ligreenSME

DRIVING MANUFACTURING SME TRANSFORMATION TOWARDS GREEN, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

Expression of Interest for External Evaluators

version 1.0

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greenSME partners







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Executive Summary

This document presents the guidelines for experts to submit an expression of interest to become greenSME external evaluators.

greenSME is a project funded by the European Union, aiming to derive manufacturing SMEs towards green, digital and social sustainability. The project will strengthen the SMEs' capacity to adopt advanced technologies to become competitive and climate neutral.

greenSME is developing a strategic approach to sustainability and a transformation pathway to support manufacturing SMEs in Europe. The path includes a sustainability self-assessment tool, elaborating an action plan with support from a greenSME sustainability advisor and the possibility of financial support through an open call. greenSME encourages manufacturing SMEs to become more sustainable by adopting technology and social innovations.

These guidelines establish the rules and process for experts to become external evaluators of greenSME. The external evaluator panel will evaluate the project proposals submitted by manufacturing SMEs and accredited Sustainability and Technology providers to the greenSME open calls



Table of contents

Exe	Executive Summary		
1.	Background, objectives and scope	. 1	
2.	External Evaluators	. 2	
2	2.1 Eligible profiles	. 2	
2	2.2 Exclusion	. 3	
3.	Process for selection of external evaluators	. 4	
3	3.1 Language	. 4	
3	3.2 Timeline	. 4	
-	3.3 Submission System	. 4	
Э	3.4 Selection	. 5	
-	3.5 Other conditions	. 5	
4.	Help-desk contact information	. 8	
An	nex 1 – List of Advanced Technologies, social innovation and environment topics	9	
An	nex 2 – List of services	14	
An	Annex 3 – Application form15		



1. Background, objectives and scope

Manufacturing is among the fundamental driving forces of the European economy, and its reinforcement is necessary to improve competitiveness and achieve Green Deal goals. EU manufacturing industry, in particular, SMEs, needs to become greener and digitalised. While the digitalisation process of SMEs is slowly progressing, the adoption of sustainability still needs to be improved.

In a post-pandemic context where manufacturing SMEs were affected by a decline in their value-added of 9.8%, they face a significant challenge; digitalisation and social and environmental requirements must be handled efficiently.

Advanced technologies and social innovation will drive the required transformation. However, the relative need for more awareness about their importance and potential impact on sustainability and competitiveness are identified as the main reasons for the slow adoption of sustainable practices by SMEs, together with the scarce possibility of testing new innovative and technological solutions.

>> The vision of greenSME is to strengthen the SME capacity to adopt advanced technologies to become competitive and climate neutral, maximising the benefits for all parts of society, starting from the upskilling and reskilling workers toward a sustainable EU manufacturing industry, with greater adaptability and resilience.

greenSME will launch two open calls during 2023 and 2024 to provide financial support to manufacturing SMEs in adopting advanced technologies and social innovations.

The external evaluators will evaluate the project proposals submitted jointly by the manufacturing SME and the accredited Sustainability and Technology provider to the greenSME open call.



2. External Evaluators

greenSME invites experts to express their interest in becoming external evaluators for evaluate sustainability projects in the greenSME Open call.

All applicants must abide by all requirements described in this chapter to be considered eligible as greenSME external evaluators.

Expression of interest does not automatically mean that the expert will be contracted for task assignments. This will depend on our business needs and fulfilment of certain formal requirements.

If the experts are contacted for a task assignment, they will need to sign a dedicated contract with the greenSME coordinator, Tekniker.

By replying to this expression of interest and signing the contract, the experts agree to perform the assignments to the highest professional standards and in compliance with the:

- Conditions set out in this expression of interest
- Expert Terms of Reference

and

• Expert Code of Conduct

2.1 Eligible profiles

greenSME invites expression of interest from experts with a high level of expertise and professional experience in the following areas (see Annex 1 – List of Advanced Technologies, social innovation and environment topics):

- Advanced Technologies: topics related to technology trends relevant to the industry (according to the Advanced Technologies for Industry taxonomy¹;
- Social Innovation: topics associated with business processes/models, people and culture applied to industry; and
- **Environment expertise:** topics associated with environmental performance and environmental impacts.

The evaluation is based on a list of required services related to the above-mentioned areas (see Annex 2 – List of services).

Very good English language skills are mandatory.

¹ See pdf file Technology definitions from the *Advanced Technologies for Industry Data Dashboard*.



2.2 Exclusion

Persons who are subject to EU administrative sanctions (i.e. exclusion or financial penalty decision)² or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funds can NOT work as experts:

- bankruptcy, winding up, court-ordered administration, arrangement with creditors, suspension of business activities or similar procedures
- in breach of social security or tax obligations
- guilty of grave professional misconduct³
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorismrelated crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95
- have created an entity under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin.

Experts will also be refused if it turns out that⁴:

- during the contract award procedure, they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they are in a conflict of interest.

Similarly, it is not possible for us to contract persons that are excluded from receiving EU funds on other legal grounds (e.g. entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)⁵, etc).

² See Article 136 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 (*'EU Financial Regulation'*) (OJ L 193, 30.7.2018, p. 1).

³ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

⁴ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.

⁵ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the *EU Sanctions Map*.



3. Process for selection of external evaluators

This chapter defines the process for the submission of expressions of interest and the selection of external evaluators.

3.1 Language

English is the official language for the greenSME project and its activities. Expressions of interest or other submissions in different languages will not be considered. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the greenSME programme. This means any requested submission of documents will be made in English to be eligible.

3.2 Timeline

This call for expression of interest is permanently open from the 3rd of July 2023 until 31st July 2024 at 17:00 CEST.

3.3 Submission System

Only expressions of interest submitted through the submission tool (F6S platform) at: *https://www.f6s.com/greensme-experts-expression-of-interest/apply* and within the timeline defined in section 3.2 will be accepted. Expression of interest submitted by any other means will not be considered. Only the documentation included in the application will be considered by greenSME.

The application is composed of the following information:

- 1. Expert profile filled in when registering on the F6S platform;
- 2. Eol Form with specific question on the areas of expertise based on greenSME domain; and with evidence of experience in project evaluation

The information provided should be actual, accurate and complete, allowing the expression of interest assessment.

If an expert would like to engage their services, the greenSME consortium will contact them to check their availability and the task assignment. At that moment, we will also need to verify their identity and bank account and check compliance with the mandatory legal requirements laid down in the EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.

Please note that registration as external evaluator does nothing more than declare the interest in working for the greeSME consortium. We do not check the eligibility or any other conditions at that moment and registration does not entail any entitlement to receive assignments.

Data Protection

To process and evaluate applications, greenSME must collect Personal and Industrial Data. F6S Network Limited, as a partner of the greenSME project, will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure coverage. Please note that greenSME requests the minimum information needed to deliver the evaluation procedures or the expert's activities.



Please refer to *https://www.f6s.com/terms* to check the F6S platform data privacy policy and security measures.

3.4 Selection

Selection of experts will be made (as and when needed) from the greenSME database, on the basis of selection criteria such as professional expertise and experience, language skills, geographical and business-sector balance, gender balance, regular rotation.

Absence of conflict

Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the greenSME selection process and during the whole project. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. In particular, applicants cannot be greenSME Consortium partners, affiliated entities, or co-operators under a contractual agreement.

The procedure will be objective and follow the principles of non-discrimination and equal treatment.

Contracting

The selected experts will sign a contract with the greenSME Project coordinator. Electronic signatures will be used in pdf format.

Evaluators will be reimbursed for their efforts. A fee of 170 EUR can be claimed for each evaluated proposal, including the time allocated for the experts' briefing and consensus meetings. The payments will be made by Tekniker within 30 days after the evaluation process is finalised.

The greenSME consortium reserves the right to refuse to provide a financial contribution in case of non or poor performance or breach of any substantial obligation, including the obligation of confidentiality and any obligation described in the above mentioned Code of Conduct.

3.5 Other conditions

Record keeping

Records and other supporting documentation to prove compliance with the experts obligations must be kept for at least three years after the final payment under a contract.

In case of on-going checks, audits, investigations, litigation or other pursuits of claims, the records and other supporting documentation must be kept until the end of these procedures.

Payment arrangements

Payments are subject to the approval by the greenSME coordinator of the work performed.

Payments will be made to the bank account specified in the Contract.

Payments will be made in Euro.

Payment deadline suspension — The payment deadline will be suspended if a request for payment cannot be approved because the required work has not been delivered or is not complete; if additional information is needed; if there are doubts about the amount to be paid; if additional checks, reviews, audits or investigations are necessary; or if there are other issues affecting the greenSME consortium interests.



Ownership and use of the results – IPR

The evaluation reports produced will belong to the greenSME consortium. The rights will be obtained for the full term of intellectual property protection, from the moment the results are delivered and approved. Delivery and approval are considered to constitute an effective assignment of rights. This transfer of rights is free of charge.

Amendments

The contract may be amended, unless the amendment entails changes to the contract which would call into question the decision awarding the contract or breach the principle of equal treatment.

The request for amendment must include the reasons for which it is made and the necessary supporting documents.

Unless otherwise agreed with the greenSME coordinator, new work may not be started before the amendment takes effect.

An amendment enters into force on the day of the last signature (and takes effect on that date or another date agreed by the parties).

Check, audits and investigations

Please note that all EU contracts may be subject to checks audits and investigations (not only by the greenSME coordinator, but also by the European Commission, and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and European Court of Auditors (ECA), as provided for under their constitutive acts⁶) — both during and after the end of the contract.

Rejection – Reduction – Suspension – Termination – Recovery of undue amounts

The greenSME coordinator may reject or reduce the remuneration or costs (fees, honoraria, allowances, reimbursement of expenses, etc.) and recover undue amounts, if:

- the work was not implemented in accordance with the contract
- allowances or expenses are not eligible
- the expert has committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud or serious breach of obligations under the contract or during its award (including non-compliance with the call conditions, false declarations or breach of the Expert Terms of Reference or Code of Conduct).

Moreover, the greenSME coordinator may terminate the contract, if:

- the services are no longer needed or the contract cannot (or can no longer) be fulfilled
- there were substantial errors, irregularities or fraud or serious breach of obligations under the contract or during its award (including non-compliance with the call conditions, false declarations or breach of the expert terms of reference or code of conduct), in particular:

⁶ For the powers of OLAF, EPPO and ECA, see Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 (OJ L 248, 18/09/2013, p. 1), Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/1996 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities (OJ L 292, 15/11/1996, p. 2), Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and Article 257 of EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046.



- o the work is not being implemented or implemented poorly or late
- the expert was found guilty of grave professional misconduct or any other of the exclusion grounds set out in section 4 are fulfilled.

Expenses incurred during suspension will not be reimbursed.

For cases involving recoveries, contract suspension or termination, the greenSME coordinator will follow a contradictory procedure.

Liability

The greenSME coordinator cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the expert (or any third party) as a consequence of performing the Contract.

Administrative sanctions

Please be also aware that the breach of obligations under this contract may trigger general public law measures, such as administrative sanctions (i.e. exclusion from greenSME external evaluators) and similar.



4. Help-desk contact information

For further questions and clarifications, you may check and address the following ways:

I. For any other issues related the expression of interest the contact e-mail is greensme@mesap.it



Annex 1 – List of Advanced Technologies, social innovation and environment topics

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES^[1]

Table 1: List of advanced technologies.

Торіс	Description
Advanced Manufacturing Technology	Advanced manufacturing technology encompasses the use of innovative technology to improve products or processes that drive innovation in manufacturing. It covers two types of technologies: process technology that is used to produce any of other advanced technologies, and process technology that is based on robotics, automation technology or computer- integrated manufacturing.
	For the former, such process technology typically relates to production apparatus, equipment and procedures for the manufacture of specific materials and components. For the latter, process technology includes measuring, control and testing devices for machines, machine tools and various areas of automated or IT- based manufacturing technology.
Advanced Materials	Advanced materials lead both to new reduced cost substitutes to existing materials and to new higher added-value products and services. Advanced materials offer major improvements in a wide variety of different fields, e.g. in aerospace, transport, building and health care. They facilitate recycling, lowering the carbon footprint and energy demand as well as limiting the need for raw materials that are scarce in Europe.
Artificial Intelligence	Artificial Intelligence is a term used to describe machines performing human-like cognitive functions (e.g. learning, understanding, reasoning or interacting). It comprises different forms of cognition and meaning understanding (e.g. speech recognition, natural language processing) and human interaction (e.g. signal sensing, smart control, simulators). Artificial Intelligence is a heterogenous field in terms of its technology base. While some aspects like sensors, chips, robots as well as certain applications like autonomous driving, logistics or medical instruments refer to hardware components, a relevant part of AI is rooted in algorithms and software.
Augmented/Virtual Reality	Augmented reality devices look to overlay digital information or objects with a person's current view of reality. As such, the user is able to see their surroundings while also seeing the AR content - Virtual reality devices place end users into a completely new reality, obscuring the view of their existing reality.



Big Data	Big Data is a term describing the continuous increase in data, and the technologies needed to collect, store, manage, and analyse them. It is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, impacting people, processes and technology. From a technology point of view, Big Data encompasses hardware and software that integrate, organise, manage, analyse, and present data. It is characterised by "four Vs": volume, velocity, variety and value. Big Data technologies are new generation of technologies and architectures, designed to economically extract value from very large volumes of a wide variety of data, by enabling high-velocity capture, discovery, and/or analysis.
Blockchain	Blockchain is a digital, distributed ledger of transactions or records, in which the ledger stores the information or data and exists across multiple participants in a peer-to-peer network. Distributed ledgers technology allows new transactions to be added to an existing chain of transactions using a secure, digital or cryptographic signature. Blockchain protocols aggregate, validate, and relay transactions within the blockchain network. Blockchain technology allows the data to exist on a network of instances or "nodes," allowing for copies of the ledger to exist rather than being managed in one centralised instance.
Connectivity	Connectivity refers to all those technologies and services that allow end- users to connect to a communication network. It encompasses an increasing volume of data, wireless and wired protocols and standards, and combinations within a single use case or location.
	<i>Standard connectivity</i> includes Fixed Voice and Mobile Voice telecom services to allow fixed or mobile voice communications, but also Fixed Data and Mobile Data services to have access and transfer data via a network.
	Advanced connectivity that is in the focus of the ATI project refers to the rise of Internet of Things scenarios, where connectivity technology boundaries expand beyond wired and cellular (e.g. 4G, 5G,) services to Low Power Wide Area Network (LPWAN), Satellite, and Short Range Wireless technologies.
Cloud computing	Cloud computing includes the delivery of tools and applications like data storage, servers, databases and software based on a network of remote servers through the Internet. Cloud computing services enable users to store files and applications in a virtual place or the cloud and access all the data via the Internet.
Industrial Biotechnology	Industrial Biotechnology is the application of biotechnology for the industrial processing and production of chemicals, materials and fuels. It includes the practice of using microorganisms or components of micro-organisms like enzymes to generate industrially useful products in a more efficient way (e.g. less energy use, or less by-products), or generate substances and chemical building blocks with specific capabilities that conventional petrochemical processes cannot provide. There are many examples of such bio-based products already on the market. The most mature applications are related to enzymes used in the food, feed and detergents sectors. More recent applications include the production of biochemicals and biopolymers from agricultural or forest wastes.

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Internet of Things (IoT)	The Internet of Things (IoT) refers to the network of smart, interconnected devices and services that are capable of sensing or even listening to requests. IoT is an aggregation of endpoints that are uniquely identifiable and that communicate bi- directionally over a network using some form of automated connectivity. Objects become interconnected, make themselves recognisable, and acquire intelligence in the sense that they can communicate information about themselves and access information that has been provided by another source. The Internet of Things relies on networked sensors to remotely connect, track and manage products, systems and grids. The Industrial Internet of Things (IIOT) – a subset of the larger Internet of Things – focuses on the specialised requirements of industrial applications, such as manufacturing, oil and gas, and utilities. IIoT systems connect non- consumer devices, used by companies, governments and utility providers in their service delivery.
Micro-and Nanoelectronics	Micro- and nanoelectronics deal with semiconductor components and highly miniaturised electronic subsystems and their integration in larger products and systems. They include the fabrication, the design, the packaging and testing from nano-scale transistors to micro-scale systems integrating multiple functions on a chip.
Mobility	IT for Mobility
	Mobility covers a large number of different technology areas and markets, which does not only encompass vehicles that take people from point A to point B, but also includes all kinds of technologies that make people more mobile (like for example mobile phones etc.). These, however, consist of a large set of sub-technologies that are hard to capture at the same time. In this project, the patent, trade, prodcom, investment and skills analysis focus on a sub-section of mobility, which is related to vehicles only, e.g. satellite navigation and radio-location, which are also the core technologies that are necessary to make autonomous driving work.
	Enterprise mobility
	The survey analysis captures mobility in terms of the workforce. The enterprise mobility market is made up of a conglomeration of mobile solutions and technologies, including hardware, software and services, empowering a borderless workforce to securely work anywhere, at any time and from any device. It does not include only the provision of smartphones or tablets to the workforce but also all the tools and applications for transforming key processes, from internal operations to operations with customers and suppliers, all the way from the shop floor to the top floor and from the back office to the end customers.
Nanotechnology	Nanotechnology is an umbrella term that covers the design, characterisation, production and application of structures, devices and systems by controlling shape and size at nanometer scale. Nanotechnology holds the promise of leading to the development of smart nano and micro devices and systems and to radical breakthroughs in vital fields such as healthcare, energy, environment and manufacturing.

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Photonics	Photonics is a multidisciplinary domain dealing with light, encompassing its generation, detection and management. Among other things it provides the technological basis for the economic conversion of sunlight to electricity which is important for the production of renewable energy, and a variety of electronic components and equipment such as photodiodes, LEDs and lasers.
Robotics	Robotics is technology that encompasses the design, building, implementation, and operation of robots. Robotics is often organised into three categories: 1) Application specific. This includes robotics designed to conduct a specific task or series of tasks for commercial purposes. These robots may be stationary or mobile but are limited in function as defined by the intended application. 2) Multipurpose. Multipurpose robots are capable of performing a variety of functions and movements determined by a user that programs the robot for tasks, movement, range, and other functions and that may change the effector based on the required task. These robots function autonomously within the parameters of their programming to conduct tasks for commercial applications and may be fixed, "moveable," or mobile. 3) Cognitive. Cognitive robots are capable of decision making and reason, which allows them to function within a complex environment. These robots can learn and make decisions to support optimal function and performance and are designed for commercial applications. When measuring production and uptake of robotics, industrial applications will be considered.
Security	Security products are tools designed using a wide variety of technologies to enhance the security of an organisation's networking infrastructure — including computers, information systems, internet communications, networks, transactions, personal devices, mainframe, and the cloud — as well as help provide advanced value-added services and capabilities.
	Cybersecurity products are utilised to provide confidentiality, integrity, privacy, and assurance. Through the use of security applications, organisations are able to provide security management, access control, authentication, malware protection, encryption, data loss prevention (DLP), intrusion detection and prevention (IDP), vulnerability assessment (VA), and perimeter defense, among other capabilities.

SOCIAL INNOVATION TOPICS

Table 2: List of social innovation topics.

Торіс	Description
Business Models	A description of how a company does business and makes money ^[2] or how an organisation creates, delivers and captures value ^[3] .
Business Processes	Event-driven, end-to-end processing path that starts with a customer request and ends with a result for the customer. Business processes often cross departmental and even organisational boundaries ^[4] .

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Workers' Skills	Competencies needed to perform any task of workers' assignments in a company.
Leadership	Set of competences and behaviours used to help people align their collective direction, to execute strategic plans, and continually renew an organisation ^[5] .
Collaborative Partnerships	Relation between critical partners or stakeholders who share knowledge and resources to achieve a common objective.

ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERTISE TOPICS

Table 3: List of environment topics.

Торіс	Description		
Resources	Measurement and analysis of resources inputs and expenditure in an organisation.		
Environmental life cycle	Environmental product life cycle assessment (LCA) is a tool for supporting policies and performance-based regulation, including life cycle costing (LCC) and social LCA (SLCA), drawing on the three-pillar model of sustainability ^[6] .		
Carbon Footprint	Measurement and analysis of the greenhouse gases emitted in an activity.		

^[1] See pdf file Technology definitions from the Advanced Technologies for Industry Data Dashboard.

^[2] https://www.strategyzer.com/blog/what-is-a-business-model

^[3] https://www.gartner.com/en/finance/glossary/business-model

^[4] https://www.gartner.com/en/information-technology/glossary/business-process

^[5] https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-leadership

^[6] Guinée, J. (2016). Life Cycle Sustainability Assessment: What Is It and What Are Its Challenges?. In: Clift, R., Druckman, A. (eds) Taking Stock of Industrial Ecology. Springer, Cham. *https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-20571-7_3*



Annex 2 – List of services

Торіс	Description
Technology	 Feasibility study Prototyping Pilot testing Demonstrating Use testing facilities New IT solutions
Technology, Social Innovation and Environment	ConsultancyCoaching



Annex 3 – Application form

Questions				
Personal data				
1 LinkedIn profile *				
2 Short Bio * Short introductory text summarising the sk	ills and experience			
			1000	
Expertise				
 Select the domains in which you Advanced Technologies 	Social Innovation	Environment		
Only answer this question if you selected "/	4 Select the advanced technologies in which you have expertise and experience: Only answer this question if you selected "Advanced Technologies" as one of the expertise and experience domains in question #3.			
Advanced Manufacturing Technology	Advanced Materials	Artificial Intelligence		
Augmented/Virtual Reality	Big Data	Blockchain		
Connectivity	Cloud Computing	Industrial Biotechnology		
Internet of Things	Micro- and Nanoelectronics	Mobility		
Nanotechnology Security	Photonics	Robotics		
5 Select the social innovation top	ics in which you have expertise an Social Innovation" as one of the expertise and ex Business Processes Collaborative Partnership			



⁶ Select the environment topics in which you have expertise and experience:

Only answer this question if you selected "Environment" as one of the expertise and experience domains in question #3

Resources

Environmental life-cycle

Carbon footprint

Experience

7 Project evaluation experience *

Experience in peer reviews or evaluation at regional, national, EU level; experience in evaluating companies' performance and/or R&D projects.

2000

8 Industrial experience *

Experience related to innovation projects; experience in the industrial sector.

2000