RISE

Resilient Innovation Ecosystems for EU Value Chains

Guidelines for Applicants

This document contains the information related to the RISE Program Applications.

1. About RISE

1.1. Project Introduction and Objectives

The overall objective of the Project RISE is to accelerate the deployment of innovation, promoting the drivers and investment needed for sustainable and successful interregional cooperation.

RISE will increase the capacity of less developed regions through successful interregional cooperations. The project supports the birth and development of innovative and resilient projects in 3 less developed regions: Bulgaria, Slovenia and Portugal. RISE is built on 5 major pillars:

1. **Focus on innovation for less developed regions;**
2. **Providing support in key domains**: Mineral Raw Materials, Forest Biomass, and Bioenergy and Sustainable buildings in the energy field;
3. **Identification of shared S3 areas;**
4. **SMEs in the centre of activities;**
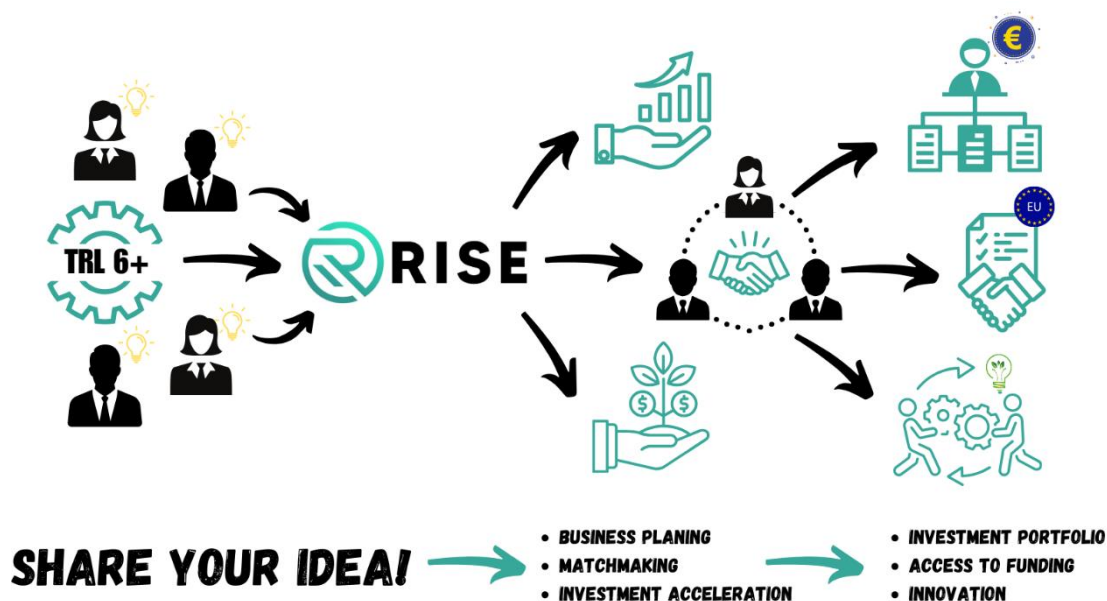5. **Developing a Pipeline of relevant projects.**

Figure 1 - About RISE Program

RISE follows four major steps:

1. Analysis of the Status Quo and setting up a pan-European ecosystem

Map local innovation ecosystems and assess possible innovation pathways to ensure the development of common future opportunities, resulting in:

1. A **better understanding of the joint cross-regional innovation capacity** of partners respective networks in selected areas, to develop interregional cooperation;
2. The **identification of compatible specialisation strategies** for cluster-related activities through benchmarking of best practises and development programmes;
3. A **strategy of actions targeting the creation of new business opportunities and economic growth** linking cluster policies and setting up connections between actors in the quadruple-helix ecosystems.

2. Ecosystem building and facilitating collaboration in EU value chains

Constructing an interregional ecosystem to facilitate collaborations among companies and regions:

1. **Develop a roadmap aimed at boosting the innovation capacity of international ecosystems**, contributing to the innovation and internationalization processes across regions.

2. **Establish enduring partnerships** between local and regional companies and the broader European markets, industries, and regions.

3. **Offer support for collaborative endeavors**, working to formulate guidelines and best practices for joint investment projects. The focus is on ensuring a smooth and productive collaboration process.

3. Pipeline of investment projects

The third step is to develop cross-regional innovation investment projects. To that end, the RISE consortium will mobilize its past and current networks and will combine capabilities across EU regions. In order to develop the birth of new projects, the RISE project runs collaborative matchmaking workshops to:

1. **Match partners** around existing technologies, solutions and business models;

2. **Merge interests from quadruple helix representatives** (including the civil society) to develop mature collaborative investment projects based on innovative solutions;
3. **Guide the process of drafting joint innovation investment plans;**
4. **Ensure robustness of the collaborative concepts and their grounding into a business logic;**
5. **Achieve mature business plans** for the interregional innovation scale-up projects under the scope.

4. Bringing projects close to market

In the fourth step, RISE focuses on vital investment planning for previously validated projects. This involves:

1. **EU Investor Mapping:** RISE will conduct a comprehensive mapping of EU investors in industrial circular economy. Key targets include corporate investors, private equity, venture capital funds, family offices, investment banks, promotional banks, and potentially business angels.

2. **Facilitating Connections:** Identifying lead contacts in investment entities, RISE will facilitate access to its pipeline for projects ready to raise private funds. The aim is to establish connections between RISE project holders and relevant investors based on their strategic goals.

3. **Fundraising Strategy:** RISE experts will guide project holders in crafting a tailored fundraising strategy, aligning with project needs, and considering both private and public funding sources.

4. **Mixed Funding:** RISE will compile cases for public funding (European Calls of Interest), supporting the development and strengthening of creative and resilient ecosystems.

2. Who may apply & eligibility criteria for applicants

2.1. Who may apply?

RISE Program offers a unique opportunity to SMEs, Start-up or spin-off, Big company, Regional/local authority, University / education / training organisation, Research and technology organization, Cluster or Technology park, Chamber of commerce or other business association, Non-profit organisation, civil society organisation, NGO to be part of a program to accelerate the deployment of innovation building, promoting the drivers and investment needed for sustainable and successful interregional cooperation.

Eligible applicants must be from one of the below identified countries (table 1 and figure 2).

Code	Country
BG	Bulgaria
ES	Spain
FR	France
IT	Italy
PT	Portugal
SI	Slovenia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden

Table 1 - RISE Program eligible countries

Figure 2 – RISE Program eligible countries

2.2. Eligible activities

RISE Program will focus on actions that produce impact in Less Developed Regions of Severozapaden (Bulgaria) and/or Alentejo (Portugal) and/or Vzhodna Slovenija (Slovenia). Transition and More Developed Regions can also benefit from the proposed action.

Actions must be TRL6+ solutions (projects with an engineering-scale prototype and tested in an industrial environment) that require further collaboration to:

1. **develop more technical and technological solutions**, and/or
2. **optimise resources to develop the project to make it economically viable**.

RISE Program will mainly distinguish and categorize actions in terms of the ones seeking:

1. **Strategic investors**;
2. **Financial investors**;
3. **Mixed approaches** that can even require specific settings – such as a dedicated Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV);
4. **Partners and interregional cooperation**.

RISE Program will also take into consideration the difference lying in the financing mix of the project, thus distinguishing between:

1. **Investment innovation** cases calling upon a sphere of risk capital investors (e.g., venture capital, private equity, etc.) that follows a much different rationale than established businesses and public authorities;
2. **Investments that are subject to mainstream investors** – including investment bankers and promotional banks.

RISE Program will support entities and projects that are aligned directly to the green and digital transition and smart manufacturing in the identified Less Developed Regions of Severozapaden (Bulgaria) and/or Alentejo (Portugal) and/or Vzhodna Slovenija (Slovenia) by focusing on: Mineral Raw Materials, Forest Biomass, and Bioenergy and Sustainable Buildings in the energy field (table 2).

Key Domains	Description	Priorities/ Examples
1/ Mineral Raw Materials	Innovative solutions to secure and promote the resilience of the European mineral raw materials value chain.	**Economic Materialization**: • Integration of digital technologies and data-driven processes for enhanced economic efficiency and innovation. • Emphasis on sustainable development in material creation and utilization, aligning with environmental considerations
2/ Forest biomass	Innovative approaches for mobilization of forest biomass for bioenergy: Unutilized (or surplus) forest growth that have no taker by conventional forest industries; or residues i.e. by-products of harvesting and silvicultural operations; or low-quality by-products of the industrial processing of wood, or demolition wood and scrap pallets.	**Circular Networking**: • Promotion of circular economy through practices like product reuse and recycling. • Collaborative systems and networks facilitating the transition of businesses into circular economy practices. **Sustainable Technologies** • Utilization of renewable resources and efficient technologies to meet energy demands. • Development and implementation of technologies reducing environmental impact and promoting low-carbon practices.
3/ Bioenergy and Sustainable buildings	Innovative production and use of renewable resources, coupled with the development and implementation of technologies and strategies that reduce environmental impact, promote circularity, and minimize carbon emissions in economic activities.	**Intelligent Manufacturing Systems**: • Integration of mechanical engineering, electronics, and computer science for intelligent system creation. • Advanced manufacturing facilities with cutting-edge technologies like AI and sustainability practices for improved efficiency and innovation.

Table 2 - RISE Program key domains

3. How to apply

1. "Register on MINE.THE.GAP Platform" (Partner Search), were basic information, alignment with RISE objectives and previous experience will be requested.
2. "Create Your Partner Search", providing detailed and specific information about the action each consortium wants to develop and identify what kind of opportunities and partners they are looking for.

Follow the full instructions under Annex 1.

3.1. Registration on MINE.THE.GAP platform

Register under the MINE.THE.GAP matchmaking platform providing the following details:

1. Basic entity details.

2. Alignment with RISE program goals.

3. Previous experience in innovation and collaboration activities.

4. Potential areas of interest for interregional cooperation.

3.2. Create Partner Search - Online Application Form:

Complete the online application form, providing accurate and up-to-date information.

For each action you would like to share, you must create an individual "Partner Search".

The form will include sections covering:

A. **Description of your business and activities**

Briefly describe your entity, its mission, and core activities. Highlight key achievements and areas of expertise.

B. **Action(s) you would like to share (piloting, demonstration, etc.)**

Provide details about the innovation project(s) you would like to share. Outline the goals, scope, and potential impact of each project.

C. **Search for partners and/or investors**

Clearly state if you are seeking partners, investors, or both. Specify the type of collaboration you are looking for and the purpose (e.g., funding, expertise, market access). If you already have the partners and/or the investors, please identify them.

D. **What is the investment/ need of your company/ project (amount in € and type – CAPEX/OPEX)**

Quantify the financial requirements for your action, specifying the amount needed and whether it is for Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) or Operational Expenditure (OPEX).

E. **Do you have a business plan ready for this investment/ project, and if not, where do you stand (incl. TRL, MRL…)?**

Describe the status of your business plan, including the Technology Readiness Level (TRL), Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL), and any other relevant progress indicators.

F. **Do you have experience with public (EU/National/Regional) Funding? If so, what are your references?**

Provide information on your experience with securing public funding. Share references and details of any successful applications or projects funded by public entities at the EU, national, or regional levels.

G. **What collaborative opportunities would you expect us to help you find (R&D partner, material supplier, etc.)?**

Outline specific collaborative opportunities you are seeking assistance with, such as finding research and development partners, material suppliers, or other strategic collaborators.

3.3. Selection Process

All the Created Partner Searches will be kept available on the MINE.THE.GAP Matchmaking Platform. The selection process will be performed by RISE Consortium and will occur in one single phase.

Based on the quality of the submitted actions and available opportunities, RISE Consortium will select and matchmake entities to participate under the RISE Program (Figure 3), aiming to give access to provide consultancy to the best action ideas.

Throughout the selection process, the RISE Consortium may extend invitations to entities from different regions that did not initially apply to the RISE Program, enriching the matchmaking process and elevating the overall quality of the proposed actions to be developed.
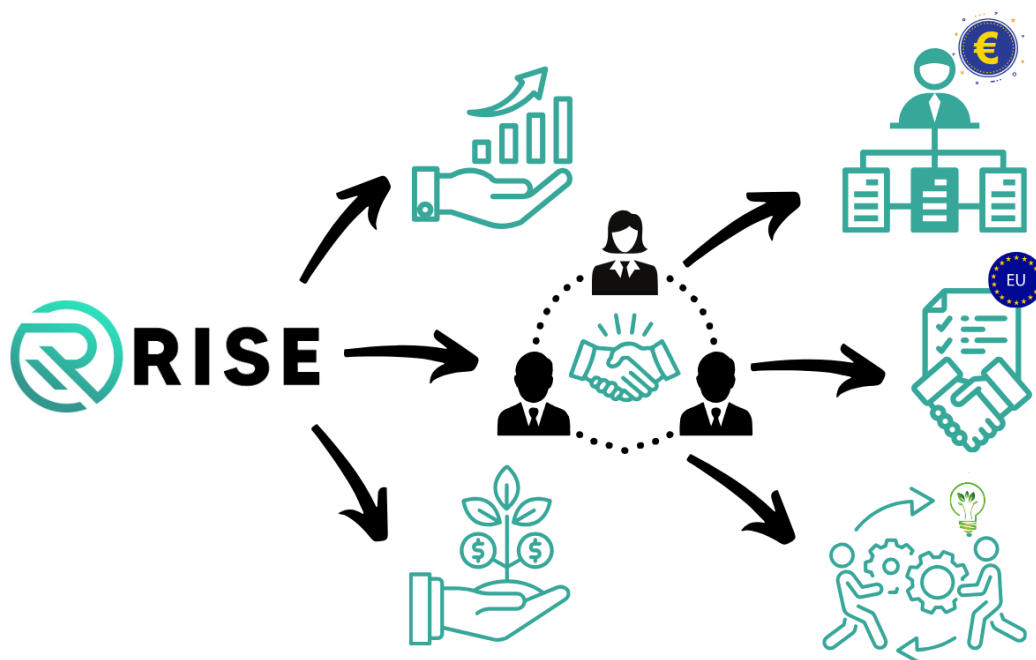
Figure 3 - RISE Program

The selection procedures are created to pinpoint the most relevant applications on the below mentioned criteria (table 3 and 4). The selection process aims to be as comprehensive and precise as possible and to assess all the submitted actions in a fair, transparent, and consistent manner.

Pre-selection will occur, assessing eligibility criteria, potential for collaboration, alignment with RISE objectives and previous experience (table 3).

Applicant criteria – Pre-selection
Alignment with program goals
• Clarity of alignment.
• Relevance to key domains.
• Potential impact on interregional cooperation.
Previous experience
• Demonstrated track record of projects.
• Success stories and references.
Potential for collaboration
• Clear collaboration objectives.
• Strength of proposed collaborations.
• Demonstrated collaboration skills.

Table 3 - RISE Program entity criteria

RISE Consortium will perform a partners analysis based on the applications and their own networks, initiating a matchmaking process and search for opportunities. Technical excellence, suitability and applicability degree of the application will also

be taken into account, following the below-mentioned criteria (table 4). As a result, a selection of applications will be announced.

Action criteria - Selection
Description of your business and activities   • Clarity and conciseness of the description.   • Alignment with the RISE program's goals.   • Demonstrated understanding of RISE mission and core activities.   • Be based on one of the identified regions (table 1).
Project(s)   • Project idea must be industrially driven.   • Clearly defined project goals and objectives.   • Feasibility and innovation of the proposed action.   • Bring a measurable impact to RISE Key Domains (table 2) in at least 1 of the identified Less Developed Region (LDR) (table 1).
Looking for partners or investors   • Transparency and specificity in seeking for partners or investors.   • Clearly articulated purpose and expected outcomes of collaboration.   • Alignment with the RISE Program objectives and potential for fostering partnerships.
Investment needed   • Clarity and accuracy of the financial request.   • Each action must represent a minimum of x € investment.   • Justification for the specified amount and type of investment.   • Alignment with the action's scale and objectives.
Business plan readiness for this investment   • Completeness and quality of the business plan   • Transparency about the current status, including TRL and MRL.   • Demonstrated understanding of the action's readiness for investment.
Experience with public (EU/National/Regional) funding   • Clarity and specificity of past experiences with public funding.   • References provided, including project names, funding sources, and outcomes.   • Demonstrated ability to secure and manage public funding.
Collaborative opportunities expectations   • Specificity of collaborative needs and opportunities.   • Alignment with the RISE Program focus on interregional cooperation.   • Demonstrated understanding of the potential impact of collaborations on action success.

Table 4 - RISE Program action criteria

4. Facilitating collaboration in EU value chains, Pipeline of investment projects and Bringing projects close to market

The selected actions will benefit from training, support and monitoring activities that will be provided and performed together with RISE Consortium and other selected entities/ actions:

- **Facilitating collaboration in EU value chains** involves fostering cooperation among businesses and stakeholders within the European Union to enhance the efficiency, competitiveness, and innovation of supply chains. This collaboration can span various sectors, from manufacturing to services, with the goal of creating integrated and resilient value chains.
- **Pipeline of investment projects** refers to a structured and planned series of investment opportunities within the EU. This involves identifying and organizing a portfolio of projects that attract investments, stimulate economic growth, and contribute to strategic objectives. These projects can include infrastructure development, technology initiatives, and sustainable ventures that align with the priorities and goals of the European Union.
- **Bringing projects close to the market** involves the strategic and operational activities aimed at transitioning innovative ideas, products, or services from development to commercial availability. This process typically includes refining prototypes, conducting market research, securing funding, addressing regulatory considerations, and establishing distribution channels. The goal is to effectively bridge the gap between project development and market launch, ensuring successful commercialization and widespread adoption.

Figure 4 - RISE Program activities and objectives

5. Timetable

	Step	Timeline
1	**Application submission**	15th February to 15th March 2024
2	**Selection**	15th March to 15th April 2024
3	**Announcement of the selected applications**	April 2024
4	**Pipeline of investment projects**	
	Workshop 1 – Mineral Raw Materials	September 2024 to February 2025
	Workshop 2 – Forest Biomass	
	Workshop 3 – Bioenergy and Sustainable Buildings	
	Bilateral meetings	
5	**Bringing projects close to market**	
	Collaboration sessions	March 2025 to October 2025
	Market Deployment Plan	
	Bilateral meetings	
	Workshops	

Table 5 - RISE Program timetable

6. Contact Information

Bulgaria

CTBG - KLIYNTEH BULGARIA FONDATSIYA

info(at)cleantech.bg

Finland

DIGIPOLIS - KEMIN DIGIPOLIS OY

pirkka.junes(at)digipolis.fi

Portugal

ACPMR – ASSOCIAÇÃO CLUSTER PORTUGAL MINERAL RESOURCES

geral(at)clustermineralresources.pt

Slovenia

TECOS - RAZVOJNI CENTER ORODJARSTVA SLOVENIJE

peter.fajs(at)tecos.si

simona.vernon(at)tecos.si

France

N-ABLE

emmanuel.boudard(at)n-able.io

Italy

LE2C - LOMBARDY ENERGY CLEANTECH CLUSTER

info(at)energycluster.it

Spain

ICAMCYL - FUNDACION ICAMCYL

projects(at)icamcyl.com

Sweden

PAPER PROVINCE - THE PAPER PROVINCE EKONOMISK FOERENING

info(at)paperprovince.com

7. Consortium

Eight partners from eight European countries charting the course towards a greener, more sustainable interregional collaboration, cultivating resilient ecosystems for a brighter, shared future.

DIGIPOLIS
🌐 digipolis.fi
📍 Kemi, Finland

PAPER PROVINCE
🌐 paperprovince.com
📍 Karlstadt, Sweden

CLUSTER PORTUGAL MINERAL RESOURCES
🌐 clustermineralresources.pt
📍 Estremoz, Portugal

ICAMCYL
Centro internacional de materiales avanzados y materias primas
International center for advanced materials and raw materials
🌐 icamcyl.com
📍 León, Spain

LE2C
LOMBARDY ENERGY CLEANTECH CLUSTER
🌐 energycluster.it
📍 Milan, Italy

CLEANTECH BULGARIA
🌐 cleantech.bg
📍 Sofia, Bulgaria

N-ABLE
Innovation Investment, Faster
🌐 n-able.io
📍 Annecy, France

TECOS
🌐 tecos.si
📍 Celje, Slovenia

Annexes

Annex 1 – How to register on MINE.THE.GAP platform and create partner search

Step 1 – Register in to the MINE.THE.GAP collaboration platform at https://h2020-minethegap.eu/registration-open-call/

Join the
MINE.THE.GAP platform

MINE.THE.GAP offers you the possibility to publish a company profile to present yourself to the community and to get in contact with other companies interested in solutions for the mining and raw materials value chain. Register now! It´s easy – fill in your details, check your eligibility, and start publishing and networking. *

Let's get started ↓

Which country do you come from?

The MINE.THE.GAP platform is available for companies that come from selected Member States of the European Union.

Choose your country ⌄
Choose your country
Bulgaria
Finland
France
Italy
Portugal
Romania
Slovenia
Spain
Sweden
I come from another country

RISE

Which region do you come from?

Please select from the given regions.

Choose your region	⌄

Choose your region
BG31 Северозападен (Severozapaden)
BG32 Северен централен (Severen tsentralen)
BG33 Североизточен (Severoiztochen)
BG34 Югоизточен (Yugoiztochen)
BG41 Югозападен (Yugozapaden)
BG42 Южен централен (Yuzhen tsentralen)
ES11 Galicia
ES12 Principado de Asturias
ES13 Cantabria
ES21 País Vasco
ES22 Comunidad Foral de Navarra
ES23 La Rioja
ES24 Aragón
ES30 Comunidad de Madrid
ES41 Castilla y León
ES42 Castilla-La Mancha
ES43 Extremadura
ES51 Cataluña
ES52 Comunidad Valenciana

innovation.

Which priorities are you working on?

In which of the following eligible fields do you offer services or are you working on?

Economic Materialization

• Integration of digital technologies and data-driven processes for enhanced economic efficiency and innovation.

• Emphasis on sustainable development in material creation and utilization, aligning with environmental considerations.

Circular Networking

• Promotion of circular economy through practices like product reuse and recycling.

• Collaborative systems and networks facilitating the transition of businesses into circular economy practices.

Sustainable Technologies

• Utilization of renewable resources and efficient technologies to meet energy demands.

• Development and implementation of technologies reducing environmental impact and promoting low-carbon practices.

Intelligent Manufacturing Systems

• Integration of mechanical engineering, electronics, and computer science for intelligent system creation.

• Advanced manufacturing facilities with cutting-edge technologies like AI and sustainability practices for improved efficiency and innovation.

Choose your fields	⌄

Choose your fields
Economic Materialization
Circular Networking
Sustainable Technologies
Intelligent Manufacturing Systems
I work in another field

Are

Are there any legal reasons impeding your participation?

Any applicant might be excluded from participating in European projects if the applicant is bankrupt, subject to insolvency or winding-up procedures, its assets are being administered by a liquidator or by a court, it is in an arrangement with creditors, its business activities are suspended, or it is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for under EU or national laws or regulations, or any other circumstances indicated in EU regulation*. Does any of those circumstances apply to you?
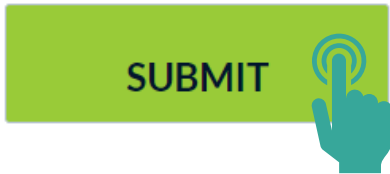
○ **Yes**   ○ **No**

RISE

We want to know more

Please complete the following information:

First Name	Last Name

Email	Mobile

Company name	Company web

☐ I have read and accept the legal notice and the privacy policy *

SUBMIT 👆

After filing in all the required fields, reading and accepting the legal notice and the privacy policy, and pressing "Submit", you will automatically receive, in your email, a registration confirmation and a password to access MINE.THE.GAP collaboration platform.

➡ **Step 2** - Log in to the MINE.THE.GAP collaboration platform at https://h2020-minethegap.eu/login/

Connect and collaborate

Log in to the MINE.THE.GAP collaboration platform

The MINE.THE.GAP project wanted to establish new collaborations between SMEs from the mining and raw materials sector and the fields of ICT, advanced manufacturing, resource efficiency, and circular economy.

In addition, MINE.THE.GAP collaborates with other European projects and the platform serves as a common tool for stablishing connections between stakeholders.

That's why MINE.THE.GAP platform offers SMEs a collaboration space to find partners for new project proposals. By creating a MINE.THE.GAP profile, SMEs can access this internal space, present themselves, and search for companies.

Create an account

Username or Email

Password

☐ Remember Me

LOG IN 👆

RISE

Step 3 – Create your Partner Search on the MINE.THE.GAP collaboration platform at https://h2020-minethegap.eu/create-your-partner-search/

CREATE YOUR

Partner Search

Create here your company profile and describe the expertise you offer in terms of products, services and projects. You will then appear in the matchmaking space and other companies can contact you.

You can submit more than one post if you have different ideas. You can manage these posts in your profile.

Title of your offer *

Your sector

Choose your sector

Choose your sector
MINING AND RAW MATERIALS
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES
ADVANCED MANUFACTURING
RESOURCE EFFICIENCY
CIRCULAR ECONOMY
OTHER

Your key domain *

Your priority areas *

Your key domain *

Choose your key domain

Choose your key domain
MINERAL RAW MATERIALS
FOREST BIOMASS
BIOENERGY AND SUSTAINABLE BUILDINGS
OTHER

Your priority areas *

Your priority areas *

☐ **Economic Materialization**

☐ **Circular Networking**

☐ **Sustainable Technologies**

☐ **Intelligent Manufacturing Systems**

Company name *

Shortly describe your business and activity *

Your project(s) *

Investment/need of your company/project *

Quantify the financial requirements for your action, specifying the amount needed and whether it is for Capital Expenditure (CAPEX) or Operational Expenditure (OPEX).

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Status of the business plan for this investment/project *

Describe the status of your business plan, including the Technology Readiness Level (TRL), Manufacturing Readiness Level (MRL), and any other relevant progress indicators.

Experience with public (EU/national/regional) funding *

Provide information on your experience with securing public funding. Share references and details of any successful applications or projects funded by public entities at the EU, national, or regional levels.

Collaboration opportunities *

Outline specific collaborative opportunities you are seeking assistance with, such as finding research and development partners, material suppliers, or other strategic collaborators.

Country where your project impacts *

- select -

- select -
Bulgaria
Portugal
Slovenia
Bulgaria, Portugal, Slovenia
I don´t know

Region where your project impacts *

- select -

Region where your project impacts *

- select -

- select -
BG31 Северозападен (Severozapaden)
PT18 Alentejo
SI03 Vzhodna Slovenija
BG31 Северозападен (Severozapaden), PT18 Alentejo, SI03 Vzhodna Slovenija
I don´t know

Justify your choice *

Justify your choice *

Justify the choices you made for the country and region where your project impacts.

Your Country *

Choose your country

Choose your country
Austria
Belgium
Bulgaria
Croatia
Cyprus
Czechia
Denmark
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Greece
Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Latvia
Lithuania
Luxembourg
Malta

Contact name *   **Phone number** *   -mail address *

Upload your company logo or avatar *

SUBMIT   Save Draft

RISE

After filing in all the required fields and pressing "Submit", your profile will automatically be available and shared with other applicants at https://h2020-minethegap.eu/matchmaking/. In this page you can also check other partners profiles and ideas.

RISE

RISE

RISE

Our project(s):
RISE

Our investment needs:
RISE

Our business plan for the investment/project:
RISE

Our experience with public funding:
RISE

Collaboration opportunities:
RISE

Country where your project impacts:
Bulgaria, Portugal, Slovenia

Region where your project impacts:
Bg31 Северозападен (Severozapaden), Pt18 Alentejo, Si03 Vzhodna Slovenija

Justify your choice:
RISE

⊘ **Bulgaria**

RISE

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Mining And Raw Materials   Mineral Raw Materials   Economic Materialization   Circular Networking   Sustainable Technologies   Intelligent Manufacturing Systems