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**CROSS-FERTILIZATION OF INDUSTRIAL
ECOSYSTEMS IN TEXTILE
MANUFACTURING AND CONSTRUCTION
LEVERAGING DIGITAL AND ADVANCED
TECHNOLOGIES TO BUILD UP GREEN AND
DIGITAL RESILIENCE IN EUROPE.**

Grant Agreement number 101074415

**xBUILD-EU 1st call for proposals
Guide for applicants**

Version 1.0 – April 3^d 2023



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Project full title:	Cross-fertilization of industrial ecosystems in textile manufacturing and construction leveraging digital and advanced technologies to build up green and digital resilience in Europe
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1.ABOUT XBUILD-EU

xBUILD-EU aims to build an EU strategic partnership focused on cross-sectoral collaboration and cross-fertilization across textile, construction and advanced technologies as an Eurocluster to support the deployment of the New Industrial Strategy for Europe with focus on synergies and cross-cutting aspects between textile and construction using advanced technologies as catalyst to deploy green solutions and a more digital Europe that enable making building safer with smart safety wear and high performing materials, more energy efficient and green using sustainable textile materials and cross-fertilizing circular economy between construction and textile, eco designed, and connected using smart textiles and advanced technologies.

xBUILD-EU will promote building up resilience with a diverse lump sum grants with a total budget of 1.05M€ to foster SME resilience via green and digital transitions, innovation and internationalization that will generate growth opportunities globally. It is also aligned with the five key objectives of the Joint Clusters Initiatives for Europe's recovery program.

xBUILD-EU is a cross-fertilization Eurocluster that spans across different industrial ecosystems (textile and construction) and brings complementarities to the priorities for both thanks to the strong linkages of advanced technology sector to facilitate the SME uptake of digital talent and the cross-sectoral collaboration needed to push forward a greener and more digital Europe.

This cross-sectoral partnership is composed of five clusters, three of them in the textile sector, one in advanced technologies and advanced manufacturing, and one in the construction sector.

Participant Organization Name	Country
AEI TÈXTILS - Associacio Agrupacio D'empreses Innovadores Textils	Spain
ATEVAL - Asociación De Empresarios Textiles De La Region Valenciana	Spain
CITEVE - Centro tecnologico das industrias textil e do vestuario de Portugal	Portugal
TUS - Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest	Ireland
CCS - Slovenski Gradbeni Grozd, gospodarsko interesno Zdruzenje	Slovenia

All of them have an extended network, due to their participation in other European Projects.

1.2. XBUILD-EU FACTS

Project Acronym	xBUILD-EU
Project Title	Cross-fertilization of industrial ecosystems in textile manufacturing and construction leveraging digital and advanced technologies to build up green and digital resilience in Europe
Project Reference	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01
Project Duration	36 months
Overall Budget to support SMEs	€1.050.000,00 will directly benefit SMEs in the form of grants (two calls for proposals)
Website	https://clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/euroclusters/xbuild-eu-0
Initial Budget Distribution	Budget initially distributed as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- First call: 510.000€- Second call: 540.000€

1.3. XBUILD-EU CONTACT POINTS

For any enquiries regarding the xBUILD-EU project, please contact the project Coordinator:

Josep Casamada, AEI Tèxtils, E-mail: FSTP@textils.cat

For any enquiries regarding information and/ or clarification about the present call for proposals, please contact: FSTP@textils.cat

For any other enquiry, please contact one of the xBUILD-EU Helpdesk contacts listed in Annex I. xBUILD-EU SMEs Helpdesk aims to the better support and preparation of the applications through the provision of information, clarifications and answers concerning the xBUILD-EU call. The Helpdesk will cover not only the basic issues of the xBUILD-EU call, but also specific issues.

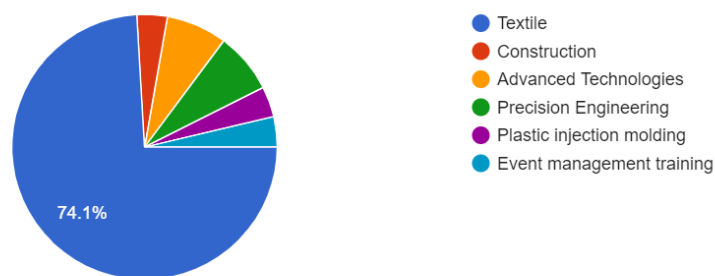
2.XBUILD-EU VOUCHERS' BACKGROUND & AMBITION

This Call for Proposal is supported by the xBUILD-EU Project Consortium and is financed by the EU's Single Market Programme under Grant Agreement 101074415 and managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

Within the preliminary activities of the xBUILD-EU project, a survey has been conducted at Textile and Clothing (Portugal and Spain), Construction (Slovenia) and Advanced Manufacturing (Ireland) industries, driven by their respective sectorial and national/regional clusters. The survey aimed at collecting new inputs about companies' needs and testing the specific directions that experts and stakeholders have drafted to become more resilient after the pandemic and to drive the recovery of those industries.

The poll has been set up to classify the needs and gaps of businesses, particularly SMEs, and to rank the assistance provided and the steps taken to address both recent and anticipated issues. Additionally, the findings from an internal workshop with partners' expertise were gathered to determine strategic directions and solutions.

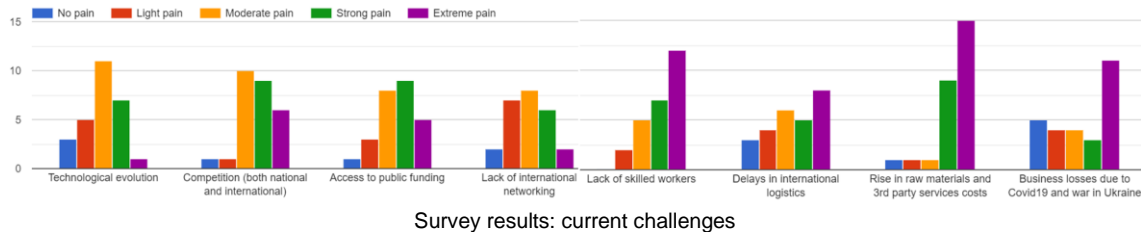
A total of 77.8% of respondents considered as SMEs, from Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia, and Spain have responded to the survey. 74.1% of the businesses are in the textile industry. Construction, precision engineering, plastic injection molding, training for event management, and sophisticated technologies are some additional activity areas.



Surveyed companies' activity sector distribution

It is important to notice that companies are still struggling with the **Covid-19 pandemic effects** on business, having not fully recovered from its impact and are now facing the new challenges of the **war in Ukraine**.

Both the poll and the workshop made it clear that the greatest challenge facing businesses right now is the **uncontrollable and exponential rise in raw material and energy expenses**. Companies are dealing with regular and ongoing increases, which have an impact on the price of raw materials as well.



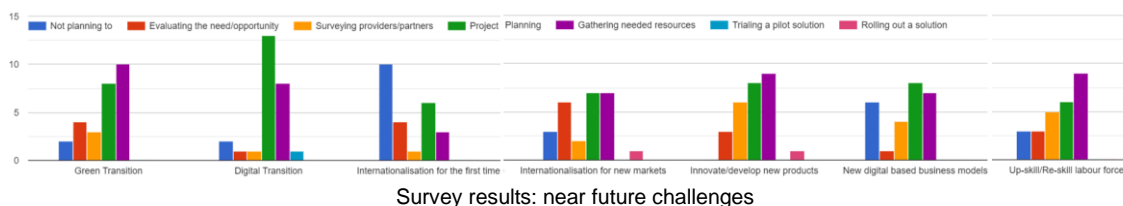
Lack of skilled workers seems to be the 2nd most painful pain point faced by companies in the sample. This pain point is closely related, as an additional cause, to the challenge of coping with the **permanent and fast technological evolution**, where 18 out of 24 companies mention it from moderate to extremely painful.

Fierce **competition**, both from national and international players is also a hot topic when it comes to current pain points. The entry of new competitors and new nations that joined the global market poses a danger to EU businesses. In this way, persistent issues have come to light, including a constrained supply network, a lack of global linkages, exports that are primarily directed towards the EU internal market, and a lack of appeal to young people entering the labor market from these industries (mainly T&C and construction).

Access to public funding for investment is considered painful for more than 90% of companies.

All businesses are aware of the opportunities the global market has to offer, but their biggest challenge is figuring out **how to get in**. The gap relates to both how to enter and what to do once inside as well. The necessity for **easier access to new markets** and greater **engagement with new suppliers and customers** was emphasized. In this regard, it's crucial for businesses to present themselves as **networked and clustered** rather than autonomously. Sectorial cluster should provide specialized services to help EU businesses enter new markets. In addition to competent contacts and pertinent market data, cluster can also report on financial and technical opportunities inside European projects.

In addition to the present issues, we must consider the obstacles and challenges that companies will probably face in the near future. Based on the answers to the survey we can observe that, regarding the **Green Transition** process, it seems that most sample companies are already taking measures to tackle it, but most are still in a preparatory stage.



When it comes to **digital transition** the scenario seems a bit better, but most companies are still in planning stage.

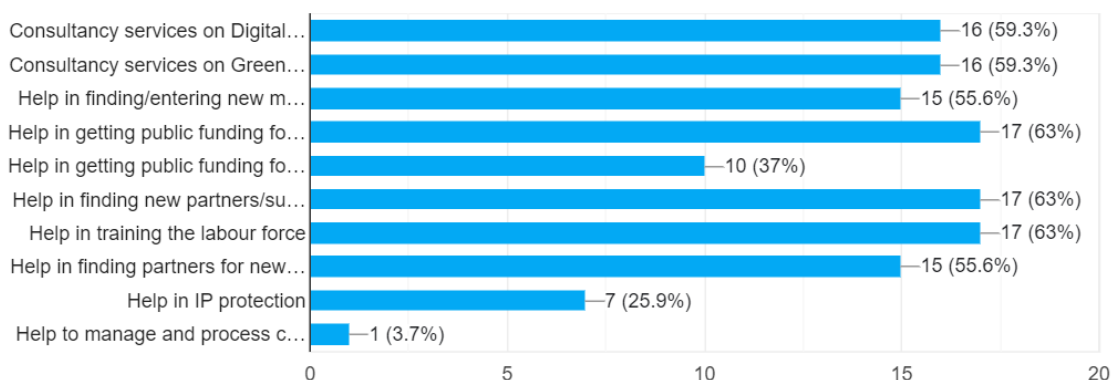
Reaching new international markets seems to be in the agenda of most companies but in a very early stage. When asked about what new markets would be of interest to them, in the middle East region, the **United Arab Emirates** represent the most wanted new market to reach by our companies, followed by Saudi Arabia and Israel. When considering America's region, the **USA hits the top preference**, closely followed by Canada.

Innovation is on the agenda of most companies but once again, the majority are still in the early stages of the journey.

A significant number of companies (6 out of 27) do **not plan to explore digital-based business models**. The ones that do are mostly in the planning /preparation stage. No one is actually running a pilot.

The need for **up-skilling and re-skilling the labor force** is in the agenda for most companies and most of them are already in the process of preparing or planning the necessary actions to undertake.

When asked **what support they would expect or wish for from the xBUILD-EU project**, we find that there is a strong need for help in getting public **funding for innovation**, help in finding **business partners** and help in **training the labor force**, followed by consultancy services in green and digital transition and help in entering new markets and lastly, help in finding the right partners to innovate.



Survey results: Support needed from xBUILD-EU

Finally, considering the companies' input and the experts' judgement, the higher priority gap/opportunities to address within the scope of xBUILD-EU should be:








- A) **Innovation** - The most crucial tool for achieving a swift and seamless twin changeover is innovation. It must be founded on a blend of both radical and incremental technological advancements in materials and processes, non-technological enhancements or transformations of business models, value chain operations, customer engagement, product life cycle management, and creative application by both industry professionals and consumers.
- B) **Labor force** - Beyond the basic technological ability to create novel materials, products, processes, or business models, innovation can only thrive in an industry if employers have access to a sufficient pool of employees that are well-educated, talented, and motivated. The largest obstacle to the industry's change may be a constantly aging workforce mixed with the requirement to quickly pick up new competencies and skills. With few exceptions in labor-intensive jobs, digitalization and automation in manufacturing continue to displace manual labor; yet, demand is growing for job profiles that require both in-depth technological knowledge and creative and soft abilities. Companies are under pressure to up their game in terms of attracting and retaining young talent, including intra-company career development and training programs, as a result of a fast-ageing workforce and the retirement of highly qualified senior specialists.
- C) **Funding** - Investment in green and digital technologies is expensive but, on the other hand SMEs awareness of national & international funding or projects to support SMEs growth is scarce. When they try to apply for they feel funding

application is too complex for them and not suitable for small scale innovation projects.

- D) **Markets** - Identifying and gaining access to new international markets is quite a challenge for SMEs. Finding the right market, the right partner and the right value proposition is hard. Support is needed in identifying high added-value niches that search for high quality, design and customization.

CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION OPPORTUNITIES

Advantages of Textile in Building and Construction:

-  Viable tools for many civil and environmental engineering applications
-  Increased system performance & life
-  Value engineering
-  Reduce carbon footprint
-  Flexibility in design & selection methodologies
-  Specification based upon functional design intent
-  Make profitable in products for durability, cost, strength-to-weight ratio and environmental aspect as well.

The pace of change brought about by the digital revolution is unprecedented. The way that businesses run, how people communicate and exchange information, and how they engage with the public and private sectors have all altered as a result of digital technologies. To harness the huge value created by the digital economy and successfully implement digital transformation, European enterprises and citizens alike require an effective policy framework, as well as the necessary skills and infrastructures (EU Policies, 2019). The EU faces a 65-billion-euro annual investment shortfall in just digital networks and infrastructure. By 2030, putting reforms into place and scaling up R&D and technological deployment expenditures might result in an additional 14% GDP growth. Acting quickly would bring an additional 3.2% increase in GDP and positive job creation by 2030. This is a socio-economic boost that Europe cannot afford to miss. Investing in innovation is only part of the issue, however. A true digital transformation must start with European citizens and businesses trusting that their applications and products are secure (Shaping Europe's Digital Future, 2020).

In order to make the first steps towards green and digital transition in both textile and constructions, as well as for fostering cross-sectoral innovation, xBUILD-EU will invest 1,05M€ in the next two years with dedicated cascade funding mechanisms, aiming at solutions that can ease the pain of participating SMEs from EU Member States in the dimensions identified by the gap analysis.

3. XBUILD-EU GRANT SCHEME - CALL ADDRESSED TO SMEs


3.1. WHICH ARE THE GRANTS TYPES OFFERED?

In the framework of this xBUILD-EU project call, **three different types of grants are offered in 2 open calls**. The grants will be addressed to SMEs active in the fields of construction, textile and advanced manufacturing.

Grant types offered for the whole duration of xBUILD-EU:

xBUILD-EU vouchers:


INNOVATE GRANT



Identify and bring to market new-to-firm products and/or services to make SMEs more resilient against value chain disruption.

20K€ per SME **15 SMEs** expected


GREEN AND DIGITAL GRANT



Assess technologies and adopt business processes to enable the green and digital transition to make SMEs more competitive, ready for a resilient future and for global growth.

50K€ per consortia of SMEs **18 SMEs** expected

GLOBAL GRANT



Facilitate internationalization of SMEs.

25K€ per SME **12 SMEs** expected

The grants open and its budget for this call are:

Innovate grant

Scope: This instrument is aimed at the **innovation** for SMEs to become more resilient **with an increased portfolio of new-to-firm products and services** to adapt to VUCA environment, increasing their capacity to respond and adapt easily in case of value chain disruptions.

Goal: to identify and bring to market new-to-firm products and/or services to make SMEs more resilient against value chain disruptions.

Duration: 4 months (fixed)

Total budget for 1st call: 160k€,

Expected number of beneficiaries: 8 SMEs,

Financial support per SME: 20k€ (fixed)

Fix and exhaustive list of activities eligible for funding:

- Technical assessment and viability, technical requirements for different target markets, compliance studies, prototype development including materials/services, technical prototyping, technical testing and market testing, prototype/system integration design and development, including materials, technical testing and market testing, dissemination actions to promote market launch.
- Business plan for exploitation of the innovation (compulsory).

Eligible costs: Staff costs, other costs such as supplies and small prototype services, subcontracting (if duly justified) and indirect costs (flat rate of 7% of total costs).

Green and digital grant

Scope: This instrument is aimed at the **adoption of processes and technologies** by SMEs to become more competitive and resilient **with focus on green and digital transition** to ensure the sustainability and connectivity of the value chain. While this grant will not fund technology acquisition, the goal is to raise awareness with small pilots to test and adapt business processes to facilitate the twin transition, **particularly technologies that can drive both simultaneously.**

Goal: to assess technologies and adopt business processes to enable the green and digital transition to make SMEs more competitive, ready for a resilient future and for global growth.

Max. duration: 4 months

Total budget for 1st call: 200k€,

Expected number of beneficiaries: 10 SMEs in 5 projects,

Consortia required: 2 SMEs from different eligible sectors

Maximum financial support per SME: 35k€,

Maximum financial support per consortia (project): 50k€

Fix and exhaustive list of activities eligible for funding:

- Digital and green assessments, viability studies, technical feasibility, prototype development including materials/services, technical prototyping, technical testing

and market testing, prototype/system integration design and development, including materials, technical testing and market testing, digital training.

- Business plan for exploitation of the adopted processes (compulsory).

Eligible costs: Staff costs, other costs such as supplies and small prototype services. Subcontracting (duly justified). Indirect costs (flat rate of 7% of total costs).

****Note:** purchase and installation of advanced technologies is not eligible

Global grant

Scope This instrument is aimed at facilitating the **internationalization** of SMEs to become more resilient **and globally competitive with facilitated access to third markets** to ensure supply and production with a broader customer portfolio to facilitate overcoming regional value chain disruptions. SMEs must target one of the prioritized target countries by xBUILD-EU.

Eligible target country: Middle east selected countries: Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

Goal: facilitate internationalization of SMEs in selected target countries.

Max. duration: 4 months

Total budget for 1st call: 150k€,

Expected number of beneficiaries: 6 SMEs,

Max financial support per SME: 25k€

Fix and exhaustive list of activities eligible for funding:

- Internationalization strategy review, assessment of market opportunities, compliance studies, technical assessment and viability, technical requirements for different target markets, internationalization custom agendas for B2B meetings, export assessment, training and capacity building.
- Business plan for internationalization operations (mandatory).
- Travel to target market for a business mission.

Eligible costs: Staff costs up to 15k€, other costs such as promotional materials for going international (i.e., translated leaflets, catalogues, etc.) up to 2k€. Subcontracting to conduct custom market assessment, identification of opportunities in the third country, database of contacts, prepare custom agendas and meetings, introductions to their country potential stakeholders, etc. with a maximum of 15k€. Travel costs up visit the selected third country for B2B meetings with counterparts. Indirect costs (7% of total budget).

All three grants will be built on the following cumulative restrictions and general terms:

- **Eligible beneficiaries:** SMEs (fitting [EU recommendation 2003/361](#) or newer) established in one of the 27 EU Member state countries and active in any of the sectors of xBUILD-EU or supporting its ecosystems.
- **Maximum financial support per third party:** 60.000€ (cumulative over all xBUILD-EU vouchers)
- **Eligible financial support:** lump-sum to cover detailed activities in each voucher.

3.2.WHAT FINANCIAL SUPPORT IS OFFERED?

Two xBUILD-EU open calls for proposals are launched during the project. The xBUILD-EU budget for the two calls is 1.050.000€ in total.

The available budget for the 1st xBUILD-EU call for proposals is 510.000€

The maximum amount to be granted per SME by xBUILD-EU project shall not exceed €60.000,00 in total even in the case of multiple granted grant types to the SME during the lifetime of xBUILD-EU. This applies for the whole tenure of xBUILD-EU project.

Each interested SME can apply to one or more grant scheme types in accordance with its needs but can only ask for the maximum financial contribution cumulatively.

The €60.000 lump sum contributions to SMEs includes the costs of any specialized subcontractor. Subcontractors can typically be innovation actors such as Research Technology Organization (RTO), Universities, Research Institutes, living labs and similar, but could be also public research centre or other, large companies, other specialized SMEs and similar.

3.2.1 MAXIMUM FUNDING OFFERED PER GRANT TYPE

Two different types of funding are being offered in the current call for proposals:

xBUILD-EU Innovate Grant

Maximum Grant per project	Lump sum of 20.000€
Grant duration	4 months
Participants	1 SME from the sectors of Construction, Textile or Advanced Manufacturing.
Budget for xBUILD-EU Innovate Grant	160.000€

xBUILD-Green and digital grant

Maximum Grant per project	Lump sum of 50.000€, with a maximum 35.000€ per SME
Grant duration	4 months
Participants	2 SMEs from 2 different eligible sectors (Construction, Textile, Advanced Manufacturing)
Budget for xBUILD-Green and digital grant	200.000€

xBUILD-Global	
Maximum Grant per project	Lump sum of 25.000€
Grant duration	4 months
Participants	1 SME from the sectors of Construction, Textile or Advanced Manufacturing.
Budget for xBUILD-Global	150.000€

The proposed budget distributed in the three grant schemes may differentiate based on the quality of the proposals received, the threshold of the scoring criteria and the final ranking lists.

In case the number of expected applicants cannot be reached in either type of grants the relevant budget will be reallocated between them or retained for distribution during the second call for proposals.

3.2.2 ELIGIBLE COSTS

Successful proposals shall receive the requested financial contribution in the form of a lump sum.

A lump sum is a fixed amount of money which can be used by beneficiaries for several purposes related to the achievement of the project objectives. It is necessary to provide an explanation in the application on how the lump sum will be used including a clear budget proposal (personnel, subcontracting, travels, equipment, and consumables). Since the granting of a lump-sum does not foresee the delivery of a detailed financial reporting and timesheets, the use of the project budget will be controlled considering the technical advancements by the technical reviewers. The final technical evaluation will assess the coherence of the spent money with the achieved results. However, since beneficiaries will have to keep the original documents of their expenses (timesheets, invoices, contracts) in case of an audit, the following rules and limitations per type of GRANT scheme must be respected.

Only costs generated during the lifetime of the project can be eligible. Period of costs' eligibility is from the contract signature date until the end of the project.

Costs described in the submitted budget must be determined in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the beneficiary.

Applicants will provide an indicative budget allocation in Excel format to allow the evaluator to better understand the organization and implementation of the project. Budget Excel will be uploaded with the application form in the submission platform.

Eligible costs are:

- **SMEs Direct staff costs:** cost hours of the staff of the beneficiary dedicated to actual work under the project.
- **Other direct costs:** further direct incurred costs directly related to the implementation of the action can be claimed for supplies and small prototype services, communication materials for exploitation, travel to international missions (in GLOBAL grant only), etc.
- **Subcontracting costs** such as expert services by Research Technology Organization (RTO), Universities, Research Institutes, living labs and similar, but could be also public research center or other, large companies, other specialized SMEs and similar. Those costs are the services/products carried out by a provider-subcontractor via a legal agreement between them, which set out the rights and obligations of both parties for the sake of the project completion.

Subcontracting may cover only a limited part of the action.

*For **xBUILD-GLOBAL subcontracting is expected up to 15k€** to conduct custom market assessment, identification of opportunities in the third country, database of contacts, prepare custom agendas and meetings, introductions to their country potential stakeholders, etc.*

In any case, beneficiaries must and should justify subcontracting properly to ensure good value for money.

- **Indirect costs:** costs incurred within the context of a project that cannot be attributed directly to the project, e.g. room rent, energy costs or general administration costs. A flat rate of 7% of the eligible costs shall be applied.

For xBUILD-GLOBAL the following limits apply:

- Staff costs up to 15k€,
- other direct costs such as promotional materials for going international (i.e., translated leaflets, catalogues, etc.) up to 2k€.
- Subcontracting to conduct custom market assessment, identification of opportunities in the third country, database of contacts, prepare custom agendas and meetings, introductions to their country potential stakeholders, etc. with a maximum of 15k€.

3.2.3 PERIOD OF COSTS' ELIGIBILITY

Period of costs' eligibility starts from the contract signature date until the end of the project. Expenditures incurred before submission date of the proposal are not eligible. Expenditures incurred after reporting period are not eligible.

3.3. APPLICATION

3.3.1 ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

Proposals will be eligible only if all the following conditions are met:

1. All applicants must be SMEs and declare their SME status in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union as part of the application via [this link](#); In cases of partner or linked companies, consult the guide of the SME definition via [this link](#).
2. Applicants must be established in one of the **27 EU member states**.
3. Linked SMEs from other countries will not be considered as a cross border partnerships.
4. Applications must be written in English (applications partially written in another language are not eligible) and must not exceed maximum number of characters stated in each text box of the application form.
5. For Innovate and Global, SMEs can apply as single entity only. For Green and Digital Grants only consortia of 2 SMEs from different sectors will be eligible.
6. SMEs applying to the call as a consortium should fill in one (1) proposal.
7. Applications must be submitted through the web-based system (<https://euroclusters.grantplatform.com/>) by **17:00 CEST (Brussels time) of the June 7th 2023**.
8. For xBUILD-Global grant, the application must target one or more of the prioritized Middle east countries: Bahrain, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia or United Arab Emirates.

3.3.2 WHERE TO APPLY AND HOW?

SMEs must apply via the following link: <https://euroclusters.grantplatform.com/>

We will evaluate only proposals submitted through the online xBUILD-EU submission tool within the **deadline (June 7th 2023 @17.00 CEST)**. Upon receipt of each proposal, the system will send you a confirmation of your submission. Proposals may be re-edited and re-submitted until the same deadline. The last submitted proposal before the deadline will be considered as the final one.

The application contains two parts:

- Administrative forms, abstract and budget which are filled in directly in the platform.
- Mandatory annexes to be uploaded in the platform:
 - o Technical proposal in pdf (5 pages limit)

All templates can be downloaded from the [xBUILD-EU website](#).

After submission, the applicant will receive an e-mail which states the date and time of the submitted proposal. SMEs applying to the call as a consortium should fill in one (1) proposal. One of the involved SMEs acting as “coordinator” is responsible to complete all information into the online tool.

3.3.3 WHEN TO APPLY?

The first xBUILD-EU Call for proposals is launched **on April 3rd, 2023** and will be open until **June 7th, 2023 @ 17.00 CEST**.

The timeline of the 1st xBUILD-EU call is the following.

Opening date for the proposal submission	April 3rd 2023
Closing date for the proposal submission	June 7th 2023 at 17h CEST
Evaluation period	June/July 2023
Notification of funded proposals	July 2023
Agreement signature date	July/August 2023
Expected starting date of the projects	September 1st 2023

4. FUNDING SCHEME

4.1. GENERAL PAYMENT TERMS

- All payments will be made in Euros (€).
- Expenditures incurred before the Contract signature date, or after the project duration period are ineligible for remuneration.
- Costs incurred for the implementation of the project must be used for the sole and close purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected results, in a transparent manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- Beneficiaries that apply in consortium must set up internal agreements regulating their cooperation. Beneficiaries in consortium are jointly liable for the proper implementation of the technical activities of the project. xBUILD-EU will not be responsible for paying any costs applied for and incurred by the beneficiaries in case of non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the xBUILD-EU funding scheme.
- Payments will be made to each SME of the consortium based on their share of the estimated budget in the project Contract.
- Payments will not be made to the subcontractors by the xBUILD-EU project directly. The SME or SMEs of the consortium are responsible to pay the subcontracting services based on their internal agreement.
- Submission of an application does not constitute an entitlement for funding.
- The recipients of the (financial) support from xBUILD-EU ("Beneficiaries") must ensure that the [European Commission](#), the [European Anti-fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#) and the [Court of Auditors \(ECA\)](#) can exercise their powers of control, on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises.

4.2 BENEFICIARIES' OBLIGATIONS

Supporting documentation

The SME must -for a period of five-years after the payment of the balance- keep records and other supporting documentation in order to prove the proper implementation of the action.

They must make them available upon request or in the context of checks, reviews, audits or investigations.

If there are on-going checks, reviews, audits, investigations, litigation or other pursuits of claims under the grant agreement (including the extension of funding), the

SME/consortium must keep the records and other supporting documentation until the end of these procedures.

The SME/consortium must keep the original documents. Digital and digitalized documents are considered originals if they are authorized by the applicable national law. Non-original documents may be accepted if they offer a comparable level of assurance.

Financial capacity:

The SME must have the financial capacity to carry out the actions described in their proposals and to properly manage the financial support granted to them.

Each SME either applying alone or as a member of a consortium **must BE** in alignment with the following situations:

- Is not bankrupt or being wound up, is not having affairs administrated by the courts, has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, has not suspended business activities, is not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters or is not any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- Is in compliance with its obligation relating to the payment of social security contributions and the payment of taxes, in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;
- Is not subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the grant.

Selected SMEs should be able to provide some basic information of their financial standing.

The following documents could be asked after the selection procedure:

- Copy of the profit and loss account for the two last closed financial year
- Balance sheet for the last two years for which accounts have been closed. Failing that, appropriate statements from banks shall be submitted.
- VAT Certificate, or VAT Registration (official document issued by each country's responsible public organization)
- Bank account information

In case of SMEs (or startups) without a financial history or track-record, a Business Plan for the on-going financial year could be required.

Exceptionally, when it would be considered and justified by xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee, if a participant is unable to provide the above documents, it may prove its economic and financial capacity by any other document which the xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee considers appropriate. Nevertheless, this entity must at least be notified of the exceptional reason and its justification in the proposal; and it reserves the right to request any other document enabling it to verify the participant's financial capacity.

Communication

SMEs awarded with xBUILD-EU grant scheme in this call will be expected to travel and participate to the xBUILD-EU Final Event (expected June/July 2025).

4.3 WHICH ARE THE PAYMENT TERMS PER GRANT?

Payment scheme	
Innovate grant	<p>✓ Lump sum of 20.000€ per project</p> <p>2 instalments pre-financing: within 30 days from the signature of the contract (50%) final: within 30 days from the approval of the final progress performance report (50%)</p>
Green and digital grant	<p>✓ Lump sum of 50.000€ per project</p> <p>2 instalments pre-financing: within 30 days from the signature of the contract (50%). Payment to each individual SME in consortium. final: within 30 days from the approval of the final progress performance report (50%) Payment to each individual SME in consortium.</p>
Global grant	<p>✓ Lump sum of 25.000€ per project</p> <p>2 instalments pre-financing: within 30 days from the signature of the contract (50%) final: within 30 days from the approval of the final progress performance report (50%)</p>

The payments will be made directly to each SME. In the case of a consortium the payments will be made to each SME individually.

Payments will not be made to the subcontractors by the xBUILD-EU project directly. The SME or SMEs of the consortium are responsible to pay the subcontracting services based on their internal agreement.

5. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

5.1 CRITERIA

Submitted applications will be evaluated in a one evaluation procedure (remote evaluation by experts from the xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee consisting of representatives of xBUILD-EU partners).

Prior to assigning proposals to external experts, xBUILD-EU partners will perform an eligibility check according to previously defined criteria.

The evaluation and ranking of the applications are based on a set of criteria in addition to the above-mentioned main eligibility requirements. The following table explains the different aspects which will be considered for each evaluation criterion.

xBUILD-Innovate grant and xBUILD-Green and Digital grant

Evaluation criteria	Sub-criteria	Score	Weighted Score
1. Impact (40%)	Market generation potential and total market size and growth-rate envisaged	5	10
	Estimated added value of the proposed product, service or business model	5	10
	Potential scale-up and job creation for the applicant SME	5	10
	Alignment of the proposal with the overall strategy of the applicant SME;	5	5
	Relevance of societal, gender and environmental related issues addressed.	5	5
Total 'Impact'			40
2. Excellence (30%)	Innovation potential within SME	5	10
	Innovation potential within the ecosystem	5	10
	Feasibility of the project	5	10
Total 'Excellence level'			30
3 Quality and efficiency of implementation (30%)	Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan	5	10
	Team	5	10
	Risk management	5	10
Total 'Implementation'			30
Max total			100

xBUILD-Global grant

Evaluation criteria	Sub-criteria	Score	Weighted Score
1. Impact (60%)	Market generation potential and total market size and growth-rate envisaged	5	15
	estimated added value of the proposed product, service or business model	5	10
	potential scale-up and job creation for the applicant SME	5	15
	alignment of the proposal with the overall strategy of the applicant SME;	5	15
	relevance of societal, gender and environmental related issues addressed.	5	5
Total “Impact”			60
2 Quality and efficiency of implementation (40%)	consistency between objectives, impact, approach and proposed activities	5	10
	subcontractor expertise in the target market	5	10
	action plan for going international and experience of the team	5	10
	availability of resources, timeframe and description of implementation of the internationalization strategy	5	10
Total “Quality and efficiency of implementation”			40
Total max. score			100

5.2 SCORING MECHANISM

Evaluation scores will be awarded based on the criteria mentioned in the section above.

Each sub-criterion is rated between 1 and 5 points; no half-points are allowed (decimal points may arise during normalization, but not as an individual evaluation grade).

Each sub-criterion has a dedicated weight for the final score. Score per criterion is the sum of the individual sub-criteria weighted scores.

The total score is comprised by adding the scores of the three criteria and will be maximum 100 points. The threshold for the overall score is 70%. Proposals in which the overall score is below 70%, will not be recommended for funding.

The meaning of the **scores** with respect to the sub-criteria are as follows:

- **1 - Poor.** The sub-criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

- **2 - Fair.** While the proposal broadly addresses the sub-criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
- **3 - Good.** The proposal addresses the sub-criterion well, but with at least one moderate weakness.
- **4 - Very good.** The proposal addresses the sub-criterion very well, although with minor weaknesses.
- **5 - Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the sub-criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

In case of proposals with **equal overall scores**, the prevailing one is the one that has the higher score in the criterion of “Impact”, then “Excellence” and then “Implementation” in this order.

In case of Global grant, the prevailing one is the one that has the higher score in the criterion of “Impact” and then “Implementation” in this order.

5.3 EVALUATION PROCEDURE

Submitted applications will be assessed by **the xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee** consisting of representatives of the xBUILD-EU partners.

The assessment period shall take max. 40 days, starting from the closing date of the call. The applicants will receive an e-mail about the outcome of the assessment directly after the assessment is finalized along with instructions for the next steps in case the applicant is awarded. The successful applicants will be requested to upload administrative and financial documents to the xBUILD-EU platform within **7 calendar days**, and within additionally 15 days to sign a formal Contract from the notification of the project approval. Failure to comply with these timeframes might result in the rejection of the proposal.

Individual Evaluation will be done remotely by xBUILD-EU experts. After individual evaluation, the result will be a preliminary ranking list. Only proposals with total score rated above the threshold will be considered eligible and included in the preliminary ranking list. **There will be different ranking lists for each of the grants.**

The final ranking list will result from the decision of the Evaluation Committee revision.

Important note to applicants: Terms and Conditions described in this Guide for Applicants / Call for Proposals, should be considered as mandatory terms and any in compliance may lead to proposal disqualification.

Examples for proposal disqualification (indicative and not exhaustive):

- Applicant and / or Consortium request budget higher than the maximum allowable.
- Applicant is not within territorial scope of the xBUILD-EU project.

6. CONTACT DETAILS AND COMPLAIN

For any enquiries regarding the xBUILD-EU grant scheme, please contact FSTP@textils.cat or your local contact point (Annex I)

For any complaints regarding the xBUILD-EU Open Call results, please contact your local contact point (Annex I) within 5 calendar days after the announcement of the Open Call results. Your email should include the following information:

- Platform username and application name
- Lead contact name and details
- Object of your complaint
- Information and evidence of the alleged breach

The xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee, which consists of representatives of the xBUILD-EU partners, will examine the complaint on the basis of the information brought forward by the applicant, will assess the case and decide whether the complaint is justified or not and will inform the applicant and the consortium on the decision taken. If the complaint is considered justified, the xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee will notify the evaluators to re-evaluate the project application and the related assessment part, subject to the complaint. The evaluators will then provide the xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by xBUILD-EU Evaluation Committee to the applicant in writing within **20 working days** from the date of submitting the complaint. This decision will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the program if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

For technical issues concerning the submission procedure, please contact FSTP@textils.cat or your local contact point.

7. MONITORING AND REPORTING PROCESS

Maximum 1 (one) month after the end of the reporting period, as it will be defined in the contract, the xBUILD-EU beneficiaries shall provide an overall performance progress report for the Project along with the respective deliverables validating the work as well as a brief financial statement with the expenses for the period according to the respective grant type.

The purpose of the above is to evaluate:

- the degree of fulfilment of the project work plan and of the related deliverable(s);
- the continued relevance of the objectives;
- the expected potential impact in economic, competition and social terms, and the xBUILD-EU Beneficiary's cooperation to elaborate a dissemination of foreground plan.

8. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

A.- Confidentiality among applicants

All information in whatever form or mode of communication, which is disclosed by a Party (the “Disclosing Party”) to any other Party (the “Recipient”) in connection with the project during its implementation and which has been explicitly marked as “confidential” at the time of disclosure, or when disclosed orally has been identified as confidential at the time of disclosure and has been confirmed and designated in writing within 15 calendar days from oral disclosure at the latest as confidential information by the Disclosing Party, is “Confidential Information”.

The Recipients hereby undertake in addition and without prejudice to any commitment on non-disclosure under the xBUILD-EU Project, for a period of 4 years after the end of the Project:

- Not to use Confidential Information otherwise than for the purpose for which it was disclosed;
- not to disclose Confidential Information without the prior written consent by the Disclosing Party;
- to ensure that internal distribution of Confidential Information by a Recipient shall take place on a strict need-to-know basis; and
- to return to the Disclosing Party, or destroy, on request all Confidential Information that has been disclosed to the Recipients including all copies thereof and to delete all information stored in a machine readable form to the extent practically possible. The Recipients may keep a copy to the extent it is required to keep, archive or store such Confidential Information because of compliance with applicable laws and regulations or for the proof of on-going obligations provided that the Recipient comply with the confidentiality obligations herein contained with respect to such copy for as long as the copy is retained.

The recipients shall be responsible for the fulfilment of the above obligations on the part of their employees or third parties involved in the Project and shall ensure that they remain so obliged, as far as legally possible, during and after the end of the Project and/or after the termination of the contractual relationship with the employee or third party.

The above shall not apply for disclosure or use of Confidential Information, if and in so far as the Recipient can show that:

- the Confidential Information has become or becomes publicly available by means other than a breach of the Recipient’s confidentiality obligations;
- the Disclosing Party subsequently informs the Recipient that the Confidential Information is no longer confidential;
- the Confidential Information is communicated to the Recipient without any obligation of confidentiality by a third party who is to the best knowledge of the Recipient in lawful possession thereof and under no obligation of confidentiality to the Disclosing Party;

- the disclosure or communication of the Confidential Information is foreseen by provisions of the xBUILD-EU Project;
- the Confidential Information, at any time, was developed by the Recipient completely independently of any such disclosure by the Disclosing Party;
- the Confidential Information was already known to the Recipient prior to disclosure.

The Recipient shall apply the same degree of care with regard to the Confidential Information disclosed within the scope of the Project as with its own confidential and/or proprietary information, but in no case less than reasonable care

Each Party shall promptly advise the other Party in writing of any unauthorized disclosure, misappropriation or misuse of Confidential Information after it becomes aware of such unauthorized disclosure, misappropriation or misuse.

If any Party becomes aware that it will be required, or is likely to be required, to disclose Confidential Information in order to comply with applicable laws or regulations or with a court or administrative order, it shall, to the extent it is lawfully able to do so, prior to any such disclosure

- notify the Disclosing Party, and
- comply with the Disclosing Party's reasonable instructions to protect the confidentiality of the information.

B.- Data Protection

GDPR compliance: The General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU) guarantee that the processing of data is carried out in compliance with the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the dignity of the data subject with particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity and the right to data protection. By applying, the applicant agrees on the storage and use of its personal data for the execution of the xBUILD-EU objectives and work plan.

The processing of data that xBUILD-EU intends to carry out will be based on lawfulness and correctness in the full protection of its rights and its confidentiality pursuant to the general principles of the GDPR and its art.24. Therefore, the competitors are informed of the procedure that the data provided by the applicants will be treated exclusively with reference to the procedure for which they submitted the documentation.

Data controller: AEI Tèxtils

Address: Carrer Sant Pau 6, 08221 Terrassa, Spain.
VAT number: G64876667

Contact details: info@textils.cat

Data we process: The xBUILD-EU consortium will be processing mainly data coming from:

- Representatives and contact person from the applicants to the xBUILD-EU Call for proposals

- Representatives and contact person from the partners of the xBUILD-EU Consortium
- As part of carrying out the projects, the partners and the applicants transfer personal data to xBUILD-EU consortium, making it possible to identify and contact (first & last name, function, business e-mail address, message, consent) their employees due to their job titles or third-parties involved in the project, such as experts. In this case, the partner remains responsible for supplying the legal information to the people involved in the processing operations prior to or when the data are collected.
- Information about successful xBUILD-EU grant applications that will be made publicly available before the end of the project containing: project title, names of project partners and short project description (as provided by the applicant in the application template).
- Information about successful xBUILD-EU grant types that will be made publicly available after the end of the project: project title, names of project partners, awarded funding and updated short project description (as provided by the project partners in the Final Report).

Purpose of the processing: The purpose of processing partners and applicant's data is:

- To run an open call and collect data necessary to evaluate applications and financing the projects.
- To manage this application form and the consequent project selection process
- To compile files on members of the consortium, partners and people likely to contribute to the projects due to their job titles or expertise.
- Communication on the projects.
- Sending a newsletter and information about events related to the projects.
- Compiling statistics related to the projects.

Lawfulness:

- (a) **Legal basis for the applicants processing of personal data:** The legal basis for this processing is the performance of selections of projects for the financing (art. 6.1, 'b', GDPR).
- (b) **Legal basis for other processing of personal data:** informed consent (art. 6.1. 'a' GDPR).

Recipients:

Third-party intervention:

xBUILD-EU, while conducting its undertakings, may authorize third parties (as defined in number 10 of article 4 of the GDPR) to process personal data which are under xBUILD-EU's domain, in order to comply with legal duties, pre-contractual or contractual obligations and/or as indispensable means of performance of xBUILD-EU's statutory goals. Said third parties can be public authorities, namely in charge of auditing tasks, project, activity or service partners.

In order to comply with the GDPR requisites, xBUILD-EU shall require the previous and mandatory consent to the data subject for this specific processing.

Processor intervention:

xBUILD-EU, while conducting its undertakings, may subcontract third entities (as defined in number 8 of article 4 of the GDPR) to process personal data on xBUILD-EU's behalf. In order to comply with the GDPR requisites, xBUILD-EU shall require the previous and mandatory consent to the data subject for this specific processing.

Period of data storage: Personal data will be stored for the period defined by legal rules or, in their absence, for the strict time needed for the fulfilment of the processing purpose, taking in consideration the legal basis for said processing, as well as all the remaining requisites and time periods determined by law, namely the lapse terms for legal actions based on the correlated rights.

Accordingly, in all cases where a mandatory storage period is determined by law, the right to erasure of personal data as stated in Article 17 of the GDPR can only be exercised by the data subject after said period is lapsed.

xBUILD-EU shall store the personal data for the strict period of time needed for the fulfilment of the data processing purpose, as well as its erasure (or anonymization, if and when applicable/needed) immediately after said period and/or upon the data subject's request, always considering the above-cited exceptions and all legally defined terms.

Rights: The applicants can exercise their rights towards the data controller, based on article 12 of the GDPR. For any inquiries regarding the processing your personal data, please contact info@textils.cat.

Applications selection and evaluation will be performed under the appropriate ethical conduct and will respect the confidentiality of the information received.

9. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AND DISSEMINATION

All rights, title, and interest in and to the intellectual property created or owned in any form or manner by xBUILD-EU's partners, shall remain vested in them. For this purpose, any such IP shall include intellectual property related to:

- Patents, patent applications and patent rights (including without limitation any and all applicable assignments of patents or patent applications, continuations, continuations in-part, divisions, patents of addition, renewals, extensions, foreign counterparts, utility models, re-examinations, and applications for reissuance of patents);
- Copyrights and applications, registrations, recordings and renewals in connection therewith;
- Trade secrets and confidential technical information (including without limitation research and development, know-how, formulae, compositions, processes and techniques, technical data, designs and drawings);

-All manuals, books, documents and specifications directly or indirectly related there to;

-Licenses, agreements and permissions granted to any third parties over the IP.

The ownership of the IP rights arising from the development of a project, within the scope of this program, shall belong to the corresponding SME/consortium, as referred in the signed consortium agreement.

The following aspects will be considered in the agreement:

-Results are owned by the party that generates them, unless otherwise agreed;

Where several Parties have jointly carried out work generating Results and it is not possible to separate such joint invention, design or work for the purpose of applying for, obtaining and/or maintaining and/or owning the relevant patent protection or any other intellectual property right, the Parties shall have joint ownership of such Results.

These Parties must negotiate and agree on a separate written joint ownership agreement among the Parties concerned regarding the allocation and terms of exercising that joint ownership of such jointly owned Results, within six (6) months as from the date of the creation of such joint Results.

In absence of such agreement or in case the Parties fail to agree within six (6) months as of the creation of such joint Results to agree on a separate written joint ownership agreement:

-Each of the joint owners shall be entitled to use their jointly owned results for non-commercial research activities on a royalty-free basis, and without requiring the prior consent of the other joint owner(s);

-Each of join owners shall be entitled to otherwise exploit the jointly owned results and to grant non-exclusive licences to third parties (without any right to sub-licence), if the other joint owners are given:

-At least 45 calendar days' advance notice

-Fair and reasonable compensation

The applicants are advised to include to their internal consortium agreement Intellectual Property Rights issues and the **use and dissemination** of the results generated by the project teams through the funding obtained via xBUILD-EU grant scheme. For details on rights and obligations related to results, the project teams can refer to Chapter 4/ Section 3 of the

https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amqa/h2020-amqa_en.pdf .

For dissemination and use of results generated through the financial support from xBUILD-EU, the recipients **must credit the xBUILD-EU project** through proper citation and appearance of the xBUILD-EU logo and EU Logo, including the proper citation "This

project has received funding from the European Union's through the Single Market Program project under grant agreement No. 101074415 - xBUILD-EU".



**Funded by
the European Union**

This project has received funding from the European Union's through the Single Market Program project under grant agreement No. 101074415 - xBUILD-EU

10. GENDER EQUILITY, DIVERSITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

xBUILD-EU seeks gender balance. Therefore, applicants are invited to take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including supervisory and managerial levels to the extent possible.

11. DISCLAIMER

Purpose: This text is explaining the xBUILD-EU Innovation Support Mechanism for information purposes only. No rights can be claimed based on this document. This document does not reflect the views of the European Commission and the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

Mistakes or inconsistencies: The xBUILD-EU consortium is not responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations that this text may cause. In the case of inconsistencies, the xBUILD-EU Consortium will determine the steps to be taken, in cooperation with the applicant concerned.

Consequential damages: In no event shall either party be liable to the other or any of its affiliates for any consequential, incidental, indirect, special, punitive or exemplary damages (including, without limitation, lost profits, business or goodwill) suffered or

incurred by such other party or its affiliates in connection with this grant scheme, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.

Direct Damages: xBUILD-EU's liability for direct damages will be limited to the amount of the financial contribution awarded to the applicant pending of payment.

Gender equality: xBUILD-EU seeks gender balance. Therefore, applicants are invited to take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including supervisory and managerial levels to the extent possible.



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ANNEX I SME LOCAL CONTACT POINTS

	xBUILD-EU SME HELPDESK		
	PARTNERS	REPRESENTATIVES	E-mail
1	AEI TÈXTILS	Josep Casamada	FSTP@textils.cat
2	ATEVAL	Julia Vercher	julia@ateval.com
3	CITEVE / Portuguese Textile Cluster	Pedro Machado	pmachado@citeve.pt
4	IDEAM / TUS	Jamie Meehan	jamie.meehan@ideam.ie
5	CCS	Vladimir Gumilar	vladimir.gumilar@sgg.si