



# S3E Charge

## Open call text #02

**OPENING:** 18 September 2023 at 12:00 CET

**CLOSING:** 15 December 2023 at 17.00 CET

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## Document revision history

Version	Date	Description of change
v.1	04/08/2023	1 <sup>st</sup> version of Open Call Text
v.2	06/09/2023	Final version





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# 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.

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

This document is focused on S3E Track 2, named **S3E Charge**, that is directed towards **growth start-ups** that will be provided with mentoring and networking to support them in the development of an investment ready business plan and facilitate access to non-dilutable and dilutable funding. The document provides detailed information regarding the S3E Charge program and its **second Open Call for Proposals** (also referred to as Open Call #2), as well as a general overview on the S3E project.

## 2 S3E Charge at a glance

S3E Charge is for **growth start-ups** with deep tech products, services, or process concept, grounded in a scientific discovery or meaningful engineering innovation and at a growth development stage, that are already in the market and aims at fostering science-based entrepreneurship and technology commercialization. It aims at (i) engaging growth start-ups, (ii) providing them with mentoring and networking to develop an investment ready business plan and (iii) facilitating access to non-dilutable and dilutable funding (Charge).

The starting point must be a written business case characterizing the product concept and the opportunity (market need), the technology and the development plan, intellectual and strategy, the market and the first customer, the competitive advantage, and the funding needs. The selected start-ups will participate in a program that provides mentoring and networking. Regular mentor meetings will be held throughout the program to exchange experiences and the network of contacts to provide to the participating start-ups. Each participating start-up will receive high-quality mentoring through a quality assurance process of the program.

So, overall, S3E Charge is a **mentoring** experience that aims to provide skills to **growth start-ups** in knowledge commercialization and the business world to enable them to:

- link their product/service/process product with market needs,
- better communicate their offerings to potential clients and investors,



- become market ready to pitch, persuade and readapt their business offerings to different audiences, depending on market needs.
- connect to 'Innovation Leaders' and 'Strong Innovators' Ecosystems
- better understand to protect IP.
- prepare an investment ready business plan.
- get access to funds and funding.

## 3 S3E Charge Open Call #2

**S3E Charge is launching its second open call for applications.**

**S3E Charge call is open to growth start-ups** from Southern European countries<sup>1</sup> with deep tech products, services, or process concepts, grounded in a scientific discovery or meaningful engineering innovation and in a growth development stage. Projects in the following scientific fields will be considered: agricultural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, and natural sciences.

The projects must envisage an economic and social impact, targeting one or more UN Sustainable Goals:

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

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<sup>1</sup> For the scope of S3E, Southern European countries include the following European countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, and Spain. And the following Associated countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey.



- **Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12):** Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Climate Action (SDG 13):** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- **Life below water (SDG 14):** Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Partnership for the goals (SDG 17):** Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalise the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

The S3E Charge Open Call #1 will be launched on **September 18, 2023 (12:00 CET)** and will close on **December 15, 2023, at 17:00 CET**.

Regardless of the number of applications, up to **30 start-ups from Southern European Countries** will be selected. Selected startups will be announced on **January 12, 2024**, and the program will start on **January 18, 2024**, and end on **April 26, 2024**.

The F6S platform will be the entry point for all proposals' submissions 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 deadline will be automatically discarded.

**Growth start-ups** should apply via: <https://www.f6s.com/s3e-charge/>

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

## 4 S3E Charge in depth

### 4.1 Who is this programme for?

S3E Charge is for **growth start-ups with deep tech products, services or process concepts**, grounded in a scientific discovery or meaningful engineering innovation and at a **growth** development stage that want to take their business offerings to investors and leverage the mentoring and networking opportunities of the S3E programme, all aligned to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). For this program, a growth start-up is a business that aims to grow and scale quickly to serve a global market and needs support to develop an investment ready business plan to access to non-dilutable and/or dilutable funding, that is, it does not have funding or have pre seed and its TRL is up to 6-7.



**Growth start-ups** are considered eligible for S3E Charge Open Call #2 if complying with **ALL** the following rules:

- Must be established as a start-up in the following science fields: agricultural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, and natural sciences. Please check the full categories here.
- The deep tech solution project must envisage to provide an impact on one (or more) UN SDGs for this call.
- Must submit a **short description** of the start-up and activities; a **video presentation** of a pitch deck focused on sustaining the value proposition for the proposed product, service or process concept; a **written business case** characterizing the product concept and the opportunity (market need), the technology and the development plan, intellectual property status and strategy, the market and the first customer, the competitive advantage and the funding needs, and a **statement of the motivation** of the team to participate in the call.
- Must be established in one (or more) of these countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey.

## 4.2 What will you get from the Programme?

S3E Charge is driven by an internationally proven mentorship program that was specifically developed for growth start-ups. The mentoring and coaching of the process guides the growth start-up teams in the development of a business plan for a product, service or process that makes them investment ready and takes their validated business case to an investor attractive level. So, you will acquire skills in technology commercialisation, science-based entrepreneurship, business development and intellectual property protection using your own business offerings through tailor-made mentorship.

When you finish the Programme, you will have developed a business plan for a product, service or process and you will have acquired skills and be investment ready to:

- link your product/service/process product with market needs,
- better communicate your offerings to potential clients and investors,
- become market ready to pitch, persuade and readapt your business offerings to different audiences, depending on market needs
- connect to 'Innovation Leaders' and 'Strong Innovators' Ecosystems
- better understand to protect IP
- prepare an investment ready business plan
- get access to funds and funding

The outcome of S3E Charge will better position you to apply for public or private funding and programs, because it will help you link your business offerings to market needs and become market ready to pitch and attract investments whilst having validated and honed your business plan and your value proposition.





## 4.3 How is the programme structured?

S3E Charge offers you a 14-week tailor-made program that involves:

- **Mentoring** (by pan-European industry experts) that will guide each growth start-up through the validation of the project, the development of the investment-ready business plan and the investment process. The mentors supporting the S3E Charge edition are individuals who are connected to deep tech and entrepreneurship, and who are prepared to help start-ups solve problems that arise throughout the program. You can see an updated list of mentors on the S3E website (<https://south3e.eu>). Note: meetings with mentors last 1,5 hours and are held every two weeks (7 meetings in total).
- **Networking** with industry leaders and investors and showcase opportunities at the S3E Open day in which the teams will give a 7-minute pitch followed by a 10-minute Q&A period to investors. **Post Open Day** the project will have a mechanism to facilitate one-on-one meetings between investors and start-ups.

**It is also important to mention that** the investment ready business plan, to be delivered as the outcome of the program, will build upon the business case provided by the participating teams, and shall include detailed sections on (i) opportunity description, (ii) product concept, (iii) technology, IP and pipeline, (iv) market analysis, (v) strategic framework, (vi) sales plan and marketing, (vii) development roadmap, (viii) financials and (ix) team. The validation of the assumptions supporting the different sections of the business plan (using external primary sources) is a key point that the mentors will need to provide support through their personal networks and enforce.

Non-dilutable funding opportunities (both national and / or European) will be permanently scouted and posted on the project web site and mentors will also provide support for the start-ups to apply to these opportunities.

It is important to note that the approach used in the **programme will be highly iterative**; in the sense that as the teams amass information from the market, they may be required to iterate back to improve previous decisions and findings. The role of the mentors is crucial in this iterative process in forcing the teams to iterate back and select the best opportunities. At the end of the programme there will be an **Open Day end of April 2024**.

## 5 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:





- **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) specialised 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 NextGenerationEU 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:** Aimed at research teams and technology transfer officers, S3E offers a hands-on training program to explore the potential social and economic impact of their scientific discoveries.
- **S3E Charge:** Aimed at 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:** Aimed at scaling start-ups and SMEs, S3E will set up an Open Innovation ecosystem to broker, connect, and match corporates to scaling start-ups through a challenge-solution duality.





Figure 1. S3E Tracks

## 6 Support material

For updated information on S3E, in general, and S3E Charge, in particular, please check out our website <https://south3e.eu>, follow our social media accounts<sup>2</sup> and [subscribe to our Newsletter](#).

Privacy Policy available at: <https://south3e.eu/privacy-policy/>

Open call #2 support material:

- **S3E Charge Open Call #2 Text**, this document.
- **S3E Charge Guidelines for Applicants**, which sets out the guidelines for participation in the second open call for proposals of the S3E Charge project.

For other needs, please contact the [Help Desk](#).

<sup>2</sup> Follow us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/south3e> and X (former Twitter): <https://x.com/south3e/>