



Guidelines for Applicants 38th Call for Proposals

Deadline: 30 September 2026

www.ira-sme.net

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Guidelines for Applicants – Call for Proposals

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1 Background and Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide interested parties with information on the 38th IraSME call for R&D proposals. It is targeted at small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and research and technology organisations (RTOs) which jointly conduct international research, technology, development and innovation (RTDI) projects.

The main objective of IraSME is to strengthen the competitive capacity of SMEs by:

- increasing collaboration between SMEs from different countries,
- increasing cooperation between SMEs and RTOs,
- increasing cooperative and competitive capabilities of SMEs by working in international R&D networks,
- supporting them in developing new products, processes or technical services that exceed the existing state of the art and have good market opportunities by lowering economical risks.

IraSME is a follow-up initiative of a former ERA-NET by ministries and funding agencies and one of the few to continue its work even after EU-funding had expired. The network coordination is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWE) and carried out by AiF Projekt GmbH, a project management agency of BMWE, which is based in Berlin (Germany).

The following regions/countries are participating in the 38th IraSME call: Austria, Brazil, Czech Republic, Flanders (Belgium), Germany, Luxembourg, Türkiye, and Wallonia (Belgium). For more detailed information on IraSME member countries and regions, please refer to the following website: www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions.

Applicants from participating countries/regions can be funded according to the rules of the respective regional/national funding programmes. Applicants from other countries/regions are welcome to participate as additional partners of a project consortium, but will have to secure the financial means for their part on their own and cannot be funded through any of the IraSME member countries'/regions' support mechanisms.

2 Basic Requirements

2.1 Project Requirements

In addition to the basic IraSME requirements, national or regional rules may apply.

These are described in the programme portraits on the IraSME website (www.ira-sme.net). Please check the programme portraits relevant for your project and contact your local funding agency for further information and consultation.

Projects must be innovative and must aim at either developing new or significantly improving existing products, processes or technical services that in their parameters exceed the existing state of the art. All projects must have significant technical risks. The outcome of the project must be clearly defined and demonstrate real market potential. At least one of these three statements must apply: Without public funding, eligible projects can a) not be carried out at all, b) only be carried out in a reduced form, or c) be carried out only with significant delay.

2.2 General Project Conditions

- At least two SMEs from two different countries/regions participating in the current call (at least one SME in each country/region)
- Participation of RTOs is possible but not mandatory, except for consortia with partners from Brazil where companies must collaborate with an EMBRAPII unit of their choice
- Balanced participation of all partners in the project
- All participating SMEs need to share in the economic results of the project.
- Every participant has a defined role in the project (subproject) that a) contains research and development tasks with significant technical risks, b) is distinguishable from the other subprojects (no redundancy), and c) is necessary for the project success.
- If RTOs are involved, at least 50% of the work packages in the whole project must be carried out by companies.
- Only use person-months (PM) in order to specify work packages!
- We recommend you set the start date of the project approximately 5 months after the call deadline (in order to allow for the time it takes to review the proposals in each respective country; however, in many cases you are allowed to start your project at your own risk before any official funding decision – please consult with your local funding organization).
- Every consortium must prepare a draft of their own consortium agreement (not yet signed!) as part of the overall application process and submit this draft to their national/regional funding agency according to their national/regional specifications.
- Regional / national rules will prevail; see overview of funding schemes on the [IraSME website](#) for details.

! Attention: To exemplify, some regional/national rules are listed here:

- Austria: Projects that involve partners from Austria need at least three companies of which at least two have to be SMEs in participating IraSME countries of which at least one has to be from Austria.

- Brazil: It is mandatory for Brazilian companies to collaborate with an EMBRAPII unit of their own choice when participating in IraSME calls.
- Brazil: Financial and general support for applicants from Brazil differs from the grant schemes available in the other IraSME countries/regions. Please check the ENRICH guide for international cooperation on the [EMBRAPII website](#) for more information.
- Germany: In German ZIM projects a limited amount of work packages may be outsourced to subcontractors.
- Switzerland: Minimum project consortium of 1 implementation partner from each partner country and 1 research entity from any of the participating countries.
- Türkiye: Participation of RTOs is preferred for applications from Türkiye.
- RTOs can participate if at least one SME from their country / region is part of the consortium. They may be funded directly or treated as subcontractors depending on the applicable national / regional rules.
- Other partners (large companies, other SMEs, RTOs, etc.) from other countries which do not take part in this call or partners from the participating countries/regions that cannot be funded in the respective national/regional programmes may be part of the project consortium if their contribution is essential to reach the project goals. However, funding will usually not be available for them.

2.3 Project Duration

Projects may take between 12 and 36 months to complete according to the applicable national rules (please see the overview of funding schemes published on the [IraSME website](#)). A project start date not earlier than five months after the call deadline is highly recommended in order to avoid rescheduling during the evaluation process.

3 Timeline 38th IraSME Call

- 1 June 2026: Joint call announcement – opening of the call.
Documents available on the IraSME website: www.ira-sme.net/current-call
- If you are planning to submit a project outline on national/regional level, this should be done at least six weeks before the call deadline. Please check, if your national/regional funding agency offers this service.
- **30 September 2026: Deadline for proposals**
- 4 November 2026: Communication of negative eligibility check results by e-mail to international project coordinator. (= Project application does not fulfil the minimum requirements and will not be evaluated.)

- February 2027: Communication of funding decisions (by e-mail to international project coordinator). Signing of consortium agreement and start/continue funding negotiations, according to the respective regional/national rules.

4 Application Procedure

4.1 Project Proposal

4.1.1 Proposal Submission – Transnational Level

The project application (IraSME Proposal Application Form) must be signed by each partner and submitted via e-mail to info@ira-sme.net by the international project coordinator no later than the deadline of the 38th Call (30 September 2026).

The template “Proposal Application Form” is mandatory and available by e-mail request on the [IraSME website](#). All sections have to be filled in including signature(s) on all LOIs. The application language for this form is English.

In addition to the proposal application form the international coordinator must submit a draft consortium agreement (unsigned!) in PDF format electronically.

4.1.2 Proposal Submission – National/Regional Level

In parallel to the transnational proposal application form submission, national/regional applications have to be submitted to the national/regional funding agencies. An overview of the funding schemes and contact details of funding agencies is available on the IraSME website: www.ira-sme.net/countries-regions.

4.2 Eligibility Criteria

- IraSME proposal must be signed by all partners and submitted by e-mail.
- Draft of consortium agreement (unsigned).
- National/regional requirements for participation fulfilled (please see overview of funding schemes, programme portraits, and please contact your local agency).
- Project duration: 12 - 36 months.

4.3 Evaluation

Every proposal will be evaluated by the respective funding agencies involved following the respective national/regional evaluation criteria. A project will be funded if all funding agencies involved reach a positive evaluation result. The results of the national/regional evaluation will be communicated to the applicants by their respective funding agencies. In parallel, the IraSME

Coordination Office will notify the international project coordinator on the overall result of their IraSME application.

4.4 Agreements and Contracts

4.4.1 Consortium Agreement

A consortium agreement between all project partners is mandatory. It regulates:

- identity of the partners,
- contract period,
- IPR ownership, IPR use and exploitation of the project results,
- subcontracting to third parties,
- contributions of each partner to the project,
- confidentiality notes and freedom of publications rights,
- the duty for every partner to contribute to a final report on the overall project (to be submitted to their respective funding agencies according to the applicable rules).

The consortium agreement is to be signed and submitted after the funding decision has been communicated and before applicants sign their contracts with the respective funding agencies. An example of a consortium agreement is not provided. Each consortium drafts their own cooperation agreement covering all of the above mentioned issues. Please contact your respective national/regional agency for advice.

4.4.2 Funding Agreement

Matters related to funding will be handled according to the respective national/regional agencies' rules. The complete set of signatures on the consortium agreement is a prerequisite for funding.

5 Funding Procedures

Funding will be provided to each partner by their corresponding national/regional funding agency according to its respective rules (please see the programme portraits on the IraSME website for a first overview).

Projects will be monitored according to the rules of the respective country/region. Hence, technical as well as financial reporting will be required according to national/regional rules as well.

Arrangements will be made during the funding negotiation process.

6 Funding Agencies

For additional information and support it is strongly recommended to contact the respective regional/national agencies before submitting a project proposal. Please refer to the list of regional/national contacts on www.ira-sme.net.

7 Definitions

- **Consortium Agreement:** A contract between all project partners regulating the terms of their cooperation, including the handling of IPR and the commercialization plan.
- **Funding agencies:** Agencies, ministries or other administrative bodies which manage the relevant funding programme(s) in the respective country/region.
- **Funding agreement:** Agreement between the funding agency and the funded project partner(s) (applicants) in the respective country/region.
- **International project coordinator:** One of the project partners. The coordinator submits the IraSME proposal application form.
IPR: Intellectual property rights.
- **Project partners:** All entities involved in a project consortium.
- **Proposal:** A project description plus annexes (letters of intent of all project partners; draft consortium agreement) submitted by the project coordinator.
- **RTDI:** Research, Technology, Development and Innovation.
- **RTO:** Research and Technology Organisation. An organisation which conducts research or development as a main activity (e.g. university, higher education institute, research institute, technology centre, etc.)
- **SME:** Small and medium-sized enterprises. See the [definition](#) of the European Commission and use the regulations of your regional/national funding agency.
- **Transnational project:** A project that includes partners from at least two different countries.