



14-GREEN

FAQs



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Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is I4-GREEN fund?

The aim of the I4-GREEN Open Call is to provide an opportunity to European SMEs in the target raw materials and mining sectors to develop products, technologies, solutions, and services in collaboration with SMEs from emerging and advanced sectors, and to provide direct financial support to SMEs through innovation vouchers.

I4-GREEN vouchers will be awarded in the form of a cascade funding of 30.000,00 € to each project proposal bringing a solution to the major challenges and needs of the I4-GREEN core pilots.

2. What is the aim of this Open Call?

To contribute to the transition of the mining industry, its SMEs and corporates, supporting directly the I4-GREEN core pilots through innovation vouchers to SME's projects awardees.

3. What is the total amount of direct financial support for SMEs, in I4-GREEN?

The total amount of direct financial support for SMEs is up to 448.500,00 Euros.

4. What is the submission deadline?

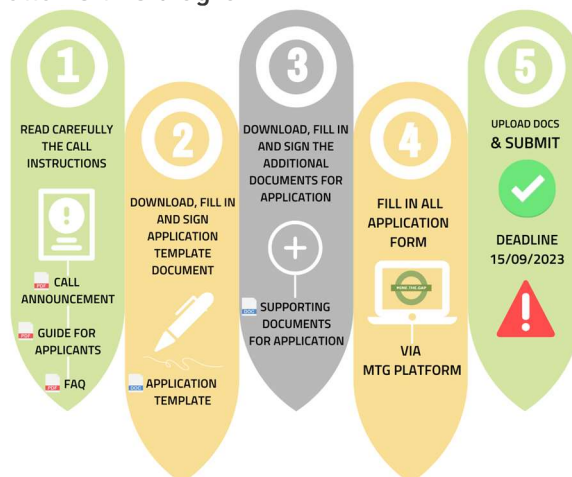
The submission deadline is 15/09/2023 at 17:00 CET.

5. Will an extension of the proposal submission deadline be possible?

No. The proposals must be submitted until 15/09/2023.

6. How do I apply?

The applications for project proposals must be submitted digitally using the I4-GREEN website, that can be found following this url: <https://i3-i4green.eu/index.php/opencall/> . The process of submission follows this diagram:



7. How many steps does the call have?

This is a one-step submission call. The evaluation will be done in 2 phases.

8. Who is the target audience for I4-GREEN call?

I4-GREEN proposes disruptive technologies that will drive the green transition of mining companies. They tackle current needs of the industry such as resource efficiency, circular models and processes that have not yet been adopted by the sector.

The development and deployment of key & advanced technologies along these 2 main demonstration sites (IHO in Extremadura, Spain and E-LIX in Andalusia, Spain) will be the core action for the third-party solution and tech developers applying to the open call.

9. Is there a limitation in the number of actors participating in an application?

I4-GREEN will fund individual innovative projects.

10. Is a newly registered start-up eligible to apply?

Yes, supporting new innovative companies is foreseen if they are in line with I4-GREEN funding scheme and rules.

11. Can a single beneficiary apply?

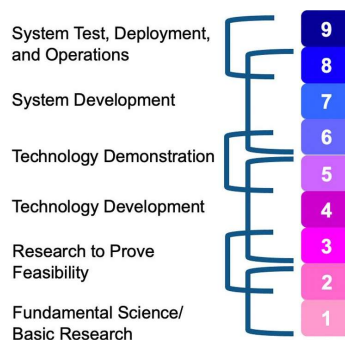
Yes, I4-GREEN will fund individual innovative projects.

12. What is the I4-GREEN Voucher?

I4-GREEN vouchers will be awarded in the form of a cascade funding of up to 30.000,00 € to each project proposal bringing a solution to the major challenges and needs of the I4-GREEN core pilots.

13. What is a TRL level?

TRL means Technology Readiness Level and it's a method for estimating the [maturity](#) a technology solution during the acquisition phase of a program.

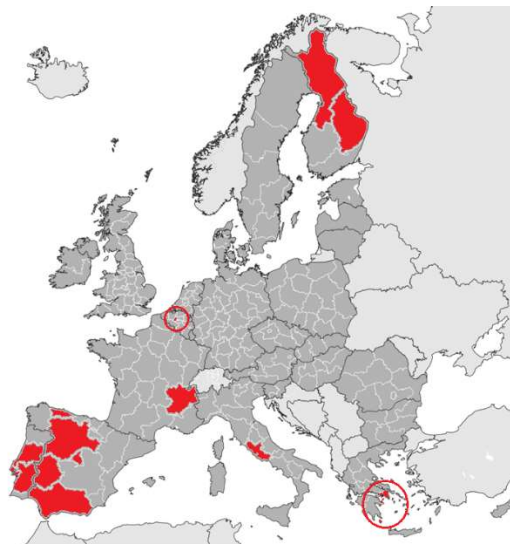


Projects funded by I4-GREEN are expected to bring high TRL innovations and solutions ready to be implemented into and implanted into the I4-GREEN industrial pilots. Starting TRL is TRL6.

14. What are the eligibility criteria of SMEs?

- a. Applicants must be a SME (Small and Medium-size Enterprise) according to the EU definition¹ (2003/361), including Public SMEs, young companies and start-ups. The most efficient way to determine whether your organisation qualifies as a small and medium-sized enterprise is using the [SME self-assessment tool](#)².
- The applicants must be a SME (Small and Medium-size Enterprise) according to the EU definition. The main factors determining whether an enterprise is an SME are:
 - staff headcount (< 250)
 - either turnover ($\leq \text{€ } 2 \text{ m} - \leq \text{€ } 50 \text{ m}$) or balance sheet total ($\leq \text{€ } 2 \text{ m} - \leq \text{€ } 43 \text{ m}$)
- ⚠ NOTE: These limits apply to the figures for individual enterprises only. A company that is part of a larger group may need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group, too.
- b. Applicants must be SMEs that are established in the **S3 participating regions covered by the I4-GREEN consortium**, including partners & associated partners regions:

REGIONS	NUTS 2 CODE
Alentejo Region	PT18
Castile and León	ES41
Extremadura	ES43
Lazio	IT14
Community of Madrid	ES30
Andalusia	ES61
Asturias	ES12
Brussels	BE10
Attica	EL3
Northern Ostrobothnia	FI1D
North Karelia	FI1D
Centro Region	PT17
Lisboa Region	PT17
Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes	FRK2



REGIONS ELIGIBILITY FOR APPLICANTS IN I4-GREEN

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en

² <http://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/>

- c. A SME is considered eligible for I4-GREEN open call if it complies with ALL the following rules:
- i. has not been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
 - ii. has no convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practices.
 - iii. is not under liquidation or an enterprise under difficulty accordingly to the [Commission Regulation No 651/2014](#).

15. How are the pilots where the SMEs will need to execute the projects?

The two pilots in need of deploying circular innovations to improve the sustainable supply of Raw Materials into the EU economy are:

Pilot 1 – Extremadura, Spain -With the objective is to improve the sustainability of iron ore production and the creation of a circular mine, and to create and develop a forefront technology to recover REE from iron mining waste, at time that reducing environmental impact and alleviating EU dependence on particularly Nd supply. (*See Technical Annex Pilot 1: IHO*)

Pilot 2 – Andalusia, Spain – It will be implemented for scaling up hydrometallurgical leaching of primary sulphide minerals for the sustainable recovery of essential metals for the green transition. (*See Technical Annex Pilot 2: E-LIX*)

⚠ NOTE: General description of the different sections and stages of the pilots related to the vouchers are given in the APPENDIX 1: TECHNICAL ANNEXES (Pilot 1: IHO-Extremadura & Pilot 2: E-LIX-Andalusia).

16. Is there a minimum percentage of the budget that needs to be dedicated to the partners within the project?

No. There is no minimum percentage of budget for each partner within the project. Please take the maximum funding amounts into consideration when drafting the project.

17. What is the maximum I4-GREEN contribution?

Maximum funding per SME: 30.000,00 €

18. What can be the consequences of submitting different applications?

The maximum possible financial support for any SME in all calls is limited to 30.000€.

19. How many main topics (AXIS) and subtopics (VOUCHER ID) must the proposal address?

It is mandatory to select ONE voucher ID and indicate it in the project application. The axis selected is implicit in the voucher ID reference.

20. What are the I4-GREEN topics (AXIS) and sub-topics (voucher IDs) that can be funded under this open call?

Project proposals will compete for funding within separate rankings for each voucher ID, following the table below:

AXIS	Pilot	Voucher ID	Description
I	1	1a	The project proposal must study the environmental footprint of the pilot, including environmental threats, standards to be implanted, CO2 footprint, complete Life Cycle Assessment of the pilot and roadmap of actions to achieve the sustainable mining standards. The project proposal must include a methodology to improve logistics and reduce emissions resulting from the transport.
		1b	The project proposal must bring an exploitation and mining technique analysis for the pilot. The project proposal must rely on the present plans of the pilot and propose the necessary steps and analysis to guarantee the most sustainable solution to extract the raw materials reserves present in the deposit. A deep comparison between underground mining and open pit mining must be included and linked to a techno-economical and sustainability analysis that should include the factors and effects of mobile machinery.
		1c	The project proposal must propose different laboratory technologies and analysis oriented to valorise the tailings and secondary waste of the pilot. The project proposal must suggest different valorisation solutions and a collection of analysis that lead to either a preliminary plan for recovering other valuable or critical raw materials from the tailings, and/or a method or technology capable of reusing the generated waste in the pilot.
	2	1d	The project proposal must propose a deep study of the environmental safety of the processing systems, technological solutions and innovative plant at the pilot. The project proposal must include a list of risks and mitigation measures of the identified environmental threats, together with a complete Life Cycle Assessment of all the processes stages implemented at the pilot technology. The study must have a focus on the mandatory requirements to comply with all the EU industrial safety regulations, and how the pilot answers and will adapt to such requirements if needed.
II	1	2a	The project proposal must present a full water study for the pilot, including details on the technology and the precise process/plant design that will be used to ensure water recycling and reuse. Such study must be coupled to a hydrological assessment in the location of the pilot, identifying and quantifying the available water sources. The design of the project proposal must include a description of the methods and technologies to be applied and how they will be integrated. Solutions must comply with EU environmental regulations and must ensure that the use of sludge rafts is avoided.
	2	2b	The project proposal must bring a comprehensive innovative water management system engineering design for the processing technology that is scaling up in ATALAYA plants (E-LIX technology). The project proposal must address the assembly and integration of modules or technology solutions at different steps of the water treatment plant projected in the pilot will be also considered. The project proposal solution can focus on bringing innovative improvements making possible the ultrafiltration and osmosis to obtain demineralized water for the process from fresh water in an efficient and sustainable way.
III	1	3a	The project proposal must present a preliminary study and engineering design for the processing plant of iron and REE ore. The output of the project proposal must include a

			diagram of the processing plants required by the pilot, and the study must include a methodology to assess the energy consumption. Global design proposed must comply with an optimized energy consumption approach.
			Vouchers 3b, 3c, 3d and 3e will be oriented to improved elements, design concepts, safety measures and operation elements' design for the creation or the improvement of an innovative processing plant, based on the upscaling E-LIX technology.
		3b	The project proposal must focus on innovative, resource efficient and sustainable solutions improving or implanting a new engineering design for liquid-solid separation by means of pressurized membrane filtration.
	2	3c	The project proposal must define innovative, resource efficient and sustainable solutions improving or implanting a new engineering design for the sedimentation and clarification of the Zn precipitate resulting as part of the process.
		3d	The project proposal must present innovative, resource efficient and sustainable solutions improving or implanting safety measures at the processing plant. The project proposal must focus on the fire protection system and provide the necessary roadmap of accreditation to comply with EU regulations.
		3e	The project proposal must focus on the implantation of an innovative, resource efficient and sustainable solution capable of integrating and managing the complete compressed air system at the pilot plant. The project proposal must fit the pilot plant design and demonstrate technical advantages with respect to other standard design and solutions. The project proposal must provide the necessary roadmap of accreditation to comply with EU regulations.
IV	1	4a	The project proposal must design a viable and optimized solution for the renewable energy supply of the mining pilot. The project proposal must include a technical analysis of costs and solutions (techno economical assessment) of the energy supply, with a deep economical comparison between self-generation via the proposed scheme with respect to buying the energy into the market.
	2	4b	Renewable Energy Supply for the processing plant scale up. The project proposal must present a sustainable and highly efficient solar energy plant engineering design coupled and fitted to the operation needs of the processing plant at pilot 2.

⚠ IMPORTANT INFORMATION APPLICABLE TO ALL THE FOUR AXIS: General description of the different sections and stages of the pilots related to the vouchers are given in the APPENDIX 1: TECHNICAL ANNEXES (Pilot 1: IHO-Extremadura & Pilot 2: E-LIX-Andalusia). Specific parameters that could be required as well as the suitability of the proposed solutions to ensure a perfect fit to the real requirements will be discussed with the companies in an open session (Technical briefing session) for applicants.

21. How many different applications can be submitted?

One SME can apply to multiple vouchers but the total funding available through vouchers per SME is up to 30.000 EUR.

22. What is the duration of de projects?

Projects are expected to be implemented into and implanted into the I4-GREEN industrial pilots in a time horizon of 6 months (fixed).

23. What does it imply for vouchers to be lump-sum grants?

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 a detailed financial reporting and timesheets, the use of the project budget will be controlled considering the technical advancements by the reviewers (I4-GREEN consortium). The assessment reports are the key elements to monitor the progress of the project.

24. What are the eligible costs?

1. **Direct staff costs** (personnel) hours cost of the staff of the beneficiary that is dedicated to actual work under the development of the project.
2. **Subcontracting costs** (external expertise): work carried out by an external provider which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with the beneficiary. This external provider cannot be one of the consortium partners. Subcontracting can account for max. 50% of the beneficiary total budget.
3. **Other costs**: further direct incurred costs can be claimed, like travel expenses, equipment (only depreciation costs), consumables, etc. Purchases or provision of paid services between consortium partners would not be eligible.

25. It is allowed to subcontract other SMEs, large companies, universities, RTDs, other entities etc.?

Yes, subcontracting can account for max. 50% of each beneficiary total budget.

26. How does the lump-sum payment work?

1 st Payment	50% pre-financing paid within 30 days after the signature of the grant
2 nd Payment	50% paid within 60 days after final report is approved by pilot leaders

⚠ Each I4-GREEN Pilot leader company will evaluate if the proposer achieved a successful project conclusion per selected axis and voucher.

27. How does the monitoring of the projects work?

To receive the total lump sum, each project must complete a final report:

End of the project	30/04/2024 (unless another date is notified, this end date is fixed)
Final report	The final report must be prepared and submitted within 60 days following the end date of the project

The final report must include:

- Summary of results of the project.
- Comparison of what was planned in the project proposal with achieved results/objectives.
- Impact of the project for each beneficiary. Each I4-GREEN Pilot leader company will evaluate if the proposer achieved a successful project conclusion per selected voucher ID.

⚠ SMEs shall also gather photos and audio-visual material and provide it when requested to help in the verification of the correct progress of the project. On-the-spot checks can also be part of the monitoring process.

28. What are the conditions for submitting a correct project application?

- The submission language is English.
- Applicants are expected to provide complete, accurate data and contact details.
- The application reception will close on 15/09/2023 at 17:00 CET.
- It is highly recommended to submit the project proposal before the deadline to avoid any failures in the platform or technical issues
- Only complete and correct project proposals submitted will be considered.

29. Are there possibilities to include attachment like charts or graphic elements to application form?

Yes. You can include any bibliography which you want to use directly below the text paragraphs within the text field for the question. They will count towards the character count for the answer. For charts and graphic elements, please use the I4-GREEN application template, sections "4. SCHEME OF THE IMPLEMENTATION" & "5. OTHER ASPECTS", which are two chapters created for including additional relevant material. The charts and graphic elements will only be included in the template uploaded as PDF.

⚠ Please don't copy charts or graphic elements into the text forms of the online application form to submit your application.

30. Is it mandatory to sign the documents submitted to apply for funding?

Applications that do not provide all the requested documents will not be considered, and all the documents requested must be signed using in the space provided, being only valid 2 options:

- Option A) Digital signature
- Option B) Handwritten signature + stamp of the company

31. Who will evaluate my proposal?

All the submitted project proposals, from all the eligible I4-GREEN regions (table 1 of the guide for applicants), will be evaluated by internal evaluators appointed by the Consortium members. To ensure the independent and fair evaluation process all evaluators will sign a declaration for absence of conflict of interest and non-disclosure agreement.

32. How will confidentiality be ensured? Is there a guarantee that my data is not handed over automatically to third parties like private investors?

I4-GREEN consortium will sign with applicants a “vouchers project agreement” (sub-grant agreement) where the Confidentiality and Data Management of applicants will be guaranteed.

I4-GREEN partners will only use the data generated for managing the open call. In case of internal contracts are required to the applicants for the execution of the projects, only the signing parts will be responsible of the agreed clauses.

33. Are extra forms or documents necessary to accompany the proposal?

Yes. The following documents are all needed to be properly completed and submitted electronically through I4-GREEN website to answer the call:

1. **Project proposal application form** (“Voucher application”)

AND

2. **All the sections** included in the additional documentation for voucher application (“Supporting documents”):

- Applicant profile
- Financial declaration
- SME ownership declaration
- Ethic issues declaration
- Applicant state of commitment
- Compliance with EU law of protection of data

34. What is the expected time-to-inform and time-to-grant?

Open Call opening date	07/07/2023
Open Call closure date/ Proposal submission deadline	15/09/2023 at 17:00 CET
Evaluation and selection	16/09/2023 – 16/10/2023
Communication of the decision to applicants	20/10/2023 (tentative date)
Start of projects (Max)	01/11/2023 (tentative start date for all SMEs led projects)

35. How will be the evaluation process?

Evaluation will be divided into **two phases**.

The first phase will judge if the quality of the application matches the overall concept of the project proposal and the applicability to the different sections and stages of each pilot/ voucher (*see Chapter 2. Sectors, value chain and topics to be funded of this document*), also including experience, knowledge and background references of the proposer to the selected axis and voucher. Internal evaluators will emit a motivated score and the participating pilot companies will have a quality vote judging the scope and suitability to the pilot requirements for each project proposal. As a result, an evaluation and a pre-selection of applications for this phase will be announced. This phase will take up to 15 days.

Only pre-selected project proposals will pass to the second phase of evaluation. At this phase I4-GREEN Consortium reserves its rights to declare one or more topic of application as

unawarded if the pilots' representatives consider that the project proposal do not properly target and solve with sufficient quality the problems and challenges raised.

The second phase will be performed by internal evaluators whose responsibility will be to evaluate under technical excellence, suitability and applicability degree (table 6). The internal evaluators will give as a result a maximum overall score of 10 points per criterium, with a total threshold of 7/10. Individual criterium thresholds are detailed in table 6. This phase will take up to 15 days.

Criteria	Weight	Threshold
SINGULARITY AND EXCELLENCE OF THE CONCEPT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Potential that this solution provides, and how it is aligned with the activity (axis) needed to be performed for fulfilling pilots' specific requirements. - The project will contribute for reduction of barriers in the interregional ecosystem and real node of the green transformation of extractive industries and sustainable mining value chain. 	20 %	5/10
IMPACT, BENEFITS & IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE SELECTED AXIS & PILOT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suitability of the proposed solution to ensure a perfect fit to the real requirements of the pilots of application. - Alignment of application with the I4-GREEN axis (I to IV). - Convincing description of how the project will have impact and the benefits for the pilot of application and, consequently, for the EU. - Potential contribution to the up-scaling potential of the pilot that applies the solution. - Expected technical results and expected performance in operation of the solution. Operability of the result of the solution applied to the pilot. 	50 %	5/10
ADEQUACY OF THE SCHEME & OTHER RELEVANT ASPECTS FOR IMPLEMENTATION: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quality of the participant in terms of necessary expertise, knowledge and background references for implementation of the action. - Quality and effectiveness of the work plan. - Balance of the allocation of tasks and use of the budget, ensuring the adequate resources in the project to fulfil the duties presented. 	30 %	5/10

36. Is there any important consideration I have to take into account for the evaluation of my proposal?

Yes, after phase 1 and 2 of the evaluation process, an initial ranking list will be created per each type of voucher according to the final overall score. This means that for each type of voucher (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d, 3e, 4a, 4b) an initial separate ranking list will be established to select the best-scored projects.

Depending on the quality of the received project proposals, after the initial ranking (per type of voucher), a second ranking list will be established. This second ranking list will consider the best-scored proposals per pilot (pilot 1 - IHO-Extremadura and pilot 2 - E-LIX-Andalusia). The highest-scored project proposals, not selected during the initial ranking list, will be classified in the second ranking list, which will be used to refine the selection of projects.

I4-GREEN will fund a maximum of three projects per voucher ID. I4-GREEN Consortium reserves its rights to not distribute the total reserved budget.

37. Can the application be submitted in any language?

No, only English applications will be valid.

38. Is this voucher under de minimis-rules?

No, the De-minimis funding cap does not apply to funding received in I4-GREEN. Therefore, if your organization already reached its limit under EU De-minimis rules, it could still receive funding from I4-GREEN.

39. What are the basic requirements for the applying company?

The applying company has to follow all the EU national rules and regulations. E.g., taxation, public procurement etc.

40. What are the differences between deliverables, milestones and outcomes?

- **Deliverables** are additional outputs (e.g. information, special report, a technical diagram brochure, list, a software milestone, a website, or other building block of the project) that must be produced at a given moment during the action.
- **Milestones** are, by contrast, control points in the project that help to chart progress. They may correspond to the completion of a key deliverable, allowing the next phase of the work to begin or be needed at intermediary points.
- The results or **outcomes** means any tangible or intangible outputs of the action such as data, knowledge or information – whatever its form or nature, whether it can be protected or not – that is generated in the action, as well as any rights attached to it.

41. What is the Advisory Board?

Advisory Board is composed by external experts responsible for providing essential industrial strategic advice to the consortium and dynamic perspectives with three major profiles: a. Business-oriented in order to support participating entities; b. Regional with a clear orientation towards smart specialisation strategies and support to innovation and investment; c. Investment-driven to ensure a clear link to green capital and a private investment mindset.

42. Where do I find further information about this Call?

You can find more information in the I4-GREEN Call Guidelines for Applicants (EN), or by contacting:

	
<p>ACPMR geral@clustermineralresources.pt</p>	<p>ICAMCYL projects@icamcyl.com</p>



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