GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS
Second Business-oriented Open Call

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1 INTRODUCTION

eSSIF-Lab is a project funded by the Horizon 2020 Programme of the European Union and aims at advancing the broad uptake of Self-Sovereign Identities (SSI) as a next generation, open and trusted means for the exchange of qualified data for the purpose of conducting efficient and safe electronic transactions via the Internet and in real life.

To promote the development, integration and adoption of SSI technologies, the eSSIF-Lab project will deliver up to 5.6 M€ of financial support among 62 projects that will be selected through three open calls:

- one infrastructure-oriented open call targeting (20) technical enhancements and extensions of the SSI framework, and
- two business-oriented open calls targeting (42) SSI business and social innovations and applications.

This Guide for Applicants contains relevant information to understand how to successfully take part in the Second Business-oriented Open Call of eSSIF-Lab.

The eSSIF-Lab consortium is composed of:

- TNO (the Netherlands) is the project coordinator and brings in its extensive SSI technical expertise and understanding of innovation processes to the start-up/SME/innovator community targeted by eSSIF-Lab.
- FundingBox Accelerator (Poland) manages the open calls. FundingBox is the European leader in managing Financial Support to Third Parties (cascade funding) and provides tools for community creation, to help innovators meet, interact and collaborate to build growth connections.
- BLUMORPHO (France) is a business accelerator with over 20 years of experience in building and developing successful ecosystems around innovation. It will provide business support to the companies that participate in the programme to accelerate their SSI-related business.
- GRNET (Greece) is responsible for the ongoing deployment infrastructure in the project. GRNET is the national network, cloud computing and IT e-Infrastructure and services provider. It supports a big number of users in the key areas of Research, Education, Health and Culture.
2 OPEN CALL SUMMARY

This Second Business-oriented Open Call will deliver up to € 1,259,000 to the best, a maximum, of the 23 best SMEs (including startups), non-for-profit entities (such as foundations or associations), or collaborative initiatives (as micro-consortia of these entities) developing and demonstrating a SSI working solution for a real-world, domain-oriented problem or opportunity, in prioritized eSSIF-Lab areas (Health Tech, e-Government and Education) or in the Open Disruptive Innovation track (for innovative proposals in other related areas that still fit in the scope of this open call and fulfil its requirements).

Proposed solutions must be commercial, competitive and sector-specific SSI applications for products and services. These solutions have to leverage on the added value that previously developed functionalities within the eSSIF-Lab may bring and they have to demonstrate the benefits of the adoption of SSI technologies.

Additionally, proposals have to include an “SSI Assurance Community” to contribute to the technical demonstration of their solution, but also to the demonstration of the accreditation processes and the governance thereof.

The issuing, exchange and consumption of SSI credentials as a core element, a high Technology Readiness Level and Investment Readiness Level and a high involvement for cooperation with the eSSIF-Lab ecosystem is also expected from the proposals. (See section 3.2 for further details on the type of eligible proposals).

The proposals selected in the Second Business-oriented Call will be invited to join an 8-month acceleration programme, including business and technical support to integrate eSSIF-Lab and other SSI technology with market propositions.

This programme has 3 stages and is competitive (meaning that only the best performing projects will go on into the next phase). Those reaching the end of the programme might get up to € 106 000 equity-free funding (see section 5 “ESSIF-Lab Business-oriented Programme” for more information).

The call is open for applications’ submission from 7 of May 2021 until 7 July 2021, at 17:00 (Brussels Local Time), through FundingBox Platform at: http://essif-lab-second-business-oriented.fundingbox.com
3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants will have to abide by all general requirements described in this chapter to be eligible to take part in the eSSIF-Lab Business-oriented Programme, benefit from its services and receive funding.

3.1 APPLICANTS WE ARE LOOKING FOR

Applicants can be individual (single) SMEs\(^1\), teams of individuals (startups not constituted yet), non-for-profit entities (such as foundations or associations) or micro-consortia of these entities (as collaborative initiatives), registered in:

- The Member States of the European Union;
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to the Member States\(^2\);
- The Associated Countries to H2020\(^3\), or
- The United Kingdom.

In collaborative initiatives, the applicant can be a micro-consortium of up to 4 partners or an individual entity (e.g., this individual entity can be the initiative is registered itself or, a founding partner or a core contributor with written legal representation permission from all the other partners).

In the case of an individual entity applying on behalf of a consortium, if selected to take part in the programme, this entity will be considered formally as the subgrantee under the 2nd Business-oriented Programme and they will be asked to formalize a formal agreement to distribute the tasks and the related funding among participating members.

Each collaborative initiative can only apply once. If the same collaborative initiative is presented by more than one applicant, only the highest-scoring one of those proposals can be selected.

When there is not a constituted legal entity, teams of 3 to 4 natural persons legally established in an eligible country (as defined above) can apply but they will be required to provide a written commitment during Sub-Grant Agreement set-up process to set up a legally registered SME if selected to take part in Stage 3 “Scalability Phase”.

Large companies, as defined in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC, are not eligible.

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\(^1\) An SME will be considered as such, if it complies with the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. As a summary, the criteria which define a SME are: i) Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250; and ii) Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million.

\(^2\) Companies from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked.

3.2 PROJECTS WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for proposals that address one of the prioritized eSSIF-Lab areas (Health Tech, e-Government and Education) or that fit in the Open Disruptive Innovation track and that will:

- develop and deploy a working solution for a real-world, domain-oriented problem or opportunity, in which the issuing, exchange, and consumption of SSI-credentials is a core part, and
- pilot and demonstrate the solution using committed, real-world parties/stakeholders (i.e., an SSI Assurance Community).

SSI Assurance Community

Any viable SSI solution has a group of issuers, holders and verifiers who agree on the semantics and assurances of the verifiable credentials that are issued, presented and verified in the context of that SSI solution. Such agreement needs to be coordinated: technical (semantics of the verifiable credentials, procedures for accreditation of issuers and verifiers, maintenance of documentation and infrastructure), legal/governance (development and maintenance of associated agreements and procedures), and business (business model for this coordination, as well as for the use of the SSI solution).

This Guide for Applicants uses the term “SSI Assurance Community” for such coordination between issues, holders and/or verifiers.

In general, there is a lot of work to get a full-fledged, working SSI solution up and running that is solving a real-world problem. Projects that successfully do this not only need a technological solution for this, they also have established the necessary cooperation between the various stakeholders that are involved, which acknowledges the subjective (personal/organisation) objectives of each stakeholder and seeks to contribute to their realization.

In SSI projects such cooperation requires tuning of the stakeholder requirements regarding e.g., the kinds of credentials (syntax, semantics, assurances), supporting services (e.g., credential catalogues, data translations/transformations, etc.), levels of assurance, privacy and usability, legal compliance, etcetera.

The proposal should therefore focus both on the (technical) solution and the generation of a new (or leveraging of an existing) community of stakeholders (i.e. an SSI Assurance Community) that is committed to pilot and demonstrate the solution in the

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4 See also https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348325716_Decentralized_SSI_Governance_the_missing_link_in_automating_business_decisions

5 Such communities go by different names, e.g. “trust community”, “trust network”, “sector collaborative” etc. We use the term “SSI Assurance Community” for any such community that is (also) tasked to make SSI solutions work for its members.
real world, and to reach agreement and commitment regarding whatever is necessary to make the solution work. This might include topics such as:

- **Business**: making sure how the money is going to flow, who is paying whom for what, convening of stakeholders, marketing of the community’s proposition, getting commitment, assuring the time & money investments from the stakeholders, etc.
- **Legal**: arranging the by-laws of the community, participation agreements, governance of accreditation processes, ensuring openness, compliance to laws (anti-compete, privacy…), etc.
- **Information and information processes**: coordinating schemas/syntax and semantics of the credentials, specifying ways/policies for checking the veracity of the information, determining which data is valid in what cases, building and contributing to standards for this, etc. This coordination preferably includes use of, and contribution/feedback to international standards for such schemas (e.g., W3C-CCG).
- **Technical**: selecting and integrating available SSI components, products, services, and applications, both from eSSIF-Lab and the market, developing the code for the application, designing, and running test and pilots, etc. Again, preferably SSI standards (W3C-CCG, W3C-DID, Aries, DIF, ToIP, …) are used where appropriate.
- **The issuing, exchange and consumption of SSI-credentials shall be a crucial part of the solution, preferably also for other purposes than identification and/or authentication.**

The solution must demonstrate business/user benefits of using/adopting SSI technologies⁶ and must include at least one of the technologies that are available through eSSIF-Lab⁷ (even if they are not limited to this use).

Further, a solution shall include the issuing, exchange and consumption of SSI credentials as a core element, be scalable and interoperable where appropriate and should have a Technology Readiness Level (TRL⁸) of 6 to 8 and an Investment Readiness Level (IRL⁹) from 5 to 7.

Please, note that the gist of the proposal should not have its focus on blockchains, but on a higher level where actual claims/credentials are exchanged to provide real services in a business or societal sector.

The table below provides further clarification and motivation of this features that the projects have to comply with to be able to take part in this open call:

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⁶ Please, note that the gist of the proposal **should not have its focus on blockchains**, but on a higher level where actual claims/credentials are exchanged to provide real services in a business or societal sector.

⁷ As eSSIF-Lab aims to create an ecosystem around the “eSSIF-Lab Framework”, the proposals in this call must be aligned (and integrated where appropriate) with the work done in previous open calls (all interrelated). Information on the work ongoing by participants in previous open calls is available at [https://essif-lab.eu/our-projects/](https://essif-lab.eu/our-projects/) and in the booklet that can be downloaded at [https://essif-lab.eu/downloads/](https://essif-lab.eu/downloads/) More information on the expected technology aspects, examples of these solutions and about eSSIF-Lab framework is in the Annex I “Technology Description” of this Guide for Applicants.


⁹ For reference, check at [https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2014/07/01/how-investors-make-better-decisions-the-investment-readiness-level/](https://blogs.berkeley.edu/2014/07/01/how-investors-make-better-decisions-the-investment-readiness-level/)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum quality criterion</th>
<th>What does it mean?</th>
<th>Why do we need it?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A working solution for a real-world, domain-oriented problem or opportunity</td>
<td>Solutions need to solve a real-life problem or address real opportunities mainly in predefined verticals.</td>
<td>eSSIF-Lab has already been developing generic SSI technology (components, products, services), now sector-specific solutions are needed in the uptake of SSI technology into business ecosystems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pilot and demonstrate the solution using committed, real-world parties/stakeholders (i.e., an SSI Assurance Community)</td>
<td>Solutions have to involve users and market actors at an early stage to be ready to go to market after leaving the programme (i.e. deployability)</td>
<td>In stage 3 (Use case / Customer integration), an active SSI Assurance Community (the above-mentioned coordination of sector-specific issuers, holders and/or verifiers, supported by technology developers), will have to be involved to demonstrate the solution. As this SSI Assurance Community will be involved in all stages of the subgrant project, letters of their commitment are required in applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must include at least one of the technologies that are available through eSSIF-Lab (even if they are not limited to this use)</td>
<td>Solutions should leverage on the existing supported components, products and/or services of the eSSIF-Lab framework.</td>
<td>This time, eSSIF-Lab aims at supporting solutions that bring technology developed so far (research component) into the market (innovation component) It will help validate the functionalities and protocols of the eSSIF-Lab infrastructure for actual, practical use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shall include the issuing, exchange, and consumption of SSI credentials as a core element.</td>
<td>Solutions should include, at its core, the use of verifiable credentials to be coherent with the overall eSSIF-Lab Framework.</td>
<td>Standardization and interoperability (compatibility) can only be achieved if all solutions in eSSIF-Lab Framework are based/using the same key concepts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 6 to 8</td>
<td>Solutions must be of sufficient TRL when applying.</td>
<td>A sufficient TRL will help to achieve better scalability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment Readiness Level (IRL) from 5 to 7</td>
<td>Solutions must be of sufficient IRL when applying</td>
<td>A sufficient IRL will help to achieve the potential market impact and, hence, sustainability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**3.3 EXAMPLE PROJECT**

As an illustration of all this, the fictitious (start-up) “OpenUp Foundation” could make a proposal for developing SSI-based solutions to continue societal life in the context of COVID-19. The foundation has signed up several test labs to issue credentials for COVID-19 tests, and event organizing organizations who want to use these to ensure a sufficiently COVID-safe event access. The project has several contextual requirements that need to be fulfilled: that only authorized security staff can verify, and only during event times; that the security staff never learns whether a visitor was vaccinated or recently tested; that people can use the solution, regardless of the SSI wallet they have, and even if they do not have a smart phone; that the solution has sufficient throughput (verifications-per-minute) with minimal visitor delays; etcetera.

The “OpenUp” foundation of this example would be a potential eSSIF-Lab BOC-2 subgrantee, where it gets funding to get the above-mentioned aspects organised. The business case of the project is the value that the solution adds to its stakeholders (test labs, event organizers, the public). The project is expected to have become a technically, commercially, and organisationally viable business ecosystem that continues to exist and thrive once the eSSIF-Lab programme has ended.

**3.4 HOW TO APPLY**

When applying to the eSSIF-Lab 2nd Business-oriented Open Call, consider that:

- we will only consider proposals submitted through the online form at [http://essif-lab-second-business-oriented.fundingbox.com](http://essif-lab-second-business-oriented.fundingbox.com) within the deadline on 7 of July 2021, at 24:00 (Brussels Local Time). Upon receipt of each proposal, the system will send you a confirmation of your submission.

- you must verify the completeness of the form, as it won’t be possible to add any further information after the deadline. After the proposal is submitted, you will be able to modify the form until the deadline.

- you can submit only one proposal to eSSIF-Lab in this open call. If more than one proposal is identified, only the last proposal which has been submitted in order of time will be evaluated. Applicants which have already been selected to take part in eSSIF-Lab programmes previously cannot apply for this open call.

- your proposal must be written in English in all mandatory parts in order to be eligible. Only parts written in English will be evaluated.

- all mandatory sections of the application form must be completed. The data provided should be actual, true, complete and should allow assessment of the proposal. Additional material, not specifically requested in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation. We will check all the information provided in your application during the external evaluation phase and Call Agreement (sub-grant agreement) preparation phase.

- we will take into consideration the existence of potential conflict of interest among you and one or more Consortium partners. Consortium partners, their affiliated entities, employees...
and permanent collaborators cannot take part in the eSSIF-Lab programme. All cases of potential conflict of interest will be assessed case by case.

- we do not accept entities that are under liquidation or are an enterprise under difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18, or that are excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority;

- your project should be based on your original work or your right to use the IPR must be clear. Going forward, any foreseen developments must be free from third party rights, or those third-party rights must be clearly stated.

eSSIF-Lab has planned a certain number of online webinars about this open call. They will be announced at the [NGI Online Community](https://www.ngi.eu).
4 HOW WE EVALUATE YOUR PROPOSAL

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair, and equal to all our participants.

For this call, we are looking for the best fit for our project and we expect a high number of applications and since we are much more concerned with quality than quantity, we suggest that you put effort into how you present your project in the best possible way, providing as much detail as you can, to support us while evaluating your application and identify the main key points and how it fits with the overall eSSIF-Lab scope.

Evaluation of proposals will be done in the 4 phases reflected in the following figure:

4.1 ELIGIBILITY CHECK

The eligibility check will be done, based on formal criteria in Section 3.1 and 3.4 in this Guide for Applicants, for all proposals submitted before the deadline. The projects that comply with all these criteria will pass on to the minimum quality check phase; the others will be excluded and marked as ineligible.

4.2 MINIMUM QUALITY CHECK

The minimum quality check will be done for all proposals that pass the eligibility check to analyse their fit within the scope of the types of activities described in section 3.2 of this Guide for Applicants. Minimum quality criteria can be found below.

The projects that do not comply with these criteria will be excluded and the ones complying with all of them will pass on to the experts’ evaluation phase. The excluded proposals will be informed of that decision.

The ‘Minimum Quality Check’ criteria are as follows:
1. The proposal must include an SSI Assurance Community that is committed to actually demonstrate the use of their proposed solution for solving a real-world problem. To show this, the proposal must
   o identify the working group or community, and provide a summary of its purpose, goals or objectives;
   o identify its leader as well as its (expected) members; and
   o include at least 2 (more is better) statements by different members that play the role of customers or users of the solution, including for each of them at least:
     ▪ the role(s) that it will fulfil when the solution is deployed;
     ▪ the (kinds of) credentials they expect to issue, consume and/or hold, and
     ▪ its commitment to the success of the pilot/demonstration of the solution.
2. The solution itself must use at least one component from the ones made available through eSSIF-Lab (more is better). To show this, the proposal must
   o identify the eSSIF-Lab components it will be using\(^\text{10}\) (there must be at least one such component – more is better); and
   o clearly and concisely explain how this/these component(s) will be applied in the solution, and how they contribute to its business value.
3. The issuing, exchange and consumption of SSI-credentials shall be a crucial part of the solution, preferably also for other purposes than purely identification and/or authentication. To show this, the proposal must:
   o identify at least one kind of credential that is being consumed by some part of the solution, and.
   o provide a convincing argument that such credentials will be (come) available in fact in the pilot/demonstration (e.g., because they will be issued within the pilot/demo, or it is already publicly available), and
   o explain how the solution handles (issues/holds/verifies) credentials in general, and what benefits the proposal aims to capitalize on.
4. Solutions are expected to validate the eSSIF-Lab component(s) that they use. To show this, the proposal must:
   o contain a statement by the applicant committing to cooperate with other participants of the eSSIF-Lab programme as needed, and specifically with those that have contributed the component(s) that is/are used in the proposed solution, for the purpose of improving the functionalities and value of such component(s).”

4.3 EXTERNAL EVALUATION

In this phase, the eligible proposals will be evaluated by three external and independent experts from the SSI field, based on the following criteria:

● **Excellence** will evaluate:
   ● Innovation: The applicants should provide information about the level of innovation within their domain and about the degree of differentiation that this solution will bring (e.g.,

\(^{10}\) These are the (open-source) components that are provided through eSSIF-Lab: https://essif-lab.eu/our-projects/ and https://essif-lab.eu/downloads/
ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new services or business and organisational models).

● Ambition: The applicants must demonstrate to what extent that proposed solution is beyond the State of the Art and describe its potential for scalability and interoperability.

● Soundness of the approach: The applicants have to demonstrate that their proposal is, or contributes to, the solution of one or more explicitly identified business issues that are related with the transition to and/or the actual use of SSI technologies. The proposal should also fit into the eSSIF-Lab vision and functional architecture or makes a convincing case on how that vision/architecture should be modified after which it is demonstrated that the proposal fits that modified vision/architecture.

● Impact will analyse:

   ● Market opportunity: The applicants must demonstrate a clear idea of the results they want to achieve and the market potential of their solution.

   ● Competition: The applicants must provide information about the degree of competition for their particular solution and the ways in which their solution can be clearly differentiated from the competition).

   ● Commercial Strategy: The applicants have to demonstrate the level of commercial scalability of the solution (meaning that it does not attempt to solve a specific problem but is able to be commercialised to solve a structural problem in a specific domain or process).

● Implementation will consider:

   ● Team: The applicants must demonstrate their management and leadership qualities, their ability to take a concept from idea to market, their capacity to carry through their ideas and understand the dynamics of the market they are trying to tap into. Also, the applicants must demonstrate their ability to develop solutions that fit into technical and/or business contexts under eSSIF-Lab Framework. The team should be a balanced and cross-functional team, with a strong background and skill base.

   ● Resources: Demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned in order to get the objectives/deliverables proposed. One important aspect is that applicants make clear in the proposal that what they propose can be developed using the partners’ technical solutions.

Each evaluator will rank each application assigning a score from 0 to 5 for each of these criteria above and will include comments as feedback, based on this, an Individual Evaluation Report will be produced.

The overall score on each criterion will be given by the average of overall score (addition of individual scores) of each evaluator of the proposal. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3 points and default threshold for overall score will be 10 points. Proposals not reaching these thresholds will not be considered any further.

Transversal criteria such as ‘Environment and low carbon economy contribution’, ‘Equal Opportunities’ and ‘Social Impact’ will also be also considered by evaluators when scoring the proposals (up to 2 points).
The final score, used to determine the final ranking for the next phase, will be calculated as an average of the assessments provided by the Evaluators, where Impact criterion is given a weight of 1.5 and transversal criteria score is considered, after normalising in order to compensate for significantly different scoring by an individual evaluator (if needed).

Ties will be solved using the following criteria, in order:
- Impact score,
- Team score, and
- Date of last edition of the application (i.e., earlier submitted proposals go first).

A ‘Ranking List’ will be elaborated as a result of this phase.

4.4 CONSENSUS MEETING

The Selection Committee, which consists of a representative of every Consortium member and members from Advisory Board or evaluators, will check the best proposals scored in the “Ranking List” produced in the previous phase.

Whilst normally the highest scored proposals will be admitted to the next stage, the committee might have reasonable objections to a specific third party (e.g., commercial competition among proposals, multiple submission, redundancy among proposals, etc.) In this case, the choice may pass to the next-scored proposal.

The Selection Committee will decide, by consensus, based on the awarding criteria described above, on the overall objectives of the programme and the fit and coherence of the eSSIF-lab ecosystem and framework, the list of finalists to be invited to the Hackathon Event, which will be the first milestone event of the eSSIF-Lab Business-oriented Programme.

The exact number of proposals selected for the formal check and call agreement set-up process will be decided based on the overall quality of the proposals.

As a result of this phase, a ‘Provisional List of FSTP recipients’ and ‘Reserve List’ will be produced.

4.5 WHAT’S NEXT? SUBGRANT AGREEMENT PREPARATION AND SIGNATURE

Before the 2nd Business-oriented Programme of eSSIF-Lab starts, we will undertake a “Formal check” and ask you to sign the Sub-Grant Agreement with the eSSIF-Lab Consortium.
To do so, we will ask you to provide documents regarding your formal status (for the details please check our Frequently Asked Questions Document) Please do it within the deadlines that will be communicated to you. If you fail to deliver the requested documents on time, without clear and reasonable justification, we will exclude you from the further formal assessment and you will be replaced with the company from the Reserve list.

You will also be required to go through an “Ethics review”. During “Ethics review”, the Ethical Committee will review all selected projects to check if there are any ethical issues raised. If an ethical issue arises, an applicant may be asked to provide additional information or additional requirements can be imposed for them. In case that any requirement/information requested is not provided by the applicant this will directly end the call agreement setup process and projects inside the “Reserve List” will substitute the failing applicants.

Once all these formalities are covered, FundingBox Accelerator (on behalf of the consortium) will sign the “Sub-Grant Agreement” with the final beneficiaries of FSTP.
5 ESSIF-LAB BUSINESS-ORIENTED PROGRAMME

The selected applicants, after signing the “Call Agreement” with FBA, will participate in the eSSIF-Lab Business-oriented Programme, which is an 8-month programme articulated as a totally customised service where high-level researchers and top business professionals are specifically selected to fit the needs of projects and guide them along the whole Programme.

The programme will follow a competitive approach (funnel approach). Only the best participants in each stage will go on for the next one: 23 companies will be invited to stage 1, the top 15 will move onto stage 2 and only the 5 best-in-class teams will reach stage 3.

The benefits of the programme include:
- Personalised business mentoring,
- Business case validation,
- Market feasibility assessment,
- Ecosystem consolidation,
- Support access to investors for the 5 best-in-class teams, and
- Invitations to pitching events.

The programme is divided in 3 competitive stages (i.e., only best in each stage will go on for the next one):
- Stage 1. Hackathon + Proof of Concept (1 month, funding up to €15K): 21 companies will be invited to an intensive Hackathon Event which will end with a matching of the team with a technical mentor and a business mentor. As result, a Proof of Concept and Business Roadmap will be defined, as well as an Individual Mentoring Plan.
- Stage 2 - Full functionality (5 months, funding up to €50K). 15 best companies of the ones in the previous stage will focus on developing a mock-up and a Prototype.
- Stage 3 – Customer / Use-case integration (2 months, funding up to €41K). Only the 5 best-in-class teams will reach this stage and focus on testing the MVPs with first early adopters and defining Business models and Exploitation Plans.

Amount indicated in Stages above is paid as a lump sum based on meet specific deliverables/KPI’s included in “Call Agreement”. However, financial support received from this programme is granted to support the following activities by participants:
- design, implementation, testing, deployment and pilots of the proposed solution (this would typically include activities to connect the design to eSSIF-Lab components); and
- core contributions to a cooperation/ecosystem of stakeholders that are committed to use that solution for their own purposes (this might include e.g., establishing specifications for e.g., credential types, accreditation mechanisms for parties that issue, hold or consume credentials, etc.)
As it will be specified in the Sub-Grant Agreement to be signed with beneficiaries, a delayed payment mechanism will be applied to the last payment. 15% of this tranche will be paid to the beneficiaries once the 2nd Business-oriented Programme is completed and all the milestones are achieved by the beneficiary. This should happen 6 months after the end of the project. The expected end of eSSIF-Lab is 31 October 2022.

These stages are linked to specific deliverables and payments:

An exhaustive “Review Process” will be implemented in order to do a proper follow up of the projects, to select those which are best to progress to the next phase and to deliver payments linked to the achievement of the KPIs/Deliverables established.

The selected projects will define during the first month of the support programme, together with the mentors allocated, an ‘Individual Mentoring Plan (IMP)’, establishing the KPIs and Deliverables that will be considered when ‘Mentoring Committee’ evaluates the projects’ performance at the milestones review (established at the end of stages 2 and 3).

Criteria for this evaluation and corresponding weights are shown in this figure below:
According with this final score:

- Beneficiaries over threshold (7 points) will successfully receive the next payment and be a candidate to continue in the programme.

- Beneficiaries under threshold will be reviewed by the ‘Selection Committee’, who will take a final decision considering all possible objective reasons for underperformance (i.e., external factors which might have influenced the beneficiaries’ performance). Those failing to pass this review won’t receive the next payment and will be invited to leave the Programme.
6 CONTACT US

6.1 HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

You can post your questions at the eSSIF-Lab space of the NGI Online Community at: https://spaces.fundingbox.com/spaces/essif-lab-community-helpdesk or send us a message to info@essif-lab.eu.

In case of any technical issues or problems with the Application Form, please include the following information in your message:

- your username, telephone number and your email address;
- details of the specific problem (error messages you met, bugs descriptions, i.e., if a dropdown list isn’t working, etc.); and
- screenshots of the problem.

6.2 COMPLAINTS

If, after receiving the results of one of the eligibility or external evaluation phases, you consider that a mistake has been made, you can send us your complaint. To do so, please, send us your complaint in English by email to info@essif-lab.eu, including the following information:

- contact details (including e-mail address),
- the subject of the complaint, and
- information and evidence about the alleged breach.

You have 5 calendar days to send your complaint starting from the day of becoming aware of the grounds for the rejection. We will review your complaint within no more than 7 calendar days from its reception. If we need more time to assess your complaint, we will inform you by email about the extension.

We will not review anonymous complaints as well as complaints with incomplete information.

Please consider that the evaluation is run by experts in the SSI field, and we do not interfere with their assessment, therefore we will not evaluate complaints related to the results of the evaluation other than related to the mistakes in the evaluation of the eligibility criteria.
7 FINAL PROVISIONS

Any matters not covered by this Guide will be governed by Polish law and rules related to the H2020 and EU grants.

Please take into account that we make our best effort to keep all provided data confidential; however, for the avoidance of doubt, you are solely responsible to indicate your confidential information as such.

The ownership of all IPR created by the FSTP beneficiaries, via the eSSIF-Lab funding, will remain with them.

The applicants base their proposals on original works and, going forward, any foreseen developments should be free from the third-party rights, or they are clearly stated. The eSSIF-Lab consortium is not obliged to verify the authenticity of the ownership of the future products and services and any issues arising from third party claims regarding ownership are the sole responsibility of the sub-granted parties.

For the selected grantees, the agreement will include the set of obligations towards the European Commission (for example: promoting the project and giving visibility to the EU funding, maintaining confidentiality, understanding potential controls by the EC/ECA and OLAF).

The eSSIF-Lab Consortium might cancel the call at any time, change its provisions or extend it. In such a case we will inform all applicants about such change. Signature of the agreement is an initial condition to establish any obligations among applicants and any Consortium partners (with respect to the obligation of confidentiality of the application).

Did not find what you were looking for? You may want to check our Frequently Asked Questions Section.
ANNEX I: TECHNOLOGY DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this technology annex is to provide guidance to applicants for eSSIF-Lab open calls about what types of developments are planned and requested.

Applicants are expected to be already active in the SSI field and to be familiar with commonly used terminology, such as “verifiable credential”, “wallet”, “issuer”, “holder” and “verifier”. Applicants are also expected to direct their work so as to realize the various benefits, and counter the risks associated with SSI, as summarized e.g., in the blog “Self-Sovereign Identity - the good, the bad and the ugly”.

Beneficiaries are expected to work in an ecosystem with other beneficiaries for the purpose of ensuring interoperability at the various levels (technology, processes, business/policy), scalability of solutions, and ensuring that solutions are fit-for-purpose (i.e., can be used in practice). This implies that beneficiaries collaborate in the project to maintain a shared vision, functional architecture and specifications of functionalities, API’s, ways of working etc. eSSIF-Lab maintains a Vision and Functional Architecture document in which the (current, draft) vision and functional architecture are described.

Since the “Second Business-oriented Call” not only aims to produce demonstrators/pilots that solve real-world problems, but also aims to validate the work that is already done by other subgrantees, applicants are expected to submit proposals for solutions that use (at least on of) the open-source components already available through eSSIF-Lab, see https://essif-lab.eu/our-projects/ and https://essif-lab.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/essif-booklet_last-version.pdf.

The key requirement to the eSSIF-Lab framework is that it is consistent and integrated, and this is why the eSSIF-Lab framework has an architecture (work in progress), and why we expect the applicants to form a business ecosystem together under eSSIF-Lab supervision.
The emphasis is on interoperability, i.e., development and implementation of standardized protocols, data models and API's, including contributing to standardization and performing of interoperability tests.

eSSIF-Lab framework will be accessible at GitLab: https://gitlab.grnet.gr/essif-lab

Selected proposals during the 2nd Business-oriented Open Call of eSSIF-Lab will develop commercial and competitive sector-specific SSI applications in products and services, in line with the top layer of the eSSIF-Lab vision and architecture, using provided eSSIF-Lab functionalities by earlier eSSIF-Lab subgrantees on all layers. The developed SSI functionality may be open-source or proprietary, as required by their business. Customers are committed participants in a community/collaborative/... that coordinates with issuers, holders and/or verifiers on a sector-specific use case (Health Tech, e-Government and Education or Open Disruptive Innovation track) that applies verifiable credentials and their assurance.
ANNEX II: PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA

CONTROLLER’S IDENTITY AND CONTACT DETAILS

The data controller is FundingBox Accelerator sp. z o.o. (Al. Jerozolimskie 136, 02-305 Warsaw, Poland). In all matters regarding personal data, you can contact us via: privacy@fundingbox.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PURPOSES, LEGAL BASIS AND PROCESSING PERIOD</th>
<th>The purpose and legitimate interest of processing</th>
<th>Legal basis for processing</th>
<th>Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>To run an Open Call and collect data necessary to evaluate applications submitted in the Open Call;</td>
<td>Legitimate interest of FundingBox (based on Article 6, paragraph 1 (f) of GDPR) which is fulfilling the obligations and our other interests related to these purposes.</td>
<td>6 years from the end of the year in which the Project ended.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2)</td>
<td>To realize the Project goals described in the Grant Agreement (communication, reporting, collaborating with other project partners);</td>
<td></td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>In order to consider potential complaints;</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>In order to possibly establish and enforce claims or defend against them;</td>
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<td><strong>5)</strong> In case your application will be selected to participate in the next stage of ESSIF-Lab:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5)</td>
<td>For the implementation of contracts for co-financing concluded by Data controller, EC and other eSSIF-Lab Project partners.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

DATA RECEIVERS

Data controller will transfer personal data only to trusted recipients such as entities belonging to the FundingBox’s capital group, IT service providers, accountants, law firms, postal and courier companies (who process personal data on the controller’s behalf).

Due to the fact that we use the services of Google LLC, your data may be transferred to the USA. We have concluded an agreement with Google LLC - the so-called Standard Contractual Clauses. This means that in accordance with the decision of the
European Commission No. 2010/87 / EU of February 5, 2010, your personal data may be processed by this company in the USA. More information about the decision at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/PL/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32010D0087

To realize the Project data can be transferred also to Project Partners (complete list of the project partners is available at the email address: privacy@fundingbox.com), European Commission and other affiliated entities.

RIGHTS OF DATA SUBJECT

Due to the fact that we process your personal data, you have the right to:
1. request access to your personal data,
2. demand the rectification of your personal data,
3. request to remove or limit the processing of your personal data,

You also have a right to object to processing of your personal data (according to the Article 21 of GDPR)

INFORMATION ABOUT VOLUNTARY OR OBLIGATORY DATA PROVISION

Providing data is voluntary, although it is necessary to participate in the eSSIF-Lab 2nd Business-oriented Open Call. Without providing your data, it is not possible to contact you and evaluate your application.
ANNEX III: GLOSSARY

Investment Readiness Level (IRL): as per this post from Steve Blank (lecturer at Haas School of Business) at the UC Berkeley blog on 1st July of 2014, there are 9 Investment Readiness Levels:
- IRL1: Complete first-pass business-model canvas
- IRL2: Market size / Competitive analysis
- IRL3: Problem / Solution validation
- IRL4: Prototype low-fidelity Minimum Viable Product
- IRL5: Validate product / Market fit
- IRL6: Validate revenue model
- IRL7: Prototype high-fidelity Minimum Viable Product
- IRL8: Validate value delivery
- IRL9: Identify and validate metrics that matter.

Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP): is a mechanism of distributing financial support to beneficiaries (such as SME’s or individuals). Detailed rules for granting support are set out in the Grant Agreement concluded between the financial support provider and the European Commission.

Minimum Viable Product (MVP): it refers to a first version of a product or service which includes enough core features for early adopters to test it and to obtain “the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort”, as per Eric Ries’ definition.

Self-Sovereign Identity (SSI): a set of not always consistent ideas that revolve around principles such as those in the Laws of Identity (Cameron, 2005), or the ten principles of self-sovereign identity in the Path to Self-Sovereign Identity (Allen, 2016). Within eSSIF-Lab, SSI is understood to be the set of all technologies that are relevant to collect, process, store, and express information in a self-sovereign fashion (i.e. in a way that every person or organization can decide for themselves), and that is useful for supporting them with electronic means as they negotiate, execute and finalize business transactions. See the eSSIF-Lab Vision and Functional Architecture document for details (Joosten, 2020)

Sub-grant Agreement: legal contract signed between FundingBox Accelerator Sp. z o.o. (as responsible for the organization of the Open Calls and management of the funds for third parties) and the applicants selected to enter the 1st Business-oriented Programme of eSSIF-Lab. The contracts include detailed information about the rules of the grant, obligations, and applicable legal requirements. More information can be found in Section 4 of this Guide (Sub Grant Agreement Setup Process).
SSI Assurance Community: a group of issuers, holders and/or verifiers of credentials that provide technical, procedural and legal assurances about the issuing and use of its verifiable credentials. They will contribute to technical demonstration of the proposed solution, but also demonstration of the accreditation processes and the governance thereof.

Technology Readiness Level (TRL): As per European Commission definition (Annex G, General Annexes to Work Programme 2018-2020 of the Horizon 2020 Programme), there are 9 levels of technology readiness corresponding to:

- TRL 1 – basic principles observed,
- TRL 2 – technology concept formulated,
- TRL 3 – experimental proof of concept,
- TRL 4 – technology validated in a lab,
- TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies),
- TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies),
- TRL 7 – the system prototype demonstration in operational environment,
- TRL 8 – system complete and qualified, and
- TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space).