Guidelines for a
Call from
TECHNOLOGY SUPPLIERS
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1 INTRODUCTION TO BETTER FACTORY

Better Factory is an EU initiative to help Small and Medium sized (SMEs) European manufacturers to enter new markets. For SMEs to explore new markets Better Factory provides:

- **Reduction of production cost** by optimising the use production resources (material, space, energy, water, machines, labour, logistics, etc.) and production planning. Better Factory will connect manufacturing SMES with companies who have proven technologies in production optimisation.

- **Redesigning of products** so they can be easily customised or personalised for individual customers. Better Factory will connect manufacturing SMEs with experienced design artists.

- **Financial and business consultancy** to improve production, develop new products and create new business strategy.

The SME will be given access to Robotics and Automation MarketPlace (RAMP – [www.RAMP.eu](http://www.RAMP.eu)). RAMP is a Business-to-Business (B2B) internet marketplace for the manufacturing SMEs. Through RAMP, manufacturing SMEs can buy production automation technologies, purchase product design services, and hire financial and business consultants.

To test and validate the transfer of technology and services on the RAMP, Better Factory is launching a Knowledge Transfer Program. In the Knowledge Transfer Program, Better Factory will select 8 manufacturing SMEs, 8 Technology Suppliers and 8 Artists. Each consortium of these trio (manufacturing SME + Technology Supplier + Artists) is referred as a Knowledge Transfer Experiment (KTE). KTEs will be supported to design new product lines and deploy automation solutions in the factory.

Better Factory will provide EUR 200,000 and full support to the manufacturing SME to explore the possibilities of optimising their production and improving their products’ design. If you are interested in improving your product design and improving your production apply to our Open Call for Technology Suppliers.
2 OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE OPEN CALL PROCESS

These guidelines summarise the main features of this Call for Technology Suppliers as a preliminary step to apply to the Better Factory Open Call that will end up with the selection of 8 KTEs.

This Call for Registration will be open

from 18 January 2021 at 00:00 CET
until 18 March 2021 at 17:00 CET

With this Call for Registration, Better Factory is calling for Technology Suppliers looking to use advance robotics and optimisation technologies for the optimisation of factory logistics, space, material, energy, labour, etc. for Lean-Agile production in collaboration with Manufacturing SMEs/Mid-Caps and Artists.

Technology suppliers will support to transform the factory into an agile production facility which not only meets their current production demands but at the same time enables them to manufacture a range of new and/or personalised products. The focus will be to minimise the impact on the production cost by deploying many advance robotics and optimisation technology to minimise the use of waste, energy, resources and logistic.

This call is a great opportunity for Tech suppliers to expand their collaborations and to scale up their innovations.

The following industrial manufacturing sectors are prioritised:

- Plastic and Rubber;
- Furniture and Wood;
- Food and Agriculture;
- Construction;
- Metal and Machinery;
- Textile and Leather.

Tech Suppliers are invited to register in the Better Factory Open Call.

The main objective of EoIs is to find the best production optimisation challenges. The automation Technology Suppliers will then be joined with Manufacturing SMEs/Mid-Caps to ensure that a successful KTE can be created.

The steps of Better Factory Open Call are as follows:

2.1 Application to the Tech Suppliers call

On this call for Tech Suppliers, applicants will be asked to fill an application form with:

- Basic personal and legal information;
- Short description of technical solution, status of technological readiness level (TRL) and relevant industry sectors;
- Presence in international business or good market commercialisation potential;
- Research Development and Innovation, RDI co-operation experience;
- Type of organisation;

Any doubt concerning the application should be addressed to the Helpdesk space, which will provide support regarding the formal aspects of the Tech Supplier application modules, and as IT support for the submission system. Any other doubt mote content specific will be properly addressed to the Art experts in the Better Factory Project.
2.2 Matchmaking process

2.2.1 Registration in RAMP

After the application has been submitted, a validation process will be undertaken as described in section 4 of these Guidelines.

If the applicant is validated they will be invited to register on RAMP following the instructions that will be provided by the Better Factory consortium after the communication of the selection by e-mail.

Based on a given challenge expressed by a Manufacturing SMEs through an Expression-of-Interest (EoI) process, a progressive matchmaking with Technology suppliers and Artists will be induced to ensure the articulation of quality teams that will submit their proposals to the Open Call.

The matchmaking process will start as soon as the Tech Suppliers and SMEs have defined the challenges for the Artists. The challenges will be published in the Co-creation Space of the RAMP Marketplace.

2.2.2 Contacting Manufacturing SMEs/Mid-Caps and Artists

The matchmaking will happen on the RAMP. The Technology suppliers will be continuously supported by members of the Better Factory consortium to ensure a right matchmaking.

2.3 Joint proposal

Once the matchmaking process is completed, Manufacturing SMEs/Mid-Caps, Technology Suppliers and Artists will be supported to create a joint proposal to be submitted to the Better Factory Open Call for Full Proposals.

The Better Factory Open Call for Full Proposals will be launched in May 2021.

This Open Call, applicants will be forming consortia composed of 1 Manufacturing SME/Mid-Cap + 1 Artist + 1 Technology Supplier.

Better Factory will provide the template for the full proposal and will support the selected applicants to create the full proposal.

The evaluation of the proposals will be done in the following steps:

- Proposals submission
- Eligibility checks Proposals which do not comply with the ‘eligibility criteria’ will be excluded from shortlisting at ‘Eligible Applicants List’.
- Internal evaluation: individual evaluations of submitted proposals, resulting in the ‘Ranking List’
- Consensus meeting: The ‘Selection Committee’ will check then the best proposals scored in previous phase.
- Jury Day: A Jury Day will be organised, to which finalists will be invited to present their projects.

After the Jury Day, once validations have been done, and before starting any activity, each selected consortium will sign a Sub-Grant Agreement.
2.3.1 Selection Process for Knowledge Transfer Experiments

At technical level, the focus will be to minimise the impact on production cost by:

- Reduction of waste
- Reduction of energy
- Resource consumption
- Efficient logistic processes

KTE applications will have to be submitted by consortia composed of:

- One Manufacturing SME or Mid-Cap
- One Technology Supplier
- One Artist

Each proposal will be evaluated by 2 internal experts, appointed according to the specific characteristics of the KTEs. The best 16 proposals will be invited to the Jury Day, where the candidates will pitch in front of the Selection Committee composed of the core partners of the Better Factory consortium.

The Evaluation criteria will be detailed in the Guide for Applicants when the joint-proposal Open Call is launched, containing at least the following:

1. **EXCELLENCE** will evaluate:
   - **Ambition/Innovation**: The applicants will have to demonstrate to what extent the proposed experiment is beyond the State-of-the-Art. Differentiation in terms of innovation and originality of targeted artistic work and developed vision in relation to the technology will also be assessed.
   - **Co-creation** contributions of artistic and technology suppliers.
   - **Soundness** of the technical approach and credibility of the proposed methodology.

2. **IMPACT** will analyse:
   - The **Market opportunity** addressed by the applicants.
   - A clear **competition analysis**.
   - **Commercial Strategy and Scalability**, as well as the contribution to RAMP Marketplace.

3. **IMPLEMENTATION** will consider:
   - **Team**: demonstrate management and leadership qualities. The team should be balanced and cross-functional, with strong background and skills.
   - **Art-tech congruency**: synergy between technological challenge and artistic thematic and methodological approaches.
   - **Resources**: demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the resources and underline the benefit of solutions already offered by Better Factory Project under RAMP.
All applications will be assigned a score from 0 to 5 for each criterion which will be reflected by the evaluators in an Individual Evaluation Report. A Ranking List will be elaborated according to the final average scores and passed to the next phase.

**CONSENSUS MEETING**

The *Selection Committee*, formed by core partners and 2 Better Factory experts, will decide by consensus (or majority vote of ⅔), and based on the ranking gotten as result of the Evaluation, the *List of finalists*.

**JURY DAY**

A Jury Day will be organised, to which finalists will be invited to present their proposals. After the event, the Jury will select the winners and include them in the *Provisional List of recipients* and *Reserve List*.

The awarding criteria will be detailed in the Guide for Applicants when the joint-proposal Open Call is launched.

The *Provisional List of recipients* will go through the validation procedure to check whether all formal requirements are met. Once positively validated, each ‘Applicant’ will sign the *Sub-Grant Agreement* under a ‘lump sum model’. The *Sub-Grant Agreement* will include, as an annex, the *Individual Mentoring Plan* for each project. This document establishes, among others, the KPIs and Deliverables that will be considered when evaluating the KTEs’ performance at the milestones review, as well as the budget.

**MILESTONE REVIEWS AND DELIVERABLES**

The *Mentoring Committee* will evaluate the KTEs performance at the *Milestone Review* (established every time a payment is due), according to the following criteria:

- Deliverables quality.
- Deadline Compliance.

The *Mentoring Committee* proposal will be reviewed and validated by the *Selection Committee*.

The *Financial Support* will be paid against the Deliverables included in the ‘Individual Mentoring Plan’ and based on the results of the Milestone Reviews.

Each consortium that completed a given stage will receive the grant corresponding to that stage. Payment amount will be known before the end of the project so all participants will be aware of it before they join the Programme.

### 2.3.2 What do we offer?

As mentioned before, Better Factory will fund 8 Knowledge Transfer Experiments (KTEs) via Open Call.

Up to **EUR 200,000 (total lump sum)** will be distributed to each one of the selected KTEs, based upon the successful delivery of technical and business reports along the 16-month Technology Transfer Program. This lump sum will be distributed among the KTE partners as follows:

- Manufacturing SME or Mid-Caps: up to EUR 50,000
- Artists: up to EUR 50,000
- Technology Suppliers: up to EUR 100,000

In addition to the funding Better Factory will provide following support services:

- Connect with Manufacturing SMEs, Artists and other Technology suppliers across Europe.
- Provide access to open and standardised Advance Production Planning and Scheduling tools for your customers.
- Provide **EUR 100,000** for learning, testing and developing Agile-Production technologies with customers.
- Provide support to find additional customers and finance to scale-up your business.
3 TECH SUPPLIER ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All Tech Suppliers must abide to the general requirements described in the Guidelines in order to be considered eligible for Better Factory preliminary call.

3.1 What types of entities are eligible?

Better Factory is looking for Tech suppliers established in an eligible country as defined in 3.2.

Technology Suppliers refer to companies (SMEs or Mid-Caps) that develop, produce and sell software applications and/or hardware to be implemented in Manufacturing companies.

A Manufacturing SME will be considered as such if it complies with the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC (available here: http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en). As a summary, the criteria which define a SME are:

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

Regarding Mid-Caps, there is no common EU definition. For the purposes of Better Factory, we are defining a Mid-Cap as:

- A company that is not an SME and has a headcount of up to 3,000 AWU.

Please note that an SME or a Mid-Cap owned by a company bigger than a Mid-Cap – i.e. having a shareholder with more than 50% of the shares whose headcount is higher than 3,000 – will be considered as a Big Company and will not be able to apply to this Call.

3.2 Eligible countries

Only eligible organisations legally established in any of the eligible countries will be eligible for the Better Factory calls. The eligible countries include:

- 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 and Sweden;
- H2020 Associated Countries, as identified in Article 7 of the Horizon 2020 Regulation: Iceland, Norway, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Israel, Moldova, Switzerland, Faroe Islands, Ukraine, Tunisia, Georgia and Armenia.
- United Kingdom: EC and UK have entered into a Cooperation Agreement which allows UK entities to participate in the Horizon Programme until 2027. However, please note that the entry into force of the said Agreement is subject to the approval of the European Parliament. The decision of the European Parliament will be made in June 2021 at the latest.

3.3 Expertise and other experience criteria

The validated Technology Suppliers applicant should:

- Demonstrate experience working with manufacturing companies.
- Have expertise and demonstrate experience working for optimisation the following challenges in the manufacturing process:
  - Reduction of energy
  - Resource consumption
  - Efficient logistic processes
• As stated before, preferably provide services, develop applications or produce hardware for manufacturing companies from the following industrial sectors:
  o Plastic and Rubber;
  o Furniture and Wood;
  o Food and Agriculture;
  o Construction;
  o Metal and Machinery;
  o Textile and Leather.
• Have experience working in collaborative international environments.
• Have interest in collaborating with manufacturing companies and Artists on RAMP.

3.4 English language

English is the official language for the open calls. The proposal must be in English in all its mandatory parts in order to be eligible. If the mandatory parts of the proposal are in any other language, the entire proposal will not be eligible.
If only nonmandatory parts of a proposal are submitted in a language different from English, those parts will not be evaluated but the proposal is still eligible.
4 TECH SUPPLIER VALIDATION CRITERIA AND PROCESS

As soon as the Technology Suppliers’ applications are submitted, the DIHs taking part of the Better Factory consortium will start the validation process according to the eligibility criteria. The validated applicants will be contacted by the Better Factory consortium and will receive further information on how to register on RAMP.

The validation process consists of:

4.1 Administrative and Eligibility Check

Call managers will evaluate the eligibility of the proposal according to the following criteria:

- Applicant from an eligible country;
- Capacity to work in English;
- All the mandatory fields in the application form are completed;
- The applicant provided sufficient information to evaluate their technology experience.

The eligibility check will be done on all proposals submitted before the deadline. The applications that do not comply with these criteria will be excluded and marked as ineligible.

Eligible applications will then be validated according to the Quality and Operational Capacity Criteria.

4.2 Quality and Operational Capacity Check

The second part of the validation process consists in an in-depth assessment of the project. The quality and operational capacity of submitted applications will be reviewed by consortium DIHs, which will determine whether the applicant is qualified for the matchmaking process. The following criteria will be taken into account for the validation of the applicants:

Technology Criteria:

1. To what extent applicants have the experience and competence in their technology challenges to successfully collaborate in a KTE.
2. To what extent applicants are addressing one of the industrial sectors being prioritised by Better Factory.
3. Applicant’s potential for growth and commercialisation of the solution, together with presence in national and international markets.

While the call is open, the Better Factory DIHs will analyse periodically the applications received. The consortium will inform the applicants having been validated accordingly by e-mail.
5  SUBMISSION SYSTEM

5.1  How to submit the application

Technology suppliers need to apply through the Call submission tool at our Better Factory call microsite.

Before applying, applicants need to be registered or create an account to FundingBox, as shown in the following screenshot:

After signing in, the applicant will be able to start a new application or edit an existing one. EoIs can be edited as many times as wished until the deadline. EoI submitted by any other means will not be validated.
The application includes the sections shown in the following screenshot. All the sections and topics marked with a star (*) are mandatory. Data provided should be actual, true and complete and should allow the assessment of the EoI.

Only the information included in the application form and in the attachments to the form will be considered. It is the applicant's responsibility to include all the necessary information in the form, which is available in Word format if working off-line is needed before fulfilling the online application.

Tech Suppliers can apply throughout the 2-month call period, and the applicants will be announced about the results after the weekly validation process. The Call will be continuously open for applications, as the objective is to have a wide pool of technology suppliers.

Only Tech Suppliers having applied before the deadline will be accepted. After the call closure no additions or changes will be considered.

**The deadline for the call for Technology Suppliers is 18 March 2021 at 17:00 CET.**

5.2 Multiple submissions

Only one application per entity can be submitted to Better Factory in this call.

If more than one application per Tech supplier is identified by the Better Factory team, only the first proposal which has been submitted in order of time, will be validated.
6 SUPPORT FOR THE APPLICANTS

For more information about the 1st Better Factory Open Call, please check our Better Factory call microsite.

For further information about the Call, in case of any doubts regarding the eligibility rules, the information in the application form, or if you encountered technical issues or problems with the online submission tool of applications, please contact the Helpdesk space.

When contacting the Technical Helpdesk, please include the following information in your e-mail message:

- your username, telephone number and your e-mail address,
- details of the specific problem (error messages you encountered, bugs descriptions, i.e. if a dropdown list is not working, etc.),
- screenshots of the problem.

For updates and project news, please visit our Better Factory website.
7 GENERAL DISCLAIMER

1. Participation in this Call for Tech Suppliers is voluntary and if the Tech Supplier does not participate in it, it does not mean it will not be able to participate in the First Better Factory Open Call for KTEs. Especially Tech Suppliers can compose a consortium with Manufacturing SMEs/Mid-Caps and Artists who have not participated in this preliminary call and are not registered in RAMP.

2. A validation under this Call is not equal with selection to perform the a KTE. Submitting a joint application to the First Better Factory Open Call for KTEs and being selected by the BETTER FACTORY Consortium is the general requirement to receive Financial Support to Third-Parties (FSTP).

3. Thanks to participating in this Call for Tech Suppliers, the validated applicants will benefit from the support of the BETTER FACTORY Consortium:
   a. To find the right partners to compose a competitive consortium (matchmaking process),
   b. To get a continuous support in the preparation of the proposal.
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