SocialTech4EU
Call for Social Enterprises in Europe
Financial support for training
(SocialTech4EU/2023/Call1:Training)

Deadline: 12 April 2023, 17:00 Brussels Time

<u>Guidelines for applicants</u>

§ 1. About the SocialTech4EU project

This project **SocialTech for Europe for Resilient and Responsible Ecosystems - SocialTech4EU** (Grant Agreement n. 101074518) aims at strengthening the resilience and innovation capacity, competitiveness, and sustainability of social economy ecosystems and of start-ups and SMEs of the social economy, with a special focus on technology social ventures.

The project will do this through providing them with support in the form of grants, financial support, and professional services. New digital and green business model enabled by new technologies are at the core of this project, as well as clusters' support to agile forms of public-private partnerships and new forms of cooperation between private and public sectors within and across different value chains and territories, to accelerate the delivery of innovative impact solutions that would not be achieved otherwise.

This project is one of the 14 Industrial Ecosystems – linked to the EU industrial Strategy and is part of the Proximity and Social Economy Industrial Ecosystem. In September 2022, **30 Euroclusters** were launched to implement the EU Industrial Strategy. Euroclusters are cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary and trans-European strategic initiatives of industry clusters and other economic actors such as research organisations, companies, etc. Learn more and access the European Cluster Collaboration Platform [here](#).

The project is implemented by a consortium of 6 partners
- [Torino Social Impact](#), represented by [Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini](#) (Italy)
- [ADV Romania Foundation](#) (Romania)
- [Coompanion Örebro](#) (Sweden)
- [Silicon Vilstal gemeinnützige UG](#) (Germany)
- [Asociacion Investigacion, Desarrollo E Innovacion En Aragon](#) (Spain)
- [European Network of Social Integration Enterprises](#) (Belgium)

For details about the project: https://clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/euroclusters/socialtech4eu, www.socialtech4eu.org

§ 2. Aims of the Call for Social Enterprises in Europe - Financial support for training

The Call *SocialTech4EU Call for Social Enterprises (SEs) – Financial Support for training* aims to contribute to strengthening the resilience, innovation capacity, competitiveness, and sustainability of Social Enterprises (SEs) and enterprises with a social mission or impact across Europe - start-ups and SMEs, with a focus on technology social ventures – thus enabling them to embrace the twin digital and green transition.

The Call will achieve this by fostering the up-skilling and re-skilling of the organisations and their workforce, with relation to business, digitalisation, and innovation/tech management.

§ 3. Beneficiaries of the Call

The Call is primarily open to **Social Enterprises** (SEs). If the expected number of Social Enterprises (100) won't be reached, for-profit enterprises and **start-ups with a social mission or impact** will be included in the selection process.

Applicants can be SMEs or start-ups, being for instance, foundations, associations, cooperatives, limited companies with restricted dividends, limited liability companies, public benefit companies, mutual aid societies.

Applicants must apply to the Call as an individual organisation.
Organisations at all levels of digital awareness can apply to the Call.

For a definition of Social Enterprises and details on the beneficiaries of the call, please see section *§5 Eligible applicants.*

§ 4. Activities supported by the Call

The Call will provide each selected organisation with a financial support of **€3.000 (lumpsum)**, to use to purchase services related to **training in the following areas**:
   a) ICT (Information and Communications Technology) skills - basic and/or advanced
   b) Emerging technologies for the social economy
   c) Open innovation
   d) Business administration, marketing and sales

Please note that the organisations selected in this Call will be able to apply for further financial support within the other project phases/calls, which will take place in 2023/2024:
   ● Innovation: up to €20.000 for each selected organisation (up to 20).
   ● Acceleration: up to €35.000 for each selected organisation (up to 10).
The total amount awarded to each SE cannot exceed €60.000.

The training services purchased with the financial support are eligible if they meet all the following requirements:

 1) Be related to one or more of the **following categories**:
   a) ICT (Information and Communications Technology) skills - basic and/or advanced.
   b) Emerging technologies for the social economy.
   c) Open innovation.
   d) Business administration, marketing and sales.

 2) Be purchased only after the agreement is signed with Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini (see "Contracting process" below) and **until 31 November 2023**. There is no minimum/maximum duration of the training.

3) Be purchased from providers listed in the **Registry of providers/stakeholders** of the SocialTech4EU project[1].

4) The financial support can be used to purchase one or more than one training and with one or more than one provider. If purchased for more than one training/with more than one provider, the total sum of all contracts/trainings must not be more than €3.000. The total sum for all services across all the in the SccialTech4EU project cannot exceed €60.000 per selected organization.

5) It must be clear in the application form that the training is consistent with the amount awarded (€3.000).

§ 5. Eligible applicants

In order to be eligible to apply for the Call, applicants must be Social Enterprises (SEs) or start-ups with a social mission or impact.
Please note that the primary beneficiaries of this call are Social Enterprises, as per definition below. If the expected number of Social Enterprises (100) won't be reached, for-profit enterprises and start-ups with a social mission or impact will be included in the selection process.

Applicants must meet all the following requirements:

1) Be a legal entity.

2a) Be a Social Enterprise (SE), as defined by the European Commission[2]:
"Main objective is to have a social impact rather than make a profit for their owners or shareholders. It operates by providing goods and services for the market in an entrepreneurial and innovative fashion and uses its profits primarily to achieve social objectives. It is managed in an open and responsible manner and, in particular, involves employees, consumers and stakeholders affected by its commercial activities. The Commission uses the term 'social enterprise' to cover the following types of business
  - *Those for who the social or societal objective of the common good is the reason for the commercial activity, often in the form of a high level of social innovation*
  - *Those whose profits are mainly reinvested to achieve this social objective*
  - *Those were the method of organisation or the ownership system reflects the enterprise's mission, using democratic or participatory principles or focusing on social justice"*

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[1] If the selected organisation is not able to find relevant services for their needs in the SocialTech4EU Registry of providers, they can identify other(s) outside the Registry: however, those other providers must register in the Registry and undergo the validation process before being able to provide their services to the organisation.

[2] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/sectors/proximity-and-social-economy/social-economy-eu/social-enterprises_en

OR

2b) Be a start-up with a social mission or impact. The social mission/impact of the organisation must be clearly described in the application form and clearly stated in the annexes to the application form (e.g. registration act). In addition, any other "proof" of the social mission/impact of the organisation can be attached to the application form, such as specific certifications (e.g. as B Corporation) or registrations (e.g. Italian Registry of SIAVS).

3) Be a start-up or SME, such as (list is non-exhaustive): foundations, associations, cooperatives, limited companies with restricted dividends, limited liability companies, public benefit companies, mutual aid societies.
- SME: Based on the definition provided by European Commission[3]:
    "An organization is considered as SME when it meets the following criteria: a) Staff headcount is less than 250, b) Annual turnover is less than or equal to €50m or annual balance sheet total is less than or equal to €43m."
- Start-up: Based on the definition provided by European Start-Up network[4]:
    "a) A start-up is younger than five years and develops into a small medium size company before becoming a cooperation,
    b) Businesses are set up, and at one point, owned and run by the founders."

4) Established (legal office) in one of the following countries:
- Countries of the SocialTech4EU project: Italy, Belgium, Germany, Romania, Spain, Sweden.
- Another EU Member State.
- EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME part of the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature[5]

5) Apply as an individual organization and not as a Cluster organisation/network.

6) Not have a conflict of interest with the partners in the project. Members of the Cluster organisations participating in the project are eligible to apply, but project partners are not.

In addition, for the whole selection and evaluation process and the duration of the agreement with Foundation Giacomo Brodolini (FGB) as SocialTech4EU project coordinator, selected applicants must commit to:
➢ Comply with the obligations that the European Commission set in the Grant Agreement with FGB, including, among others:
  - Avoid conflicts of interest (Article 12 GA).

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[3] Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises

[4] https://europeanstartupnetwork.eu/vision/

[5] Please note that a minimum of 10% of selected organisations in the Call must be established in a country other than the project partners' countries.

- Maintain confidentiality (Article 13 GA).
- Promote the action and give visibility to the EU funding (Article 17 GA).
- Liability for damages (Article 33 GA).
- Allow the Agency, the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the recipient's premises.

➢ Provide information on the training activities undertaken (non-confidential), for communication and dissemination purposes, to both the SocialTech4EU project partners and EISMEA - European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency

§ 6. Financial support available

The total EU funding available for the Call is €300.000. Please note that the project partnership has the right not to award all the funding available in the Open Call.

Each selected organization can receive a maximum of €3.000 within this Call.

As mentioned above, selected applicants will be able to apply for additional financial support in the further project phases for:
- Innovation: up to €20.000 for each selected organisation (up to 20).
- Acceleration: up to €35.000 for each selected organisation (up to 10).

The total amount awarded to each SE cannot exceed €60.000.

§ 7. How to submit an application

Applicants must submit their application in English only by the deadline 12 April 2023 at 17.00 Brussels time by:
- Completing the application form at https://zfrmz.com/y5Pev58b5EtzFkBsXcQA
- Attaching the following annexes to the application:
  - Registration Act.
  - Statute, if available.
  - Proof of registration as a Social Enterprise, if available.
  - For start-ups with a social mission/impact, any document that can demonstrate their social mission/impact (e.g. certifications, registration to specific registries – see details in section "Eligible applicants").

Each applicant can submit one application only and will receive an email acknowledgment of the submission of the application.
It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit an application. Failure of the application to arrive by the call deadline for any reason, including network communications delays, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. Moreover, no additions or changes to an application can be made after it has been submitted, nor after it has been selected.

§ 8. Selection and evaluation process

1st step – Eligibility

All applications received by the Call deadline will be reviewed by the SocialTech4EU project partners against the eligibility criteria described under "Eligible applicants" and "Activities supported by the Call".

N.B. Please note that the following applications will be deemed ineligible:
- Submitted after the deadline.
- With no or incomplete attachments.
- Not submitted by an eligible applicant.
- Completed in languages other than English.
- Not submitted for an eligible activity.

Only the eligible applications will move to the 2nd step.

2nd step – Evaluation

All eligible applications will be reviewed against the following evaluation criteria:
1. Relevance (40 points): How relevant is the proposed training plan to the objectives/themes of the SocialTech4EU project and Call, as well as to the technological and digital development of the applicant organisation?
2. Quality (30 points): To what extent are the proposed training plan and expected results linked to the training needs of the applicant organisation? How clear, coherent and realistic is the plan? Is it consistent with the amount of the financial support (€3.000)?
3. Impact (30 points): To what extent is the training plan likely to have a tangible impact on the applicant organisation's technological and digital development process?

In case of ex-aequo, priority will be given to applications that:
    1. Are submitted by organisations from regions with different levels of economic development and established in:
- EU-13 countries, i.e. member countries since 2004 (Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia).
- EU regions with which the SocialTech4EU project partners had no previous cooperation.

    2. Are submitted by applicants with a good understanding of digitalisation/high need for training in digitalisation.

Applications will be evaluated by the SocialTech4EU project partners. To ensure fair treatment of applicants and impartiality, project partners will evaluate applications submitted by applicants established in countries other than theirs.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation process.

Non-successful applicants willing to submit a complaint, must complete the complaint form and follow the procedure stated herein.

Data processing:
Data included in the application forms will be used solely for the purpose of the evaluation process of the Call, and may be shared among the SocialTech4EU partners. In order to receive the financial support, the selected organisations must consent that their data are used within the whole duration of the project, including with the European Commission and for communication and dissemination purposes. Details about this will be included in the agreement between the selected organisations and Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini SRL SB (SocialTech4EU Coordinator). Terms and conditions of the processing of personal data and the requirements of GDPR in Sweden, Coompanion (please click on "Translate" and select your preferred language). For any questions regarding the privacy policy, please contact: malin.aronsson@coompanion.se

§ 9. Contracting and payment arrangements

Please note that the selected organisations will receive the financial support on the basis of:

➢ The signature of an agreement with Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini SRL SB, SocialTech4EU Coordinator: the agreement will detail all rights and duties of the selected organisation and binding conditions for the organisation to receive the financial support.

➢ The presentation to Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini of the following documents for all trainings purchased/undertook:
  1. Invoice and proof of payment of the service purchased.
  2. Certificate of completion/attendance issued by the provider.
  3. One-page report on the training undertaken (including detailed programme of the training).
  4. If available, output of the training, e.g. website link.

§ 10. Further information
For queries, please email:
Partner leading the project WP3 Inspire, Up-skill And Re-skill": Malin Aronsson at Coompanion, malin.aronsson@coompanion.se
Project coordinator: Debora Greco at Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini SRL SB, greco@fondazionebrodolini.eu
N.B. Please keep both email addresses in copy.

Applicants can also contact in their national language the following national contact points
Italy - Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini SRL SB: greco@fondazionebrodolini.eu
Belgium – ENSIE: flore.depauw@ensie.org
Germany -Silicon Vistal: helmut@siliconvilstal.de
Romania - FUNDATIA ALATURI DE VOI ROMANIA, elena.vasiliu@alaturidevoi.ro

Spain - ASOCIACION INVESTIGACION, DESARROLLO E INNOVACION
EN ARAGON- alvaro.lombardo@idia.es

Info-sessions will be held on the Call. For details about these, the Call and the project, please visit:
https://clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/euroclusters/socialtech4eu,
www.sociatech4eu.org

§ 11.Useful resources

- European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA)
- EU Cluster Policy
- Social Economy in the EU
- Towards a green and digital future - Key requirements for successful twin transitions in the European Union
- COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS An SME Strategy for a sustainable and digital Europe

§ 12. Calendar of the Call

Launch of the Call: 8 February 2023
Deadline of the Call: 12 April 2023
Communication of results to applicants: by 12 May 2023
Start/end date for purchasing/undertaking the training services: from date of signature of the contract with Fondazione Giacomo Brodolini until 31 November 2023.