



S3E Reverse: Selecting the Challenges

Open Call text #1

For Large Companies, Corporations & Public Organisations

v.3

20 Dec 2022

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Document revision history

Version	Date	Description of change
v.1	25/10/2022	1 st version of Guideline for Applicants
v.2	13/11/2022	Changes in the targeting of 17 UN SDG, changes in eligibility criteria
v.3	20/12/2022	Changes in the Reverse programme diagram regarding TRL





1 Introduction

S3E – Southern European Entrepreneurship Engine is a project, funded by the European Commission, focused on accelerating **deep tech projects, start-ups, and SMEs** that aim at providing solutions towards a more sustainable society and economy in line with Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)¹.

The S3E program is built around three tracks of carefully designed services tailored to support researchers, research teams, start-ups, scaleups and SMEs in advancing their technologies, products, processes, or services towards the market. Participants in the programs will be selected through open calls.

The aim of **S3E Track 3: S3E Reverse** is to create a **brokerage program** that will connect corporates and public organisations (we use **Challenge Organisations** from now on) that face certain challenges related to the SDGs, with mature, scaling start-ups that can address these challenges through their products, services, and solutions.

The overall goal is to create new collaborations between organisations with specific needs and SMEs/Start-ups that may be able to address them.

We start this track by inviting corporates and public organisations (Challenge Organisations) to submit a challenge through our Open Call Mechanism. The procedure is easy and straightforward and will not take more than a few minutes.

These calls will be evaluated and organised by S3E experts and will be published on our website and platform to invite SMEs to submit their proposals for addressing these challenges through Deep Tech.

This document provides a full set of information for all corporates and public organisations that would like to submit their challenges.

An Open Call for SMEs/Start-ups to address these challenges will be published in the first months of 2023.

This document provides detailed information regarding the S3E Reverse program and its **first Open Call for Proposals** (also referred to as Open Call #1), as well as a general overview of the S3E project.

2 S3E Overview

The S3E – Southern European Entrepreneurship Engine project mission is to develop an engine of growth that will contribute to improve the connectedness and efficiency of the entrepreneurship ecosystems in southern European countries.

S3E consortium partners are:

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



- **HiSeedTech** - A not-for-profit association founded by private companies that came together with the purpose of enabling the creation of value from knowledge through technology entrepreneurship and open innovation.
- **EPLO Institute for Sustainable Development** – part of an international organization dedicated to mainstreaming the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the EU Green Deal, providing capacity building, policy work and educational programs.
- **IDI** (International Development Ireland) specialises in practical day-to-day implementation for Government agencies in economies which are growing and changing rapidly
- **Australo** Interinnov Marketing Lab SI - is a marketing agency specializing in growth hacking for research and innovation.

The S3E project is co-funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 European innovation ecosystems under the grant agreement ID: 101072135 ([see here the Cordis fact sheet](#)).

S3E will focus on accelerating **deep tech projects, start-ups, and SMEs** that, by providing solutions towards a more sustainable society and economy, can impact social development and economic growth in these countries and contribute to the timely achievement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in line with the EU Green Deal, the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the **Next Generation EU** fund.

S3E will provide skills to researchers and technology transfer actors in science-based entrepreneurship and technology commercialization, supporting growth stage start-ups in business development and in procuring investment, and providing technology brokerage for corporates and scale-up stage start-ups and SMEs.

The program is built around **three tracks** of bespoke services tailored to start-ups' varying levels of maturity (i.e., early, growth, and scaling stages):

- **S3E Start:** For research teams and technology transfer offices, S3E offers a hands-on training program to hone their commercial skills and secure early funding for development.
- **S3E Charge:** For growth start-ups, S3E provides mentoring and networking to develop an investment-ready business plan and facilitate access to non-dilutable and dilutable funding
- **S3E Reverse:** For scaling start-ups / SMEs, S3E will set up an Open Innovation ecosystem to broker, connect and match corporates and public organisations (Challenge Organisations) to more mature scaling start-ups through a challenge-solution duality.

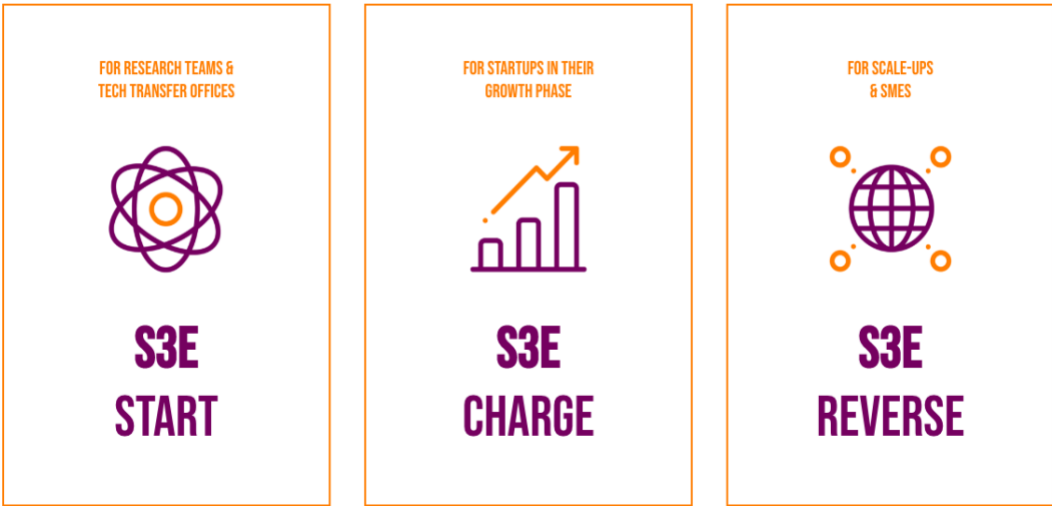


Figure 1. S3E Tracks



3 S3E Reverse at a glance

S3E Reverse is designed to help SMEs and **scaling start-ups (or scale-ups)**, gain market traction through a pan-European brokerage program, that will connect them with corporate and public organisations, with specific challenges and problems, which they can work together to solve.

The program will start by inviting corporates and the public sector (**Challenge Organisations**) to unveil challenges they face, related to the SDGs that could be addressed through deep tech solutions.

The program will focus on **challenges** related to least one of the 17 **Sustainable Development Goals**:

1. **No Poverty (SDG 1)**: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
2. **Zero Hunger (SDG 2)**: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
3. **Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3)**: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
4. **Quality Education (SDG 4)**: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
5. **Gender Equality (SDG 5)**: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
6. **Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)**: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
7. **Affordable and Clean Energy (SDG 7)**: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all.
8. **Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)**: Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.
9. **Industry Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9)**: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
10. **Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10)**: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
11. **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11)**: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable
12. **Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12)**: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. **Climate Action (SDG 13)**: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
14. **Life below water (SDG 14)**: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.



15. **Life on land (SDG 15):** Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
16. **Peace, justice and strong Institutions (SDG 16):** Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. **Partnership for the goals (SDG 17):** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The **Challenge Organisations** (corporates and public organisations) will submit their challenges through our open call mechanism. S3E experts (selected through an open Expression of Interest) will work as deep tech brokers by reviewing the submitted challenges and selecting those with the highest degree of potential, impact and innovation, and feasibility.

The challenges will be published on the S3E website. After that, an **Open Call for SMEs and start-ups** will be launched inviting them to submit their ideas, products, and solutions that can address those specific challenges. Our evaluators will select the most mature and appropriate start-ups to **match them with the Challenge Organisations**.

The starting point of the **Reverse Program** are the challenges and/or problems that corporates face in complying with the UN SDG and creating a more sustainable business. Our **deep tech brokers** will formulate these challenges into specific problems, translating the requirements of the challenge organisations into precise specifications with which the start-ups can work.

During the program, the selected experts, i.e., the **deep tech brokers** will facilitate the process and support both the Challenge Organisations to define their specifications and frame their requirements and the solvers, the SMEs, and scale-ups that will design solutions to address these challenges.

In addition, the selected SMEs and scale-ups (**The Solvers**) can benefit from a **customised innovation support program** designed specifically for them and the coaching and technology brokerage services they will receive. The details of this programme will be announced in the call for the SMEs in 2023.



S3E Reverse Phases

From Challenges to solutions





4 S3E Reverse Open Call #1 for Challenge Organizations

4.1 Eligibility Criteria for Challenge Organisations

S3E Reverse is launching its first open call for applications to **Challenge Organisations: Corporates and public organisations** that have one or more challenges to contribute.

Any kind of public or private organisation can participate as long as it meets the following criteria:

- Is established in any country eligible for the Horizon Europe program including associated countries.
- Is facing a challenge related to any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
- Requires a Deep Tech solution.

4.2 Application Procedure

The **Challenge Organisation** will be invited to submit a simple and quick application to elaborate on the challenge it is facing. The application will be submitted through F6S platform, and it will contain the following questions:

- Challenge description.
- Technology domain/domains in need (Selection).
- Context of use.
- Technical key criteria, requirements, and constraints.
- Benefits that a solution will bring to the organisation.
- Potential commercial impact of finding a solution for the challenge.
- Relevant SDG (Selection).

4.3 Restrictions

Organisations may apply for more than one Challenge in the same Open Call, with different applications, preferably in a different area, and may also apply again in future Calls. Nevertheless, only one challenge per organisation will be selected.

It is also possible that 2 challenge organisations submit a very similar challenge. In this case the Technology Broker will work with both of them (in full confidentiality) to combine the challenges in the best possible way and to make the best use of available resources.

4.4 Selection Process

The challenges are going to be selected by an independent committee of experts based on the following criteria:



Category	Criterion	Weight
Challenge	Degree of Innovation and novelty of the challenge	15%
	Feasibility (Technical, time, budget)	15%
	ESG (Environmental / Social / Governance) Impact	30%
	Relevance to EU priorities	10%
Organisation	Reliability & Technical Capacity of Organisation	15%
	Robustness of the Organisation	15%

The Selection Committee will be composed of three independent experts (invited through an Open Expression of Interest) and a member of the S3E consortium.

Each member will evaluate the challenges individually based on the above criteria. The final ranking will be decided on a consensus meeting of the committee. The committee will justify the final selection decision and prepare the report and the list of challenges that will be published.

In case a selected challenge requires further elaboration or justification, the selection committee will contact the challenge organizations to improve the descriptions of the challenges before the publications.

At least 15 challenges will be selected in this first call and will be published with a brief description and justification to our website to create the starting point for inviting scale-ups and SMEs to submit their solutions.

The decision of the committee cannot be appealed.

The results of the selection will be announced by 7 March 2023.

Challenge Organisations will be notified regardless the results of the selection process.

4.5 Timeline of the 1st Open Call

The open call for the challenge organizations will be launched on the **7th of November 2022**.

The call will stay open till **10 February 2023 at 17:00 CET**.

Between 10 February 2023 and 7 March 2023 our selection committee will evaluate the challenges, which will be announced by 7 March 2023.

By **14 March 2023**, the open call for SMEs and scale-ups will open inviting them to submit solutions to the challenges. **A detailed Guide for Applicants for scale-ups and SMEs will be published at the time of the opening of the call.**

The call for the SMEs and scale-ups will stay open till 15 May 2023.

The proposals from scale-ups and SMEs will be evaluated by independent experts and the selected companies will be invited for an interview by our deep tech technology brokers.



Following the final selection interview the technology brokers will work with the selected scale-ups and SMEs to match the submitted challenges with the proposed solutions.

4.6 Application Platform

The F6S platform will be the entry point for all challenges submissions to S3E Open Calls, which is directly linked to the S3E website (<https://south3e.eu/apply-now>). Submissions received by any other channel after the deadline will be automatically discarded.

Interested Corporates and Public Organisations applicants can apply via: <https://www.f6s.com/s3e-reverse/apply>

Save your place at <https://south3e.eu/>



5 The benefits for participation to S3E Reverse

5.1 Why a brokerage program?

Both the private and the public sector are facing countless challenges that could be addressed through innovation and technology. On the other hand, there are so many teams, entrepreneurs, and start-ups that although they have worked and develop wonderful innovative solutions, they cannot find their way to the market, or they fail to focus on the actual problems because simply they are not able to identify them. There is a clear gap of communication and collaboration between the organisations that must respond to specific challenges and those companies that could help addressing them.

S3E Reverse has a two-fold objective. First to collect challenges from corporates and public organizations and secondly to invite innovative SMEs and start-ups to contribute with Deep Tech based solutions to address those challenges. The aim of our brokerage program is to bridge this gap and match the challenge organisations with the most appropriate start-ups and SMEs that can provide solutions and address these challenges.

The brokerage program is a highly customised program that will be designed explicitly for each case.

5.2 What's in it for the Challenge Organisations?

Challenge Organisations (Corporates and Public Organisations) will apply to **S3E Reverse** Open Calls to present a challenge that will help them solve a problem that needs a deep tech approach, that impacts their contribution to the attainment of at least one of the SDGs.

The selected organisations will work with our **Tech Brokers** to better define their challenge and develop a set of solid technical specifications that will help the scale-ups design the best solutions for them.

Through our technology brokerage process the organisations will be able to better define their problems and needs and find potential solutions through their collaboration with a smaller innovative company.

Such collaborations may lead to the direct procurement of innovative solutions, that may prove much more efficient and affordable than what is currently available to the market.

Moreover, our program will help organisations to team up with innovative scale-ups to partner in a common proposal under Horizon Europe calls for Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) or Public Procurement for Innovative Solutions (PPIs) or other opportunities that may improve the capacity of both.

6 General Information

6.1 Means of submission

The F6S platform will be the entry point for all proposals' submission to S3E Open Calls, which is directly linked from S3E' website: <https://south3e.eu>. Submissions received by any other channel and after the open call duration will be automatically discarded.



6.2 Language

English is the official language for S3E Open Calls. Submissions done in any other language will not be eligible and, thus, will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the S3E Start program.

6.3 Data protection

The proposals are confidential, and each person involved in the program will sign a non-disclosure agreement, namely the reviewers of the proposals.

To process and evaluate applications, S3E will need to collect Data. S3E partners will act as Data Controllers of 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 refer to <https://www.f6s.com/privacy-policy> to check F6S platform data privacy policy and security measures and to <https://south3e.eu/privacy-policy/> to get informed about the S3E Start Privacy Policy.





7 Information and support

For the application form and detailed guidance for applicants, please download the files available at the <https://south3e.eu> website.

The S3E consortium has in place a helpdesk available for all participants and accessible from our website.

More info at <https://south3e.eu/apply-now/>.

Open call #1 support material:

- **S3E Reverse Open Call #1 Text**, that provides detailed information regarding the S3E Reverse program and its first Open Call for Proposals.
- **S3E Reverse Guidelines for Applicants**, this document.

You can find both documents in Zenodo Repository:

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7266493>

