



Open Call 2026

Guide for applicants

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This document provides information for the applicants to the ELEVATEX Open Call 2026, a cascade funding scheme implemented by the ELEVATEX partnership.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The ELEVATEX Project

Launched in October 2025, ELEVATEX is a European project coordinated by Techtera. It aims to support the green and digital transition of the textile industry while strengthening its international competitiveness. To support innovation and technology adoption, €1.98 million will be distributed to European SMEs through cascade funding open calls. In 2026, 20 SMEs will receive up to €30,000 each to develop new products or services. In 2027, 20 consortia composed of two companies (including at least one textile SME) will receive up to €69,000 per project to support the adoption of advanced technologies.

1.2 ELEVATEX Consortium

The ELEVATEX consortium includes five European textile clusters: Techtera (France), PTC (Portugal), NTT (Italy), ATEVAL (Spain) and Tèxtils.CAT (Spain).

ID	Organization Name		Country
1.	ASSOCIATION TECHTERA AUVERGNE RHONE ALPES - Techtera		France
2.	CENTRO TECNOLÓGICO DAS INDUSTRIAS TEXTIL E DO VESTUÁRIO DE PORTUGAL – Portuguese Textile Cluster (PTC)		Portugal
3.	NEXT TECHNOLOGY TECNOTESSILE SOCIETA NAZIONALE DI RICERCA R L - NTT		Italy
4.	ASOCIACION DE EMPRESARIOS TEXTILES DE LA REGION VALENCIANA - ATEVAL		Spain
5.	ASSOCIACIO AGRUPACIO D'EMPRESSES INNOVADORES TEXTILS – Tèxtils.CAT		Spain

2. ELEVATEX GRANT SCHEME – 1st OPEN CALL

2.1 Scope of the 1st Open Call

This Call for Proposal is supported by the ELEVATEX Project Consortium and is co-funded by the European Union, under the Joint Cluster Initiative – Euroclusters – call, managed by the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

The 1st ELEVATEX Open Call aims to support individual textile SMEs developing innovative products, processes or services with clear market potential.

Projects should contribute to:

- Product or service development;
- New or improved processes for the green and/or digital transition;
- Market launch preparation;
- Strengthening SME competitiveness.

2.2 Type of projects supported

Projects may focus on:

- Development of new or significantly improved products;
- Development of innovative services;
- Preparation for market entry.

Projects must demonstrate:

- Impact and ambition: added value of the proposal, market potential, degree of novelty;
- Excellence /expertise: Technical expertise and experience, availability of resources, risk management;
- implementation: project design, workplan coherence, feasibility of the project;
- Coherence of the private contribution of the applicant.

2.3 Financial support

- Grant per SME: €30,000 (fixed lump sum);
- Expected number of funded SMEs: 20;
- 1st call total budget: 600.000€;
- Project Start: October 2026, for 6 months.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility conditions

To be eligible, applicants must meet all the following conditions:

- For-profit SMEs operating in the textile ecosystem, including start-ups with a minimum of one year of legal existence at the time of application. Sole traders are not eligible;
- SMEs must comply with the official European Commission SME definition: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en;
- Established in an EU Member State or in an eligible non-EU country, listed European Economic Area EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME (Competitiveness of SMEs) part of the Single Market Programme;
- Not considered as an “enterprise in difficulty”, not unable to pay its debts, not subject to insolvency or bankruptcy proceedings including safeguarding, reorganisation or liquidation, not having been convicted of illegal practices, not be subject to exclusion from EU funding, no double funding;
- Providing an additional private financial contribution to their project;
- Committing to reporting, communication and monitoring obligations;
- Have the operational and financial capacity to implement the project;
- The Applicant’s project must be TRL >6;
- Applicants must align with the EU standards regarding equal treatment and opportunities.

Application requirements:

- Applications must be complete, be written in readable English and must not exceed maximum number of characters stated in each text box of the application form;
- Submission of one application per SME; in case of multiple submissions detected only the latest submitted proposal will be considered;
- Applications must be submitted through the web-based system by 17:00 CEST (Brussels time) of the 31st of July 2026.;
- Budget must be in € currency;
- Applications must avoid any kind of conflict of interest between the Applicant and any other party.

The partners of the ELEVATEX project are not eligible for funding under this call.

Applicants and selected applications will be required to sign declarations and/or provide documents regarding:

- Financial health and documents: a letter (template provided by ELEVATEX) signed by a public accountant including the amount of own funds of the applicant, the amount of the last 2 accounting profits, and a statement about the financial safety of the applicant;
- Capacity to implement the project;
- Amount of private funds mobilized and their purpose in the project;
- Compliance with EU rules;
- Completed SME CHECK: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/sme/public/organisation-name>.

3.2 Eligible activities (exhaustive)

- Product or service development;
- Prototype development and testing;
- Processes development and/or improvement for the green and/or digital transition;
- Technical validation and viability of new-to-firm products and/or services;
- Market analysis and preparation;
- Market testing;
- Business model development;
- Compliance studies;
- Activities supporting green and/or digital transition.

3.3 Eligible costs and lump sum overview

Successful proposals shall receive the requested financial contribution in the form of a fixed lump sum.

A lump sum is a fixed amount of money which can be used by beneficiaries for several purposes related to the achievement of the project objectives. It is necessary to provide an explanation in the application on how the lump sum will be used including a clear budget proposal (personnel, subcontracting, travels, equipment, and consumables). Since the granting of a lump sum does not foresee the delivery of detailed financial reporting and timesheets, the use of the project budget will be controlled considering the technical advancements by the technical reviewers. The final technical evaluation will assess the coherence of the money spent with the

achieved results. However, since beneficiaries will have to keep the original documents of their expenses (timesheets, invoices, contracts) in case of an audit, the following rules and limitations per type of GRANT scheme must be respected.

Only costs generated during the lifetime of the project can be eligible. Period of costs' eligibility is from the contract signature date until the end of the project.

Costs described in the submitted budget must be determined in accordance with the usual accounting and management principles and practices of the beneficiary.

Applicants will provide an indicative budget in € to allow the evaluator to better understand the organization and implementation of the project. It will be indicated on the submission platform.

Eligible costs are:

- **SMEs Direct staff costs:** cost hours of the staff of the beneficiary dedicated to actual work under the project;
- **Other direct costs:** further direct costs incurred directly related to the implementation of the action can be claimed for supplies and services, communication materials for exploitation, and business travel;
- **Subcontracting costs** such as expert services by Research Technology Organization (RTO), Universities, Research Institutes, living labs and similar, but could be also public research center or other, large companies, other specialized SMEs and similar. Those costs are the services/products carried out by a subcontractor via a legal agreement between them, which set out the rights and obligations of both parties for the sake of the project completion. **Subcontracting costs cannot exceed 30% of the total costs.** In any case, beneficiaries must and should justify subcontracting properly to ensure good value for money.

In all cases, cost categories (i.e. staff, direct, subcontracting) must be in line with [Annotated Grant Agreement of EU Funding programs 2021-27](#).

3.4 Period of costs' eligibility

Period of cost eligibility starts from the contract signature date until the end of the project. Expenditures incurred before submission date of the proposal are not eligible. Expenditures incurred after reporting period are not eligible.

3.5 Participation in multiple ELEVATEX cascade funding calls

The maximum amount to be granted per SME by ELEVATEX shall not exceed 60.000€ in total, even in the case of multiple granted grants to the SME during the lifetime of ELEVATEX. This applies not only to the first call, but also for the 2nd call in case an SME would apply to it as well (upcoming ELEVATEX Open Call 2 in 2027).

3.6 Private financing

Applicants must declare the private financial sources that they will crowd in in addition to the ELEVATEX grant for their project and will have to confirm this amount in the final report of their project, if selected for funding. Crowding-in of private resources means financial resources invested in the project, i.e. not as in-kind contributions.

This funding must come from a financial resource, whether it is the company's own financial resources or another source of funding, such as a loan or an investor. The private funding mobilized must be used for expenses related to the project, and for the same kind of expenses that are covered by the fixed lump sum.

If the private funding amount is inferior to 1% of the global budget of the application, the application will be ineligible.

4. Application Process

4.1 Where and how to apply?

Applications must be submitted exclusively via the **[GoodGrants platform by clicking here](#)**. The application contains two parts:

- Administrative forms, abstract and budget to be filled in **in the platform**;
- Mandatory annexes to be uploaded in the platform:
 - PDF document with the **results of the SME self-assessment tool** from the European Commission: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/sme/public>
 - AND:
 - Filled in “**Certificate of financial standing and absence of insolvency proceedings**” from the open accountant, financial auditor or any other external financial expert: <https://www.techtera.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/05/elevatex-open-call-2026-certificate-of-financial-standing.docx>
 - Or, if not possible to provide the Certificate, any official document displaying the same information;
 - Or, if not possible, the balance sheets of the SME from the last 2 available years, along with a certificate of registration.

In the last 2 cases, the legal name, registration number, VAT number and registered office address, equity and profit/loss must be displayed. If the documents are not available in English, French, Italian, Portuguese or Spanish, their translation will need to be provided as well

All templates can be downloaded from the ELEVATEX submission platform. Upon receipt of your proposal, the system will send you confirmation of your submission. Proposals may be re-edited and re-submitted until the deadline. The last submitted proposal before the deadline will be considered as the final one. Only proposals submitted through the online ELEVATEX submission tool within the deadline will be evaluated.

All information and documentation provided by the applicants is under their responsibility.

4.2 Call timeline

- Call opening: **1st June 2026**
- Call closure: **2 months after opening – 31st July 2026 – 17:00 CET**
- Evaluation period: **August–September 2026**
- Contracting & pre-financing: **September 2026**
- Expected starting date of the project: **October 2026**
- Project duration: **6 months – project end March 2027**
- Final evaluation: **April 2027**
- Final payment: **May 2027**

5. Evaluation and Selection Process

Submitted applications will be evaluated in a one-step evaluation procedure (remote evaluation by 2 experts from the ELEVATEX Evaluation Committee consisting of representatives of ELEVATEX partners). Prior to assigning proposals to the experts, ELEVATEX partners will perform an eligibility check according to previously defined criteria. The ELEVATEX experts will assess applications only from countries other than their own.

The evaluation and ranking of the applications are based on a set of criteria in addition to the above-mentioned main eligibility requirements.

At least 10% of the supported SMEs will be based in eligible regions outside of the ELEVATEX partners individual countries (France, Italy, Spain and Portugal).

5.1 Scoring Mechanism

Each sub-criterion is rated between 1 and 10 points; no half-points are allowed. Each sub-criterion has a dedicated weight for the final score. Score per criterion is the sum of the individual sub-criteria weighted scores.

The total score is comprised by adding the scores of all criteria and will be maximum 10 points. The threshold for the overall score is 70% of the maximum grade. Proposals in which the overall score is below 70% will not be recommended for funding.

In case of proposals with equal overall scores, the prevailing one is one that has the higher score in the criterion of "Impact-ambition", then "Excellence" and then "Implementation" in this order. If proposals remain tied after applying these criteria, EU-13 countries and applications not from France, Portugal, Italy or Spain will be prioritized. If proposals remain tied after applying these criteria, an additional evaluation round will be conducted involving two newly appointed evaluators.

Evaluation scores will be awarded based on the criteria mentioned in the table below.

Evaluation criteria	Sub Criteria	Max score	Sub criteria weight
1. Impact/Ambition	Added value and relevance of the proposal	10	15%
	Market potential	10	10%
	Degree of novelty	10	10%
2. Excellence/Expertise	Technical expertise and experience	10	15%
	Availability of resources	10	10%
	Risk Management	10	5%
3. Implementation	Project design	10	10%
	Workplan coherence	10	10%
	Feasibility of the project	10	10%
4. Private share	Coherence of the private contribution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Less than 10% (but more than 1%) of budget: 1 point • From 10% and less than 20%: 4 points • From 20% and less than 30%: 7 points • 30% and above: 10 points 	10	5%
Total		100	100%

While ELEVATEX is implemented by cluster organizations from France, Portugal, Italy, and Spain, applicants from other eligible countries are strongly encouraged to participate. It is especially the case for EU-13 countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

5.2 Evaluation procedure

Submitted applications will be assessed by the ELEVATEX Evaluation Committee consisting of representatives of the ELEVATEX partners. Each ELEVATEX partner evaluates only applications submitted from outside their own country.

The assessment period shall take max. 40 days, starting from the closing date of the call. The applicants will receive an e-mail about the outcome of the assessment directly after the assessment is finalized along with instructions for the next steps in case the applicant is awarded. The successful applicants will be requested to upload administrative and financial documents to the ELEVATEX platform within 7 calendar days, and within additional 15 days to sign a formal Contract from the notification of the project approval. Failure to comply with these timeframes might result in the rejection of the proposal.

Important note to applicants: Terms and Conditions described in this Call for Proposals should be considered as mandatory terms and any incompliance may lead to proposal disqualification.

6. Contracting and Payment Modalities

Selected beneficiaries will sign a grant agreement with Techtera, project coordinator of ELEVATEX.

The financial support will be provided as a **fixed lump sum of €30,000**.

Payments will be made in **two instalments**:

- **Pre-financing (20% - 6.000€)**: paid within 15 days following the signature of the grant agreement;
- **Final payment (80% - 24.000€)**: paid within 30 days after the completion of the assessment of the final progress performance report.

If the SME does not implement the project as described in the proposal or fails to properly justify the implementation of the planned activities, the final payment will not be made, and the SME may be required to reimburse the pre-financing received. Further details are provided in Section 7 – Monitoring and Reporting Obligations.

Payments will be made exclusively to the SME beneficiary. The ELEVATEX project will not make payments directly to subcontractors. The SME beneficiary remains fully responsible for paying subcontractors in accordance with their internal agreement.

All documents and information submitted by SMEs as part of the application and reporting process remain under their sole responsibility and constitute a contractual commitment. The beneficiaries are responsible for the accuracy, completeness and reliability of the information provided.

7. Monitoring and Reporting Obligations

No later than one month after the end of the reporting period, as defined in the contract, the ELEVATEX beneficiaries shall submit a progress report on the implementation of the Project. The report shall include the relevant deliverables demonstrating the activities carried out and a justification for the mobilization of private funds. The report will allow the consortium to assess:

- The level of implementation of the project work plan and the related deliverables;
- The continued relevance of the project objectives;
- The expected economic, competitive and societal impact of the project;
- The cooperation of the ELEVATEX Beneficiary in dissemination and communication activities.

Financial support is provided as a fixed lump sum. Therefore, the final assessment will focus on the proper implementation of the planned activities and the achievement of the expected results. No verification of the actual costs incurred will be carried out.

Beneficiaries will be requested to contribute to monitoring activities required by the European Commission, including the completion of a final survey on project outcomes (SME survey). Should the survey not be completed, the Applicant will not receive the final payment and may be asked to reimburse the pre-financing.

The successful applicants must keep records of their technical and financial activities during the project in case of an audit of ELEVATEX by OLAF, EPPO and ECA.

For dissemination and communication purposes, SMEs shall acknowledge the ELEVATEX project and the support received from the European Union by displaying the ELEVATEX logo, the EU emblem with the right mention as well as the Euroclusters logo in all relevant materials and publications. The following statement shall be included:

“This project is funded by the European Commission Joint Cluster initiatives for Europe’s recovery (Euroclusters) under the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) grant agreement number 101236463”.

All these mandatory acknowledgements will be made available to the successful Applicants.

SMEs shall also provide visual materials (e.g. photos or other communication assets) and non-confidential descriptions of results that may be used by the consortium and the European Commission for communication and dissemination purposes.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection (GDPR)

A full list of applicants will be prepared containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will be also shared with the European Commission for transparency.

The applicants' list will not be public but will serve as statistics in project communication materials.

To process and evaluate proposals, the ELEVATEX consortium will need to collect personal and industrial data. The ELEVATEX project coordinator will act as a Data Controller for data submitted through the Cluster Submission platform. The Cluster Submission platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data are managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the Cluster Submission platform terms to ensure coverage.

The final list of the awarded projects and beneficiaries will be made public, including name of the projects, abstract, legal name of the companies, sector, country/region of origins, results of the project and duration of the projects.

The results and IPR developed during the project implementation will be the exclusive property of the corresponding SME.

9. Ethics, Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

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

10. Complaints Procedure

For any enquiries regarding the ELEVATEX grant scheme, please contact your local contact point (Annex 1: helpdesk)

For any complaints regarding the ELEVATEX Open Call results, please contact fstp@techtera.org within 5 calendar days after the announcement of the Open Call results. Your email should include the following information:

- Platform username and application name;
- Lead contact name and details;
- Object of your complaint;
- Information and evidence of the alleged breach.

The ELEVATEX Evaluation Committee, which consists of representatives of the ELEVATEX partners, will examine the complaint based on the information brought forward by the applicant, will assess the case and decide whether the complaint is justified or not and will inform the applicant and the consortium on the decision taken. If the complaint is considered justified, the ELEVATEX Evaluation Committee will notify the evaluators to re-evaluate the project application and the related assessment part, subject to the complaint. The evaluators will then provide the ELEVATEX Evaluation Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by ELEVATEX Evaluation Committee to the applicant in writing within 20 working days from the date of submitting the complaint. This decision will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the program if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

For technical issues concerning the submission procedure, please contact fstp@techtera.org or your local contact point.

ANNEX 1: Helpdesk

For any enquiries regarding information and/ or clarification about the present call, please contact one of the ELEVATEX National Contact points listed:

Applicants located in other EU countries other than France, Portugal, Italy or Spain are invited to contact ELEVATEX's coordinator – Techtera should they have any question on the application process.

Role	Organization Name & contacts	Country
Coordinator	TECHTERA Valentin NALLET - vnallet@techtera.org Robin ODDON - roddon@techtera.org	France All countries except PT, IT, ES
Partner	PTC Maria José CARVALHO - mjcarvalho@citeve.pt Bruno BRAS - bbras@citeve.pt	Portugal
Partner	NTT Matteo LEPRI - matteo.lepri@tecnotex.it Enrico VENTURINI - enrico.venturini@tecnotex.it	Italy
Partner	ATEVAL Julia VERCHER - julia@ateval.com Gema MIRO - gema@ateval.com	Spain
Partner	Tèxtils.CAT David GOMEZ - fstp@textils.cat Alex GASCON - fstp@textils.cat	Spain