DREAM
Digital Resilient Europe for Advance Manufacturing

Innovation Open Call

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Opening date: 21 March 2023

Closing date: 25 May 2023, 17:00 CET

Project Title	Digital Resilience Europe for Advanced Manufacturing
Project Acronym	DREAM
Grant Agreement No	101074436
Instrument	SMP-GFS
Topic	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01 Joint Cluster Initiatives (EUROCLUSTERS) for Europe's recovery
Start Date of Project	1st September 2022
Duration of Project	24 Months

Table of contents

1. DREAM and Open Call

1.1 What is DREAM?

DREAM is a project co-funded by the European Commission, in the Single Market Programme, part of the Euroclusters initiative.

It aims to support digital companies in the deployment of digital technologies and processes to transform manufacturing companies as greener and more digital.

The partners in the DREAM project are Pôle SCS (coordinator / France), Pôle Mécatech (Belgium), G.A.C Group (France), MESAP (Italy), Cluj IT Cluster (Romania).

DREAM implements a cascade funding mechanism via an open call, to support the deployment of 35 projects from digital ecosystem into manufacturing context, for more digitalized sector, with a focus on efficient management of resources.

A description of the DREAM Open Call can be found in the DREAM Guide for Applicants.

1.2 Who can apply to the DREAM Open Call?

Consortium composed of at least 2 entities (registered legal persons), established in one of the participating in the Single Market Programme (SMP), namely:

- EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))

- non-EU countries: listed European Economic Area EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME part of the Single Market Programme (list of participating countries: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf)

Therefore, the eligible countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden (27-EU member states) and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Ukraine.

2. Consortium composition

2.1 What shall be the consortium composition to apply to DREAM?

The consortium composition must be composed at least of the following:

- Partner 1: SME from digital sector

- Partner 2: Private entity (SME or large group) acting as industrial end-user, from manufacturing domain

All entities applying as one consortium should be autonomous to one another (without any capital or personal links).

At least one legal entity of the consortium (digital SME or end-user) must be based in a country of one of the DREAM consortium partners, i.e. Belgium, France, Italy, or Romania.

The consortium shall gather entities from at least two different NUTS 1 regions of Europe from eligible countries.

2.2   What is an SME?

An SME will be considered as such if it complies with the European Commission's recommendation 2003/361/EC. As a summary, the criteria defining an SME are:

- Staff head account in annual work unit less than 250

- Annual turnover less or equal to 50 million € *OR* annual balance sheet total less or equal to 43 million €

Note that the figures of partners and linked enterprises should also be considered as stated in the SME user guide. For detailed information check user guide to the SME definition:
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en

Only SMEs can be funded in DREAM.

2.3   How can I check my SME status?

The SME self-assessment tool provided by the European Commission is available on this link: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/

The outcome of this self-assessment will have to be attached to the application for any SME applicant, on https://dream.grantplatform.com/

2.4   In which region am I located according to the NUTS1 classification?

The official text definition of regional NUTS1 classification can be found here:

https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:02003R1059-20180118&from=EN#tocId15

The map of the European NUTS1 regions is available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/345175/7451602/2021-NUTS-1-map.pdf

2.5 Is it accepted to have a consortium with more than 2 partners?

Yes. As it is mentioned in the Guide for Applicants, the call is open to consortia composed of <u>at least</u> 2 partners and there is no contradiction to support a larger consortium. However, please remember that only SME applicants can receive funding and the maximum grant amount per project will remain the same (30.000 €), regardless of the number of consortium partners.

2.6 Can I submit my application if my company is not yet established?

No, it is not possible. The call is only for registered legal persons (registered before submitting the proposal).

2.7 Can a research institute participate in the open call?

Yes, a research institute can be part of the consortium as a 3rd partner but cannot receive funding.

2.8 How does DREAM define a "digital SME"?

A digital SME is a company (registered legal person) having the status of SME (see section 2.2), and developing, producing, and selling a product or a service from the digital sector (e.g. software, applications, hardware etc.) for the end users in a particular sector of business.

3. Application process

3.1 What does TRL mean?

TRL means *Technology Readiness Level.* The TRLs are indicators of the maturity level of particular technologies. This measurement system provides a common understanding of technology status and addresses the entire innovation chain.

There are 9 technology readiness levels, from TRL 1 being the lowest to TRL 9 the highest.

A full description of TRLs is available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/wp/2014_2015/annexes/h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf

3.2 How long does it take to fill in the application?

As an average, it is estimated that it takes in the range of 2 working days to fill in the DREAM application.

Please note that each field on the application has a character limit, so it is recommended to keep the proposal focused on the requested information.

It is recommended to create an account on the DREAM application platform https://dream.grantplatform.com/ at an early stage and to start drafting the application. Applicants can enter text/data and come back as many times as necessary before submitting the final version.

It is also recommended to submit the application quite in advance before the deadline in order to avoid last-minute problems.

3.3 Will I be able to modify my proposal after submission?

Yes, after you submit your application, you can edit it as many times as you wish, until the deadline on 25 may at 17:00 CET.

3.4 What happens if I do not submit my application within the deadline?

Applications are not accepted after the deadline. It is strongly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to submit your proposal. Failure of meeting the submission deadline for any reason, including extenuating circumstances, will result in the rejection of the application.

3.5 Which additional documents can I attach to my application?

Only three types of attached documents are accepted:

- SME self-assessment (mandatory for SME partners): for each SME partner, outcome of the SME self-assessment https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/ , in pdf or jpg format (max 5MB) . Please use the formatting for file name: **ProjectName_CompanyName_date_SMEcheck.pdf**

- Financial viability check (mandatory for SME partners): for each SME partner, outcome of the financial viability check https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do , in pdf or jpg format (max 5MB) – see also section 3.10. Please use the formatting for file name: **ProjectName_CompanyName_date_FV.pdf**

- Letter of support from end-users (optional), in pdf or jpg format (max 5MB). Please use the following formatting for file name: **ProjectName_CompanyName_date_LoS.pdf**

Into the application form on https://dream.grantplatform.com/, you will find dedicated fields where these documents can be uploaded.

3.6   Should my consortium partners submit a separate application form?

No, as a consortium you should submit only one application on behalf of your partners, thus you need to gather all necessary information from consortium partners. At the beginning of the application form, you will be asked to provide the name and contact details of the person, who will be the contact point and coordinator in your consortium.

3.7   Can a company submit two project ideas?

No. If more than one proposal is submitted by any company, by any consortium, only the last edited proposal (counting back from the deadline) which has been submitted will be evaluated. The other proposals submitted by the same company will be considered as ineligible.

3.8   Are applicants required to include the budget plan in the application?

In the application form, it is asked to provide information on how the grant amount will be distributed among the consortium (SMEs), and among the main budget categories (personnel costs, equipment, subcontracting, travel costs). Subcontracting cannot exceed 30% of the partner subcontracting part of the work.

Drafting a budget will also help to evaluate the project's feasibility and plan the activities accordingly.

As the grant is a lump-sum, no financial reporting will be needed (see section 5.4).

3.9   What is the Financial Viability check?

It is an online self-evaluation questionnaire provided by the European Commission which allows you to evaluate and confirm that your company is in a healthy financial situation and will be able to successfully implement the project you propose in your application. It is available here:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do

The document on how the ratio are calculated is here:

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/agd/h2020-calc-financial-viability-ratios-guide_en.pdf
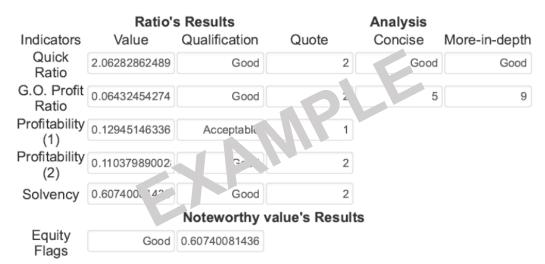
3.10 How can I upload information about my SME's 'financial viability check'?

Once you have fill in the requested fields on
https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do , you have to click on "Calculate ratio".

The results will appear on the bottom of the web page. Here is an example of the type of outcome from the Financial viability check that you should get:

Indicators	Ratio's Results			Analysis	
	Value	Qualification	Quote	Concise	More-in-depth
Quick Ratio	2.06282862489	Good	2	Good	Good
G.O. Profit Ratio	0.06432454274	Good	2	5	9
Profitability (1)	0.12945146336	Acceptable	1		
Profitability (2)	0.11037989002	Good	2		
Solvency	0.607400 42	Good	2		
Noteworthy value's Results					
Equity Flags	Good	0.60740081436			

Then, you have to print the page in pdf or take a screenshot, which then can be uploaded in the DREAM application form.

Please use the following formatting: **ProjectName_CompanyName_date_FV.pdf**

Please note that each SME of your consortium will have to provide this financial viability check as a separate file to be uploaded in the application form. Other consortium members (not SMEs) are not requested to do it.

4. Evaluation and selection process

4.1 What are the selection criteria?

As detailed in the Guide for Applicants (section 9), each proposal will be evaluated by external independent evaluators with 3 main awarding criteria: Excellence, Impact, Implementation.

4.2 How do I get the extra 1 score for "transnational consortium"?

To get this extra point (assigned after external evaluation stage), the 2 partners (Partner 1 = Digital SME and Partner 2 = industrial end-user) should be from different eligible countries.

4.3 What type of support is available for preparing the proposal?

The 'Guide for Applicants' is the main reference document. It provides detailed information about the requirements of the evaluation and selection process, and the Support Program offered by DREAM.

If you encounter any technical problems while filling in the application form, contact dream-opencall@pole-scs.prg and we will do our best to help you.

4.4 What documents do I need to deliver during the evaluation process?

For applications that will be successfully evaluated and ranked, and before signing the Sub Grant Agreement, the DREAM consortium is going to verify the status and financial viability of the partners. More specifically, the following documentation will be requested:

1. Status information of the beneficiaries

2. Legal existence. Company Register, Official Journal or similar, showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and, if applicable, a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).

3. Financial information. It includes the staff headcount (annual working units), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company.

4. In the event the company declared being non-autonomous in the SME check list: the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organisations.

5. In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting document which demonstrates headcount and ownership such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional, association records, etc.

6. Bank identification form

7. Copy of the ID Card or passport of the legal representative of the beneficiaries.

8. Information about participation in other acceleration programmes and/or other H2020 grants received.

4.5 What are the phases of evaluation and the expected schedule?

- 26th of May – 31st of May 2023: Eligibility assessment (administrative check)

- 1st of June – 21st of June 2023: Evaluation by external experts

- 29th of June – 3rd of July 2023: Evaluation Summary Reports sent to the applicants and administrative documents requested to the selected applicants

- 10th of July – 28th of July 2023: Sub-grant Agreement signature for the selected applicants

- 1st of September 2023 – 31st of May 2024: Projects Execution

5. Support programme

5.1 What are the payment conditions and schedule?

The selected projects will receive up to 30.000 € per project in the following 2 instalments:

- A pre-funding payment of 40% of the requested financial contribution will be provided at the beginning of the project, after signature of the subgrant agreement

- A final payment of 60% of the requested contribution will be provided after the approval of the final report by the DREAM consortium. The approval process will check that the project KPIs (defined by the applicants in their application) are met and satisfactory and demonstrators and deliverables are satisfactory. Furthermore, a physical or remote meeting with an interactive session will be organised to better verify the quality of the technical results. Should the technical check be unsatisfactory, DREAM Steering Committee can decide to revoke the funding in whole or in part.

5.2 What types of costs does the grant cover?

Eligible costs are direct and indirect costs that correspond to the project budget which are set out in the application form, and they are eligible as long as corresponding tasks or parts of the Project will be properly implemented (including personnel costs, purchase of goods, services, equipment, travel costs,; subcontracting (if any, up to 30% maximum)).

5.3 What services does DREAM offer in the Support Programme?

During the Support Programme (up to 9 months period, no longer than until 30th of May 2024), the awarded projects will cooperate with the DREAM project consortium.

Each DREAM project partner will support 7 projects, the role of the DREAM project partner will be: organisation of follow-up sessions, coordinate and control the correct implementation and execution of projects, through the lump sums by the SMEs; communication and promotion actions.

In addition to the financial support and project follow-up provided by the DREAM consortium partners, dedicated info/training sessions will be proposed to the funded projects, notably on how to prepare a resilience preparedness/business continuity plan.

Specific template will be provided by DREAM to the funded projects for the mid-term reporting and the final reporting. The final report to be prepared by the funded projects will include a section on resilience preparedness/business continuity plan.

5.4   Will I need to provide invoices and other financial documents on how I spent the grant money?

The lump sum is a simplified method that means that beneficiaries (the awarded SMEs) are not required to present accounting documents like invoices, timesheets, etc., to prove that the cost was actually incurred.

DREAM project consortium will assess the progress of the funded projects and quality of the work during Interim Reviews, but not the accountancy of the participating SMEs. In this sense, we will ask the awarded projects to demonstrate the implementation of the project in line with the milestones set. In any case, the lump sum methodology does not release the awarded SMEs from the obligation to collect documentation to confirm the costs under fiscal regulation.

Applicants shall bear in mind that by participating in the DREAM support programme, receiving the grant and signing the Sub Grant Agreement, they will also be responsible towards the competent tax authorities, and the EC audit bodies such as the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).