

Call for SMEs

High Impact Action 3rd open call

(1st edition 2020)

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Vsebina

[Guide for applicants 3](#_Toc60218859)

[Background and general objectives 3](#_Toc60218860)

[Scope and expectations 3](#_Toc60218861)

[Impact 4](#_Toc60218862)

[Project achievements 4](#_Toc60218863)

[Organisation in charge 4](#_Toc60218864)

[Objectives 5](#_Toc60218865)

[Funding scheme 6](#_Toc60218866)

[Eligible costs 6](#_Toc60218867)

[Reporting and financial stipulations 7](#_Toc60218868)

[Eligibility conditions 7](#_Toc60218869)

[Application process 8](#_Toc60218870)

[Template for proposal preparation 9](#_Toc60218871)

[Evaluation criteria 9](#_Toc60218872)

[Scoring mechanism 10](#_Toc60218873)

[Evaluation procedure 11](#_Toc60218874)

[Annex 1: Proposal template 12](#_Toc60218875)

[Annex 2: Applicant’s statement 17](#_Toc60218876)

[Annex 3: Declaration of absence of conflict of interest 20](#_Toc60218877)

# Guide for applicants

## Background and general objectives

HIA is part of the European industrial transition pilot project coordinated by DG REGIO, the goal of which is to support widely conceptualized innovations on the basis of Guide on Research and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS3), developed to tackle industrial transition challenges. The EC expects to develop a holistic strategy for economy transformation based on the smart specialisation strategy (S3), clusters and digitalization, strengthen connections with other regions and clusters and also test new industrial transition approaches and generate recommendations for better RIS3 implementation support.

The High-Impact Action (HIA) consists in the piloting of a “transformative mechanism”. This mechanism will take the form of a physical and virtual platform for piloting and demonstrating modular and reconfigurable cells across various industries with an outlook to represent Slovenian knowledge and technologies within the nine pillars of Strategic research and innovation partnerships resulting in a national demonstrative centre for factories of the future. When complete this platform will bring together equipment, resources, expertise, people from a broad range of organisations (research and technology organisations, centres of excellence, SMEs, corporates, etc.) specialising in industry 4.0 development and deployment. It will be the channel for public support to technology development and deployment (mainly piloting and demonstration activities), education for industry, as well as networking, match-making and information diffusion. It will build upon Slovenian capabilities but also competences sourced from European partner regions to complement missing assets in the region (sourced through for example the Vanguard initiative and Thematic smart specialisation platforms). The physical platform will be leveraged to ensure the breakthrough of Slovenian research and development results and concepts into international markets by demonstrating and marketing the national capabilities of Industry 4.0 adoption.

## Scope and expectations

The HIA was designed through an intense consultative process in the context of the first phase of the European Commission (DG REGIO) Pilot Action on Industrial Transition. Through this HIA, Slovenia wishes to upgrade its industrial system and reach higher added value segments in industrial value chains. The HIA was designed as to:

1) Address the factors hindering the modernisation of the Slovenian industry (related to skills/labours, the lack of specific technological capabilities, sub-optimal availability of capital, etc.) to accelerate its sustainable growth;

2) Build upon a new economic transformation approach formalised by the new Strategy which was validated in November/December 2018 (with AMI expert support);

3) Draw lessons that will feed into the reflection on the new/renewed Cohesion Policy framework and the underpinning Smart Specialisation concept;

The HIA will focus on Industry 4.0 deployment to the Slovenian ecosystem, using local and foreign competences to build capacity at the regional level. The motivations and drivers for this strategic decision was grounded into different challenges (difficult skills retention, high dependence on foreign economic decision centres, etc.) and the will to set up a new type of instrument: a “transformative mechanism”.

## Impact

The HIA would demonstrate the building blocks, architecture and ground specifications relevant to the transformative mechanism. It would offer a replicable model for cross-regional collaboration at different levels (international expert working group, cross-regional SME piloting/demonstration activities). It would demonstrate the impact of combining piloting/demonstration and communication (best practices/flyers/etc.). The integration of policy streams and of support capabilities into one physical (and virtual) location is a key new feature of the HIA, as is the TRL integration foreseen in practice (accelerating TRL climbing). Both are combined and designed around a key building block of the HIA: flexibility and adaption.

Specific technical specifications, technical boundary conditions and addressed Vertical Value Chains (VVC) are specified in document “Invitation to tender” under section “Technical specification”.

The results of all 5 selected project must demonstrate capability to modularly connect to results of other 4 selected projects. It is desired that all results of selected projects foresee the capability that after the end of the project developed results could be used in common national “DEMO Factory of the Future” showroom as one production cell.

## Project achievements

* Process improvement enabled by technological integration.
* The development and dissemination of a success story in the form of a 1 to 2-pager and a speech/presentation in an event.

## Organisation in charge

The HIA Project is funded by the European Union (hereinafter referred to as the “EC”) within the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation - Horizon 2020, on the basis of the Grant Agreement 2018CE160AT115 conclude

d between TECOS, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the European Commission (hereinafter referred to as the “Grant Agreement”).

Ministry of Economic Development and Technology is the grant coordinator and TECOS has been delegated the implementation the project entitled “Slovenian Pilot for an Industry 4.0 Transformative Mechanism”.

The Strategic Research and Innovation Partnership Factories of the Future (SRIP FoF) is the leading alliance for Industry 4.0 (more than 80 members). It gathers and aims to connect the Slovenian research and innovation triple helix, similar to an innovation cluster. The Slovenian Tool and Die Development Centre TECOS is the lead and legal representative of the SRIP and will handle the grant from both legal and managerial perspectives. TECOS is responsible for handling all aspects of the grant, and any as well as all activities of it.

## Objectives

The HIA will focus on the Alpha Version of the Platform (Version 1). It will therefore consist of the first-phase piloting of the Platform. The HIA will be operated through a voucher scheme (total of 5 vouchers) that will set the ground for the full Platform specifications (Beta/Full version), its architecture but also the surrounding support structure in the areas of piloting, integration, deployment and technological demonstration. In this regard the expected result of the first stage of HIA is a platform concept based on requirements and ideated specifications for the said platform where different production cells are interconnected via common communication protocols and standards in a way that ensures modularity and remote control. In particular, technology agents, to be proposed by service providers, are envisaged to enable functional linkage of the cells in shared technology modules.

Five projects will be implemented by private companies, with the implementation supported by service providers with the aim to test combinations of technological blocks relevant to the modular and reconfigurable production cells. The goal of these projects will be to derive specifications for a common platform and demonstrate impacts on company level. The SMEs selected through a call, will receive a voucher, which they will use to contract service providers, or upgrade their infrastructure. These would help the awarded SMEs in upgrading their production cells through provision of at least one of the relevant services.

Each project is to pursue the objective of a 20% efficiency gain in at least one of the following parameters: lead-time, material use, overall production/process costs, waste production, CO2 emission, part integration, people interaction, energy consumption.

## Funding scheme

TECOS is leading and managing the implementation and also has the role of distributor of vouchers in the cascade funding scheme.

The grant approved for funding of the HIA SME-driven Industry 4.0 projects is 250.000 €, from which 5 vouchers will be distributed to SMEs. The voucher can be assigned to 1 single company or a consortium of companies – up to 5 companies maximum, but not higher than the 50.000 EUR total per voucher.

Each winning project has to be privately co-funded in the amount of minimum 50 % of the overall project costs (each voucher is to be privately co-funded for at least the same amount of investment). Voucher receiving SME can privately co-fund their project in the amount of maximum 10.000 EUR for costs necessary and vital for implementation of the project such equipment or personnel costs, provided the equipment purchased is new, or the personnel costs regarding a new employment at least for the duration of the project[[1]](#footnote-1). The allowed co-funding for the remaining minimum amount of 40.000 EUR can be in the form of in-kind contribution.

Maximum of 5 companies are allowed to gather in a consortium and apply for a voucher individually. In such case, companies each have to disclose how they are benefitting from working in the consortium and how will it impact the projects objectives and lesson learning ability.

## Eligible costs

The following costs are eligible and will be subject to check when appropriate:

* Contractual agreements and costs incurred by service provider (up to maximum 50.000 EUR)
* Costs necessary for implementation of the project such as equipment or personnel costs, provided the equipment purchased is new, or the personnel costs regarding a new employment at least for the duration of the project. These costs are up to maximum 10.000 EUR[[2]](#footnote-2)
* The remaining amount to maximum 50.000 EUR is cost intended for service providers (minimum one service provider has to be chosen and Memorandum of Understanding has to be provided) which is funded in the full amount of the invoice.
* Total value of the voucher is up to 50.000 EUR combined.

## Reporting and financial stipulations

* SMEs will issue two claims: 1st claim two months after the project start, second claim upon the project completion, but not later than 31.5.2021.
* The claims will be accompanied by: contractual documents with service providers, with proof of payment. Proof of purchase of equipment or other costs, with proof of payment.
* Content report, describing on maximum 10 pages progress and activities implemented.
* Based on provided claims, SMEs will be reimbursed upon receipt of funds from EC and eligibility check.

## Eligibility conditions

The participant SMEs must verify the following requirements to be eligible to receive funding:

* Submitted proposals will only be considered as eligible, if the proposing organisation qualifies as an SME, following the definition in the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC.
* Submission retained for funding must come from SMEs that are legally established in Slovenia or have an official branch in Slovenia.
* Proposals must address the topics described in Annex 1. Proposals must therefore be focused on Industry 4.0 relevancy of each project, economic impacts and its ability of lesson drawing.
* Companies have to prove their financial viability by providing relevant documentation.
* Each SME project has to be open and publicly display results (IPR/specifics retained by the company).
* Each project has to offer generic lessons to be used for the design of the architecture and specifications of the phase 2 platform.
* Each project has to be at a maturity stage of TRL5+, argued in the project proposal.
* Each project has to be multi-technological (e.g. integrating plasma, photonics, advanced manufacturing technologies) with minimum 2 technology modules to be integrated.
* Each project should respect basic visibility and communication stipulations, using HIA, TECOS, SRIP FoF and Ministry of Economic development and technology logos, using in all materials the following quote: *“This project \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (title) is financed through the HIA transformative mechanism, financed by European Commission 2018CE160AT115, implemented by Republic of Slovenia, Ministry of economic development and technology, TECOS, Slovenian tool and die development centre and SRIP Factories of the Future. The implementors do not take any responsibility over the results achieved.”*

## Application process

Interested organisations are invited to submit their application to TECOS at address: simona.vernon@tecos.si.

Applications must be completed in English.

An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent by the deadline and includes the documents referred to below. All documents submitted by applicants should be duly filled in, legible, signed and numbered sequentially.

Each application shall include the following documents:

* Annex 1 – Proposal template
* Annex 2 – Applicant’s statement
* Annex 3 – Declaration of absence of conflict of interest
* Annex 4 – Proof of Memorandum of understanding by SME and service provider
* Annex 5 – Financial plan showing in-kind financing and financial structure, with requested voucher not being higher than 50.000 EUR.
* Annex 6 – Draft contract, to be filled out and signed by SME.

Additional supporting documents (e.g. publications) may be requested at a later stage.

Deadline for application

The duly signed applications must be sent by 8.1.2021 at the latest. The date of sending will be established as follows:

* Where applications are sent by e-mail to the following e-mail address: simona.vernon@tecos.si the date of the e-mail will be the date of sending.

If you discover an error in your proposal, and provided that the call deadline has not passed, you may submit a new version. Only the last version received before the call deadline will be considered in the evaluation. Proposals must be received by the closing time and date of the call. Late proposals – including force majeure circumstances – or proposals submitted in any other way than through the email stated above, will not be evaluated. If financial or other inconsistencies are found in the provided documents, clarification will be requested within 8 days from the final deadline. The foreseen start of projects is January 18th, 2021.

## Template for proposal preparation

Proposals will be submitted in a document according to a pre-defined template Annex 1.

The proposal will be structured in sections whose expected content is explained in detail in Annex 1.

The sections will be completed filling the template and sent to TECOS in PDF format.

## Evaluation criteria

Members of the appointed International expert group will evaluate each proposal independently according to the following evaluation subjects:

* Relevance to call ambitions
* Impact
* HIA-specific
* Company/consortium competence and financial viability

The following table explains the different aspects which will be considered for each evaluation criteria:

1. Relevance to call ambitions:
* Relevance to regional S4
* Innovativeness and newness
	+ Lesson-drawing potential of the project for HIA
	+ Demonstration of readiness to cooperate with other selected projects
1. Impacts:
* Measure(s) to open up/make project sustainable
* On challenges (digitisation, circular economy, etc.)
* Value added to SI economy (growth, employment, etc.)
* National demo centre “Factory of the Future” establishment support and collaboration/communication readiness
* Achievement of specific indicators as stated above in point Project Achievements and Objectives.
1. Project description:
* Clear description of project approach
* Description of ways to achieve stipulated project achievements
* Description of phases and duration of each phase
* Description of input needed
* Description of the value added of service provider
* Argumentation of necessary additional costs or investments
1. HIA-specific:
* Cross-regional collaboration
* Business case backed by relevant evidence (market assessment)
* Dissemination effort
1. Team/consortium/management quality
	* Argumentation for an option of selecting a consortium or not, presentation of consortium
2. Risk mitigation capability
3. Budget soundness and argumentation

In case two or more applications receive the same number of points, the applicants that are members of SRIP FoF, will be favoured.

## Scoring mechanism

A score from to including half scores will be assigned to each of the 4 criteria.

The meaning of the marks is as follows:

* 0: The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
* 1: Very poor – The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
* 2: Poor – While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
* 3: Acceptable – The proposal addresses the criterion, although significant improvements are possible.
* 4: Good – The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are still possible.
* 5: Very good – The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any short-comings are minor.

The final mark given to each criterion will be the average of the scores given by the 5 evaluators.

In order to be successful, proposals shall score at least 3 in each criterion and have an overall score of at least 28 points.

Only one project from each Vertical Value Chain (VVC), described in document “Invitation to Tender” under article “Technical specifications” will be selected.

Successful proposals (i.e. above threshold) are funded in descending order until the available sum for the call is totally assigned.

An Evaluation Summary Report containing the scores and all evaluators justifications for each score as well as the Selection Committee ranking justifications will be provided to proposal coordinators.

## Evaluation procedure

The first review (eligibility check) will be performed by TECOS.

The evaluation of proposals will entirely be carried out by the International expert group.

At the end of the evaluation procedure a public summary report of evaluation results will be published. All applicants will receive individual feedback in the form of an evaluation form that will state whether the proposal is successful or not.

# Annex 1: Proposal template

General guidelines to follow when writing the proposal:

1. Please follow the structure of this template when preparing your proposal. It has been designed to ensure that the important aspects of your planned work are presented in a way that will enable the experts to make an effective assessment against the evaluation criteria.
2. Additional proof can be provided by the applicant in case promotional material or studies are provided, as well as photographic materials.
3. Important: All the necessary guidance notes are presented in *blue italics*. Please remove these before you submit your application
4. Notice: The HIA project treats all proposals received as confidential, as well as any related information, data and documents received from each applicant. The whole process of handling and evaluating proposals is carried out in compliance with strict confidentiality rules, and proposals are archived under secure conditions at all times.

**Company details**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Legal name of SME applying for the HIA voucher: |  |
| Company VAT number:  |  |
| Country where the company is registered:  |  |
| Address: |  |
| Legal representative: |  |
| Name of contact person: |  |
| Position within the company: |  |
| Telephone number: |  |
| Email address: |  |
| Company web page  |  |

**Financial data on SME status from the last accounting period/financial year to ensure SME status**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Number of employees |  |
| Turnover/balance sheet in Euro |  |

**Company’s core business**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Business sector | *Indicate which sector best describes your company’s core business.* |
| Utilized key technologies | *Select at least two of the SRIP FoF key technologies* |

**Project information**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Maturity stage argumentation | *Technology readiness level, description* |
| Project approach and willingness to show public results | *Indicate the cooperation approach and opportunities envisioned.*  |

**Project description**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project acronym |  |
| Project title |  |
| Addressed Vertical Value Chains (VVC) | *Select one of the following:* * *Robotics*
* *Photonics*
* *Plasma technologies*
* *Control technologies (including AI, HMI, digital twins, AR/VR, IIOT)*
* *Smart mechatronic moulds*
 |
| Project description | *Please clearly describe, the project, approach and ambitions of the project (maximum 5000 characters)* |
| Approach to reaching achievements | *Describe how you plan on reaching project achievements and objectives, (maximum, 2000 characters)* |
| Timeline and duration of phases | *Please clearly define phases of the project, their duration (maximum 2000 characters, can be provided in a form of an annex to description e.g. Gantt chart or similar.)* |
| Description of input needed | *Describe the efforts to be put in to the implementation of the project by your company (maximum 2000 characters)* |
| Added value of service provider | *Describe the service provider chosen, reasoning for the chosen provider (please note, the service provider has to be listed and applied as the service provider to HIA platform @simona.vernon@tecos.si, maximum, 1500 characters)* |
| Additional costs or investments needed | *Please clearly argue and describe the necessary added costs, up to 20.000 EUR maximum (50% co-financing). This chapter is not subject to evaluation but is subject to acceptance or refusal by the evaluation committee.* |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Score** |
| **Project description** |  |
| **Budget soundness and argumentation** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Relevance to call ambitions** | **Score** |
| Relevance to regional S4 | *Describe how your ambitions in scope of this project relate to the S4 Smart Specialization Strategy* |  |
| Innovativeness and newness | *Elaborate on innovativeness and newness of the production cell you plan to upgrade*  |
| Lesson-drawing potential for HIA | *Describe the expected results of your planned efforts and explain the lessons they will potentially provide in scope of beta platform specifications* |
| Cooperation readiness | *Demonstrate your readiness to cooperate with other selected projects* |
| **Impacts** | **Score** |
| Measure(s) to open up/make project sustainable |  |  |
| On challenges | *Digitisation, circular economy, etc.* |
| Value added to SI economy | *Growth, employment, etc.* |
| National demo centre establishment support | *Describe how your project will benefit the outlook on an establishment of a national demonstrative centre for future factories.* |
| **HIA specific** | **Score** |
| Cross-regional collaboration | *If existent, describe your plan for cross-regional cooperation and how it will benefit your efforts within HIA*  |  |
| Business case backed by relevant evidence | *Market assessment* |
| Dissemination effort | *List your planned dissemination efforts* |
| **Team/management quality** | **Score** |
| *List competencies and references that indicate the quality of your staff.* |  |
| Consortium | *Argumentation for an option of selecting a consortium or not, presentation of consortia* |
| **Risk mitigation plan** | **Score** |
| *Given the timeline of the project, time constraints may occur in trying to meet the requested deadlines for completion of the project. Describe your risk mitigation plan in scope of this and any other possible issues* |  |

#

# Annex 2: Applicant’s statement

Legal representative \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (provide name and surname) of the applicant\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Provide full name of the applicant) declare that:

* We agree and accept all conditions stated in the public call.
* The application is prepared in English language.
* All statements given in this application are true and correspond to the actual situation
* We apply to this public call with only one application.
* We are aware that we are directly responsible for achieving the objectives of the proposed project.
* We will not claim compensation from TECOS in case we are not selected as the call winner and we will not claim compensation of costs associated to preparation of proposal documentation in case of procedure termination, rejection of all tenders or withdrawal from the execution of the order;
* We fully accept the terms and conditions of the related HIA calls under which we are submitting our tender and we agree that they will be fully integrated in the contract;
* Our office is registered in Slovenia;
* We meet mandatory duties and other monetary non-tax obligations in accordance with the law governing the financial administration collected by the tax authority in accordance with the regulations of Slovenia;
* We submitted all tax deductions for employment income for the last five years until the date of submission of this application;
* We haven’t been fined in regards to misdemeanour related to payment for work twice in the last three years before the deadline for submission of tenders by a final decision of the competent authority of the Republic of Slovenia or another Member State or third country
* In preparation of our tender and execution of contract we have and will fulfill the obligations arising from the regulations on safety at work, employment and working conditions valid in the Republic of Slovenia;
* We are a reliable and experienced company with managing personnel capable of executing the requested work and we have the technical and human capacities needed for execution;
* A person who is a member of the administrative, management or supervisory body of our company or who has the authority to represent or decide or supervise wasn’t involved in a final judgment for an act that has elements of the criminal offenses listed in Article 75 of the ZJN-3.
* We will provide the needed services in a professional and quality manner under the profession rules in accordance to the regulation (laws, policies, technical consensus), technical instructions, recommendations, norms and environmental regulations;
* Any physical equipment used in our project meets the fundamental environmental requirements;
* Project will be executed by professionally trained personnel;
* We fully accept and agree with terms set by TECOS, listed in this tender, and will approach the execution of order and provide services in accordance;
* We have read the Invitation to tender and prepared our tender accordingly;
* We are fully aware of all relevant legislation, that is taken in account in scope of the HIA project;
* We are fully aware of the size and complexity of the project objectives;
* We are not excluded from invitation to tender based on criminal records, paid taxes or other basic requirements under the Public Procurement Act, which Invitation to tender is based on;
* We state that we meet the conditions listed in the Invitation to tender, in relevance to impunity, payed taxes, offenses in relevance to payment for work done, are capable of conducting professional activities, are technically and professionally trained
* We confirm, we will obey and respect all the communication guidelines of this call.

By signing this document, we state that we meet all conditions in relevant open call documentation. We are signing this statement in full awareness of criminal and material liability and will provide evidence to the order issuer if needed. This statement will be treated as a business secret.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Place and date | Stamp | Name and surname of the legal representative |
|  |  |  |
| Signature |
|  |

# Annex 3: Declaration of absence of conflict of interest

I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name and surname), as a legal representative of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name of the applicant) understand that conflict of interest refers to situations in which my organization or its representatives may occur financial or other gains.

I herewith declare on my word of honour that our organization does not have any interests that would conflict with duties and responsibilities as the Service Provider.

Further, in case of any form of conflict of interest (possible or actual) which may inadvertently emerge during my organizations conduct, I will dully report it to TECOS for immediate action.

I understand that my organization may be held accountable by TECOS for any conflict of interest which I have intentionally concealed.

Date: ………………….

Signature …………………..

1. The necessity and vitality of such a cost needs to be elaborated in detail within the project proposal. It is at discretion of the evaluators of the proposals and can be as such rejected or accepted. Furthermore the maximum amount of 10.000 EUR has to be matched with the equal amount seen in financial terms (invoices, salaries etc.) and cannot be justified with in kind approach. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Definition of eligible costs is listed in the Invitation to tender document. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)