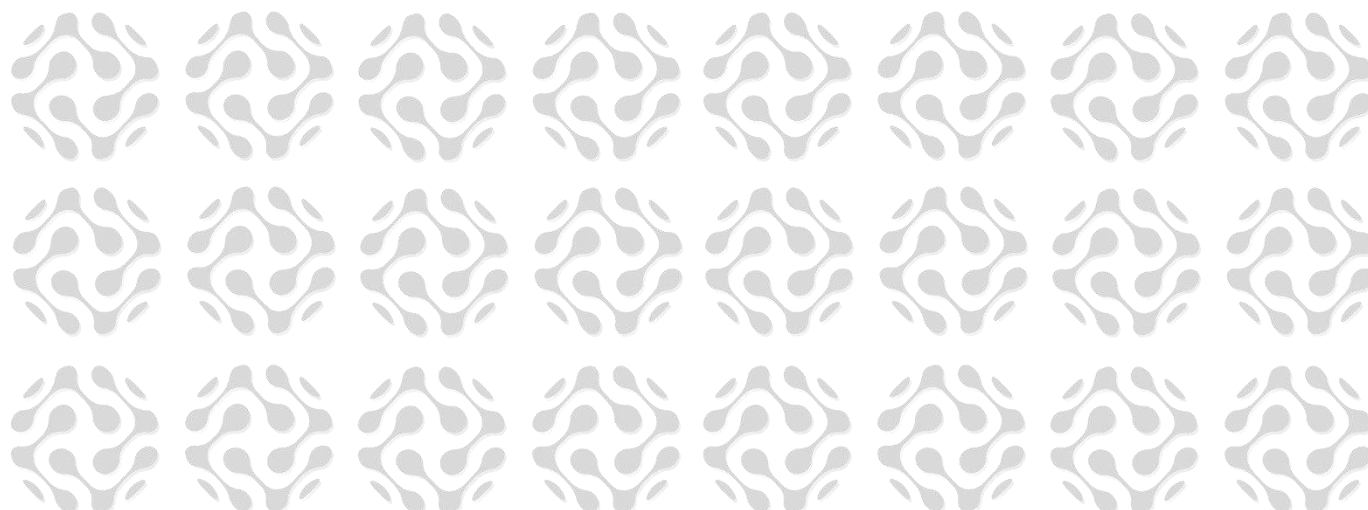




Project Deliverable
D3.1 Open call documents KIT and sub-grantees financing rules

EPICENTRE PROJECT



Project Acronym	EPICENTRE
Project Title	EmPowering Industrial eCcosystems to boost clustEr facilitated greeN and digiTal tRansition in Europe
Project Coordinator	CLDI
Project Duration	36 Months
Deliverable No.	D3.1 Open call documents KIT and sub-grantees financing rules
Dissemination level*	PU - Public
Work Package	WP 3
Lead beneficiary	CLDI
Contributing beneficiary/ies	CBIOS, LITMEA
Due date of deliverable	31 March 2023

Nature:

Dissemination level

R = Report, P = Prototype, D = Demonstrator, O = Other

PU = Public

PP = Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)

RE = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission Services)

CO = Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Date	Authors	Description
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V2	15/02/2023	CLDI	Second draft
V3	30/03/2023	CLDI	Final draft

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable consists of the Call for Proposals, subgrant agreement, and application form for the EPICENTRE project. This document outlines the requirements and details of the Call for Proposals, which is supported by the EPICENTRE project consortium and funded by the European Union. The call targets innovative SMEs and aims to foster collaboration with Corporates in the Health, Agri-food, Digital-ICT, and Fintech sectors to enable the emergence of new cross-border and cross-sectoral value chains.

The selected SMEs will receive funding up to EUR 42.400 and additional business support services such as training workshops, mentoring, matchmaking events, and investment forums. The call invites project proposals from SMEs and start-ups to solve a set of challenges provided by Corporates and aims to support the development of innovative solutions with significant impacts in the sectors and value chains they belong to.

The call aims to foster cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaborations with corporates and Midcaps, scale-up early-stage businesses, and increase the digitalization, resilience, sustainability, and greening of the EU industrial ecosystems. This document provides information on eligible costs, evaluation processes, and participation requirements for applicants.

A) CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Call for proposals for SMEs and Startups



CONTENT

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2. INTRODUCTION
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5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT
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8. HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL
9. ELIGIBLE COSTS
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document outlines the requirements and details of the Call for Proposals, which is supported by the **EPICENTRE** project consortium and **funded by the EU's Single Market Programme**. The call targets innovative SMEs and Startups and it aims to foster collaboration with Corporates in the **Health, Agri-food, Digital-ICT, and Fintech** sectors to enable the emergence of new cross-border and cross-sectoral value chains.

The selected SMEs and Startups will receive funding up to EUR 42.400 and additional business support services such as training workshops, mentoring, and matchmaking events. The call invites project proposals from SMEs and start-ups to solve a set of challenges provided by Corporates and aims to support the development of innovative solutions with significant impacts in the sectors and value chains they belong to.

The call aims to foster cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaborations with corporates and Midcaps, scale-up early-stage businesses, and increase the digitalization, resilience, sustainability, and greening of the EU industrial ecosystems. This document provides information on eligible costs, evaluation processes, and participation requirements for applicants.



2. INTRODUCTION

This Call for Proposal is supported by the EPICENTRE project consortium and is financed by the EU's Single Market Programme (SMP) under Grant Agreement 101074486.

The call is addressed to innovative SMEs and aims to enable the emergence of new cross-border and cross-sectoral value chains through fostering collaboration with Corporates within four sectors with strong synergies: **Health, Agri-food, Digital-ICT and Fintech**; to foster personalized nutrition, healthy and sustainable lifestyles.



The selected SMEs will receive **up to EUR 42.400** for the development of their innovative projects and will also benefit from additional business support services such as training workshops, mentoring and, matchmaking events valued in **EUR 6.850** to ensure that the innovative projects develop a marketable product, as well as the collaboration with Corporates.

2.1. WHAT IS EPICENTRE?

The project '[EmPowering Industrial eCosystems to boost clustEr facilitated greenN and digiTal tRansition in Europe](#)' -EPICENTRE- (SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01) proposes a holistic approach in accelerating market placement of business solutions brought by innovative SMEs.

EPICENTRE assists innovators to fast-track their ideas to market by identifying the real industrial opportunities based on societal needs, providing across the board technological/ business support services, access to corporate test beds and to external public and private funding.

It envisages the support of innovation in SMEs, fostering their green and digital transformation, enabling the emergence of new cross-border and cross-sectoral value chains in the Health, Agri-food, Digital-ICT and Fintech sectors.

The development of cross-border and cross-sectoral value chains will be facilitated setting up 3 geographical poles of activity in different regions across Spain, Italy and Lithuania. This innovation poles will be managed and energized by 3 regional representative Clusters in the target sectors.



EPICENTRE launches a call for proposals to offer SMEs the possibility to join the [EPICENTRE Acceleration Program](#), a 3-phase funnelled program with the aim of fostering the collaboration between SMEs (including start-ups) and Corporates; and the [EPICENTRE Academy](#), providing SMEs with a training program, mentoring and coaching services, competences due diligence and matchmaking events, amongst other initiatives. These initiatives include financial support. The beneficiary SMEs will receive up to **EUR 42.400** for participating in the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and up to **EUR 6.850** for participating in the EPICENTRE Academy.

2.2. MISSION AND MOTIVATION OF THE CALL

EPICENTRE goal is to **develop a clear strategy for providing coherent support to SMEs and Startups** by fostering cross-sectoral and cross-border innovation to strengthen existing and emerging industries and improving the position of SMEs in global value chains through regional and industrial support. This implies the need to look at systemic obstacles and barriers of the target value chains that may prevent their competitiveness in the regions from fully exploiting innovation-driven entrepreneurial opportunities.

SMEs and Startups will be the main beneficiaries of the innovation ecosystem fostered by clusters, while the latest will play a central role connecting all the stakeholders and providing inputs on the key performance areas and regions where SMEs and Startups can innovate.



THE OVERALL OBJECTIVES THAT EPICENTRE AIMS TO ADDRESS ARE:

- To develop new cross-sectoral industrial value chains across the EU, by building upon the innovation potential of SMEs, in a context of collaboration with Corporates and the integration of different innovation actors and with the focus on reindustrialization for growth and job creation, developing a long-term internationally competitive supply (goods and services) based on innovative solutions.
- To help SMEs generate, take up and better capitalize on all forms of knowledge, creativity, craftsmanship and innovation, fostering their green and digital transformation.
- To promote the role of clusters, as favourable ecosystems for innovation.

AMONG OTHERS, THE EXPECTED IMPACTS OF EPICENTRE ARE:

- To improve the resilience of the EU industrial ecosystems by developing value chains interlinkages in the EU single market;
- Build capacity to increase strategic autonomy in the most critical supplies and technologies of their ecosystems, including upscaling of manufacturing facilities;
- Reinforce transformation into a greener and more digital economy;
- Foster up and re-skilling of the workforce whilst attracting talents;
- Reconnect and boost access to global supply and value chains.



3. WHO ARE WE

The EPICENTRE project is managed by 3 regional representative Clusters in the target sectors.

Associacio Cluster Digital de Catalunya (Spain).



Distretto ad Alta Tecnologia Campania Bioscience – CBIOS- (Italy).



Lietuvos Maisto Eksportuotoju Asociacija -LITMEA- (Lithuania).



4. INNOVATION ACTION LINES

The EPICENTRE project has identified two challenges per topic or Innovation Action Lines:

Topic 1:

Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Digital and Fintech

(EPICENTRE-DIG-FIN)

Topic 2:

Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Agrifood

(EPICENTRE-AGF)

Topic 3:

Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Health

(EPICENTRE-HEA)

Projects are not limited to the referred technologies, but a clear demonstration of the impact in solving the challenge is required. The main impact is to encourage cross-sectoral collaborations by signing long-term agreements between Corporates-Midcaps and SMEs.

This fact will increase the competitiveness of the participating SMEs, facilitating the adoption of new or improved processes and technologies that improve the value chains' efficiency in the use of resources, open markets for green technologies and services and uptake of digital solutions.

Topic 1:

Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Digital and Fintech

(EPICENTRE-DIG-FIN)



Digital-Fintech Challenge 1: How to apply digital finance solution (fintech) to cross- sectoral fields (data science, AI, blockchain, machine-learning, cybersecurity)

Digital-Fintech Challenge 2: Digital Payment and Digital Identity (block chain, data sharing, digital transformation, gamification)

The solutions can cover the following key performance areas:

Key Performances Areas

SUSTAINABILITY

Circular Economy
Economic and environmental sustainability
Energy saving

NEW DIGITAL SOLUTION

Patient monitoring
Edutech
Digital Twin solutions
Industry 4.0
Gamification
Digital Transformation

SECURITY

Block chain
Data protection and cyber security
Data sharing on cloud
Training and Gamification
Digital identity

Topic 2:

Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Agrifood

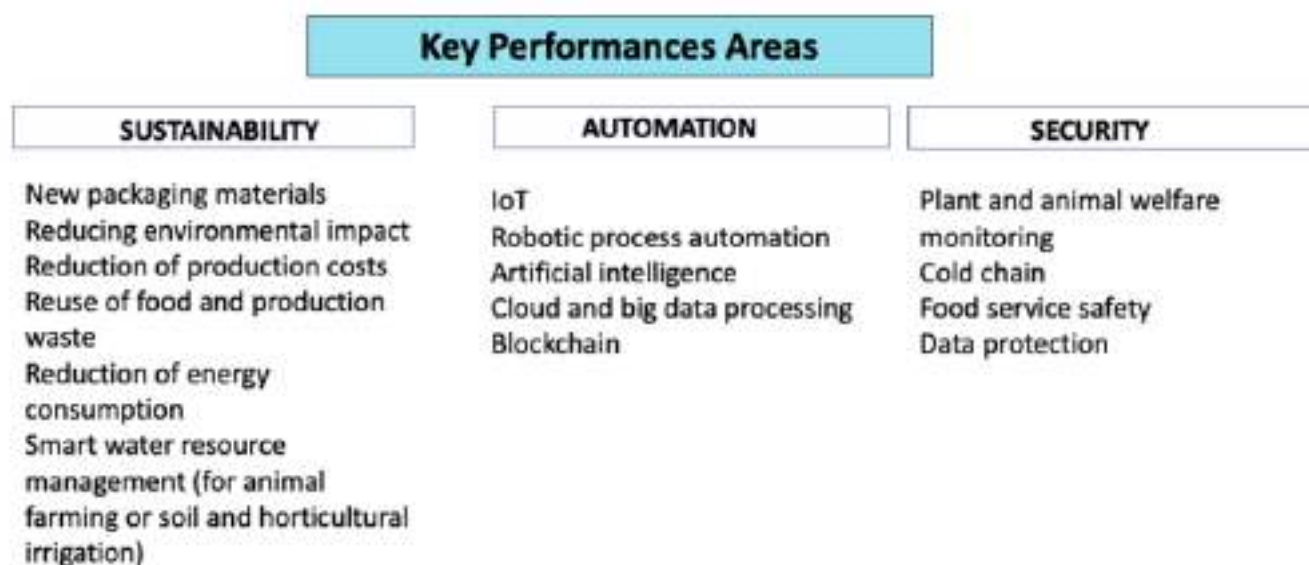
(EPICENTRE-AGF)



Agrifood Challenge 1: Monitoring the health status of food production and shelf-life extension (security)

Agrifood Challenge 2: New packaging materials and smart use of resources (sustainability, automation and security)

The solutions can cover the following key performance areas:



Topic 3:

Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Health

(EPICENTRE-HEA)



Health Challenge 1: Development of new digital solutions in the learning and behavioural sphere that can be used by patients and families (virtual care and new products)

Health Challenge 2: New therapeutic solutions derived from natural products and organic extractions (sustainability and new products)

The solutions can cover the following key performance areas:



5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The total amount for funding support for SME's projects is EUR 1.050.000, being EUR 905.000 allocated for the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and EUR 145.000 allocated for the EPICENTRE Academy. The call for proposals is designed as an [Open Innovation Challenge competition](#). The maximum amount of financial support that an SMEs-project can directly receive is EUR 42.400.

The funding support applying for each beneficiary project are the followings:

	EPICENTRE Acceleration Program Amount per project (EUR)	EPICENTRE Academy Amount per project (EUR)	Total per phase Amount per project (EUR)
LAUNCH PHASE 1st call: 25 SMEs-projects selected 2nd call: 25 SMEs-projects selected	1.400	850	2.250
SUSTAIN PHASE 1st call: 12 SMEs-projects selected 2nd call: 13 SMEs-projects selected	31.000	3.500	34.500
DRIVE PHASE 1st call: 3 SMEs-projects selected 2nd call: 3 SMEs-projects selected	10.000	2.500	12.500
Total funding support per SMEs projects	42.400	6.850	49.250

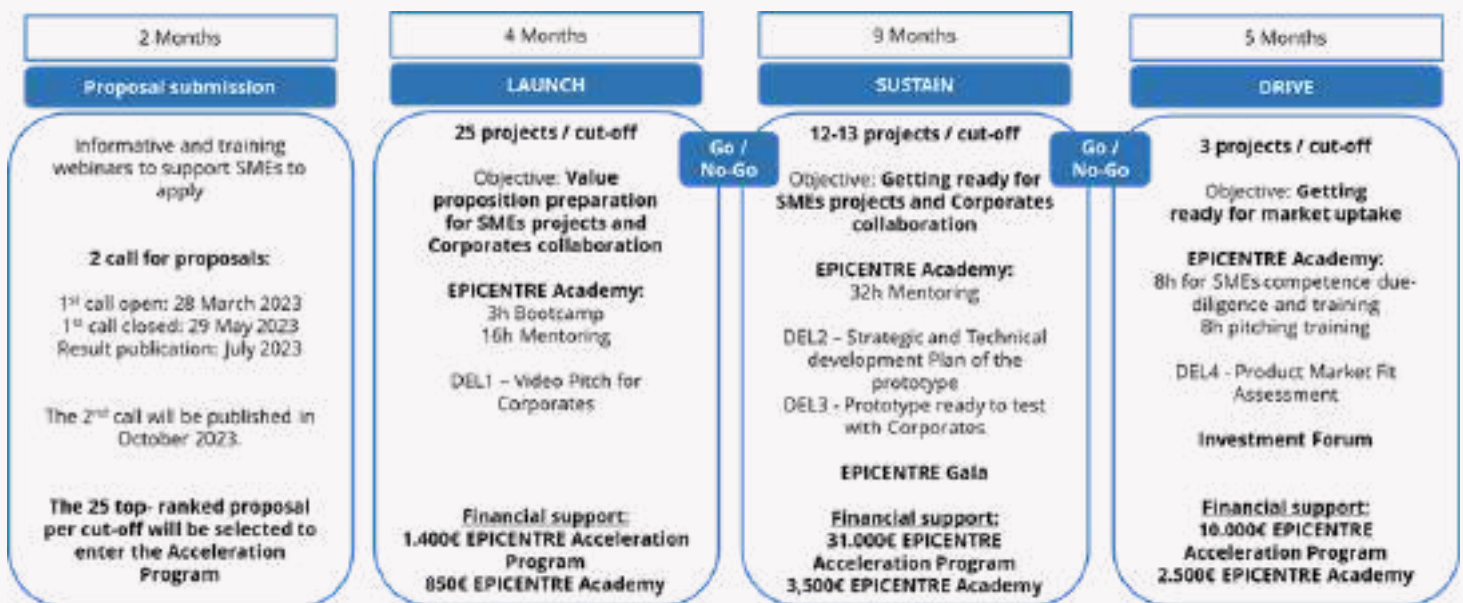


6. HOW IT WORKS

6.1. THE EPICENTRE ACCELERATION PROGRAM

The EPICENTRE Acceleration Program is a 3-step funnel acceleration programme divided in the LAUNCH, SUSTAIN and DRIVE phase. Each phase looks forward to advancing SMEs and Startups projects to achieve at least TRL 8, in collaboration with Corporates and by enhancing their hard and soft skills and competences, with an innovation and entrepreneurship approach.

EPICENTRE call for proposals award SMEs to enter into the EPICENTRE Acceleration program.





2 calls will be launched, the first one in March 2023 and the second one in October 2023.

In total up to 50 projects (25 project per cut-off) will be selected to enter into de LAUNCH phase, receiving EUR 1.400 financial support and a limited pool of business support services delivered by the EPICENTRE Academy. Up to 25 top-ranked proposal (12 projects in the 1st cut-off and 13 projects in the 2nd cut-off) in the LAUNCH phase will move forward to the SUSTAIN phase, receiving up to EUR 31.000 financial support plus a full package of Business Support Services delivered by the EPICENTRE Academy. The runner-up 6 projects (3 projects per cut-off) from the SUSTAIN phase will move forward to the DRIVE phase and will receive EUR 10.000 financial support and a set of ad hoc Business Support Services delivered by the EPICENTRE Academy.

Projects could receive a maximum amount of EUR 42.400 financial support for the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and EUR 6.850 for the EPICENTRE Academy.

During the overall Program, each project will be assigned to a Project Officer that belongs to one of the Clusters, based on the technological nature and the planned region of impact of each project.



6.2. SERVICES FUNDED: THE EPICENTRE ACADEMY

EPICENTRE will provide the following business support services to the selected projects to contribute to enhance their innovation capabilities, achieve the product market fit phase either by formalising a business collaboration agreement with corporates or other market players (sales agreement, licensing, investment in the SME or acquisition...) or getting early adopters to use the technology, as well as financing.

The services to be provided to the selected SMEs/Startups or SMEs/Startups consortia will have the form of:

- Bootcamps
- Focused training workshops
- Business coaching for business model discovery and fine-tuning
- Mentoring
- Product-market fit assessment
- Matchmaking events with ecosystem players
- Re-skilling and competence development
- Agile methodologies

The topics to be addressed will include: business model development, value proposition, preparation of pitch decks, communication skills, B2B markets, IP management, negotiation skills development, internationalization process, marketing and communication strategies, funding opportunities.

To be entitled to participate in the acceleration program, all the EPICENTRE selected projects will have to go through the EPICENTRE Academy and receive the business support services to be paid with the corresponding financial support.

The business support services scheme will provide a tailored approach in line with the stage of development and needs of the selected projects.

6.3. THE PROGRAM PHASES AND THE SERVICES FINANCED

The awarded projects will enter into the Acceleration program and EPICENTRE Academy described in the previous sections. Both initiatives run simultaneously across the 3 defined phases: **LAUNCH – SUSTAIN – DRIVE**.



6.3.1. PHASE 1: LAUNCH

THE EPICENTRE ACCELERATION PROGRAM:

Up to 50 selected proposals will enter the **Phase 1: LAUNCH** of the Accelerator Program (25 proposals on the first cut-off and 25 proposals on the second cut-off). This phase runs during the first 4 months after the selection of proposals. Projects will be requested to attend the **EPICENTRE Academy Bootcamp** provided by Worsley Acceleration Services. In this bootcamp, SMEs will be guided on how to work with Corporates, receiving additional coaching support to prepare a video pitch presenting their value proposition. SME's will also have the chance to participate in networking activities. At the end of the LAUNCH phase, the EPICENTRE corporate board will evaluate and select a group of the best 12 projects on the first cut-off and 13 projects on the second cut-off to enter into the SUSTAIN phase.

The main outcome of the LAUNCH phase is the submission of the “Video pitch with value offer to the Corporates”. This video must be delivered within 3 months from the formal start of the project. Upon completion and approval of the “Video pitch with value offer to the Corporates” and the milestones specified in section 11.2 CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS, each selected project will receive EUR 1.400 of financial support.

THE EPICENTRE ACADEMY:

BOOTCAMP & MENTORING SERVICES

All EPICENTRE 50 selected projects for the LAUNCH phase will attend the dedicated bootcamp. They will be trained on the methodology to be followed during the acceleration program as well as on the Pitch Deck preparation for the Corporates. The bootcamp will be held online, in English language, and its open to the selected SMEs Projects, who will receive up to 16 hours of mentoring support to apply the bootcamp learnings.

All the selected SMEs will have the opportunity to review and validate their work with the expert coaches assigned to identify additional factors (and/or strengths and weaknesses) to improve.

To benefit from the EPICENTRE Academy, the participating SMEs will receive **EUR 850 financial support** upon being selected to enter the LAUNCH phase.

6.3.2. PHASE 2: SUSTAIN

THE EPICENTRE ACCELERATION PROGRAM:

All the **25 selected projects** (12 projects on the first cut-off and 13 projects on the second cut-off) from the LAUNCH phase **will enter the phase 2: SUSTAIN**. This phase runs during the following 9 months after the projects' selection.

Projects will be requested to **fine-tuning their technical requirements and to develop a minimum viable product** which serves to (i) verify some key functional aspects of the intended solution, (ii) demonstrate the technical feasibility of the proposed solution under a representative operational environment, (iii) provides technical solutions for all critical functionalities, but usually does not have all the functionalities of a final product.

During this phase, SMEs will receive a full package of Business Support Services, including training activities, mentoring, and coaching sessions.

At the end of the SUSTAIN phase, the EPICENTRE Gala will be held. SMEs and Startups will have to pitch their projects in front of an audience of different innovation actors. The corporate board will evaluate and **select the best 3 projects** from each group (**6 projects in total**) that are ready to make a testbed with corporates, will pass on to the next phase.

The main outcome of the SUSTAIN phase is the submission of the “Strategic and Technical development Plan of the prototype” and the “Prototype ready to test with Corporates”.

- “Strategic and Technical development Plan of the prototype” should provide a detailed description of the design characteristics and the scope of the prototype and the required steps to implement it within the project.
- “Prototype ready to test with Corporates” should describe the minimum viable product achieved characteristics, its functionalities and the test bed project plan to be performed with the Corporates.

Upon completion and approval of the deliverables each selected project will receive **EUR 31.000 of financial support**.

THE EPICENTRE ACADEMY:

ONE-TO-ONE MENTORING & COACHING SERVICES

The 25 top ranked selected projects for the SUSTAIN phase will be entitled to receive a customized business support package in the form of mentoring and coaching services. Up to 32 hours of mentoring and coaching will be provided to each project. Some sessions could be provided in groups, as training on critical topics is envisioned to be provided.

The one-to-one customized support from these European experts will help projects to achieve the prototype phase, maximizing the success ratio when implementing the strategic plans on collaborating with corporates.

The format will be online and in English language.

EPICENTRE GALA

The EPICENTRE Gala will be held at the end of the EPICENTRE SUSTAIN phase. The 25 top-ranked projects will have the opportunity to present their project results to the Corporates and audience and to exchange and interact with the participating Corporates and other European stakeholders.

The event will be held in Barcelona, all the 25 top-ranked SMEs and Startups projects are invited to attend the event. The language will be English.

To benefit from the EPICENTRE Academy, the participating SMEs and Startups will receive **EUR 3.500 financial support** upon been selected to enter into the SUSTAIN phase.

6.3.3. PHASE 3: DRIVE

THE EPICENTRE ACCELERATION PROGRAM:

The 6 selected projects will enter in the Phase 3: DRIVE of the Accelerator Program (3 projects per cut-off), **developing testbeds with Corporates** acting as “entrepreneurs in residence”. This phase runs during 5 months after the selection of proposals. Projects will be supported to **continue evolving their products/services in a real corporate environment and to explore opportunities for long-term partnerships** with big industrial players and other collaborative business models. Additionally, a number of ad-hoc training and mentoring services will be provided.

The main outcome of the DRIVE phase is the submission of the “**Product Market Fit Assessment**” document. This document should describe in detail how the technology will be materialized into a new and successful marketable solution.

Upon completion and approval of the deliverable, each selected project will receive **EUR 10.000 of financial support**.

THE EPICENTRE ACADEMY:

SME COMPETENCE DUE DILLIGENCE AND TRAINING SERVICES

The top 6-ranked projects selected for the DRIVE phase will go through a due diligence to identify missing competences (soft/hard) to be enhanced. For this purpose, SMEs and Startups will receive tailor-made business support services for this purpose, up to 4 session of 2 hours. The format will be online and in English language.

INVESTMENT READINESS TRAINING WORKSHOPS

All EPICENTRE selected projects (6 top-ranked projects) will receive focused training workshops aiming at preparing their innovative projects to raise additional external finance beyond EPICENTRE.

Up to 8 hours training will be provided to assist the selected projects to increase their understanding and communication skills concerning the process of raising external financing from private investors and early-stage VC/corporate funds.

The format will be online and in English language.

To benefit from the EPICENTRE Academy, the participating SMEs and Startups will receive **EUR 2.500 financial support** upon being selected to enter into the SUSTAIN phase.



6. 4. TRANSVERSAL SUPPORT. FINANCED SERVICES

There is a set of transversal support to be provided along the 3 program phases.

FOLLOW-UP SCHEME AND HELP DESK FACILITY SUPPORT

Follow-up actions will be set up to facilitate a successful outcome of the transnational and cross-sectoral collaboration between SMEs and Corporates. Support and assistance from an assigned Project Officer throughout the whole acceleration program will ensure a regular contact and online interactions to achieve the defined targets and to unlock potential problems and enquires concerning the acceleration program and the business support services.

NETWORKING WITH CORPORATES

The EPICENTRE team will facilitate the interaction of the SMEs and Startups with the Corporates involved in the Acceleration Program. Participants in the SUSTAIN and DRIVE phase will have dedicated meetings to work with Corporates in solving their challenges. Several interactions will be made during the SUSTAIN phase for the prototype development and to develop the tests beds during the DRIVE phase.



7. WHO CAN APPLY

To be eligible to apply for EPICENTRE Call for Proposals, your company must meet the following requirements:

- Be legally established in an EU Member States or in countries associated to the SMP (as of today: Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein), or in Ukraine, when established in territories that are under the effective control of the Ukrainian authorities at the submission deadline.
- Belong to the value chain of the Health, Agri-food, Digital- ICT and Fintech sectors.
- Be a SME (including startup) according to the EU definition:

Enterprise category	Headcount annual work unit (AWU)	Annual turnover	or	Annual balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ EUR 50 million	or	≤ EUR 43 million
Small	< 50	≤ EUR 10 million	or	≤ EUR 10 million
Micro	< 10	≤ EUR 2 million	or	≤ EUR 2 million

Proposals submitted by consortia (“joint proposals”) are eligible. **Joint proposals** take place when a proposal is submitted by a group of SMEs / Startups of maximum 3. One of the SMEs / Startup will be the consortia representative (Project Lead) and will be the responsible upon the Cluster and the accomplishment of terms and conditions of the Sub-grant agreement. **The total funding support is provided per project not per SME / Startup.**

8. HOW TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL

8.1. CALL FOR PROPOSAL TIMELINE

1 The first call for proposal of EPICENTRE Acceleration Program will open on March 28th 2023 at 17:00 (CET). The deadline for proposal submission is May 29th 2023 at 17:00 (CET).

2 The second call for proposal of EPICENTRE Acceleration Program will open on October 4th 2023 at 17:00 (CET). The deadline for proposal submission is December 5th 2023 at 17:00 (CET).

3 The selected proposals will be notified within 2 months after the closure of the call for proposal.

4 The selected 25 projects from the 1st cut-off are expected to start the Acceleration Program in September 2023. The 25 projects selected in the 2nd cut-off will start in January 2023. The formalization of the participation will be made by signing the sub-grant agreement.

8.2. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION PROCEDURE AND REQUIREMENTS

- All proposals must be submitted via the [EPICENTRE Proposal Management Platform](#)
- All proposals must be submitted in English language.
- Proposals can be submitted individually or jointly by 2-3 SMEs / Startups maximum.
- Only one proposal per SME / Startup can be selected for funding.
- Applicants must complete the [online form](#).








APPLY HERE

9. ELIGIBLE COSTS

The financial support (lump-sum) provided to the Beneficiary SMEs-project will support their participation in the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and the EPICENTRE Academy, the delivery of the prototype, the implementation of the testbeds and the preparation of the deliverables.

The lump-sum is aimed at covering the following costs incurred by the beneficiaries:

-  Personnel costs directly link to the SMEs-projects receiving financial support
-  Travel costs related to the SMEs-projects receiving financial support
-  Equipment or software bought or used for the SMEs-projects receiving financial support (depreciation, leasing, rental costs)
-  Direct cost for subcontracting products and/or services linked to the SMEs-project receiving financial support
-  Costs related to intellectual property rights (IPR)

10. EVALUATION PROCESS

10.1. EVALUATION COMITEE

The Evaluation Committee is composed of 1 evaluator from each of the following countries: Italy, Spain and Lithuania. Therefore, the committee will be formed by 3 evaluators, coordinated by Cluster Digital de Catalunya.

10.2. EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation process of applications, which will take approximately **6 weeks** after the call deadline is closed, is summarized in the following steps:

- 1 Administrative revision of applications and request of documentation, if needed.
- 2 Evaluation Committee's coordinator distributes applications proportionally among all the evaluators. SME / Startup general information (i.e., company name, country, etc.) will be hidden from evaluators to ensure a fair, independent process.
- 3 Each of the evaluators will assess the applications assigned to him or her and will fill an evaluation form prepared for the purpose.
- 4 Evaluation Committee's Coordinator will collect all evaluation forms and generate a ranked list from the highest scored application to the lowest.
- 5 The Evaluation Committee meets to validate the results and agree on the final list of selected SMEs and Startups and a reserve list.

10.3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND SCORING MECHANISM

To enter into the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program, the eligible projects will be evaluated and ranked according to the following evaluation criteria and scores, applying the ex-aequo rule, considering the same conditions to all participants.

Main criteria	Sub-criteria	Scoring
1. Innovation Potential	Alignment with the call challenges	[0 – 5]
	Innovativeness of the proposed solution	[0 – 5]
2. Project implementation	Technology readiness levels and time to market: Viability to move from TRL 6 to TRL 8	[0 – 5]
	Quality of the technical description provided	[0 – 5]
	Clarity and credibility of the workplan and cost structure proposed	[0– 5]
3. Business Potential of the applicant	Description of the companies involved	[0 – 5]
	Description of the teams involved	[0– 5]
	Experience in previous innovation projects	[0 – 5]
4. Expected Impacts	Impact in the competitiveness of the participating SMEs	[0 – 5]
	Impact in the target sectors	[0 – 5]
5. Motivation and commitments	Willingness and commitment to attend to the planned activities within the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and the EPICENTRE Academy	[0 – 5]
	Willingness and Commitment to attend the EPICENTRE Gala	[0 – 5]
	Maximum score	60

Additional scores will be given to:

Main criteria	Sub-criteria	Scoring
1. Joint applications	Applications from 2-3 SMEs.	5
	Applications from 2-3 SMEs, including at least 1 start-up	5
	Maximum score	70

Evaluation scores will be awarded based on the criteria mentioned above. Each sub-criterion will be scored with 0 to 5 points, being 0 the minimum score and 5 the maximum score. All criteria weight the same, meaning that all the criterions count the same in the evaluation. There is an additional criterion that gives applicant additional points. The maximum score to receive is 70 points.

In case of proposals with the same score, the priority in the ranking list will be given to (1) the eligible proposal in sector of application that have received the lowest number of projects.

The selection of the SMEs-project that will move to the SUSTAIN and DRIVE phase will be made according to their performance during the previous phase. The evaluation criteria will be the following:

Main criteria	Sub-criteria	Scoring	Weigh
1. Attendance to the EPICENTRE Academy	100% attendance	3	33,3%
	80% attendance	2	
	60% attendance	1	
2. Quality of the deliverables	High quality	3	33,3%
	Medium quality	2	
	Poor quality	1	
3. Implementation according to project plan	No deviation	3	33,3%
	Minor deviation	2	
	Major deviation	1	
	Maximum score	9	100%

11. FORMALIZATION OF THE PARTICIPATION

11.1. VALIDATION OF THE SME STATUS AND ITS FINANCIAL CAPACITY

The selected project proposals will be notified within 2 months after the closure of the call for proposal. Those participants whose proposal is selected will be asked to provide a copy of the following documents related to the last two years of closed accounts:

- Balance sheet
- Profit and loss account
- Staff head count (in annual working units)

This financial capacity check will evaluate the recipient's financial health and stability through the documents listed above.

Based on the results of the financial capacity check, it will be determined whether the recipient has the financial capacity to manage the funds effectively. If the recipient is deemed to have weak financial capacity, the EPICENTRE evaluators will consider alternative payment arrangements, such as payments in instalments or withholding of advance payments until certain milestones are met.

Specific cases:

For newly established enterprises (start-up enterprises) that have not yet closed accounts: a self-declaration, including a bona fide estimate (in the form of a business plan) for the on-going financial year[1].

For enterprises without turnover whose activity implies a long time-to market: a declaration of the investment made and the likely expected return (to demonstrate that it is engaged in an economic activity).



11.2. CONTRACTUAL CONDITIONS

The projects that have been selected in the call for proposals to receive the financial support (“Beneficiary SMEs-project”) will sign an agreement (“the sub-grant agreement”) with the EPICENTRE Project Lead Cluster - Associació Cluster Digital de Catalunya (CLDI) (“the Cluster”).

The Sub-grant agreement specifies the actions that will be implemented in order to successfully execute the activities; rights and obligations of the contractor – that is, the beneficiary SMEs-project, particularly those on payments, performance of the contract, confidentiality, checks and impact evaluation.

The sub-grant agreement negotiation process is scheduled by July 2023 for the first call for proposals and by December 2023 for the second call for proposals.

The beneficiary projects will need to achieve several milestones to receive the payment of the funding support. The following table includes the mandatory milestones that the beneficiary will need to accomplish.

PROGRAM PHASE	MILESTONES
AWARDING phase	Agreement negotiation
LAUNCH phase	Payment for the EPICENTRE Academy
	Bootcamp participation
	Minimum 10h mentoring participation
	Submission of Deliverable 1 (DEL1) – Video Pitch for Corporates
SUSTAIN phase	Payment for the EPICENTRE Academy
	Minimum 20h mentoring participation
	Submission of Deliverable 2 (DEL2) – Strategic and Technical development Plan of the prototype
	Submission of Deliverable 3 (DEL3) - Prototype ready to test with Corporates
	Attend the EPICENTRE Gala onsite
DRIVE phase	Payment for the EPICENTRE Academy
	Minimum 3 sessions due diligence and training participation
	Minimum 5h pitch training participation
	Submission of Deliverable 4 (DEL4) - Product Market Fit Assessment

Call for proposals for SMEs and Startups



EPICENTRE

[APPLY HERE](#)



B) APPLICATION FORM

- General Project Information

Company information:

- company's name,
- location,
- website,
- type of company: SME / Startup

Contact details:

- Contact person
 - Gender: Male / Female/ Other
 - Name and Surname
 - Email
 - Job position

Type of application:

- Are you applying as a consortium or individual company? Individual company / consortia of 2-3 SMEs
- In the case of a consortium, please provide the following information for the other participating SMEs

Company 2 information:

- company's name,
- location,
- website,
- type of company: SME / Startup

Contact details:

- Contact person
 - Gender: Male / Female/ Other Name and Surname
 - Email
 - Job position

Company 3 information:

- company's name,
- location,
- website,
- type of company: SME / Startup

Contact details:

- Contact person
 - Gender: Male / Female/ Other Name and Surname
 - Email
 - Job position

Project information

- Project name
- Project acronym/short name
- TOPIC – Please select the Innovation Action Line you are applying for:

- **Topic 1: Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Digital and Fintech (EPICENTRE -DIG-FIN)**

Digital-Fintech Challenge 1: How to apply digital finance solution (fintech) to cross- sectoral fields (data science, AI, blockchain, machine-learning, cybersecurity)

- Digital-Fintech Challenge 2:** Digital Payment and Digital Identity (block chain, data sharing, digital transformation, gamification)

- **Topic 2: Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Agrifood (EPICENTRE-AGF)**

- Agrifood Challenge 1:** Monitoring the health status of food production and shelf life extension (security)
- Agrifood Challenge 2:** New packaging materials and smart use of resources (sustainability, automation and security)

- **Topic 3: Fostering Cross-Sectoral innovation in Health (EPICENTRE -HEA)**

- Health Challenge 1:** Development of new digital solutions in the learning and behavioural sphere that can be used by patients and families (virtual care and new products)
- Health Challenge 2:** New therapeutic solutions derived from natural products and organic extractions (sustainability and new products)
- Contact information (name of the main contact person and email & Job position)
 - Abstract (maximum 500 words)
 - Are you an SME? *Please consider the European Commission definition for SME in the call document.* [YES/NO]

1 Description of the innovation potential of the proposed solution

1.1 Alignment with the call challenges (max. 300 words)

Explain how the proposed project solves the challenge you apply for. What are you going to solve? How are you going to solve it? What solution are you providing? How much time do you need to deliver a Minimum Viable Product?

1.2 Innovativeness of proposed solution (max. 300 words)

Explain the proposed solution (products, processes, services etc.) and highlight the advantage of your (expected) solution in comparison to the existing solutions on the market. How does it provide more added value than other solutions?

Provide a preliminary comparison with alternatives solving the same or similar problems. This could include costs, environmental benefits, ease-of-use or other features.

What are the sources of your technology/innovation's competitive advantage (IP, cost savings/efficiency gains; process/product innovation; quality/reliability...)?

2 Project implementation

2.1 Technology readiness levels and time to market: Viability to move from TRL 6 to TRL 8 (max. 300 words)

Describe the current stage of development for the proposed solution and how are you going to achieve TRL8. Where appropriate, mention key milestones that led to the current stage (e.g. prototype, field trials, pilot studies with intended end-users and/or potential clients). Refer to the Technology Readiness Levels definition where relevant.

- 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 a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- TRL 6 — Technology demonstrated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- TRL 7 — System prototype demonstration in an operational environment
- TRL 8 — System complete and qualified
- TRL 9 — Actual system proven in an operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies, or in space)

2.2 Technical description of the solution (max. 500 words)

Provide information regarding the product, service, procedure you aim to develop. Include a higher level technical description of the proposed solution. Explain what developments do you need to deliver.

2.3 Workplan and cost structure (max. 1000 words)

-

- 3.3.1 *Explain the activities you are going to implement. Include work packages or phases, tasks or activities, outcomes or deliverables and estimate the duration of each action.*

3.3.2 *Describe the overall cost structure of your project. The project cost can be higher than the financial support available.*

3.3.3 *In case of subcontracting, please describe the reason to subcontract, activities to be developed by the subcontractor and the procedure to do the subcontracting. Take into consideration that the maximum amount for subcontracting is 20% of the total financial support.*

3 Business Potential of the applicants

3.1 Company description (max. 300 words)

Describe the company background, its main activity lines, the company size, the geographical markets it addresses, the annual turnover. etc.

In case of a consortium, please provide the same information for each of the participating SMEs.

3.2 Team involved (max. 300 words)

Provide a short bio of the team involved in the implementation of the proposed project. Include the name, surname, job position, background and its role in the project.

3.3 Experience in previous Innovation projects (max. 300 words)

Name the last 3 innovation projects you participated in. include the name, a brief description, the years of implementation, the funding support received (if any) and a reference link.

4 Expected Impacts of the project

4.1 Impact in the competitiveness of the participating SMEs (max. 300 words)

Explain the different reasons you apply to EPICENTRE call for proposals and how the program will support to increase your competitiveness.

4.2 Impact in the target industries (max. 300 words)

Explain the possibilities for scaling up and capitalizing on project's results to create spill-overs beyond projects partners.

- 5. Motivation and commitments

Are you committed to attend to all the activities planned within the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and the EPICENTRE Academy? [YES/ NO]

Are you willing to attend the EPICENTRE GALA? [YES/ NO]

- 6. Funding resources

Did you receive financial support from another European cascading funding call? [YES / NO]

If so, for which activity? (please add the Project ID and the Project Title)

C) SUBGRANT AGREEMENT

SUB-GRANT AGREEMENT (for the 30 top-ranked proposals)

Number XXX - EPICENTRE

This **Agreement** (“the Agreement”) for providing financial support to Selected Third Parties, is between the following Parties:

on the one part,

OFFICIAL NAME OF THE CLUSTER [field for legal status] organised under the laws of [Country], established in [ADDRESS – STREET, POSTCODE, CITY, COUNTRY], with VAT No [_____], duly represented by [Legal Representative], [Legal Representative Position] ; as the Consortium coordinator for the “**EPICENTRE** project” (Grant Agreement N° 101074486), hereinafter referred as the “**Contractor**”.

and

on the other part,

1. **OFFICIAL NAME OF THE SELECTED THIRD PARTY (Acronym)**[Sub-project Leader], [field for legal status] organised under the laws of [Country], established in [ADDRESS – STREET, POSTCODE, CITY, COUNTRY], with VAT No [_____], duly represented by [Legal Representative], [Legal Representative Position] .
2. **OFFICIAL NAME OF THE SELECTED THIRD PARTY (Acronym)** , [field for legal status] under the laws of [Country], established in [ADDRESS – STREET, POSTCODE, CITY, COUNTRY], with VAT No [____], duly represented by [Legal Representative], [Legal Representative Position].
3. **OFFICIAL NAME OF THE SELECTED THIRD PARTY (Acronym)**, [field for legal status]organised under the laws of [Country], established in [ADDRESS – STREET, POSTCODE, CITY, COUNTRY], with VAT No [_____], duly represented by [Legal Representative], [Legal Representative Position],

hereinafter referred to as the **Selected Third Parties**.

Hereinafter the “**Contractor**” and the “**Selected Third Parties**” sometimes each individually referred to as “**Party**” or collectively as “**Parties**”.

Have agreed to enter into the Agreement relating to the Action entitled [Sub-Project NAME], hereinafter referred as the [Sub-Project ACRONYM] under the terms and conditions below.

WHEREAS:

- EPICENTRE aims to assists innovators to fast-track their ideas to market by identifying the real industrial opportunities based on societal needs, providing across the board technological/ business support services, access to corporate test beds and to external public and private funding.

- EPICENTRE launches a call for proposals to offer SMEs the possibility to join the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program, a 3-phase funnelled program with the aim of fostering the collaboration between SMEs (including start-ups) and Corporates; and the EPICENTRE Academy.
- In the framework of **EPICENTRE** an open call for SMEs has been published to become a sub-grantee of the **EPICENTRE** project. The proposal and other information submitted by the applicant SMEs-project as part of this call have been analyzed by independent evaluators and supervised by *[name of the contracting cluster]* and have proven to meet the requirements of this call. The evaluation committee issued a report on the extent to which the proposal was in line with the call, analyzing technical, economic and business innovation aspects of the proposal. This report has been accepted by the **EPICENTRE** Consortium and as the competent authority for issuing a final decision on the request made for grants has resolved to award this Sub-Grant to the *[name of the Sub-grantee]*.
- This Sub-grant Agreement lays down the terms and conditions for financial support to the SMEs-project, with funding being contingent on the attainment of agreed milestones.

HAVE AGREED to the following terms and conditions including those in the following annexes, which form an integral part of this *Sub-grant Agreement*.

- Annex I - Call for proposals
- Annex II - Application form

Article 1: Scope

The European Union has decided to grant a financial contribution for the implementation of the Pan-European project 'EmPowering Industrial eCcosystems to boost clustEr facilitated greenN and digiTal tRansition in Europe' -EPICENTRE- (SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01). That grant agreement includes the provision for sub- grants to third parties.

[Name of the Sub-grantee] has been selected to receive a financial and business (training workshops, mentoring, brokerage events, etc.) support for the implementation of an innovative project under the EPICENTRE conditions as specified in Annex I, called *[Name of the SMES-project]* (the "*project*"), within the framework of the grant agreement and under the conditions laid down in this *Sub-grant Agreement*.

During the implementation of the *project*, the sub-grantee will receive business support services aimed at, among others, strength their capabilities when working with Corporates. This support services are specified in Annex I – Call for proposals.

Article 2 – Duration and start date of the project

The *project* shall be executed in three phases, upon being selected to enter into the corresponding phase.

The duration of the first phase - LAUNCH, shall be 4 months, from **DD/MM/YYYY** (hereinafter referred to as the "*start date*") until no later than **DD/MM/YYYY**.

The duration of the second phase - SUSTAIN, shall be 9 months, from **DD/MM/YYYY** (hereinafter

referred to as the “*start date*”) until no later than DD/MM/YYYY.

The duration of the third phase - DRIVE, shall be 5 months, from DD/MM/YYYY (hereinafter referred to as the “*start date*”) until no later than DD/MM/YYYY.

Article 3 – Deliverables, reporting periods and milestones

The execution of the *project* involves the elaboration and delivery, by the Sub-grantees of the following documents:

- Deliverable 1 (DEL1) – Video Pitch for Corporates.
- Deliverable 2 (DEL2) – Strategic and Technical development Plan of the prototype.
- Deliverable 3 (DEL3) - Prototype ready to test with Corporates.

The reporting periods for the three deliverables are:

- DEL1: before the end of the first phase (month 3)
- DEL2: in the first two months of the second phase (month 2)
- DEL3: before the end of the second phase (month 7)

Any report and deliverable, when appropriate, required by this *Sub-grant Agreement* shall be in **English language**.

A set of milestones to be accomplished by the Sub-grantees is also required:

LAUNCH phase

- Payment for the EPICENTRE Academy
- Bootcamp participation
- Minimum 10h mentoring participation

SUSTAIN phase

- Payment for the EPICENTRE Academy
- Minimum 20h mentoring participation

DRIVE phase

- Payment for the EPICENTRE Academy
- Minimum 3 sessions due diligence and training participation
- Minimum 5h pitch training participation

Article 4 – Funding support and Business support services

The Sub-grantees must attend the activities under the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program and the EPICENTRE Academy and must submit the deliverables listed in Article 3 on time and meet the

milestones in order to receive the funding support.

The total funding support to be received by each sub-grantee SME project is the following:

	EPICENTRE Acceleration Program Maximum amount (EUR)	EPICENTRE Academy Maximum amount (EUR)
LAUNCH PHASE 50 SMEs-projects selected	1.400	850
SUSTAIN PHASE 25 SMEs projects selected	31.000	3.500
DRIVE PHASE 6 SMEs projects selected	10.000	2.500
Total funding support to SMEs projects	42.400	6.850

Figure 1: Financial support amounts

Article 5 – Funding support disbursements

The corresponding disbursements for the EPICENTRE Academy will be made within ten days of signing the sub-grant agreement and seven days upon being selected to enter into the next phase.

At the stage of receiving the corresponding disbursement for the EPICENTRE Academy, the Sub-grantee must pay to the Business support services provider, Worsley Acceleration Services the total amount received within seven days. The bank details are the following:

Recipient: Worsley Acceleration Services
 Bank account: [account number]
 Concept: EPICENTRE Academy. [Project name]

Failure to comply with this obligation will lead to the termination of the contract (Article 13).

The corresponding disbursements for the EPICENTRE Acceleration Program will be made within ten days of the approval of the deliverable.

The activities developed before or after the duration of the project, even if they are related to the indicated milestones, shall be excluded for the grant.

The Cluster is entitled to reduce the maximum financial contribution, suspend the transfer of payments or demand repayment of all or part of the financial contribution already transferred if the Sub-Grantee fails to fulfil its obligations under this Sub-Grant Agreement or fails to fulfil them on time, uses the financial contribution for purposes other than stipulated in this Sub-Grant Agreement, or if the sub-grant is used to finance activities that may affect trade between member states of the European Union. Before doing so, the Cluster shall consult the Sub-Grantee.

Article 6 – Intellectual property and ownership of results

The results of the action supported, fundamentally, the proof of concept developed, know-how and other intangible outputs, and related rights (e.g. patents), belong to the *Sub-grantee*. Results only include outputs of activities that will be implemented according to Annex I.

If third parties (including personnel) may claim rights to the results, the Sub-grantee must ensure that it complies with its obligations under this Sub-grant Agreement.

The Sub-grantee shall be liable for the infringement of patents or other intellectual property rights of a third party during the implementation of the project or any other activities under this Sub-grant Agreement.

Exploitation of results

The Sub-grantee must take measures aiming to ensure exploitation of their results by themselves (e.g. for commercial or industrial exploitation) or by third parties (e.g. through licensing).

Dissemination of results

The Sub-grantee must promote the project and its results, by any means used by the company (online and/or offline) providing information to different audiences, strategically.

Unless the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EISMEA) requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the project and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the EPICENTRE must display the EU emblem and include the following text:

- *For communication activities: "This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon EUROPE research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101074486.*
- *For infrastructure, equipment and major results: "This [infrastructure][equipment][insert type of result] is part of a project that has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 101074486.*

Any communication activity related to the action must indicate that it reflects only the author's view and that the EISMEA is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information it contains.

Any dissemination of results action carried out by the Sub-grantee requires prior communication to the, 15 days in advanced.

Article 7 – Access rights to results

Access rights, if needed for research, shall be granted under fair and reasonable conditions.

Access rights for exploitation of results if needed for implementing the tasks under the

EPICENTRE program shall be also granted under fair and reasonable conditions.

Article 8 – Confidentiality

During implementation of the action and for four years after the period set out in Article 2, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at the time it is disclosed (“Confidential Information”).

"Confidential Information" shall mean any and all information, which is supplied or disclosed, directly or indirectly, in writing or in any other means, by each Party to the other including, but not limited to any documents, drawings, sketches, designs, materials, samples, prototypes, data, know-how, and which at the time of its disclosure or supply is identified as confidential. Oral information shall be recorded in writing by the Party disclosing it within fifteen (15) days after disclosure, and the resulting document shall specifically state the date of disclosure and designate the information as confidential.

The Parties shall undertake to keep the Confidential Information confidential and not to disclose it nor to permit the disclosure of it to any third party, undertake to use the Confidential Information solely for the Purpose of this agreement and not to make any other use, whether commercial or non-commercial, without the prior written consent of the Party disclosing it.

No Party shall be considered to be in breach of this Sub-grant Agreement if it is prevented from fulfilling its obligations under the Sub-grant Agreement by Force Majeure. Each Party will notify of any Force Majeure without undue delay.

The confidentiality obligations no longer apply if:

- the disclosing Party agrees to release the other Party;
- the information was already known by the recipient or is given to him without obligation of confidentiality by a third party that was not bound by any obligation of confidentiality;
- the recipient proves that the information was developed without the use of confidential information;
- the information becomes generally and publicly available, without breaching any confidentiality obligation, or
- the disclosure of the information is required by the EU or national law.

Article 9– Communication

Any communication or request concerning the *Sub-grant Agreement* shall identify the *Sub-grant Agreement* number, the nature and details of the request or communication and be submitted to

the following addresses:

For the Cluster: <name contact person>
<postal address>
<e-mail address>
<telephone and fax number>

For the *sub-grantee*: <name contact person>
<postal address>
<e-mail address>
<telephone and fax number>

Any notice to be given pursuant to this *Sub-grant Agreement* shall be in writing in the English language signed by one of the representatives identified above and in a legible written form or by e-mail. Notices shall be sent to the office identified above of the relevant Party. Any such notice or other written communication shall, if sent by registered mail or e-mail, be effective upon receipt thereof; if sent by facsimile, be effective on the first business day after the sending thereof ; and if communicated by personal delivery, be effective on the day of delivery.

The Sub-grantee must immediately inform the Cluster of any event that is likely to affect significantly or delay the implementation of the actions, or the EPICENTRE goals, in particular: changes in its legal, financial, technical, organisational or ownership situation. Also, the Sub-grantee must notify any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests. A “conflict of interests” exists if shared interests:

- influenced the contract’s/subcontract’s selection/award procedure;
- influenced the contract’s/subcontract’s price and this does not correspond to the marketprice or
- affected the action’s performance, as measured by the appropriate quality standards.

These interests may be:

- economic interests (e.g. unjustified and preferential contracts or subcontracts with connected companies (not based on technical merit, etc.));
- political or national affinity (e.g. Sub-grantee is chosen, or research-related decisions are adopted, based on political considerations, connections or national affinity);
- family or emotional ties (e.g. contracts or subcontracts made with family members for their benefit) other shared interests.

The communication requirement also applies to circumstances affecting the decision to award the EPICENTRE financial support or compliance with obligations under this Sub-grant Agreement.

In addition, the Sub-grantee must inform the Cluster about the progress of the project when the latter requires it.

Article 10 – Record keeping

The Sub-grantee must, at least until the time-limit of the effectiveness of this Sub-grant Agreement, keep records and other supporting documents to prove the proper implementation of the action.

Article 11 – Applicable law and competent court

This Sub-grant Agreement is governed by (each country) law. Any disputes in connection or arising out of this Sub-grant Agreement which cannot be settled amicably shall be exclusively brought to competent court in [country where the project will be developed].

Article 12 - Liability

The Sub-grantee shall not engage in any conduct that is detrimental to the reputation, character, standing or goodwill of the European Commission/EISMEA, the Cluster and other EPICENTRE participants.

If the Sub-grantee causes damage to the European Commission/EISMEA, the Cluster or other EPICENTRE participants by the inadequate implementation of the project, except in case of force majeure, it must compensate them for the amount of damage caused.

The Sub-grantee must ensure that the execution of the project complies with the Horizon Europe Program, its objectives, principles and rules.

The Sub-grantee warrants that:

- It has full power and authority to enter into and perform its obligations under Sub-grant Agreement.
- It will execute the project in a timely, competent, and professional manner using appropriately skilled, experienced, and qualified personnel or subcontracting, in accordance with all applicable laws and regulations.
- The execution and delivery of this Sub-grant Agreement will not conflict with, violate, breach or constitute a default under any term or provision of its organizational documents or any agreement or instrument to which the Sub-grantee is a party or by which it is bound, or any statutes, laws, rules, regulations, or orders or other legal requirement applicable to the Sub-grantee.
- The Sub-grantee has and shall maintain all governmental, regulatory, self-regulatory and other licenses, permissions, approvals, consents, authorizations, declarations or registrations in all jurisdictions in which the Sub-grantee provides services pursuant to this Sub-grant Agreement.
- The Sub-grantee is, and at all times during the term of this Sub-grant Agreement shall, remain in compliance with (i) the provisions of this Sub-grant Agreement and (ii) all applicable laws, rules and regulations, and all applicable orders or other requirements of any governmental authority or regulatory body or agency (or similar entity), in each case in each jurisdiction where the Sub-grantee maintains an office or conducts any business.

- The Sub-grantee must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest ('conflict of interests').
- The action must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles. The Sub-grantee must commit to and ensure the respect of basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities).

The Cluster shall under no circumstances be liable for any indirect, incidental or consequential damages (including without limitation, lost business or profits, loss of data or loss of use of equipment), nor for any claims, costs or damages that may result, directly or indirectly, from the performance of the SME's obligations under this Sub-grant Agreement or out of the use of the SME's results.

The Sub-grantee in case of subcontracting will retain full liability towards the Cluster for performance of the Sub-grant Agreement as a whole.

Article 13 – Other provisions

The EISMEA of the European Commission may — at any moment and without any time-limit — check any aspect relating to the support. It also may carry out reviews on the proper implementation of the project, as well as carry out audits on the proper implementation of the action and compliance with the obligations under this Agreement. Checks, reviews and audits could be done using its own staff or with the assistance of external experts or bodies. In this sense, all requested information must be provided within the given deadline. In addition, the EISMEA may carry out interim and final evaluations of the impact of EPICENTRE, for which the requested information should be provided by the Sub-grantee.

Moreover, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) may carry out investigations, including on-the-spot checks and inspections, to establish whether, concerning the project, there has been fraud, corruption or any other illegal activity affecting the financial interests of the European Union.

Article 14 – Entry into force and termination of the Sub-grant Agreement

This *Sub-grant Agreement* shall enter into force after its signature by *the Cluster* and *the Sub-grantee*, on the day of the last signature.

This Sub-grant Agreement shall continue in full force and effect until the end of the period set forth in Article 2.

The Cluster has the right to terminate this Agreement at any time upon written notice, without the need to proceed to court, in the following cases:

- The Sub-grantee has materially failed to comply with eligibility requirements;
- The Sub-grantee has breached or defaulted in the performance of its obligations (including participation in activities associated with the "Business Support Services");
- The Sub-grantee is in state of bankruptcy or suspension of payment or a petition to that effect is filed by or against the Sub-grantee;

- In the event the business of the Sub-grantee will be winded up or closed down;
- In case of force majeure, including acts of God ((floods, fires, earthquakes and the like).
- The non-approval of any of the established deliverables;
- A cause of General Interest;
- Upon request of the Commission.

Such notice of termination shall indicate the specific termination provision in this *Sub-grant Agreement* relied upon, set forth in reasonable detail the facts and circumstances claimed to provide a basis for termination under the provision so indicated, and specify the termination date, which shall not be fewer than 15 days after giving of such notice. If such failure remains uncured following such notice, termination will be effective immediately and automatically on the expiration of the applicable notice period, without further notice or action by *the Cluster*.

ACKNOWLEDGE EU SUPPORT

This project has received funding from the European Union's EISMEA, Single Market Programme, Call SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER, under grant agreement number 101074486.

This *Sub-grant Agreement* is only in English and English version supersedes all other translation in any language whatsoever.

Done in two originals.

<name contractor>

<name legal representative>

Date

Date

Place

Place

Stamp of the organisation:

Stamp of the organisation: