EU TECHBRIDGE

Selection Process Guide & Scoreboard V2

wateralliance
accelerating business with WaterCampus

LE2C
LOMBARDY ENERGY
CLEANTECH CLUSTER

Sustainable
Business Hub

avaesen

CLEAN
INNOVATING GREEN SOLUTIONS

Context

In order to ensure that SMEs participating in the virtual and physical matchmaking are relevant to the identified technology needs and are truly ready to internationalize, selection processes will be designed and implemented between the different stages of the matchmaking process. Selection processes will be managed in collaboration with the challenge owner and the partners. To ensure a standardized and fair selection process, a process guide and scoreboard will be developed. This will support decision making and ensure a fair process.

Scope

The scope of this document is to give a short overview of how the selection process for European SMEs applying for matchmaking with North-American end-users is organised in the EU Techbridge project. This includes an overview of the selection criteria each SME is evaluated on.

Executive summary

The EU Techbridge project facilitates an intensive matchmaking programme (virtual and physical) to match concrete water and energy innovation needs from North American end-users/corporate buyers with innovative solutions from European SMEs. A selection process will be set up to make sure the right SMEs will be matched with the needs of the North American end-users. The North-American end-user is in the driving seat in this process and has the most important vote. The EU Techbridge partners will support the end-users by pre-selecting companies which have a solution that can fit the end-user's need(s), are capable to execute internationalisation activities and are innovative.

EU TECHBRIDGE

Selection Process Guide & Scoreboard

Introduction

The EU Techbridge project matches innovative European SMEs with North American based end-users/corporate buyers which are looking for innovative water and energy solutions. By setting up an intensive matchmaking programme (virtual and physical), concrete challenges from North American corporate buyers will be matched with innovative solutions from European SMEs. A crucial part of the project is to make sure that there is a match between the innovative solutions submitted by European SMEs and the challenges/innovation needs of North American based end-users/corporate buyers. Therefore, an easy and smooth selection process is developed within the project.

Steps within the matchmaking process

The matchmaking process of the EU Techbridge project consist of the following steps:

1. Engage with potential partners/end-users from North-America
2. Sign cooperation document/agreement with these North American partners
3. Specify the technology needs of the North-American partners
4. **SME recruitment – recruitment webinars**
5. **Selection process for virtual matchmaking after recruitment webinar**
6. **Virtual matchmaking**
7. **Selection process for physical matchmaking after virtual matchmaking**
8. **Physical matchmaking**
9. Follow up after physical matchmaking
10. Physical follow-up meetings

For the selection process the steps 4 till 8 are the most important. In these steps the project partners and, most of all, the end-users will select the SMEs for the matchmaking. Below these steps will be dealt with in more detail:

4. SME recruitment – recruitment webinars
In this step North American end-users will present their technology needs to European SMEs and cluster organisations to enthuse European SMEs to submit an application with their solution for the presented challenge/technology needs. The EU Techbridge project should recruit as many relevant SMEs as possible for these webinars. Furthermore, the EU Techbridge partners will make sure that the technology needs will be communicated to SMEs, networks, clusters and other organisations to make sure that as many as possible relevant SMEs will hear of the technology needs of the North American end-users.

5. Selection process for virtual matchmaking after recruitment webinar

- After the recruitment webinars, European SMEs can submit a short application form in which the company can explain how their solution/technology can solve the technology need(s) of the North American end-user. The application form includes the following information:
    - General information of the company (name, contact person, website)
    - Targeted end-user
    - Targeted technology need(s)
    - Description of solution, highlighting its innovativeness and how it answers the end-user's technology need(s)
    - Technology Readiness Level (TRL)
    - Information of a reference case
    - Description of supply chain involvement
    - Administrative requirements (SME declaration, financial stability and GDPR authorisation)

- Based on the submitted applications, the project partners will make a **longlist** of applications of which the project partners believe these are a good match with the end-users' technology needs. The project partners will evaluate the submitted applications with the following guidelines:
    - Each EU Techbridge project partner will evaluate the applications from companies from their own countries
    - Applications from companies not located in the project consortium countries will be divided equally
    - The project partners will focus their evaluation on 3 selection criteria:
        1. Appropriate Technology Readiness Level (minimal TRL 6)
        2. General match between the submitted solution and the requested innovation need
        3. Agreement with administrative requirements (SME declaration, financial stability and GDPR authorisation)
    - Selection criteria number 1 and 3 should be answered with Yes. If one of them is answered with a No, the application will be rejected. Selection criteria number 2 can be evaluated as Yes, Maybe/Don't know for sure or No. If it is a No the application is rejected. If it is a Yes (and the other 2 selection criteria can also be answered with a Yes) the application will be put on the longlist
    - If the project partners are not sure if the submitted solution is a possible match for the requested innovation need (the evaluation is a Maybe/Don't know for sure) the submitted solution will be put on the longlist so the end-user can decide if it is a match

- The longlist will be presented to the end-user(s). The end-user(s) will make a **short list** of companies with which they want to have a virtual 1 on 1 meeting (virtual matchmaking). This

EU TECHBRIDGE

point is very important because as EU Techbridge project we put the North American end-user in the driving seat. They decide with whom they want to have a 1 on 1 meeting with.

6. Virtual matchmaking

This step consist of virtual 1 on 1 meetings between the end-user and the companies selected by the end-user. In these short 1 on 1 meetings the end-user and the company can get to know each other and the company can explain how their technology can solve the innovation need(s) of the end-user. More details about this step:

- The 1 on 1 meeting will be a short virtual meeting
- The format will be decided by the end-user. Preferably a short 30 minutes meeting with a presentation of the technology need(s) by the end-user, a short solution pitch by the SME and an in-depth Q&A discussion (can also be a group discussion)
- The EU Techbridge partners will facilitate the meeting and support the companies selected for the 1 on 1 meetings. The follow-up is also facilitated by the EU Techbridge partners
- The goal is to see if the company and the end-user would like to have another more in-depth meeting to discuss cooperation possibilities

7. Selection process for physical matchmaking after virtual matchmaking

In the pre-Covid situation it was the idea to have a physical follow-up after a positive virtual meeting. Because of Covid, we believe there will be virtual follow-up meetings after the first virtual meeting. The selection for a virtual follow-up meeting is entirely a decision by the end-user. The project partners do not assess the SMEs again. If there is still a match after several virtual meetings, it is possible for European SMEs to receive a travel voucher (up to 50% of the travel and accommodation costs) for a physical meeting. The criteria for obtaining a travel voucher are:

- A clear statement from the end-user with which the SME is in dialogue with that they want to meet the company physically and there is an opportunity for business
- State-aid/de minimis requirements
- Assessment criteria as mentioned below:

Assessment criteria
Innovativeness
Commercial potential
Export/Internationalization readiness
Economic impact
Environmental impact/impact on sustainable development

The abovementioned assessment criteria will not be evaluated with a points system. Each assessment criteria will be assessed with a Yes, No or a Maybe. The applicants should score a Yes on all points. If the applicants score one or more Nos or Maybes the applicant will be discussed with the end-user. The companies will be asked to fill in a short form in which they have the opportunity to

EU TECHBRIDGE

explain why they meet the abovementioned criteria. The project partners will use these forms to assess the companies.

At the end of the day the end-user has the most important say in the selection of SMEs with which they want to have a physical meeting. For example, if the project partners believe the SME is not ready to internationalise but the end-user still wants to meet the SME, the SME can get a travel voucher.

In conclusion: The assessment of the companies by the abovementioned criteria are for selecting companies for the travel vouchers. It is not again an evaluation if the company is a right match for the end-user's challenge. This already has been done in step 5.

8. Physical matchmaking

The physical meeting can take many forms. It can be a face-to-face 1 on 1 meeting between the end-user and the SME, but it can also be a pitching event where several SMEs pitch their solution to the end-user. Furthermore, the physical matchmaking can be attached to a conference or expo. Most importantly, the physical matchmaking should have at least a dedicated face-to-face 1 on 1 meeting.

Annex 1: Scoreboard

Next to the administrative requirement each application is evaluated in step 7 on the following criteria:

Assessment criteria
Innovativeness
Commercial potential
Export/Internationalization readiness
Economic impact
Environmental impact/impact on sustainable development

As mentioned above, the most important criteria for decision making is the fact that a submitted solution should fit the needs of the end-user. The end-user is in the driving seat for this. They have the final say.

Annex 2: EU Techbridge matchmaking process

European SMEs will be involved in the project activities according to the following process:

STEP 1
Participation in the missions' webinars to understand end-users' technology needs

STEP 2
Applying and presenting your innovative solution to be selected for 1:1 meetings with end-users
1 MONTH

STEP 3
Selection process run by project partners and end-users
1 MONTH

STEP 6
Physical mission and potential Business Agreement signature with end-user

STEP 5
Follow-up to understand mutual interest
1 MONTH

STEP 4
If selected, virtual 1:1 meetings with the end-users you have selected

EU TECHBRIDGE