



S3E Start

Guidelines for Applicants for open call #02

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Document revision history

Version	Date	Description of change
v.1	04/08/2023	1 st version of the guidelines for applications
v.2	24/08/2023	2 nd version of the document
v.3	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 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.

This document provides a full set of information useful for interested applicants who are willing to participate in **S3E Track 1: S3E Start**, that is directed towards research teams from research and development organisations (e.g., universities, research institutions, start-ups, or companies), and technology transfer officers. This document provides a full set of information regarding the program, namely the **guidelines for applications**.

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:

- **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 organisation 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 specialising 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

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



Sustainable Development Goals, 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.



S3E START



S3E CHARGE



S3E REVERSE

Figure 1. S3E Tracks

3 S3E Start at a glance

3.1 Who is this program for?

S3E Start is designed for **research teams with deep tech projects**, grounded in a scientific discovery or meaningful engineering innovation, that want to explore the path from the lab to the market.

S3E Start is also for **technology transfer officers** that want to learn a thoroughly tested methodology to foster science-based entrepreneurship and technology commercialization within their own organisations.



3.2 What will you get from the program?

S3E Start is driven by an internationally proven process for technology commercialization that was specifically developed for deep-tech projects. The hands-on approach of the process guides the **research teams** in the development of a business case for a product, service or process grounded on the scientific discovery or engineering innovation with which the team applied to the Program. So, you will acquire skills in technology commercialisation and science-based entrepreneurship using your own project and the set of deliverables that, in each class, will be provided to the teams to guide you through the process.

When you finish the Program, you will have developed a business case for a product, service or process developed from your research outcomes and you will have acquired skills to:

- link Science & Technology to product and market needs,
- better communicate science to a non-scientific audience,
- evaluate the different paths to move the technology to the market.

The outcome of S3E Start will also better position you to apply for public or private funding, because it will help you link your science to market needs and validate the assumptions that support the arguments to justify why you will be creating social and / or economic value.

The **Technology transfer officers (TTOs)** will actively participate in the S3E Start program by joining the research teams from the R&D organisations they belong to. By becoming an integral part of these teams, the TTOs will learn the Program methodology through the same hands-on approach.

For **TTOs** applying to the program individually, they would be given a different experience as they would only participate in online tutorials and webinars.

3.3 How is the program structured?

The starting point of the Program is a technology proposed (in the application form) by each participating research team. Over a **period of 18-weeks** S3E Start offers a hands-on experience that involves:

- **Online tutorials**, mainly on the topics related to the process used to guide the participating teams in the development of a business case for a product, service, or process grounded on the proposed technology. Note: classes are held every week for one hour and a half.
- **Webinars**, on diverse topics pertinent to the development of the relevant skills (e.g., intellectual property, financials, business development, venture funding.). Note: a total of eight webinars (one hour long) will be held.
- **Mentoring** (by industry experts) that will guide the teams on validation of the project and in the development of the business case. The mentors supporting the S3E Start edition are individuals who are somehow connected to the area of deep tech and entrepreneurship, and who are prepared to help teams 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 an hour and a half and are held every two weeks.





- **Networking** with industry leaders and showcase opportunities at the S3E Open day.
- **Deliverables** on a weekly basis so research teams can apply the concepts learnt during the online tutorials to their technology. These are expected to require three hours, on average, every week.
- **Advisory** in the last two weeks of the program to help the research teams fine-tuning their final presentation for the S3E Open Day.
- **Pitch Presentations:** During the program, the research teams will have three pitches, one at the beginning of the program for them to explain their technology, one in the middle to present the value proposition of the deep tech project and the final pitch at the end of the program at the Open Day.

It is also important to mention that:

- The teams will undergo a training program that will have as the visible outcome a business case for a product/service or process concept sustained by the technology proposed.
- The teams will pitch their project, at S3E Open day, to a large audience composed among others by pre-seed stage investors and corporate ventures.

The provisional agenda of S3E Start can be found in Table 1.

TYPE	DATES	HOUR (CET TIME)
ONLINE TUTORIALS	February: 6,13,20,27 March: 5,12, 19, 26 April: 2,9,23,30 May: 7,14	15:00 - 16:30
WEBINARS	February: 13,20, 27 March: 12, 26 April: 9,30 May: 14	16:30 - 17:30
MENTORING	February: 8, 21-23 March: 6-8, 20-22 April: 3-5, 24-26 May: 8-10, 22-24	Schedule individually with each team (1h30 meeting).
TEAMWORK	Schedule individually with each team, but we estimate, at least, three hours each week.	
ADVISORY	May 20- June 4	5 meetings in the last two weeks, schedule individually with each team.
PITCH PRESENTATIONS	February: 6 (Technology Pitch) April: 16 (Value Proposition Pitch) June: 6 (Final Pitch at S3E Open Day)	

Table 1. S3E Start provisional schedule





The approach used in the **S3E Start program is 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 options. At the end of the program there will be an **Open Day on the 6th of June 2024**.

The diagram below provides a more detailed look into the three phases of the S3E Start process:



Figure 2. S3E Start program approach

In the Table below, further details are provided about each step of the S3E Start program:

IDEATION PHASE	<p>In this phase a set of clearly defined product concepts will be developed and prioritised considering the linkages between the unique capabilities of the technologies and customer/market needs (Technology-Product-Market linkages). Each team is required to generate multiple product concepts that can be enabled by each technology. Then research teams will have to identify diverse market opportunities for each product concept to further specify product attributes.</p>
DEVELOPMENT PHASE	<p>In this phase teams will refine, improve, validate, and select among the product concepts devised in the 'ideation' phase using a guided approach that will force them to contact the 'market' to challenge and sustain each of the T-P-M linkages proposed in the ideation phase. In the early stages of this phase, teams will be looking for 'fatal flaws' (product or market) that will justify 'dumping' one (or more) T-P-M linkage(s). With the information gathered from the market teams will develop "value propositions" for their products using a standard format that will force them to (i) clearly define the product, (ii) tie customer needs to the benefits of using the product in economic terms and (iii) differentiate the product from competitors based on unique product features. Additionally, they will build a business model that, for the product moving forward, describes the rationale of how the company will create, deliver, and capture value. Throughout this phase participants will have to use a set of management tools (e.g., 5 Forces Analysis, SWOT Analysis, Industry Mapping, "Voice of the Customer", etc.) to gain a much better understanding of the way the market works and will be supported by the tools embedded in the approach, thus fine-tuning their product concept choices.</p>



COMMERCIALIZATION PHASE

In this phase teams put the pieces of the puzzle together by building a **strategy to bring the product to market**. This phase begins with the definitions of the **pricing point and the sales plan** answering strategic questions such as market traction and market entry point(s). Additionally, drawing on the business model previously designed teams will define their **development roadmap** that will allow them to build the **financial projections and risk analysis**. At this stage teams will have all the elements needed to produce a business case and a final pitch that are the final deliverables for the Program.

Table 2. S3E Start stages.

4 Open Call #2

S3E Start is launching its second open call for applications.

S3E Start call is open to research teams from Southern European countries² with deep tech projects, grounded in a scientific discovery or meaningful engineering innovation, that want to explore the path from the lab to the market. 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 the following Sustainable Development 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.

² 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.





- **Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11):** Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.
- **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.

S3E Start call is also open to technology transfer officers from Southern European countries that want to learn a thoroughly tested methodology to foster science-based entrepreneurship and technology commercialization within their own organisations.

The S3E Start Open Call #2 was launched on the **18th of September 2023 (12:00 CET)** and will last until the **12th of January 2024 at 17:00 CET**. On the open call #2, S3E Start will **select up to 25 research teams** and **up to 20 technology transfer officers**.

Selected projects will be announced on the 26th of January 2024 and the program will start on the 6th of February 2024 lasting until the 6th of June 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.

To support applicants, **S3E Start will organise five Q&A Webinars** on the following dates:

- 26th of September 2023 at 15:00 CET
- 31st of October 2023 at 15:00 CET
- 28th of November 2023 at 15:00 CET
- 19th of December 2023 at 15:00 CET
- 9th of January 2024 at 15:00 CET

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

5 Timeline

Submission to the Open Call #2 will be launched on the **18th of September 2023 (12:00 CET)** and the deadline for applications is on the **12th of January 2024 at 17:00 CET**.



Below, the expected dates are presented for the different stages. The opening and closing dates of each stage can be subject to change in case of any modifications to the project's schedule.



Figure 3. S3E Start timeline.

The evaluation process will be composed by two stages:

- First, the application will be assessed by S3E project partners to validate if it conforms to the eligibility criteria.
- Second, the application will be assessed by a board of remote peer reviewers that, if required, will select the teams for an interview.

The selected projects will be announced on the 26th of January and the program will start on the 6th of February 2024 lasting until the 6th of June 2024 with the Open Day.

6 Eligibility criteria

6.1 Research teams

Research teams are considered eligible for S3E Start Open Call #2 if complying with **ALL** the following rules:

- Must be organised as a research team (2 to 5 team members), whereby one team member is designated as the Principal Applicant and the others as Co-Applicants. (Note: applications from individual researchers are not eligible).
- Have a deep tech project from the following science fields: agricultural sciences, engineering and technology, medical and health sciences, and natural sciences. Please check the full categories here.
- The proposed project must envisage to provide an impact in one (or more) SDGs: No Poverty (SDG 1); Zero Hunger (SDG 2); Good Health and Well-Being (SDG 3), Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5); Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6); Affordable and



Clean Energy (SDG 7); Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8); Industry Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9); Reduced Inequalities (SDG 10); Sustainable Cities and Communities (SDG 11); Responsible consumption and production (SDG 12); Climate Action (SDG 13); Life below water (SDG 14); Life on land (SDG 15); Peace, justice and strong Institutions (SDG 16) and Partnership for the goals (SDG 17).

- Belonging to R&D organisations from 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.

6.2 Technology transfer officers

Technology transfer officers are considered eligible for S3E Start Open Call #2 if complying with **ALL** the following rules:

- Must be an individual application supported by a R&D organisation.
- Have, at least, three years of experience.
- Belonging to a technology transfer office of a R&D organisation from one of these countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, and Turkey.

7 Open call submission

On the open call #2, S3E Start will **select up to 25 research teams** and **up to 20 technology transfer officers**. All research teams and technology transfer officers should fulfil the eligibility criteria as expressed in section 5 and submit the application form on F6S.

The application form for **research teams** is available at:

<https://www.f6s.com/s3e-start-for-researchers/apply>

The application form for **technology transfer officers** is available at:

<https://www.f6s.com/s3e-start-for-tech-transfer-offices/apply>

7.1 Application form questions

Research teams:

- Identification of the team members and R&D organisations
- Description of the proposed technology and / or scientific discovery (in terms of what it does rather than the technical details on how it works),
- Description of what is the uniqueness and / or innovativeness of the proposed technology,
- The status of development and an outline of the main tasks required for the next stage of development,
- The scientific field of the project.
- The SDGs the project aims to address.





- IP status and
- A statement of the motivation of the team to participate.

Technology transfer officers:

- Identification of the individual and the R&D organisation
- Years of experience
- Research team in which you will be integrated (if applicable)
- CV of the individual
- Letter of R&D organisation supporting the application
- Motivation letter to participate in the program.

7.2 Criteria rank

The criteria to rank the applications from **research teams** will include the:

- perceived “breadth” of the technology, i.e., the platform potential of the technology, and
- perceived “depth” of the technology, i.e., the unique features of the technology.
- motivation to participate in the training program and the entrepreneurial spirit of the team will also contribute to the applications ranking.

The criteria to rank the applications from **technology transfer officers** will include the:

- motivation to participate in the training program, namely mentioning how S3E Start could help their TTO to succeed in getting their discoveries into the market.
- geographic dispersion – meaning that S3E Start will try to cover all the southern European Countries so it is not expected to have more than two participants from the same country.

Selected **research teams** and **technology transfer officers** will be announced on the 26th of January 2024. The kick-off of the program will be on the 6th of February 2024 and end on the 6th of June 2024.

7.3 Open Call #2 publication

The Open Call #2 was published on the **18th of September 2023 (12:00 CET)**. It is supported by:

- **S3E Start Open Call #2 Text**, which provides a full set of information regarding the Open Call for Proposals for the S3E Start.
- **S3E Start Guidelines for Applicants**, this document.

Interested applicants should register at the F6S (www.f6s.com). This will be the central interface for managing the proposal applications for the remainder of the open calls.

7.4 Proposal preparation

Please follow the steps:

1. For the proposal preparation, the applicants are requested to apply online and answer all mandatory questions.





2. Be concrete and concise. Please examine all the Open Call documents and attend the various events promoted by the S3E Start project, that will be made available at <https://south3e.eu/>.
3. It is highly recommended to submit your proposal well before the deadline. If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and provided the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the S3E Start team to resubmit the proposal (for this purpose please contact us at info@south3e.eu). However, S3E Start is not committed that resubmission in time will be feasible in case the request for resubmission is not received by the S3E Start team at least 48 hours before the call deadline.

It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the F6S submission system will be definitive.

7.5 Proposals reception

Submissions will be done ONLY via the F6S platform. A full list of proposers will be drafted containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity (which will be also shared with the European Commission for transparency reasons).

The application reception for S3E Start will close as indicated in section 5 “Timeline” on the **12th of January 2024 at 17:00 CET.**

The application form for **research teams** is available at:
<https://www.f6s.com/south3e-start-for-researchers>

The application form for **technology transfer officers** is available at:
<https://www.f6s.com/south3e-start-for-tech-transfer-offices>

8 General Information

8.1 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.

8.2 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.





8.3 Data protection

The proposals are confidential, and each person involved in the program will sign a non-disclosure agreement (NDA), 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.

9 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 will organise, at least, five Q&A Webinars (see section 4) and be present at events from September 2023 until January 2024, to connect with interested applicants.

Please check our website, follow our social media accounts³ and [subscribe to our Newsletter](#) if you want to stay tuned with this program.

Open call #2 support material:

- **S3E Start Open Call #2 Text**, that provides detailed information regarding the S3E Start program and its second Call for Proposals
- **S3E Start Guidelines for Applicants**, this document.

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

³ Follow us on LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/south3e> and X (former Twitter): <https://x.com/south3e/>

