



# Matchmaking manual for SMEs, designers and startups looking for transnational partners to participate in the Fashion for Change Growth programme

**This is a manual for enterprises that want to participate in Fashion for Change on how to find a partner in order to fulfil the Growth programme's requirement of having a transnational partnership.**

[The Open call](#) of the Fashion for Change Growth programme is open for transnational partnerships led by at least one SME, designer or startup (SME, micro-company or self-employed professional) that seek to create or develop innovative products or services for circular fashion. This manual describes how they can look for a transnational partner and how they can be assisted in their search by the Fashion for Change Knowledge hub, Enterprise Europe Network (E.E.N.), Climate KIC, the European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP), Holland Circular Hotspot and Online matchmaking by Fashion For Change.

## 1. Who can apply to the Growth Programme?

Each SME, designer or startup participant from the EU-27 or COSME countries (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine<sup>1</sup>) can be an applicant in the Fashion for Change programme. However, they need to find a partner in another EU or COSME country before they can be considered for participation because the call is only open for transnational partnerships. If they don't yet have a transnational partner, individuals and teams can apply for matchmaking

<sup>1</sup> See

[https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/other\\_eu\\_prog/cosme/legal/3rd-country-participation\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/other_eu_prog/cosme/legal/3rd-country-participation_en.pdf)

support and will be invited to participate in the online matchmaking event (see section 2, Matchmaking). The individual applicants in each transnational partnership must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- All applicants should have a high potential for sustainable innovation in the fashion industry (applications, products, services, processes, ideas).
- The lead applicant must be an SME, a designer, or a startup (SME or micro-company or self-employed professional) working in the fashion sector as well as textiles, apparel, footwear, and accessories.
- The transnational partner applicant can be another designer, another startup, corporation, investor, sponsor, incubator, a self-employed expert on the circular economy or sustainable fashion, communication, marketing, education, logistics, or other industries' representative.
- All applicants must be legally established in the EU-27 or COSME countries (Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iceland, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine).
- Additional criteria will be considered, if necessary, to assess the startups' investment readiness.

The partnerships/projects proposals must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Partnerships must present innovative applications, products, processes, services, or ideas in textiles, clothing, footwear, leather, and accessories, or new business models for circular fashion.
- Each project must comprise one SME, designer or startup who will be the lead applicant.
- Each partnership should be formed from at least 2 eligible (EU27 and COSME) countries. If an applicant does not have a partnership, the Fashion for Change consortium will assist in forming the partnerships and reaching agreements beneficial for both parties.
- Partnerships who apply as partnerships are expected to provide proof of being in partnership (Letter of intent as a minimum - [template](#)).
- Proposing a sound plan on how the teams use the financial support (developing proofs of concept and prototypes of new products and services, developing and testing new business models, developing collaboration to test more sustainable/recycled material, supporting participation in trade shows or other showcase events).

In addition, the following criteria must be met in order to be considered admissible:

- An online application platform is set up on [F6S](#); hence applications must be submitted through the official online submission system before the

official deadline (19.04.2022) of the Open Call. Link to the application form will be added to the Fashion For Change website.

- Applications must be submitted in English only.
- An online application form must be fully completed.
- All mandatory supporting materials specified in the Open Call must be submitted: a Declaration of Honor (Annex 1), Letter of Intent (Annex 2) and Curriculum Vitae of all the applicants in the project (Annex 3)
- Partnerships who apply as partnerships are expected to provide proof of being in partnership (letters of intent as a minimum).
- Organisations that have already been awarded under a call for proposals published by any of the following three projects: S4Fashion (Grant agreement number: 958038), Circular InnoBooster (Grant agreement number: 958135) and SmallButPerfect (Grant agreement number: 958060), can participate in this call only if the project idea is completely different from the one already awarded.
- Projects that have already been funded or are being funded by other funding instruments will be rejected. Double funding is not allowed [here we mean any funding instruments, not necessarily Sustainable Fashion projects mentioned above].
- The same organisation can be involved in only one partnership under the call. Only the first submitted application will be evaluated if an organisation is mentioned in more than one application. All the other concerned applications submitted will be considered ineligible under this call.

**The 25 partnerships chosen to participate in the 8-month long Growth Programme and receiving the financial support have to sign a grant agreement for the entire duration of the programme.**

If you are unsure if the partnership meets the criteria, contact Fashion For Change project team [info@fashionforchange.eu](mailto:info@fashionforchange.eu)

## **2. How to find a transnational partner to participate in the Fashion for Change Growth programme?**

To facilitate each enterprise in finding a transnational partner the Fashion For Change team is recommending the following steps and available support channels:

1. Fashion for Change Knowledge hub
2. Enterprise Europe Network (E.E.N.)
3. Climate KIC

4. ECESP
5. Holland Circular Hotspot
6. Online matchmaking by Fashion For Change

### 1. Fashion for Change Knowledge hub

After filling out the online application form, each enterprise is encouraged to register into the Fashion for Change Knowledge hub Community:

- Go to <https://www.fashionforchange.eu/knowledge-hub/community/>
- Click on “Register your Own”
- Select designer, SME or Start-up as your organisation type

Next, browse through the list of existing Community members to see if any of those organisations might be an interesting partner for you, and contact them to find out. Conversely, they might find you via the Community also.

### 2. Enterprise Europe Network (E.E.N.)

The E.E.N. is an organisation of the European Commission providing free services to SMEs. The E.E.N. database contains 6000 profiles of potential partners in 65 countries worldwide, mainly of SMEs, research institutes and academia / universities. The database is available online and for free, with access to search without need to register in advance. The E.E.N. can assist SMEs for free with partner search in three ways:

- Option 1: Go to <https://een.ec.europa.eu/content/international-partnerships-0> and look for yourself in the database of registered partners.
- Option 2: Send an email to Ms. [mohini.keunen@rvo.nl](mailto:mohini.keunen@rvo.nl) with a concrete search request via a search profile. She will then screen the request, make sure it is clear for others, forward it internally to the E.E.N. experts in the relevant countries, and create a search profile for your enterprise on the E.E.N. website for others to see. The search profile is anonymous; your company name is not shown.
- Option 3: Participate in one of the matching events organised by E.E.N. for fashion events, such as the Fashion Match Amsterdam 11.0 (more info [here](#), info about more meetings can be found [here](#) when available).

N.B. Large companies cannot register and registration of consultants is discouraged.

### 3. Climate KIC

The EIT Climate-KIC is an EU programme active in 24 countries with 28 offices across Europe, including the major cities of Brussels, London, Paris and Berlin. It has 450+ global partners, spanning universities, businesses, cities and NGOs. Enterprises can take the following step:

- Go to <https://www.climate-kic.org/partners/> and look for partners

#### **4. ECESP**

The European Circular Economy Stakeholder Platform (ECESP) is a joint initiative by the European Commission and the European Economic and Social Committee. To search for partners:

- Go to <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en>
- Go to <https://circulareconomy.europa.eu/platform/en/good-practices>
- For the lowest search field, "Sector", select "Textiles, apparel and leather" and click on "Search"
- Browse through the best practices
- You can make further selections via the other search fields.

#### **5. Holland Circular Hotspot**

Holland Circular Hotspot is a private-public platform in which companies, knowledge institutes and (local) authorities collaborate to promote and support international collaboration and knowledge exchange on Dutch circular economy. For international visibility Dutch entrepreneurs can send in their circular showcase (free of charge) [here](#) for publication [here](#). To search for partners:

- This webpage offers an overview of possible partners in the Netherlands: <https://hollandcircularhotspot.nl/dutch-partners/>
- To get in touch with Dutch potential partners, enterprises from outside the Netherlands can write an email, with information describing their matching request, to [info@hollandcircularhotspot.nl](mailto:info@hollandcircularhotspot.nl)
- Dutch enterprises can write an email, with information describing their matching request, to [info@hollandcircularhotspot.nl](mailto:info@hollandcircularhotspot.nl) to get in touch with foreign potential partners.

#### **6. Online matchmaking**

All participants who will apply as individuals or teams without a transnational partner will be invited to participate in an online matchmaking event. When applying, the teams or individual applicants without a transnational partner can

leave a respective request in the application form for the Consortium to actively assist in the matchmaking processes.

For those who apply for active matching support, the Consortium will:

- 1) suggest suitable matches out of the pool of applicants; the Consortium helps different applicants to connect by evaluating the applications and trying to match them. See also option 1, the Fashion for Change Knowledge hub) and/or
- 2) organise one or more online matchmaking events (this option).

If needed, team formation around ideas will take place during the online events organized by the Consortium. Invitations will be sent out at the latest one week before the matchmaking event. Depending on the number of individual applications and matchmaking requests received, there can be up to 3 matchmaking events organised. During the facilitated online matchmaking event(s), individual applicants as well as teams will present their ideas to find additional team members. Different formats might be used:

- A. speed-dating: a pool of participants will meet online (on Zoom or other online platform) and will have a chance to meet each other and present ideas in breakout rooms. Depending on the number of participants, the meeting time and the number of speed-dating cycles will be defined at a later stage.
- B. pitches/presenting ideas: all participants looking for a partner pitch their ideas after which the individual participants will fill out a special form to choose and/or rank other participants as potential partners according to their preference.

## Background information

For more information on the Open call see FASHION For Change website: <https://www.fashionforchange.eu/acceleration-programme/open-call/>.

As of January 10, 2022, the Fashion for Change project will launch their campaign for a “Growth Programme” including a call for proposals for transnational partnerships. The call closes on April 19, 2022.

**The overall purpose of the programme is to implement a financial and technical support programme to SMEs, designers and startups working in**

**the fashion industry and enable them to develop innovative applications, products, processes and ideas towards circular fashion.**

The purpose of the call for proposals is to select 35 transnational most promising partnerships at different stages of the fashion value chain to present their circular fashion ideas at a 48-hour long Fashion Sprint hackathon event. The selected 35 partnerships with the most impactful ideas will benefit from mentorship, workshops, and networking opportunities during the hackathon. At the end of the event, 25 teams will be selected to enter the Fashion for Change Growth Programme accompanied by the direct financial support of 10 000 EUR per team. During 6 months, the selected teams receive technical and business support through intensive circular fashion and business mentoring, workshops, networking, and study visits. Through the provision of technical and business expertise, teams will be able to develop, test, and make their products more scalable. Then 5 most outstanding teams out of 25 will receive an additional lump sum of 5 000 EUR to increase their investment readiness. At least 2 investor meetups per team will be organized, and additional business support will be provided to revise the business plan.

The selected partnerships/projects will be provided with:

- Financial support for 25 teams (10 000 EUR per team). In addition to 5 teams, another 5000 EUR.
- Mentorship on circularity and sustainability, product/service development, and business development.
- 2 study visits focusing on manufacturing and marketing/business development.
- Workshops and training cover circularity, product/service development, and business development.
- Networking with partners, investors, and experts.
- Access to the Knowledge Hub.
- Support and assistance from the Consortium throughout the project.

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