



SUSTAIN: Guide for Applicants

OPEN CALL FOR INNOVATION SERVICES

TERMS AND CONDITIONS



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1. About the SUSTAIN Eurocluster

a. SUSTAIN Facts

Project Acronym	SUSTAIN		
Project Title	cluSter bUilding SmarT reAdiness INdicators		
Industrial Ecosystem Strand	Construction		
Project Duration	36 Months	Start	End
		01 September 2022	31 August 2025
Overall budget	€1.437.759,00		
	€1.050.000,00 to directly benefit innovative SMEs		
Website	http://www.sustaineurocluster.com/		
Dissemination of the Results	LinkedIn: https://www.linkedin.com/company/sustain-eurocluster/		
	Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/sustaineurocluster/		
	Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100090357226909		
	Twitter: https://twitter.com/SUSTAIN_EU		
	ECCP: https://profile.clustercollaboration.eu/profile/cluster-partnership-initiative/86f1c461-7092-44fd-baca-933aeee1734b		

b. Specific objectives towards SMEs support

The COVID-19 crisis highly demonstrated the weakness of European companies and principally of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to adopt both novel processes and technologies to meet new customer expectations, and to gain or improve skills to confront with the new business conditions. More specifically, with regard to the construction industry, the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic emphasized the importance of issues that have been dogging the domain for years. Indeed, stagnant productivity, low levels of digitization, low profitability as well as the domain highly bespoke building approach, fragmented ecosystem, and high share of on-site manual labour have signalled disruption over the last years.





Furthermore, a combination of increasingly stringent sustainability requirements, rising cost pressure, labour scarcity, and new available materials, production approaches, and digital tools are forcing the industry to innovate.

To that end, and taking under consideration the EU Industrial Strategy, the SUSTAIN partnership is scheduled to address all the three specific needs that were derived from the above strategy. In particular, SUSTAIN will:

1. Boost the market of building construction by developing a wide network of related clusters and SMEs in order to minimize the effect of the Covid-19 crisis;
2. Address the strategic dependencies, both technological and industrial in the field of building construction sector and enhance the EU's open strategic autonomy, by promoting innovative services and training SMEs to adopt these services;
3. Focus on the green and digital transition for companies related in the market of building sector, by promoting innovative solutions related to buildings' energy efficiency and smartness.

Concerning the third point, SUSTAIN will focus on introducing an innovative digital tool that assesses the buildings Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI) using Building Information Modelling (BIM) technologies.

c. SUSTAIN Partners

	Participant Organization Name	Country
	CERTH - ETHNIKO KENTRO EREVNAS KAI TECHNOLOGIKIS ANAPTYXIS	Greece
	https://www.certh.gr/root.el.aspx	
	IsZEB - Intelligent Solutions for Zero and Positive Energy Buildings	Greece
	www.iszeb.gr	
	GreenTech - The Green and Smart Technology Cluster	Latvia
	https://greentechlatvia.eu/en/home/	
	CEEC - Clúster de l'Energia Eficient de Catalunya	Spain
	https://clusterenergia.cat/	

 Digital Innovation Hub	Ahedd - National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos" (NCSR-D)	Greece
	https://ahedd.demokritos.gr/	

d. SUSTAIN contact points

For any enquiries regarding the SUSTAIN project, please contact the project Coordinator:

- Dimosthenis Ioannidis, CERTH, E-mail: djoannid@iti.gr

For any enquiries regarding information and / or clarifications about the present call for proposals, please send an email to sustain.eurocluster@gmail.com.

2. Description of the SUSTAIN Open Call

a. Proposed timeline

Key Dates for the SUSTAIN Open Calls for Proposals

1 st Open Call – SUSTAIN Innovation support experiments (Gold Awards)	
Launch of the 1 st Open Call	01/09/2023
Deadline of the 1 st Open Call	01/11/2023
Evaluation of applications	Until 31/12/2023
Announcement of the beneficiaries	02/01/2024
Contracting of the Sub-Grant Agreements	31/01/2024
Start date of sub-projects	01/02/2024
End date of sub-projects	31/10/2024
Total duration of the experiment	9 months

2 nd Open Call – SUSTAIN Go-to-Market experiments (Silver Awards)	
Launch of the 2 nd Open Call	01/08/2024

Deadline of the 2 nd Open Call	01/10/2024
Evaluation of applications	Until 31/10/2024
Announcement of the beneficiaries	01/11/2024
Contracting of the Sub-Grant Agreements	30/11/2024
Start date of sub-projects	01/12/2024
End date of sub-projects	31/05/2025
Total duration of the experiment	6 months

b. Basic information about the SUSTAIN Open Call

The SUSTAIN Open Calls provides financial support to SMEs for developing new products, services or methods addressing the smart building construction challenges. The call is adapted to two maturity technology readiness levels: **Innovation support (Gold Awards) [TRL 4-6]** and **Go-to-Market support (Silver Awards) [TRL 7-8]**, according to the maturity of the solution to be developed (please see below section “c. Types of experiments”). **The proposed projects must be aligned with at least one of the following topics** (*in case of selecting more than one topic, the applicant has to mention which one is the main topic*):

1. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) technologies could provide automated solutions for the design, analysis, simulation, control, diagnosis, and provision of dependable energy in the building industry. Advanced tools developed by AI technologies would be capable of allocating energy resources as well as managing supply and demand to ensure the efficiency and the cost-effective operation of buildings’ operations. The smart energy-efficient buildings constitute the elemental level at which the benefits of AI would be materialized. The much greater benefits lie ahead as smart buildings integrated with AI into connected communities will be able to interact in real time through the power and water grids. The path to this is traced in coupling Smart Readiness Indicator’s (SRI) recent advances with AI technologies. By empowering software applications to analyze large datasets by identifying patterns, detecting anomalies, and making precise predictions, AI can create further revenue opportunities for smart buildings.

2. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR)

Technology-based ICT programs and tools change the approach that companies adopt for project development, encompassing design, planning, and execution phases. Cutting-edge software, hardware, and analytical tools effectively address challenges that have hindered

the construction industry for years. These advancements alleviate issues related to project design and communication, which have historically posed significant obstacles. Thus, in order to enhance smart construction technologies and project management, various combinations of computer-generated content and reality, including virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are proposed to support Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI).

3. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Building Information Modelling (BIM)

Building information modeling (BIM) is widely regarded as the most important tool for advancing the building industry. Multiple disciplines can be combined into one model, known as the BIM model, using BIM. Examples of such disciplines include structural design, architectural design, MEP details, and many more. Building design, operation, and lifecycle management are improved by integrating Smart Readiness Indicators with BIM. This combination makes it possible to maximize energy efficiency, find opportunities for the integration of smart technologies, and give useful information to everyone involved in the building's lifecycle.

4. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs)

Potential synergies between the Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI) and the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) include the potential for a joint assessment process, which has the potential to significantly lower overall assessment costs; a shared logic regarding the primary intervention moment that has the greatest potential to stimulate an upgrade in a building's capabilities (when changing ownership or occupancy); and the potential to share a communication platform (e.g., potentially integrating SRI information into an EPC).

5. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Building Energy Management System (BEMS)

The Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI) should raise awareness amongst building owners and occupants of the value behind building automation and electronic monitoring of technical building systems and should give confidence to occupants about the actual savings of those new enhanced functionalities. Combining the Smart Readiness Indicator with a Building Energy Management System (BEMS) improves buildings' potential to exploit smart technology, optimize energy efficiency, increase occupant comfort, and integrate with upcoming trends such as demand response and renewable energy integration.

6. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Internet of Things (IoT)

The integration of Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) with Internet of Things (IoT) technologies can enable enhanced monitoring, control, and automation of building systems. By leveraging IoT devices and sensors, buildings can collect real-time data on various parameters such as occupancy, energy consumption, indoor air quality, and environmental conditions. The SRI

coupled with IoT can provide valuable insights for optimizing energy usage, improving occupant comfort, and identifying maintenance or efficiency improvement opportunities in buildings.

7. Smart Readiness Indicators (SRI) coupled with Methodologies and Tools to Support Positive Energy Buildings (PEB) Construction/Renovation

Positive energy buildings can have a significant contribution to the efforts for mitigating climate change, by providing also the surrounding community with renewable energy, while ensuring a good living and working environment for its own occupants. Potential synergies between the Smart Readiness Indicator (SRI) would allow to rate the PEB in terms of its smart readiness. The rating would show the capacity of the buildings in terms of their readiness to adopt and integrate future technologies such as electric vehicles, renewables, energy storage for flexibility and demand-side management, etc. Similarly, this would also show the ability of the building to adapt according to the occupant’s requirements, improve the energy efficiency and optimize the systems, and adapt according to external signals for instance from the grid, to improve the energy flexibility of the building.

All the awarded applicants must also have as a result a publication of a white paper or a presentation of the awarded project in relative journals or conferences.

c. Types of experiments

The call is addressed to two maturity technology readiness levels: **Innovation support (Gold Awards) [TRL 4-6]** and **Go-to-Market support (Silver Awards) [TRL 7-8]**, according to the maturity of the solution to be developed .

Applicants will choose the corresponding financing scheme depending on the innovation maturity and on the activities/services to be performed or needed. It is recommended that prior to applying to the open call, each applicant/consortium performs a self-assessment of the TRL of the proposed solution in the application.

TRL Level	Description
TRL 4	Lab Testing/Validation of Alpha Prototype: Component/Process: Design, development and lab testing of components/processes. Results provide evidence that performance targets may be attainable based on projected or modelled systems.

TRL 5	Laboratory Testing of Integrated/Semi-Integrated System: System Component and/or process validation is achieved in a relevant environment.
TRL 6	Prototype System Verified: System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (beta prototype system level).
TRL 7	Integrated Pilot System Demonstrated: System/process prototype demonstration in an operational environment (integrated pilot system level).
TRL 8	System Incorporated in Commercial Design: Actual system/process completed and qualified through test and demonstration (pre-commercial demonstration).

3. Eligibility Criteria

All applicants will have to abide to all general requirements described in this section to be considered eligible to apply for financial support under the SUSTAIN open call. Therefore, please read this section carefully.

a. Beneficiaries

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

The SUSTAIN Open Call is addressed only to legally established and **registered SMEs (including start-ups)**, according to the criteria set by the EU as defined in the EU Recommendation 2003/361¹. Beneficiaries have to declare their SME status in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union:

- a. SME: “The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.” These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm which is part of larger grouping may need to include employee/turnover/balance sheet data from that grouping too.
- b. Start-up: A sub-category of the SME category having an incorporated legal entity, separate from and independent of owners or shareholders, and is set up to trade actively (not dormant). Start-up companies are at an early development stage having been in business for a short time.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

Applicants have to use the SME self-assessment tool (SME self-assessment questionnaire) provided by the European Commission² and upload the results of the questionnaire on the online platform (please see Section 4.e).

- Beneficiaries can apply for the Open Call as a consortium or individually.
- Beneficiaries must be legally established at least 6 months before submission deadline.
- For projects with a consortium of several eligible beneficiaries, one SME must be defined as “Coordinator” and this SME will lead the team throughout the whole project

b. Eligible Countries

Each beneficiary must be an SME established or having a branch office in the SUSTAIN territorial scope, described as follows:

- 27 EU Member States
- non-EU countries: listed EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME part of the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#))

SMEs from EU Regions different from the countries of SUSTAIN partners (Greece, Latvia, Spain) are strongly encouraged to submit their proposals.

c. What type of activities will be funded

Activities such as prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation, technical consultancy, market replication and other services can be funded for a maximum duration of **nine months**. The summary of the two financing schemes is presented in the table below.

Open Call Schemes	INNOVATION SUPPORT (Gold Awards)	GO-TO-MARKET SUPPORT (Silver Awards)
Targeted TRL	4 – 6 TRL	7 – 8 TRL
Applicants	One or more SMEs acting as technology providers for smart building construction	
Maximum Budget per Proposal	50.000€	30.000€
Type of financial support	LUMP SUM*	

² https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeq.do;SME_SESSION_ID=KkYXEK3J2-KcV06jlnJQFHnll12x5Z48QMXJxhUbNO46gEH81QWQ!821612122?execution=e1s1

	Applicants propose the amount of the lump sum contribution on the basis of their estimated costs. The lump sum is fixed during grant preparation.	
Total Allocated Budget	600.000€	450.000€
Estimated number of projects that will receive financial support	12 Projects	15 Projects
Project (max) duration	9 Months	6 Months
Total budget available	1.050.000 €	

*A lump sum is a fixed amount of money which can be used by beneficiaries for several purposes related to the achievement of the project objectives. It is necessary to provide an explanation in the application on how the lump sum will be used. However, detailed reporting of expenditures, cost statements and time sheets will not be requested during or after the end of the project, unless in case of audits. Since the granting of a lump sum does not foresee the delivery of any cost statements, the proper use of the project budget will be assessed by the technical reviewers. considering the technical advancements.

d. Eligible costs

Only costs generated during the lifetime of the project are eligible.

Since each project is funded in the form of a lump sum, costs described in the submitted budget must be determined in accordance with the beneficiary's usual accounting and management principles and practices.

The categories of eligible costs are:

- **Direct staff costs (personnel):** cost of the “human effort” related to the staff working in the development of the project. The total work hours dedicated to each work package must be also indicated in the Application Form.
- **Subcontracting costs (external expertise):** work carried out by an external provider which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with the beneficiary. Subcontracting costs are allowed, but they cannot exceed 30% of each individual SMEs budget.
- **Purchasing costs:** travel and subsistence, equipment, consumables, publication costs, dissemination actions, networking activities, other goods, works and services. Purchases or provision of paid services between consortium partners is not eligible.

For all applicants, it is mandatory to include the following costs in the proposed budget:

1. Innovation support Actions (Gold Awards):

- Minimum 4.000 € for travel costs for mobility actions and networking activities that will take place during the SUSTAIN project.
- Minimum 2.000 € for publication costs (paper or conference presentation).

2. Go-to-Market support Actions (Silver Awards):

- Minimum 3.000 € for travel costs for mobility actions and networking activities that will take place during the SUSTAIN project.
- Minimum 2.000 € for publication costs (paper or conference presentation).

4. Preparation and Submission of the proposal

a. Language

English is the official language for the SUSTAIN open calls. Submissions done, even partially, in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the SUSTAIN programme. This means any requested submission of deliverables will have to be done in English to be considered eligible.

b. Number of proposals per applicant

Each SME can be coordinator or participant only in one proposal under each call (1st and 2nd call) of proposals. In case of multiple participation of the same SME in each call, all applications including this SME will be rejected.

Please, pay attention that in total for both calls, one SME cannot receive more than 60.000 Euros sub-grant.

c. Submission system

SMEs must apply via the following link: <https://sustain-digital.iti.gr/>

Only proposals that will be submitted through the online submission tool within the deadline (*November 1st 2023 @17.00 CEST for 1st Open Call and October 1st 2024 @17.00 CEST for 2nd Open Call*) will be evaluated.

d. Deadline

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted. After the call closure, no additions or changes to received proposals will be considered. The deadline for this call is mentioned above.

e. Documentation format

Applicants must create an account on the abovementioned website. Then, after registration, a dedicated form will appear where all the required information for the application has to be entered as text , drop-down menu or similar.

The required steps and documents for a complete application are presented below:

No	Description	Mandatory/Optional	Type of provision
1	Fill all the mandatory fields of the online application	Mandatory	Online
2	Fill and upload the excel file with the Workplan description (download the Work Plan template from the submission platform)	Mandatory	Filled-in and uploaded online
3	Fill and upload the excel file with the budget allocation (download the Budget template from the submission platform)	Mandatory	Filled-in and uploaded online
4	Declaration of Honour - DoH (download the DoH template from the submission platform)	Mandatory	Filled-in, signed and uploaded online
5	Results of the SME self-assessment ²	Mandatory	Uploaded online the result of the assessment in pdf format.
6	Extra file with more details about the project (pdf file)	Optional	Uploaded online

f. What happens after the proposal is submitted?

The last step in the application process is clicking on the final submission button. Once applicants have submitted their proposal, they receive an automated e-mail stating that the submission has been completed successfully.

3. Evaluation and selection process

A three-step assessment procedure will be followed safeguarding the principles of transparency and equal treatment, as described below. The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the excellence, impact and implementation of each proposal that successfully passed the admissibility and eligibility checks.

1. **Eligibility check** of the Application Form: All the mandatory fields must be filled-in and all mandatory files that were described above must be submitted.
2. **Individual evaluation**: each member of the Application Review Panel will evaluate the application against the evaluation criteria (see section 3.b).
3. **Consensus group**: in case of major deviations between the individual evaluations of the members of the Application Review Panel (>10 points) of the same application, the members of the Application Review Panel will communicate (email, online meeting, etc.) to discuss and evaluate collectively the application, based on their individual evaluation, ensuring a coherent, fair and transparent evaluation. If no agreement is reached, a third evaluator will be involved.

a. Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation of each submitted application will be carried out by an internal Application Review Panel, consisting of 2 experts from the SUSTAIN consortium partners. Partners that are from the same country as one of the consortium members of the proposal will not evaluate that proposal, to avoid any risk of conflicts of interest. These experts will have solid knowledge on topics related to the project, therefore their views and opinions will ensure that the most suitable proposals are selected. The experts can meet in person or online.

The evaluation period shall take max. 60 days, starting from the closing date of the call. The applicants will receive an e-mail about the outcome of the evaluation directly after that is finalized, along with instructions for the next steps in case the application is selected for funding. A reserve list of applications will also be created. The reserve list will be used in case of some approved proposals will not proceed to implementation or in case of availability of funding.

b. Evaluation Criteria

In order for a proposal to be successful, the minimum threshold under each of the evaluation criteria must be reached (see below) and the minimum overall score attributed to the proposal must be **60 out of 100**. The evaluators will use only full points and not half points.

Evaluation criteria	Sub-criteria	Score
<p style="text-align: center;">Excellence <i>(Minimum pass threshold – 25)</i></p>	<p>1 Ambition. Applicants must demonstrate to what extent their proposed project is beyond the State of the Art, and describe the innovative approach behind it (e.g., ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models).</p>	0 - 10
	<p>2 Innovation: Applicants should explain the innovations resulted from the project compared to the current situation in the considered activity sectors. Moreover, applicants must describe the expected key market application(s) of the results of your project, that differentiates it from competitors and provides the highest added value for potential customers.</p>	0 - 10
	<p>3 Innovation & Technologies: Applicants must describe which digital innovation and / or technologies, architectures, processes and methodologies they will use to obtain the results and how they will use them according to the objectives.</p>	0 - 10
	<p>4 Stage & development: Applicants should explain the current stage of development of the project and the past key milestones that led to it (e.g. initial feasibility study, proof of concept completed, early field trials under way), or similar indications of results and describe the positioning of the business innovation project, e.g. where it is situated in the spectrum from ‘idea to Proof of Concept’. Refer to Technology Readiness Levels where relevant.</p>	0 - 10
<p style="text-align: center;">Impact</p>	<p>1 Market opportunity: The applicants must demonstrate a clear idea of what they want to do and</p>	0 - 10

<i>(Minimum pass threshold – 25)</i>		whether the new/improved product/service has market potential (e.g., because it solves a problem for a specific target customer).	
	2	Competition: The applicants must provide information about the degree of competition for their product/service and if the idea is disruptive and breaks the market (i.e., the products/services to be brought to market can be clearly differentiated from the competition).	0 - 10
	3	Commercial strategy and scalability: The applicants must demonstrate the level of scalability of the new/improved product/service, meaning that it doesn't address the solution of a specific problem but is able to be commercialised to solve a structural problem in a specific sector/process/etc.	0 - 10
	4	Transversal criteria such as 'Environment and low carbon economy contribution', 'Equal Opportunities including Gender Balance' and 'Social Impact' will be also considered by evaluators when scoring the proposals.	0 - 10
Management / Implementation <i>(Minimum pass threshold – 10)</i>	1	Soundness of the workplan, including relevance of the tasks described, and the timing of the activities	0-5
	2	Team: The applicants have to demonstrate their management and leadership qualities, their capacity to carry through their ideas and understand the dynamics of the market they are trying to tap into. The team should be a balanced and cross-functional team, with a strong background and skill base.	0-5
	3	Ethics: Applicants should confirm if there are any ethical issues which might occur and how they propose to mitigate them with special attention to GDPR compliance.	0-5
	4	Cost-effectiveness of the workplan: Quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned to the project in order to get the proposed objectives/deliverables	0-5

c. Final ranking and Selection

The final mark given under each criterion will be the average of the scores given by the evaluators. The Applications will be ranked based on their overall score (sum of all the criterion scores). In the case of equal scores of two applications, the following rules will be used to rank them:

1. Rule 1: Priority will be given to applications that have higher scores in the criterion 'Excellence' .
2. Rule 2: In case following Rule1 there are applications in the same position, priority will be given to applications that have a higher score in the criterion 'Impact'.
3. Rule 3: In case following Rule 2 there are applications in the same position, priority will be given to the applications that have a higher score in the criterion 'Implementation'.

d. Communication of the results

It is foreseen that the applicants will receive the results by email within 60 days maximum after the proposals' deadline submission.

The results will be also published on the project website (www.sustaineurocluster.com), on the ECCP platform as well as on the SUSTAIN social media accounts (please find the SUSTAIN accounts in section 1.a). The results will include a short description of the awarded projects, the date of the award, duration, and beneficiaries' legal names and countries.

e. Contract preparation and Signature

Contract preparation

After the Open Call evaluation conclusion and applications selection, the SUSTAIN partners will start the Sub-grant agreement preparation in collaboration with the selected applicants. Sub-grant agreement preparation will go via administrative and financial checking (and potentially into technical or ethical/security negotiations) based on the evaluators' comments.

The objective of the Sub-grant agreement preparation is fulfilling the legal requirements between the SUSTAIN team and every beneficiary of the open call. The items covered will be:

1. Inclusion of the comments (if any) put forward by the Application Review Panel.
2. To validate the status information of the applicant according to the definition included in section 3 'Eligibility Criteria' of this document, the following documents will be required:

- a. Legal existence: Organisation Register, Official Gazette or another official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
- b. Declaration of honour: Document that ensures that the sub-grantee complies with the rules and is not in a situation that would exclude him/her from receiving EU funding.
- c. Bank account information: The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a form signed by the applicant representative and the bank representative. The account should be a business bank account of the applicant.

The applicants should produce the above documentation within 2 weeks. An additional week may be provided in duly justified cases. In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the proposal can be rejected and the next proposal in the reserve list can be invited.

At the end of the contract preparation phase, a Sub-Grant Agreement (Contract) will be signed between the SUSTAIN consortium partner responsible for the payment and each selected applicant.

Sub-Grant Agreements can be signed:

- With a certified electronic signature (this option refers to encrypted digital signatures such as those produced using e-signature software).
- With a signature that is manually signed by hand.

In the first option, the Sub-Grant Agreement can be sent by e-mail while in the second option, the Sub-Grant Agreement must be sent by post. In all cases mentioned above, a signature indicates full acceptance of the agreement terms.

6. Monitoring and Reporting Process

One month after the end of the reporting period (see table below), as it will be defined in the contract, the SUSTAIN Open Call beneficiaries shall provide an overall **performance progress report** for the project, along with the respective deliverables validating the work, as well as a brief **financial statement** with the expenses for the period according to the respective grant type.

The purpose of the above is to evaluate:

- the degree of fulfilment of the project work plan and of the related deliverable(s);
- the level of the declared KPIs achievement;
- the achieved impact according to the approved proposal.

According to the experiment type, the scheduled reports are presented below:

Reporting procedure	
Innovation support	<p>✓ Lump sum of maximum 50.000€ per project</p> <p>2 reports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interim report: The Beneficiary should submit an interim report at the mid-term of the project. ● Final: The Beneficiary should submit a final report at the end of the project.
Go-to-Market support	<p>✓ Lump sum of maximum 30.000€ per project</p> <p>1 report</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Final: The Beneficiary should submit a final report at the end of the project.

During the projects' implementation, the beneficiaries will attend monitoring meetings with the SUSTAIN consortium. The exact dates of the monitoring meetings will be defined in the signed contract.

7. Financial support

a. General payment terms and obligations of beneficiaries

Any selected applicant will sign a dedicated Sub-Grant Agreement with the SUSTAIN project coordinator (on behalf of SUSTAIN Consortium). The funds attached to the Sub-Grant Agreement come directly from the funds of the European Project SUSTAIN, and the SUSTAIN consortium is managing the funds according to the Grant Agreement Number 101074311 signed with the European Commission.

- All payments will be made in Euro (€).
- For projects run by a consortium payments will be made to each SME individually.

- Payments will not be made to the subcontractors of the beneficiaries. The SME or SMEs of the consortium are responsible to pay the subcontracting services based on their internal agreements.
- Expenditures incurred before the Grant Agreement signature date, or after the project duration period are ineligible to the sub-grant.
- Submission of an application does not constitute an entitlement for funding.
- Costs incurred for the implementation of the project must be used for the sole and close purpose of achieving the objectives of the project and its expected results, in a transparent manner consistent with the principles of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

SUSTAIN will not pay any costs applied for and incurred by the beneficiaries in case of non-compliance with the terms and conditions of the Sub-Grant Agreement.

The **Beneficiaries' obligations** are the following:

- Each beneficiary SME must -for a period of five (5) years after the payment of the balance- keep records and other supporting documentation to prove the proper implementation of the action.
- Each beneficiary SME must make the supporting documentation available upon request or in the context of checks, reviews, audits, or investigations.
- If there are on-going checks, reviews, audits, investigations, litigation or other pursuits of claims under the Sub-Grant Agreement, the SME must keep the records and other supporting documentation until the end of these procedures.
- The SME must keep the original documents. Digital and digitalised documents are considered originals if they are authorised by the applicable national law. Non-original documents may be accepted if they offer a comparable level of assurance.

Financial capacity:

The SME must have the financial capacity to carry out the actions described in their proposals and to properly manage the financial support granted to them. Each SME either applying alone or as a member of a consortium **must be** in alignment with the following situations:

- Is not bankrupt or being wound up, is not having affairs administrated by the courts, has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, has not suspended business activities, is not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters or is not any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;

- Is in compliance with its obligation relating to the payment of social security contributions and the payment of taxes, in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;
- Is not subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the grant.

SUSTAIN consortium will request the required documents before the Sub-Agreement signing and before the payments in order to confirm the above Financial capacity requirements.

b. Payment terms per experiment type

Payment scheme	
Innovation support	<p>✓ Lump sum of maximum 50.000€ per project</p> <p>2 instalments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-financing: within 30 days from the signature of the contract (40%). Payment to each individual SME in consortium. ● Final: within 30 days from the approval of the final progress performance report (60%)
Go-to-Market support	<p>✓ Lump sum of maximum 30.000€ per project</p> <p>2 instalments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Pre-financing: within 30 days from the signature of the contract (40%) ● Final: within 30 days from the approval of the final progress performance report (60%)

8. Enquiries and complaints

If, after receiving communication of the results after your proposal administrative check, you have a complaint regarding your ineligibility that you think is tied to a mistake from our side, this complaint must be submitted by email to sustain.eurocluster@gmail.com within five (5) calendar days following the announcement of the administrative check result. Your complaint must be in English and include:

- Your contact details (name, organization, email address and phone number)
- Details of your complaint
- Any relevant information or evidence regarding your complaint.

A request for redress can only be based on objective, clear, and well-documented evidence of the reasons for the complaint. It must clearly identify the application and be submitted by someone legally authorised to represent the applicant within five (5) calendar days of receiving notice of your evaluation results to the following email address: ***sustain.eurocluster@gmail.com***. A redress committee, including representatives from SUSTAIN partnership members, will review the case and recommend an appropriate course of action. Its role is to ensure a coherent legal interpretation of requests and equal treatment of applicants.

The redress procedure is concerned only with the evaluation process, and the scientific or technical judgement of the qualified experts is not in doubt.

Only one request for redress per application will be considered. All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

Once we receive your complaint or redress, we will evaluate it within 15 calendar days from its reception.

For technical issues concerning the submission procedure, please contact nlaloumis@iti.gr.

9. Confidentiality and Data protection

GDPR compliance: The General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU) guarantees that the processing of data is carried out in compliance with the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the dignity of the data subject with particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity and the right to data protection.

By applying, the applicant agrees on the storage and use of its personal data for the execution of the SUSTAIN objectives and work plan. The SUSTAIN Consortium commits to handling personal data confidentiality except for the call results, which will contain the following information:

- Information about successful SUSTAIN funding support applications that will be made publicly available before the end of the project containing: project title, names of project partners and short project description (as provided by the applicant in the application template).
- Information about successful SUSTAIN funding support that will be made publicly available after the end of the project: project title, names of project partners, awarded funding and updated short project description (as provided by the project partners in the Final Report).

The processing of data that SUSTAIN Consortium intends to carry out will be based on lawfulness and correctness in the full protection of its rights and its confidentiality pursuant to the general principles of the GDPR. Therefore, the competitors are informed of the procedure that the data provided by the applicants will be treated exclusively with reference to the procedure for which they submitted the documentation. The applicants can exercise their rights towards the data controller, pursuant to article 12 of the GDPR. For any inquiries regarding the processing your personal data, please contact the coordinator.

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

Sensitive information

The parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as sensitive in writing ('sensitive information') - during the implementation of the action and for at least the time-limit of 5 years after the final payment.

If a beneficiary requests, the SUSTAIN Consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for a longer period. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use sensitive information only to implement the Sub-Grant Agreement. The SUSTAIN Consortium may disclose sensitive information to its staff and to other EU institutions and bodies. It may moreover disclose sensitive information SMEs, if:

1. this is necessary to implement the Sub-Grant Agreement or safeguard the EU financial interests and
2. the recipients of the information are bound by an obligation of confidentiality.

10. Gender Equality, Diversity and Social Inclusion

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

11. Promotion and Dissemination

The beneficiary(ies) SME(s) must promote the project funded by SUSTAIN and its results. All the projects must fulfil the minimum communication activities defined by the SUSTAIN partnership, which include:

- Promotion of the project on the SME website. In the case of collaborative projects, the publication must be included on the websites of all the SMEs participating in the project as beneficiaries.
- Participation in at least one SUSTAIN networking event with physical presence.
- Participation in at least one online SUSTAIN networking event.
- Presentation of the project and its results in at least one physical event. This presentation could be done at any relevant event selected by the beneficiaries, which should be relevant for the promotion of the results.

Unless otherwise agreed with the SUSTAIN partnership, all communication and dissemination activities developed by the beneficiaries in relation to the project (including media relations, conferences, seminars, and information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), must include:

- The European flag (emblem) and funding statement.
- The Euroclusters programme logo.
- The SUSTAIN logo.

The following disclaimer: “Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are, however, those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.”

After the Sub- Grant Agreement signature, a communication kit will be provided to all the beneficiaries with all logos needed.

12. Disclaimer

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

Mistakes or inconsistencies: The SUSTAIN consortium is not responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations that this text may cause. In the case of inconsistencies, the SUSTAIN



Consortium will determine the steps to be taken, in cooperation with the applicant concerned.

For any question related to the Open Calls procedures you can send an email to sustain.eurocluster@gmail.com.

