZero OPEN CALL FOR INNOVATION PROJECTS

Version 1.0 – 13/08/2026

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This is the first version of the most frequent questions received up to the date of publication. Questions can be sent via an email to punz@piemonteinnova.it specifying the topic of the request and the question/doubt/information needed. Deadline to send questions is until 5 working days before the deadline, meaning until 8th September 2026.

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 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) established in an EU Member State or in a country participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP) - strand for 'Competitiveness of SMEs', at the moment of the call launch.

Reference: Section 2.2 – Eligible Countries.

1.2. *May a non-eligible entity (such as: municipality, other public authority, large enterprises) participate as a non-funded pilot-site host/ end user/supporting stakeholder?*

The Guidelines specify that only consortia composed of SMEs are eligible applicants and beneficiaries, and that the funding agreements are signed with these companies. However, the document does not explicitly exclude other entities to participate as non-funded stakeholders. It is advisable that if the participation of these stakeholders is foreseen, their role and impact to the project activities is included in the application, well explained, especially if the activities need them as a requisite of their success.

Reference: Section 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1.3. *Can a single SME apply for financial support under this call?*

No, the PowerUp NetZero OPEN CALL FOR INNOVATION PROJECTS to Consortia of SMEs (also including start-ups provided they are SMEs) established in an EU Member State or in a country participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP) at the moment of the call launching date.

Projects must be submitted by consortia composed of at least two members and no more than three companies and must address at least one of the challenges described in this document.

Reference: Section 1. OVERVIEW OF THIS OPEN CALL and Section 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1.4. *Can a company just registered be eligible to participate?*

No, Companies may be eligible, provided that they have at least one closed and validated financial year, are formally established in an eligible country, and qualify as an SME.

Reference: Section 2.1 – Eligible Applicants.

1.5. *Are intermediary organisations and other stakeholders eligible to apply?*

No, intermediary organisations are not eligible to apply under this call. Intermediary organisations is any entity whose primary purpose is to distribute or channel funds to other entities, rather than directly implementing project activities; this includes but is not limited to: financial intermediaries, holding companies whose primary function is fund management, and entities acting as sub-granting bodies under other EU programmes for the same activities covered by this call.

Other entities not being a small and medium organisation cannot participate either, this includes universities, research institutions, Cities, etc. However, the Guidelines does not explicitly exclude other entities to participate as non-funded stakeholders. It is advisable that if the participation of these stakeholders is foreseen, their role and impact to the project

activities is included in the application, well explained, especially if the activities need them as a requisite of their success.

Reference: Section 2.1 – Eligible Applicants. Question 1.2 above.

1.6. In order to participate to the Strand B – City of Turin Challenges, does an SME must be located in the City of Turin?

No, the call is open to SMEs established in EU Member States or in countries participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP). Thus, even though Strand B includes challenges proposed by the City of Turin, applicants may submit a proposal addressing one of the Turin challenges regardless of their location, provided they comply with the eligibility criteria of the call and clearly address the selected challenge and the proposal requirements. The implementation of the activities, nevertheless, must be carried out in the City of Turin to ensure a correct test of the solutions. More information about the specific interest of the City of Turin are available on these factsheets:

Strand B: City of Turin Challenges, the City of Turin has shared the following factsheets with specific information on their main challenges of interest:

[City of Turin – Po River Test Area – Fact Sheet](#)

[City of Turin – Urban Road Test Area- Fact Sheet](#)

[City of Turin – Catalytic-Pavements-Test-Area](#)

Reference: Sections 2.1 and 2.2 and [webpage of the call](#)

2. Scope of technologies and eligible activities

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

The call focuses on specific challenges defined for the five Net-Zero Technologies approached by the project PowerUp NetZero: solar energy; battery and energy storage; H2 technologies; sustainable biogas and biomethane; and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS).

For the purpose of this call, each consortium must propose an application tackling only one of the 2 strands and at least one of the challenges within them. Thus, evaluation will be carried out per strand.

- Strand A: Topics and challenges related to the 5 NZTs.
- Strand B: Challenges launched by the City of Torino

References: Section 1.1 – Net Zero Technologies addressed by this call. 1.2 STRANDS, TOPICS AND CHALLENGES TARGETED BY THIS CALL

2.2. *What TRL levels are expected in this call? Start and end?*

This call focuses on highly innovative pilot, demonstration or TRL 6–7 validation activities, meaning that a high degree of innovation is expected in response of this call. Funded activities could address technical risks associated with the demonstration of innovative technologies and solutions, such as optimising technology processes and operational parameters and/or improving the characteristics of their products/solutions. Innovation projects should demonstrate an innovative net-zero technology or solution in an operational or in a Virtual & Industrially Relevant environment (TRL 6-7) but are not necessarily expected yet to reach large scale demonstration or commercial production.

Reference: Section 2.3 – Activities eligible for funding.

2.3. *Can activities be carried out 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?*

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.

Applicants must complete the online application form and upload all required supporting documents, including the activities timeline/budget/KPIs file, the Declaration of Honour, and the SME Financial Viability Self-Check result (image, pdf printed from the webpage) from the website: <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do>

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

3.2. *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.

3.3. *Can an SME be part of two consortia?*

No, each SME may participate to only one Consortia, and each Consortia may submit only one application to this call.

In the case of multiple submissions by the same applicant, only the last one received (as per timestamp of the IT system) will enter the evaluation process, the rest will not be considered, meaning, they will be declared non-eligible.

If the submitted proposal is declared non-eligible or fails to reach the thresholds needed to proceed to the evaluation, the applications that were submitted earlier by the same applicant will not be considered for evaluation.

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 60.000,00 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 120.000,00 per Consortia, maintaining the threshold of 60.000,00 per SME provided by the project (in case the SME is also a beneficiary of the Open Call for Business Innovation and Technology Adoption Services, the total budget received from the PowerUp NetZero Consortium cannot be higher than 60.000,00; this applies also to all linked entities).

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

4.3. *Who must retain ownership of the developments and equipment used during project implementation, after project completion?*

As EU funded projects, ownership remains of the SME. Our primary interest is that the consortium demonstrates that the equipment is effectively used for the project and contributes to the achievement of the proposed objectives, results and KPIs during the project period.

Please also note that, as per the EU funding rules, for equipment purchases, the applicable principle is depreciation. Therefore, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the actual use of the equipment during the project implementation period may be considered. Further details on eligible costs and reporting requirements will be included in the Agreement to be with successful beneficiaries. A draft of this agreement will be available shortly in the open call webpage.

4.4. Is VAT eligible as a cost?

The Guidelines explicitly state that recoverable VAT is not an eligible cost.

Reference: Section 3.1 – Eligible Costs.

4.5. If an SME is awarded funding under both calls, and the combined amount would exceed the €60,000 per-SME limit, how is the excess handled? Specifically, is the SME's share of the Projects grant reduced to bring the combined total within the €60,000 ceiling, does one award take precedence over the other, or is the SME required to choose between them?

Yes, the total funding an SME can receive across the two Open Calls cannot exceed €60,000.00. However, this is not an eligibility requirement, it only applies if the SME's applications are selected for funding.

If a company is selected for funding under the Open Call for Business Innovation and Technology Adoption Services and is subsequently also selected under the Open Call for Innovation Projects, the total amount awarded to that company within the project will be capped at €60,000.00. This is because, by the time projects are selected, the services activities will already be underway.

Please check the timelines of both calls (pages 13–15):

- <https://piemonteinnova.it/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/PowerUp-NetZero-Guidelines-for-Open-Call-for-Services.pdf>
- https://piemonteinnova.it/wp-content/uploads/2026/06/PowerUp-NetZero-Guidelines-for-Open-Call-for-Projects_final-1.pdf

Please also keep in mind that double funding is not allowed: the two applications may be connected to each other but must not overlap in activities or tasks. This should be clearly explained in the application.

References: 3. Financial support provided. 6.2 PAYMENTS

4.6. *Is the 20% co-funding required per SME individually, or can it be distributed unevenly across consortium members?*

The call allows a flexibility of minimum co-funding of 5% per partner. This must be all explained and included in the application text as well as the timeline, budget and KPI excel.

Reference: Section 3.2 Co-funding.

5. Reporting and evaluation

5.1. *Who will evaluate the applications?*

Proposals will be evaluated by an Evaluation Panel, consisting of at least 2 representatives of the PowerUp NetZero project consortium, preferably not belonging to the same country as the one of the applicants, that could ask (if necessary) for the support of external experts, with wide expertise in the topic of the proposal.

For Strand B, the City of Torino will also participate in the evaluation panel.

Reference: Section 5.1 Procedure and Timeline.

5.2. *What happens if several proposals receive the same score? Which are the countries referred to in the 3rd criteria?*

In case several applicants receive the same score, the prioritisation criteria will be applied as mentioned in the Guidelines:

- 1st criterion: **PowerUp NetZero** technologies addressed by proposals: priority to Net-Zero Technologies not yet addressed.
- 2nd criterion: **PowerUp NetZero** challenge addressed by proposals: priority to challenges not yet addressed.
- 3rd criterion: Presence of SMEs or start-ups from EU regions different from the countries of individual **PowerUp NetZero** partners
- 4th criterion: Random drawing.

Regarding the 3rd criteria of prioritisation, it refers to the countries from the PowerUp NetZero project partners. Here is the complete list (available at the project coordinator's webpage):

- FONDAZIONE PIEMONTE INNOVA (FPI), Italy
- ASOCIACION CLUSTER DE MOVILIDAD Y LOGISTICA DE EUSKADI (MLC-ITS Euskadi), Spain
- PARCO SCIENTIFICO TECNOLOGICO PER L'AMBIENTE ENVIRONMENT PARK TORINO SPA (ENVIPARK), Italy
- BWCON RESEARCH GMBH (BWCON), Germany
- FONDATSIA KLUSTER INFORMACIONNI I KOMUNIKATSIONNI TEHNOLOGII (ICT CLUSTER), Bulgaria

- TECES GROZD ZELENIH TEHNOLOGIJ MARIBOR (TEC), Slovenia

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