

## 3DP Pan EU

### Call for proposals to provide services and funds to SMEs to support pan-European demonstration projects based on 3DP technologies

Opening date for proposals: April, 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 12:00:00 CET

Closing date for proposals: August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 17:00:00 CET

#### Introduction and general objectives

Additive manufacturing or 3D printing technology has been identified as a crucial technology to upgrade the EU's industrial base in many studies. The European Commission also highlighted in a recent communication on a renewed EU Industrial Policy Strategy<sup>1</sup>, that this technology is also critical to reinforce Europe's industrial leadership in the context of increasing globalisation, sustainability challenges and rapid technological change. The technology also offers numerous advantages for SMEs in the context of prototype feasibility and commercialisation of new products, as well as part of increasingly interlinked global and regional value chains. Industrial modernisation not only requires the development of innovative manufacturing technologies, but depends on the ability of industrial companies to absorb and successfully implement such technologies, so the actual uptake of these technologies.

When considering the uptake of these technologies, SMEs however still face several limitations and constraints, such as:

- lack of accessible and clear information on where to find support;
- problems in getting access to technology infrastructures, especially when these infrastructures and centres are located abroad, hampering access to 'best value for money' solutions;
- need to combine equipment and services from various facility centres;
- strong reliance on technology centres to find solutions for technological innovations.

To tackle these issues a Consortium composed of 5 partners<sup>2</sup> with strong competencies on 3D printing technology transfer and industry related connections has the objective to support the development of a pan-European platform of existing facilities (including available infrastructure and services provided) that are used particularly by SMEs for testing, validating and eventually integrating new 3D printing solutions into their products and process. This platform will be able to speed up technology deployment in and by industrial companies thanks to the connection of complementary facilities which already exist in EU regions.

This will be a virtual support platform that gathers and connects a number of existing 3D printing demonstration facilities in the EU, allowing innovative SMEs in different industrial sectors willing to apply 3D printing solutions to get high quality services such as testing of new 3D printing solutions, validation, and certification, which are not provided by one single demonstration facility. Through the establishment of the platform, this action (labelled as 3DP Pan EU) aims to help, test and validate a number of industrial demonstration 3D printing-based projects in different application fields.

On the *3DP Pan EU platform*, SMEs can find the solutions that best suit their needs and the technology centres that offer the service. The platform will allow SMEs to send a direct request to the facility centres, hence facilitating their access to knowledge, expertise and infrastructure, even when these are located in other countries. This virtual platform can currently be found at: <http://www.3dppan.eu>.

**To test and validate a number of industrial demonstration 3D printing-based projects in different application fields making use of this pan-European platform, the Consortium, supported for this**

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<sup>1</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM:2017:479:FIN>

<sup>2</sup> The Consortium consists of the following partners: Brainport Development N.V. (<https://brainporteindhoven.com>), IDEA Consult (<http://www.ideaconsult.be>), ART-ER Soc.Cons.p.A. ([www.art-er.it](http://www.art-er.it)), CIVITTA (<http://www.civitta.com>) and Asterion Europe (<http://www.asterioneurope.eu>).



**purpose by the Commission, also wishes to help and financially support a number of SMEs. For this reason, this open call has been launched and will offer services and funding up to 10 SMEs to carry out demonstration activities on the platform.**

The open call is organised by this Consortium (as such this document has also been drawn by the Consortium).

By submitting an application for this call for proposals, candidates accept the specific terms and conditions described in the present document.

## **1. Specific objectives and services provided**

The objective of the present call is to test and validate a number of industrial demonstration 3D printing-based projects in different application fields making use of this pan-European platform. In particular, this will be done supporting those SMEs willing to carry out feasibility, testing and validation of a 3D printing prototype, making use of equipment and related materials and manpower made available by at least two facility centres mapped in the virtual platform [3DP Pan EU](#).

With reference to the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) used by the European Commission under the Horizon 2020 program<sup>3</sup>, the projects, being in the framework of industrial demonstration projects, should start as a recommendation at least from a TRL value of 6 - technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies).

This platform has been designed by the Consortium in order to provide support to SMEs to make connections with facility centres located in Europe, in order to find those facility centres that better suits the specific needs of the SME.

More specifically, the objective of the call is to provide these services and funds to max 10 selected SMEs.

Each selected SME will receive the following services:

- support service in the definition of the partnership between the SME and the facility centres (a template of the *letter of commitment* will be made available – **annex n.2**);
- financial support in the form of grant which will cover 100% of the eligible costs with a maximum amount of 40,000 euro (forty thousand euro) per beneficiary SME to make use of equipments, related materials, services<sup>4</sup> and the manpower made available by at least two facility centres mapped in the online platform: [3DP Pan EU](#).

In order to participate in the open call, SMEs will need to reach at least 2 facility centres located in more than one EU country, that must be registered in the on-line platform. SMEs may use the on-line platform and anyone of the different entry points in it to look for facility centres, according to its specific technical requests/needs.

The SME will then, need to receive a quotation from all the facility centres involved, in relation to the activities that will be performed by the facility centres during to the project of the SME.

The SME should subsequently evaluate the offers and select those that best meet its requirements, also with reference to complementarity of the facility centres activity. Any SME that has received and selected offers from at least 2 facility centres registered in the Platform, and that has received by those involved in the proposal a *letter of commitment*, can respond to this Call (procedure reported in section 7). In relation to the *letter of commitment*, any facility centre must sign a letter of commitment (**annex n.2**), synthetically reporting

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission, G. Technology readiness levels (TRL), HORIZON 2020 – WORK PROGRAMME 2014-2015 General Annexes, Extract from Part 19 - Commission Decision C (2014) 4995

<sup>4</sup> Equipments and services must be an high quality support for SMEs with the scope to test, validate, and certificate new 3D printing solutions. Thus, will be considered "in scope" only those services that are of high quality and related to the 3D printing process. Any service provided in each phase of the 3D printing process will be considered available, in particular services such as: *Support service; Product design & modelling; Simulation; Upscaling; Printing; Joining; Assembling; Testing; Post-processing; Maintenance; Monitoring; Sterilisation service; Scanning; Control of the architecture; Software; Recycling.*

the commitment of the facility centre to implement the services reported in the quotation.

## 2. Type of beneficiaries

This call welcomes applications from SMEs (legal person) participating on their own. Only one beneficiary SME per application is admitted. All applicants shall be located in the EU Member States<sup>5</sup>. An SME will be considered as such if it complies with the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. As a summary, the criteria which define an SME are:

- Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250; **AND**
- Annual turnover less or equal to 50 million € **OR** annual balance sheet total less or equal to 43 million €.

Note that the figures of partner and linked enterprises should also be considered as stated in the SME EU definition<sup>6</sup>. Start-ups are included in this category if they are incorporated.

## 3. Eligibility criteria

The application is eligible only if:

- It is submitted by an SME, or by a SME on behalf of a consortium of SMEs (for SME definition, the reference is the EU definition as detailed above);
- The duration of the project must be between 6 and 9 months;
- The SME is legally established in a EU Member State;
- The proposed project is a demonstration/validation project in the field of Additive Manufacturing;
- It is submitted according to the rules set in section 7, 'Submission of application', below, including the deadline;
- The SME has received offers from at least two facility centres of more than one Member State, has selected at least two of those quotations (from facility centres of more than one Member State) to use in the proposal and has received a signed *letter of commitment* (according to **annex n.2**) from all the facility centres actively involved in the proposal (section 4 of **annex n.1**);
- The facility centres selected by the SME and included in the project proposal, must be registered in the on-line platform (<http://www.3dppan.eu>);
- The submission is in English language;
- Other forms of submission are not admitted.

## 4. Eligible costs

In order to be eligible for funding, costs should be actually incurred by the beneficiary and meet the following criteria:

- they are incurred during the duration of the project, as indicated in the project agreement that will be signed in case of approval, with the exception of costs relating to the request for payment of the balance and the corresponding supporting documents (audit certificates);

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<sup>5</sup> The Member States of the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom.

<sup>6</sup> For more information see:

- SME Definition: [http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition\\_de](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_de)
- User Guide to the SME definition:  
<https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/15582/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/native> also available in other languages:  
<http://ec.europa.eu/DocsRoom/documents/15582/attachments/1/translations>
- SME self-assessment questionnaire to determine whether your organisation qualifies as a SME: <https://bit.ly/2JHAmx>

- they are indicated in the estimated budget of the project, reported in the approved proposal;
- they are necessary for the implementation of the project, in accordance with the description of the action, attached to the project agreement;
- they are identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- they comply with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- they do not include VAT or sales tax;
- they are reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency;
- costs should be related to the use of equipment and related material, and the manpower that will be made available by the facility centres;
- costs related to any purchase by the SMEs, not including the services by the facility centres, are not eligible.
- Staff costs of the SMEs are not eligible.

The beneficiary's internal accounting and auditing procedures must permit direct reconciliation of the costs and revenue declared in respect of the action/project with the corresponding accounting statements and supporting documents.

The financial support to SMEs will be provided in the form of grants based on the reimbursement of actual costs incurred by the recipients when implementing the supported activities.

The reimbursement of actual costs will cover 100% of the eligible costs with a maximum amount of 40.000 Euros, but SMEs are allowed to engage in larger contracts on own costs. As a matter of fact there are no limitations on the total value of the project, in particular in those cases where increasing the value of the project can significantly increase the impact on the uptake of 3D printing technologies.

## 5. Award criteria

The award criteria that will be used to assess applications include:

- a) Excellence of the project approach and clarity and pertinence of the objectives: the objectives of the 3D printing project must be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) with reference to feasibility, testing and validation;
- b) Quality, completeness and efficiency of the foreseen implementation (e.g. type of technologies, type of material, certification process, etc.). The use of the services from the facility centres, necessary in order to reach the final result, must be complementary<sup>7</sup>, demonstrated and justified;
- c) Potential impacts of the project results based on: realistic application scenarios and added value for the products/services of the applicant; possible impact on the wider industry (added value for the EU).
- d) The soundness and clarity of the budget proposed;

These award criteria will be used to establish a ranking list.

## 6. Evaluation and selection of applications

The evaluation of applications is made solely on the basis of the applications and additional documents sent before the relevant deadline. Nevertheless, the Consortium reserves the right to request additional information or clarifications from the applicant, provided that such information or clarification does not

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<sup>7</sup> The applicant should possibly justify the rationale behind the selection of the facility centers and which kind of collaboration is foreseen among them. The collaboration could be based on complementary competences or on alternative competences from the facility centers, but anyway focused on the common objective of the proposal.

substantially change the application. Clarifications are particularly justified in case of obvious clerical errors made by the applicant.

The applications will be assessed by the evaluation committee appointed by the Consortium and composed by Consortium staff and 5 external experts on the basis of the specific award criteria (section 5) included in the call.

The evaluation committee will proceed as follows:

- a. Eligibility check (section 3)
- b. Project assessment (section 5)
- c. Communication of the outcome

During the eligibility check, the evaluation committee will analyse applications and all the requested documents signed and received within the specified deadlines. During this check, all eligibility criteria listed in section 3 will be analysed and the committee also determines for which application more information is needed.

Applications that pass this process will be assessed according to the award criteria listed in section 5 and this will be done by using a common evaluation form. Proposals not fitting with the objective of the call will not be further evaluated. A scoring system from 0 to 5 will be used to evaluate the proposal performance with respect to the award criteria. Half marks may be given.

Scoring system:

- *0: Failure. The proposal fails to address the criterion in question, or cannot be judged because of missing or incomplete information.*
- *1: Poor. The proposal shows serious weaknesses in relation to the relative criterion.*
- *2: Fair. The proposal generally addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses that need corrections.*
- *3: Good. The proposal addresses the relative criterion well, but certain improvements are necessary.*
- *4: Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but small improvements are possible.*
- *5: Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all aspects of the relative criterion.*

Evaluation scores will be given for all the 4 award criteria and the criteria are weighted equally. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3 (applications that do not pass this threshold will not be ranked).

The selected applications will be ranked based on

- *The total score obtained for all criteria;*
- *The geographical location of the SME and the Facility Centres.*

Note:

1. *Maximum one proposal per SME will be awarded. In case an SME will present more than one proposals during the call, only the one with the higher score will enter the final ranking.*
2. *In case of ex-aequo: the evaluation committee might determine a priority order for proposals which have been awarded the same score.*
3. *The consortium reserves the possibility to give priority to the geographical location (base of operations) of the SME in the ranking of applications. A minimum of 5 EU Member States must be represented amongst the approved applications through the location/base of operations of the SME.*
4. *The consortium reserves the possibility to modify the partnership of a proposal. This is only applicable to proposals which include a facility centre which is already included in another approved proposal, provided that the equipment or services are not unique in the EU in order to ensure the even spread of facility centres supported by the this Call for Proposals. If necessary, and in agreement with the applicant, the 3DP Pan EU project will assist the SME to find an alternative facility centre to fulfil the objectives of the proposal.*

The result of the evaluation will be announced by publication on the website (<http://www.3dppan.eu>) and communicated via email to the selected applicant. Final decisions on selection by the evaluation committee will be made within thirty (30) calendar days from the closure date of the call in case the number of applications received will be less than 40, or within sixty (60) calendar days from the closure date of the call in case the number of applications received will be 40 or more. SMEs that are not selected will be informed of the reasons for rejection within two weeks after a decision is taken.



When these procedures do not lead to 10 supported SMEs, the consortium will launch a second call short after the closing of the first call.

## 7. Submission of applications

The application must be submitted by emailing all necessary documents to [application@3dppan.eu](mailto:application@3dppan.eu) after the date of publication of the call but before August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020, 17:00:00 CET (closure of the call).

The application must contain:

- The description of the project according to the application template (**annex n.1**);
- The formal offers made by the two facilities centres selected by the applicant;
- The 2 letters of commitment (according to the template at **annex n.2**) duly signed by the facility centres providing the services.
- The Declaration that the applicant is a SME as defined by the EU definition (**annex n.1**);
- The Declaration that the applicant is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18 (**annex n.1**);
- The Declaration that the applicant is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority (**annex n.1**);
- Confirmation and acceptance of the privacy policy by applicant (**annex n.3**);

Only applications completed in full with all the requested documents, signed and received by the specified deadlines will be considered.

## 8. Award letter and project agreement

The consortium, represented by Brainport Development, will send an award letter to each of the 10 selected SME informing about the result of the call. Then, the selected SMEs have 5 working days to accept the result and confirm the participation in the project.

After this phase, Brainport Development will sign a **project agreement** with each of the selected SMEs that are awarded the services and the grant, establishing the terms and conditions for the provision of services and grant: a maximum number of working days per services and funding based on costs reimbursement will be defined. In order to receive the financial support, all expenses need to be occurred and documented. Detailed information will be provided to beneficiaries in the project agreement.

At the end of the project the beneficiary will be requested to prepare a technical and financial report with information about the implementation of the project, results obtained and costs incurred. The 10 beneficiaries will be also requested to support the promotion of the platform, participating in an interview, after the end of the project, in order to provide to the consortium disclosable information about the project, the results and the use of the platform. This information may be used by the consortium in the form of lessons learned. More details will be provided to beneficiaries in the project agreement.

## 9. Payment of the grant

The financial support will be paid by the Consortium to the SME which submitted the application in two instalments. SMEs will have to provide relevant evidence to justify the eligibility of the costs. The amount of financial support and further details regarding payments will be indicated in the project agreement with each SME.

## 10. Privacy, personal data and transparency

Personal data provided to the Consortium by the applicants and come into Consortium disposal in managing the present call will be treated in accordance with:

- Directive (EU) 2016/680 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA.
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), that is applicable as of May 25th 2018, and which introduce multiple changes with respect to the former legislation (i.e. Directive 95/46/EC) regarding to 'protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of natural persons and in particular, their right to the protection of personal data', and Directive 2002/58/EC on privacy and electronic communications

## 11. Responsibility and Confidentiality

Each applicant is responsible for the completeness, clarity and truthfulness of the data and information contained in the documents and materials prepared and/or compiled for the application. The Consortium is therefore not responsible for such contents, or for any inaccuracy, omission or violation of other parties' rights. Any request for clarification, correction or compensation from third parties will be faced directly by the candidate.

Project ideas remain the property of the applicants.

The Consortium will keep confidential and will not disclose to third parties, nor will directly or indirectly use - except for reasons strictly related to the call implementation - the information related to the projects provided by the applicant in the application form, as well as news and data related to projects that will be known during the implementation of the project.

Any member of the Evaluation Committee external to the Consortium will be asked to sign a commitment to confidentiality.

## 12. Governing Law and Jurisdiction

Any matters not covered by this Guide for Applicants will be governed by Dutch law, in particular the provisions of the Dutch Civil Code and the law of the European Union.

## 13. Contact

Information for applicants are published on the following website: [www.3dppan.eu](http://www.3dppan.eu)

For any further information or questions, please contact: [application@3dppan.eu](mailto:application@3dppan.eu)

*April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

*Eindhoven, The Netherlands*

