



# OPEN CALL TO ACCESS CASCADE FUNDING FOR INNOVATION PROJECTS

**Guidelines for Applicants,  
rules and  
topics description.**



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## History of changes

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2	06/05/2026	Withdrawal of the Košice region

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

Abbreviation	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AMKE	Non-profit Civil Company
BMS	Battery Management System
CCRI	Circular Cities and Regions Initiative
CDW	Construction and Demolition Waste
CE	Circular Economy
CFS	Certificate on Financial Statements
DNSH	Do no significant harm
EC	European Commission
ECA	European Court of Auditors
EEA	European Economic Area / European Economic Area Agreement
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
EPR	Extended Producer Responsibility
EPPO	European Public Prosecutor's Office
ESPR	Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicles
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
GBER	General Block Exemption Regulation
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
GPP	Green Public Procurement
HE	Horizon Europe
IA	Innovation Actions
INSEE	National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies (France)
IoT	Internet of Things
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
IT	Information Technology
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LCA	Life Cycle Assessment
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
PIC	Participant Identification Code
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutants
PPI	Public Procurement of Innovative Solutions
PSS	Product-Service System
RDI	Research, Development and Innovation
R&I	Research and Innovation

RIV	Regional Innovation Valleys
SIRET	Establishment Directory Identification System (France)
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
VAT	Value Added Tax

# 1 Introduction: What is RIVCircular?

RIVCircular is a project co-funded by the European Commission (EC) under Grant Agreement 101161013 (HORIZON-EIE-2023-CONNECT-03 Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems of the European Innovation Ecosystems Work Programme / Horizon Europe). RIVCircular proposes a consistent set of core collaborative activities to improve the connections and cooperation between the participating territories.

**The project brings together** 11 partners from 7 countries.

RIVCircular partner	Country	Scope	Region/territory name
Comunidad de Madrid (coordinator)	Spain	Regional	Madrid region
Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d	Spain	Regional	Madrid region
Innlandet Fylkeskommune	Norway	Regional	Innlandet region
Innovasjon Norge	Norway	Regional	Innlandet region
28Digital	Belgium	N/A	N/A
Hauts-de-France Regional Council	France	Regional	Hauts-de-France
Department of Economics of the Kyiv Oblast Regional State Administration	Ukraine	Regional	Kyiv-Oblast region
Green Fund	Greece	National	Greece
Junta de Extremadura	Spain	Regional	Extremadura
FUNDECYT Parque Científico y Tecnológico de Extremadura (FUNDECYT-PCTEX)	Spain	Regional	Extremadura
Vienna Business Agency	Austria	Regional	Vienna

RIVCircular is in line with the new European Innovation Agenda's flagship on accelerating and strengthening innovation in European Innovation Ecosystems across the European Union (EU) and addressing the innovation divide, the RIVCircular project proposes the collaboration of **seven (7) European regions and territories** in southern (Madrid, Extremadura, Greece), central (Hauts-de-France, Vienna), northern (Innlandet) and eastern (Kyiv Oblast) Europe in the field of the circular economy.

RIVCircular mobilizes 12.350.000€ to allocate to stakeholders in RIVCircular funding regions through a cascade funding call that will be jointly funded through Horizon Europe and State aid, for which the aid scheme falls under Article 25 of *Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty (General Block Exemption Regulation, GBER)*<sup>1</sup>, as amended by Commission Regulation (EU) 2023/1315 of 23 June 2023<sup>2</sup>. However, given that the current Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 expires on 31 December 2026, the regions of the RIVCircular project, as the authorities granting the aid, undertakes to make any amendments or corrections that may be necessary to adapt the scheme notified after 31 December 2026 to the extension of the GBER, or to the replacement of the GBER by a new Block Exemption Regulation. The regions of the RIVCircular project, as the granting bodies,

<sup>1</sup> GBER [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 651/2014 of 17 June](#).

<sup>2</sup> [Regulation - 2023/1315 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

undertake to comply with the rules on the accumulation of aid laid down in Article 8 of the Regulation, as well as the obligations to comply with the incentive effect of Article 6 (please note that specific Horizon Europe timeline restrictions apply to cost eligibility, as detailed in Section 3), the publicity obligations laid down in Article 9 and the communication obligations laid down in Article 11. The provisions of Article 1(2) of the GBER, concerning measures excluded from the scope of application of the Regulation, also apply. If any beneficiary declares itself to be in crisis, it shall be excluded from this aid scheme and, while it is subject to a procedure for the recovery of unlawful aid, the granting of this aid shall be suspended, in accordance with the Deggendorf case law<sup>3</sup>.

This document provides guidance information regarding the RIVCircular Open Call, describing the objectives, eligibility, the evaluation criteria and the topics. Applicants are invited to review the contents of the following materials before preparing and submitting their proposal.

## 2 What do we offer?

The RIVCircular project will provide cascade funding by launching an **Interregional Innovation Call** with **five (5) topics**. Those topics are:

- Topic 1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity (see topic description in annex 1)
- Topic 2: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency (see topic description in annex 2)
- Topic 3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse (see topic description in annex 3)
- Topic 4: Circular economy in the textile industry (see topic description in annex 4)
- Topic 5: Digital solutions for circular economy (see topic description in annex 5)

Funded projects under this call should focus on the development and/or deployment of technologies, products and services in the circular economy area, including breakthrough and disruptive innovations, through cooperation between actors from the seven (7) participating regions and territories, considering the eligible topics by region and estimated allocation budget (see Table 2).

Applicants legally based outside the RIVCircular partner territories, or **who do not meet the criteria for operations and presence in the region, are not eligible for funding**, as the RIVCircular initiative is co-funded by the Horizon Europe programme and the regional administrations within the RIVCircular partner territories.

Funded projects should propose activities to produce plans and arrangements or designs for new, altered or improved products, processes or services. These activities may include prototyping, testing, demonstrating, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication - **TRL 6 to 8**.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Deggendorf case law [EUR-Lex - 61992CJ0188 - EN - EUR-Lex](#)

<sup>4</sup> [TRL assessment tool guide | NCP Portal Management | Horizon Europe NCP Portal](#)

The recommended budget for each project is shown in Table 1. Budgets outside this range must be duly justified.

Table 1. Estimated distribution of RIVCircular funds

TOPICS	ESTIMATED BUDGETS PER PROJECT
Topic 1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity	1 – 2 M€
Topic 2: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency	1 – 2 M€
Topic 3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse	1 – 2 M€
Topic 4: Circular economy in the textile industry	1 – 2 M€
Topic 5: Digital solutions for circular economy	200K-700K€

The topics description can be found in the annexes 1-5.

RIVCircular consortium will treat your proposal **confidentially**, as well as any related information, data and documents received. External evaluators are also bound by an obligation of confidentiality.

Applications must not contain any sensitive personal data or trade secrets.

A formal **Cooperation Agreement** must be signed between all beneficiaries to establish a clear governance framework. This private legal instrument defines the specific roles, financial responsibilities, and implementation of duties of each party to ensure successful project delivery. The agreement is drafted and executed under the sole responsibility of the project beneficiaries.

## • Call overview

<b>Call objective</b>	<p>Support Interregional innovation projects in circular economy (TRL starting and finishing 6-8), launching a call with 5 topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topic 1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity (see topic description in annex 1)</li> <li>• Topic 2: Circular energy integration: valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency (see topic description in annex 2)</li> <li>• Topic 3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse (see topic description in annex 3)</li> <li>• Topic 4: Circular economy in the textile industry (see topic description in annex 4)</li> <li>• Topic 5: Digital solutions for circular economy (see topic description in annex 5)</li> </ul>
<b>Total budget available</b>	12.350.000€

<b>Eligible topics by region</b>	Madrid, Innlandet, Hauts-de-France, Kyiv, Extremadura: topics 1-5 Greece and Vienna: topics 1, 2 and 5
<b>Eligibility conditions</b>	At least 3 entities from 3 different Member States or contracting parties to the European Economic Area Agreement, in which the RIVCircular participating territories are involved  Topic 5: The consortium must include at least 1 SME  Applicants from other areas not part of RIVCircular funding territories are not eligible
<b>Eligible applicants per region</b>	All kinds of entities based in Madrid, Hauts-de-France, Innlandet and Kyiv-Oblast regions.  Enterprises based in Vienna.  Enterprises and Research and Knowledge dissemination organisations entities based in Extremadura region  Public and Research and Knowledge dissemination organisations based in Greece  Proposals may only be submitted by legal entities. Natural persons are not eligible to apply.
<b>Estimated aid intensity per type of entity</b>	For enterprises based in: Madrid, Hauts-de-France, Innlandet, Kyiv-Oblast, Vienna, Extremadura <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Corporations: up to 50%</li> <li>- Medium-sized enterprises: up to 60%</li> <li>- Small enterprises: up to 70%</li> </ul> For Research and Knowledge dissemination organizations based: In Madrid, Hauts-de-France, Innlandet, Greece, Extremadura: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up to 100%</li> </ul> In Kyiv-Oblast: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Up to 70%</li> </ul>
<b>Eligible costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Personnel costs</li> <li>- Travel costs</li> <li>- Equipment: depreciation costs</li> <li>- Other goods and services</li> <li>- Subcontracting: up to 10%</li> <li>- Overheads (indirect costs): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Up to 20% for entities based in Madrid, Innlandet, Vienna, Extremadura</li> <li>o Up to 5% for entities based in Greece</li> <li>o 0% for entities based in Kyiv-Oblast</li> <li>o Entities based in Hauts-de-France should consult their regional representative</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>VAT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Recoverable VAT is not eligible for entities based in Madrid, Hauts-de-France, Kyiv, Greece, Extremadura</li> <li>- For entities based in Innlandet and Vienna, applicants should consult their regional representatives</li> </ul>
<b>Projects duration</b>	<p>Topics 1 to 4: between 2-3 years Topic 5: between 1-2 years</p>
<b>Funding per beneficiary</b>	<p>An entity can request up to 600.000€ in total, even if they submit several proposals to different topics within this call</p>
<b>Proposal submission</b>	<p>Compulsory to <b>submit proposals via the website</b> <a href="https://www.rivcircular.eu/call/">https://www.rivcircular.eu/call/</a>, uploading:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form A, Form B (30-page max), Budget and Annex 8 (Declaration on double funding for recipients) (templates available to download on the RIVCircular website). No other documents allowed.</li> <li>- English language.</li> <li>- Re-submissions not allowed, just 1 submission.</li> <li>- The coordinator of each proposal should submit the proposal before the deadline and on behalf of the consortia.</li> <li>- Single-step submission</li> </ul> <p>Parallel submission at the regional level is compulsory for entities based in Hauts-de-France. The entities of these regions will be informed about this.</p>
<b>Evaluation criteria</b>	<p>Excellence: 30% Impact: 40% Implementation: 30%</p>
<b>Enquiries</b>	<p>General consultations: <a href="mailto:info@rivcircular.eu">info@rivcircular.eu</a> Specific regional consultations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Madrid: <a href="mailto:info@rivcircular.eu">info@rivcircular.eu</a></li> <li>- Innlandet <a href="mailto:rivcircular@innlandetfylke.no">rivcircular@innlandetfylke.no</a></li> <li>- Hauts-de-France <a href="mailto:RIVcircular@hautsdefrance.fr">RIVcircular@hautsdefrance.fr</a></li> <li>- Kyiv-Oblast <a href="mailto:prom@econkoda.gov.ua">prom@econkoda.gov.ua</a></li> <li>- Vienna <a href="mailto:rivcircular@wirtschaftsagentur.at">rivcircular@wirtschaftsagentur.at</a></li> <li>- Extremadura <a href="mailto:rivcircular@extremaduraempresarial.es">rivcircular@extremaduraempresarial.es</a> and <a href="mailto:rivcircular@fundecyt-pctex.es">rivcircular@fundecyt-pctex.es</a></li> <li>- Greece <a href="mailto:Rivcircular@prasinosameio.gr">Rivcircular@prasinosameio.gr</a></li> </ul>

### 3 Eligibility criteria

- **General common eligibility criteria for the call**

RIVCircular Open Call supports teams from legal entities in boosting technologies in the circular economy sector. The goal is to support consortia in bringing to market new and disruptive solutions for the circular economy.

SMEs participation is **compulsory** for **topic 5**.

SME participation is encouraged for topics 1, 2, 3, 4.

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are defined in the [SME definition - Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs](#)<sup>5</sup>, where the main factors determining whether an enterprise is an SME are:

1. staff headcount
2. either turnover or balance sheet total

In the case of “**Linked enterprises**”, as defined in Article 3.3 of Annex I of the Commission Regulation 651/2014<sup>6</sup> of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty, only one of them may be a beneficiary.

All participants involved in the proposal **must first be registered** in the [EU Funding & Tender Portal](#)<sup>7</sup> and have their 9-digit **Participant Identification Code (PIC number)**. The validated profiles serve as a guarantee for acknowledging that the participant is an active legal entity and that it is financially viable in line with the criteria of the European Commission and its Agencies. Entities can verify directly on the [EU Funding & Tender Portal](#) whether their entity is already registered and has a PIC. If not, please proceed with the registration following the instructions on the same page ([see instructions](#)). PIC will ensure the typology of each entity. PIC number will be used in [RIVCircular application](#) (Form A).

The project proposals must be submitted by a consortium comprising at least three (3) entities from three (3) different RIVCircular partner territories from different countries. (Table 2).

Projects are expected to **start in February 2027 at the earliest**.

A single entity may receive a **maximum total funding** of **EUR 600.000**, regardless of the number of proposals submitted to this call (cumulative funding). The maximum total funding per entity applies to all topics without any exception.

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<sup>5</sup> SME definition [https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-fundamentals/sme-definition\\_en](https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-fundamentals/sme-definition_en)

<sup>6</sup> [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 651/2014 of 17 June](#)

<sup>7</sup> [EU Funding & Tender portal](#)

Project proposals in the context of the RIVCircular Open Call will be under the EU **Innovation Actions (IA)** modality, **compulsory starting and finishing between TRL 6-8**. Proposals must clearly outline how any proposed technological advances will progress from one TRL to another.

- TRL 6 — Technology demonstrated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)
- TRL 7 — System prototype demonstration in an operational environment
- TRL 8 — System complete and qualified

Each Innovation Activity should aim to deliver concrete and **tangible outcomes** and ensure their dissemination and exploitation.

Proposals should include the following **compulsory deliverables**:

1. A **Dissemination and Exploitation Plan** in:
  - **Month 2** for projects of 1-year duration
  - **Month 3** for projects of 2-year duration
  - **Month 6** for projects of 3-year duration
2. A **Data Management Plan** in:
  - **Month 6** for all projects

**Proposals should include at least one** activity within the following:

- **Support the challenges** of public and private collaborations in **Public Procurement Innovative solutions (PPI)**, by building trust among stakeholders through increasing transparency, openness and collaboration, aligning intersectoral objectives, gaining experience with innovation procurement to mitigate the barrier and friction in its adoption.
- **Encourage Green Public Procurement (GPP)** practices and implementations through transparent knowledge acquisition and transfer, combating greenwashing, and mitigating the initial high costs. The results may be featured in reports and publications aimed at improving green procurement practices.

- **Specific eligibility criteria by type of participating entity, topic, and region**

Only **the entities based within the RIVCircular regions and territories are eligible** to participate, and of these, entities can participate only in topics where their region or territory participates (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Eligible topics by region and estimated available budget

TOPICS	Eligible regions/areas and estimated budget per topic						
	MADRID (Spain)	INNLANDET (Norway)	HAUTS-DE-FRANCE (France)	KYIV OBLAST (Ukraine)	EXTREMADURA (Spain)	GREECE	VIENNA (Austria)
1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity	650.000€	950.000€	200.000€	600.000€	250.000€	400.000€	200.000€
2: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency	650.000€	950.000€	200.000€	1.000.000€	250.000€	400.000€	200.000€
3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse	650.000€	200.000€	325.000€	200.000€	250.000€		
4: Circular economy in the textile industry	650.000€	200.000€	325.000€	600.000€	250.000€		
5: Digital solutions for circular economy	400.000€	400.000€	100.000€	300.000€	200.000€	200.000€	200.000€

This distribution of funds by topic is an estimation. The funds may be redistributed to ensure that the highest-rated projects are funded

**Applicants legally based outside the region, or - if headquartered elsewhere in the same country (except for Greece that is within national level) - entities that do not have a formally registered and operational presence in the region that is directly relevant to the activities and objectives of the proposed project (indicated in Table 2), are not eligible for funding.**

**Applicants must pass Russian sanctions checks** to ensure full compliance with international and EU regulations (Guidance for EU operators: Implementing enhanced due diligence to shield against Russia sanctions circumvention [Guidance for EU operators: Implementing enhanced due diligence to shield against Russia sanctions circumvention - guidance-eu-operators-russia-sanctions-circumvention en.pdf](#)).

The applying consortium must take into consideration **Intellectual Property Rights** (IPR), ensuring compliance with Horizon Europe policy on IPR, as each partner retains ownership of the results it generates. Access rights will be granted to other partners for project implementation and exploitation under fair and reasonable conditions. Results will be protected where appropriate, while ensuring open access to scientific publications and compliance with EU regulations on AI (Artificial Intelligence), data protection and ethics.

Table 3 shows specific information about the **project's duration** and the **minimum number of participants per proposal** and topic.

Table 3. Project Duration and Participation Requirements

Topics	Projects duration	Minimum n° of partners per consortium
<b>Topic 1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity</b>	Between 2-3 years	Three (3) entities from at least three (3) different Member States or contracting parties to the European Economic Area Agreement (EEA) <sup>8</sup> , in which are involved the RIVCircular participating territories (see Table 2)  <i>SME participation is encouraged</i>  <i>Note: Ukraine is not part of the European Economic Area Agreement</i>
<b>Topic 2: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency</b>		
<b>Topic 3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse</b>		
<b>Topic 4: Circular economy in the textile industry</b>		
<b>Topic 5: Digital solutions for circular economy</b>	Between 1-2 years	Three (3) entities, from three (3) different Member States or contracting parties to the European Economic Area Agreement, in which are involved the RIVCircular participating territories (see Table 2).  <b>Participation of one (1) SME is mandatory</b>  <i>Note: Ukraine is not part of the European Economic Area Agreement</i>

- *The projects that do not comply with all the criteria mentioned in section 3 will be excluded and marked as ineligible. The admissibility and eligibility criteria will be evaluated based on the information provided in your application throughout the entire evaluation process.*
- *Projects must demonstrate an **incentive effect**<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, in strict compliance with Horizon Europe regulations<sup>10</sup> regarding Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), project activities may not commence, and no eligible costs may be incurred, prior to the formal signature of the Specific Grant Agreement and the official start date defined therein. Any activities performed or payments made before this milestone will be considered ineligible.*

## • Aid intensity

The aid constitutes grants and, for **enterprises**<sup>11</sup>, will be allocated under General Block Exemption Regulation-GBER, article 25 (5) and (6). The maximum Percentage of aid intensity per type of enterprise is as follows and if the following conditions are met:

Type of enterprise	Maximum Percentage of aid intensity
Corporations	Up to 50%

<sup>8</sup> [European Economic Area Agreement \(EEA Agreement\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> Incentive effect as defined in Article 6 [GBER \(EU\) No. 651/2014](#)

<sup>10</sup> Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe, and the Horizon Europe Annotated Grant Agreement (AGA) rules governing cost eligibility for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP).

<sup>11</sup> In the State Aid regulations, the word " Undertaking " is commonly used instead of "Enterprise". Following the Art 2.1 of the [Commission Notice on the notion of State Aid as referred to in Article 107\(1\) of the TFUE](#) it is defined as follows: "The Court of Justice has consistently defined undertakings as entities engaged in an economic activity, regardless of their legal status and the way in which they are financed. The classification of a particular entity as an undertaking thus depends entirely on the nature of its activities."

Medium-sized enterprises ( <a href="#">European Commission SME definition</a> )	Up to 60%
Small enterprises ( <a href="#">European Commission SME definition</a> )	Up to 70%

- The aid intensity for each beneficiary shall not exceed 25% of the eligible costs for **experimental development** (General Block Exemption Regulation article 25 (5)).
- The aid intensities for experimental development may be increased up to a maximum aid intensity of 70% of the eligible costs in accordance with the points a and d (General Block Exemption Regulation article 25 (6)):
  - o by 10 percentage points for medium-sized enterprises and by 20 percentage point for small enterprises (General Block Exemption Regulation article 25 (6a)).
  - o by 25 percentage points if the research and development project (General Block Exemption Regulation article 25 (6d)):
    - (i) has been selected by a Member State following an open call to form part of a project jointly designed by at least three Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement; and
    - (ii) involves effective collaboration between undertakings in at least two Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement when the beneficiary is a SME, or in at least three Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement when the beneficiary is a large enterprise; and
    - (iii) if at least one the two following conditions is fulfilled:
      - the results of the research and development project are widely disseminated in at least three Member States or contracting parties to the EEA Agreement through conferences, publication, open access repositories, or free or open source software; or
      - the beneficiary commits to, on a timely basis, make available licences for research results of aided research and development projects, which are protected by intellectual property rights, at a market price and on non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis for use by interested parties in the EEA.

- **Specific criteria per region**

The **eligibility of participating entities, and other constraints** varies based on the type of entity and region:

### Specific criteria for Madrid region (Spain):

#### Eligibility

**All entities** such as public bodies, universities, research centres, corporations, SME and other business entities, **legally based in the Madrid Region** are eligible.

Entities are considered based in the Madrid Region if they operate a productive working center in the region, conduct their primary project task and activities within the region, and are officially registered in the region.

Applicants must comply with the requirements set out in **Article 13 of Law 38/2003, of 17 November, on General Subsidies**<sup>12</sup>.

#### Aid intensity

The aid constitutes grants.

For **enterprises** see the previous section on “Aid intensity”.

For **Research and Knowledge dissemination entities**, it can be financed up to 100% as non-aid, if compatible with section 2.1 of the Communication from the Commission Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01) and specifically, with non-economic activities included in Section 2.1 articles 20a and 20b.

Recoverable value added tax (VAT) is not eligible for public funding; therefore, when the applicant recovers VAT, the eligible expenditure must be presented excluding tax.

#### Eligible costs

**Indirect costs** (overheads) applicable to Madrid-based entities could be up to 20% of the direct cost. Subcontracting is not included in the indirect cost calculation.

The **rest of** the applicable **eligible costs** are indicated in **section 4** below.

#### Payments

Fundación para el Conocimiento madri+d will process the financial payments for entities belonging to Madrid region and will consist of three payments:

- **Pre-financing payment** (to be received after the signature of the Agreement)
- **Interim payments** (released following the submission and positive evaluation of the intermediate performance reporting)

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<sup>12</sup> [Law 38/2003, of 17 November on General Subsidies](#) (in Spanish)

- **Final payment** (processed after the project completion, upon the successful assessment of the final project results and outcomes).

### **Visibility**

For all dissemination activities, Madrid-based entities funded under this RIVCircular call must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in section 7 "Visibility and disclaimer"), that the projects are co-funded by the Community of Madrid and include its logo.

### **Enquiries**

For any specific enquiries from applicants in the Madrid region, please send an email to [info@rivcircular.eu](mailto:info@rivcircular.eu).

## **Specific criteria for Hauts-De-France (France)**

### **Eligibility**

**All legal entities** (public or private bodies, profit or non-profit) such as public bodies, universities, research centres, corporations, SME and other business entities, **established in Région Hauts-de-France** are eligible.

Recoverable value added tax (VAT) is not eligible for public funding; therefore, when the applicant recovers VAT, the eligible expenditure must be presented excluding tax.

### **Aid intensity**

The subsidies granted to Hauts-de-France participants are subject to state aid rules. As such, the aid intensities allocated to the project will not exceed the maximum rates authorized under COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) 2023/1315 of June 23, 2023, amending Regulation (EU) No. 651/2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty.

The aid constitutes grants and will be analysed by Hauts-de-France services for determining the most relevant state aid scheme(s) associated with the expenses foreseen. **The rates for enterprises indicated before in the section on Aid intensity are for information purposes only and subject to further investigation.**

\* Maximum percentage of aid intensity under General Block Exemption Regulation-GBER, article 25. Other state aid scheme could be determined during the proposal's analysis (e.g. " Régime cadre exempté de notification N° SA. 111723 relatif aux aides à la recherche, au développement et à l'innovation (RDI) pour la période 2024-2026").

**For Research and Knowledge dissemination entities**, it can be financed up to 100% as non-aid, if compatible with section 2.1 of the Communication from the Commission Framework for State aid for

research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01) and specifically, with non-economic activities included in Section 2.1 articles 20a and 20b.

### **Process for participants**

**Hauts-de-France** participants will submit an additional application aside their RIVCircular proposal to the usual regional subsidy system and associated validation steps. Hauts-de-France participants will notably be required to detail their developments and budgets within the RIV circular proposal in French language.

The dossier to be submitted will contain:

- An official letter requesting a grant addressed to the President of the Hauts-de-France Region
- A description of the tasks foreseen in the RIV circular project, the role of the entity within the partnership and the duration of the operation
- Financial statements of the previous year
- A detailed budget of the operation

***Ineligible expenses:*** taxes and duties, financial costs (agios, daily, overdraft fees), provisions, fines, contributions in kind, exceptional expenses, memberships and expenses unrelated to the activity program, investment expenses presented as operating expenses, expenses redirected to new actions without prior notification to the Region's services.

These documents (and associated budget) constitute the core of the submission to regional authorities and will be analysed by its services aside the RIVCircular evaluation. Besides, participants will have to send and provide all mandatory documents related to their application.

### ***Mandatory documents to be provided:***

#### ***FOR ALL***

- *Bank details*
- *Certificate of non-recovery of VAT when expenses are presented inclusive of tax*
- *Decision of the competent authority approving the transaction*
- *Accounting information as of December 31 of the previous year*
- *List of public subsidies obtained during the last three years*
- *Copy of the INSEE document (SIRET)*

#### ***FOR ASSOCIATIONS***

- *Publication in the Official Journal and receipt of declaration to the prefecture (for a first application)*
- *Articles of association*
- *List of board members*
- *Sworn statement certifying that the association is in compliance with its tax and social security obligations*
- *Charter of republican values and secularism signed by the duly authorized legal representative*
- *Certificate of the Republican Commitment Contract (certificate attached)*

#### ***FOR COMPANIES AND ECONOMIC INTEREST GROUPS***

- *Proof of legal existence (Kbis extract, registration in the relevant register or directory)*

- *Articles of association and list of board members*
- *A sworn statement certifying that the company is in compliance with its tax and social security obligations*
- *Approved and signed balance sheets and income statements for the last three financial years + the latest auditor's report*

#### **FOR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS**

- *Articles of association of the entity and list of members of the board of directors*

The grant application will then be put to a vote by the regional councillors of the Hauts-de-France standing committee.

#### **Payments**

No pre-financing will be provided to Hauts-de-France participants.

First payment will be issued once the dedicated deliberation is published. Interim payments will occur upon participants' reporting.

#### **Visibility**

For all dissemination activities, Haut-de-France-based entities funded under this RIVCircular call must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in section 7 "Visibility and disclaimer"), that the projects are co-funded by Région Hauts-de-France and include its logo.

#### **Enquiries**

More information will be provided by Hauts-de-France Region upon RIVCircular proposal submission. For any specific enquiries from applicants in Hauts-de-France region, please send an email to [RIVcircular@hautsdefrance.fr](mailto:RIVcircular@hautsdefrance.fr).

### **Specific criteria for Innlandet (Norway)**

#### **Eligibility**

**All legal entities relevant for the action** (public or private bodies, profit or non-profit), such as universities, research centres, corporations, SME\* and other business entities, **based in Innlandet** are eligible. Additionally, entities that have a formally registered and operational presence in the region that is directly relevant to the activities and objectives of the proposed project, but have headquarters elsewhere in Norway, are also eligible.

Any proposal involving stakeholders covered by the criteria above must indicate that the main project tasks and activities for which support is sought are to take place within Innlandet (Innlandet fylke). Where this is not sufficiently clear from the proposal, the proposal may be rejected, even if the entity is legally based in or operating in Innlandet.

### **Aid intensity:**

For aid that constitutes state aid, the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER) applies in addition to requirements by Horizon Europe.

The intensity of aid is provided according to GBER article 25 as experimental development. For project support that falls within the definition of state aid, to any undertaking regardless of legal status or profit motive, the intensity of aid is calculated as an enterprise in the previous section on “Aid intensity”

**For Research and Knowledge dissemination entities**, it can be financed up to 100% as non-aid, if compatible with section 2.1 of the Communication from the Commission Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01) and specifically, with non-economic activities included in Section 2.1 articles 20a and 20b.

Recoverable value added tax (VAT) is not eligible for public funding; therefore, when the applicant recovers VAT, the eligible expenditure must be presented excluding tax.

### **Process for participants**

Applicants from Innlandet will not need to submit a separate application to Innlandet County Council.

By submitting a proposal, applicants consent to Innlandet County Council storing proposals in their archives in cases where its respective stakeholders participate. These documents will not be publicly available and will be treated as confidential.

If selected, the grant agreements will contain an annex specifying conversion rates and further specific details specifically for beneficiaries from Innlandet.

Note that aid granted by RIVCircular constitutes financing provided to third parties through the FSTP mechanism of a Horizon Europe project (Grant Agreement ID: 101161013). As such, the procedure is managed as a project wherein Innlandet County Council is a co-funding participant.

### **Eligible costs**

Indirect costs (overheads) applicable to Innlandet-based entities could be up to 20% of the direct cost. Subcontracting is not included in indirect cost calculation.

The rest of the applicable eligible costs are indicated in section 4 below.

### **Payments**

Innlandet County Council will process the financial payments for entities based in the Innlandet region and will consist of three payments.

- **Pre-financing payment** (paid shortly after the signature of the Grant Agreement)
- **Interim payments** (issued after approval of the intermediate performance reporting)
- **Final payment** (processed after the project ends, upon the successful assessment of the final project results and outcomes).

The distribution of amounts between the payments is subject to evaluation of each project. Pre-financing up to half of the grant *may* be considered if duly justified. 25% of the funding will be retained for the final payment.

## **Visibility**

For all dissemination activities, Innlandet-based entities funded under this RIVCircular call must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in section 7 "Visibility and disclaimer"), that the projects are co-funded by Innlandet County Council and include its logo.

## **Enquiries**

For any specific enquiries from applicants in the Innlandet region, please send an email to [rivcircular@innlandetfylke.no](mailto:rivcircular@innlandetfylke.no)

## **Specific criteria for Kyiv region (Ukraine)**

### **Eligibility**

All entities (public or private bodies, profit or non-profit), such as public bodies, universities, research centres, corporations, SME\* and other business organizations, legally based (registered) in Kyiv region are eligible.

Entities are considered to be those that are based in Kyiv region if they conduct their activities and complete primary project tasks and activities within the region and are officially registered in the region.

### **Aid intensity**

The aid constitutes grants and will be allocated for **enterprises** as indicated in the previous section on "Aid intensity".

Entities such as **research organizations** may receive funding of up to 70% of eligible costs, when they support activities that are not carried out for commercial purposes, as this funding may be considered non-state aid.

In accordance with paragraph 14.1.121 of the [Tax Code of Ukraine](#), non-profit enterprises, institutions, and entities are considered to be non-payers of corporate income tax in accordance with paragraph 133.4 of Article 133 of the Tax Code of Ukraine.

Recoverable value added tax (VAT) is not eligible for public funding; therefore, when the applicant recovers VAT, the eligible expenditure must be presented excluding tax.

### **Eligible costs**

Indirect costs (overhead costs) **are not provided for**.

Applicable eligible costs are indicated in section 4 below (see section 4 in the Guidelines document).

### **Payments**

The Department of Economics of the Kyiv Regional State Administration will process the financial payments for entities belonging to the Kyiv region.

No pre-financing will be provided for Kyiv region participants.

Interim payments will be released following the submission and positive evaluation of the intermediate performance reporting. Final payment (processed after the project completion, upon the successful assessment of the final project results and outcomes).

### **Visibility**

For all information dissemination activities, entities based in the Kyiv region and funded under this RIVCircular call, must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in Section 7 “Visibility and Disclaimer”) that the projects are co-funded by the Department of Economics of the Kyiv Regional State Administration and include the logo of the Kyiv Regional State Administration.

### **Enquiries**

For any specific enquiries from applicants in the Kyiv region, please send an email to [prom@econ.koda.gov.ua](mailto:prom@econ.koda.gov.ua)

## **Specific criteria for Vienna (Austria)**

### **Eligibility**

**Small, medium-sized and large enterprises** with an existing or planned **establishment in Vienna**. Founders planning to open a permanent establishment and implement their project in Vienna must demonstrate that they have established a premise in Vienna within 6 months of funding approval.

Non-profit entities are not eligible.

An “establishment” is a fixed business premise, i.e. the enterprise has a power of disposition over certain (owned or rented) facilities, premises and/or (machine) equipment. Fixed business premises that only serve as an auxiliary function (e.g. a distribution center) are not considered an establishment.

### **Aid intensity**

The aid constitutes grants.

**For enterprises** see in the previous section on “Aid intensity”.

### **Eligible costs**

Funded internal personnel costs from Vienna-based entities are awarded indirect costs (overheads) of 20%. The overhead rate covers all overhead costs (e.g. rent for general spaces, operating costs, maintenance, office materials, administration, accounting/controllers, payroll accounting, IT). These costs may not be listed as direct costs.

The **rest of** the applicable **eligible costs** are indicated in **section 4** below.

### **Payments**

Vienna Business Agency will process the financial payments for entities based in the Vienna region. The payment schedule includes an advance payment of a maximum of 50% of the approved funding amount (to be received after the signature of the Agreement). One partial payment can be made following a positive evaluation of the submitted interim report. The maximum amount is based on the approved funding amount, minus any advance payments, also leaving 20% of the total funding amount for the final payment.

Regarding the interim report:

Partial payment is available to projects with a duration of 3 years or more following the submission of an interim report including a financial account. This partial payment can be made halfway through the planned project duration at the earliest and, at the latest, one year before the actual end of the project. Sufficient eligible costs must have been incurred at that point in time (more than 50% of project costs). An interim report must include an interim account of actual project costs incurred to date as well as updated cost planning for the project.

### **Visibility**

For all dissemination activities, Vienna-based entities funded under this RIVCircular call must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in section 7 "Visibility and disclaimer"), that the projects are co-funded by the Vienna Business Agency and include its logo.

### **Enquiries**

For any specific enquiries from applicants in the Vienna region, please send an email to [rivcircular@wirtschaftsagentur.at](mailto:rivcircular@wirtschaftsagentur.at).

## **Specific criteria for Greece**

### **Eligibility**

Potential beneficiaries of the call include the Ministry of Environment and Energy, acting as the central executive body for environmental policy-making, as well as its supervised entities with relevant competencies. Eligible applicants also include other Ministries, Local Government Authorities (Municipalities and Regions), Municipal Enterprises, Decentralized Administrations, and Legal Entities of Public or Private Law (under state supervision).

Furthermore, eligibility extends to Non-Governmental Entities (NGOs) operating as non-profit associations, Non-Profit Civil Companies (AMKE), Public Benefit Foundations based in Greece, Social Cooperative Enterprises (Koin.S.Ep.), and Associations. Additionally, Universities, Research Centers or

Institutions, Chambers, and Scientific or Professional Associations are included. All potential beneficiaries must explicitly include the protection and management of the natural and/or urban environment, or the protection of wildlife, within their statutory or charter objectives.

### **Aid intensity**

Potential beneficiaries will be financed for 100% of their total eligible budget as non-aid, if compatible with section 2.1 of the Communication C (2022) 7388 final of 19.10.2022 of the European Commission “Framework for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation”. The aid is intended for activities that are not carried out for commercial purposes.

### **Payment terms**

#### **Payments schedule**

Funding is provided through a reimbursement model; therefore, no pre-payment or advance funding is available. Payments are delivered in three instalments following the submission and approval of necessary progress reports.

### **Aid Intensity and VAT**

- **Funding Rate:** Eligible beneficiaries receive 100% financing of their total eligible budget.
- **VAT Policy:** Recoverable Value Added Tax (VAT) is not eligible for public funding. If an applicant is entitled to recover VAT, all expenditure must be reported excluding tax.

### **Expenditure Guidelines**

To ensure reimbursement, all costs must be directly linked to the project and incurred within the eligibility period.

- **Personnel:** Only project-related contract costs are eligible; the salaries of permanent public sector personnel are excluded.
- **Travel:** Expenses (subsistence, mileage, etc.) are reimbursed for project team members only, according to the limits set by Law 4336/2015.
- **Equipment:** All equipment must be registered in the entity’s Fixed Assets Registry.
- **Overheads:** Fixed operating costs or indirect costs could be up to 5% of the direct costs
- **Ineligible Costs:** Beneficiaries cannot claim bank charges, insurance premiums, fines, or penalties. Postage costs are eligible under conditions.

### **Other compliance terms**

- All invoices exceeding **€500** must be processed via bank transfer.
- Every receipt or invoice must explicitly indicate the project title and the **Green Fund** and must be accompanied by a bank payment document.
- Non-profit entities must be registered in the Funded Bodies Registry (of the Hellenic Ministry of Digital Governance) <https://mef.diavgeia.gov.gr/>, according to the provisions of Law 4727/2020 (art. 83).
- Cash invoices with relevant indication and stamp of the issuer

## Relevant legislation

- Article 180 of Law n. 4820/2020 'Organic Law of the Court of Auditors and other regulations' (obligation to inform the funding body),
- Ministerial Decision 21091/2990/03.08.1946 'On the determination of an additional daily allowance for those employed outside the office employees'
- Law 4412/2016 'Public works, supplies and services contracts',
- Law 4336/2015, Subparagraph D.9, as amended and in force.

## Visibility

For all dissemination activities, Greek entities funded under this RIVCircular call must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in section 7 "Visibility and disclaimer"), that the projects are co-funded by the Green Fund and include its logo (available in Greek [here](#), in English [here](#)). Also, Green Fund should be updated in case of upcoming communication activities, events, etc.

For any specific enquiries from applicants in Greece, please send an email to [Rivcircular@prasinotameio.gr](mailto:Rivcircular@prasinotameio.gr)

## Specific criteria for Extremadura (Spain)

### Eligibility

In Extremadura, **private entities** will be eligible for this grant. Their headquarters or permanent production centre must be located in the Autonomous Community of Extremadura. The activities and budget execution of the project must take place in Extremadura.

Different aid intensities will be established depending on the size of the company: **50/60/70 and 70-100%** co-financing for entities such as research organizations supporting activities that are **not carried out for commercial purposes**.

### Payment schedule

The following payment schedule is set as follows, depending on the topic:

- **Topic 1 to 4: 3 payments** are established: Pre-financing of **70%** of the eligible amount, to be received after the signature of the Agreement (2027); **15%** of intermediate payment before the end of the second year and after interim justification; and the third and final **15%** after the completion and final justification.  
For example, a project that lasts three years submits an application and is selected at the end of 2026, would receive the first payment at the beginning of 2027; in 2029, after the intermediate justification, it would receive the second payment; and at the end of 2030 approximately it would receive the third and final payment, after the final justification.
- **Topic 5:** 2 payments are established: pre-financing of **70%** of the eligible amount, to be received after the signature of the Agreement (2027); final **30%** after the end of the project and final justification.

For example, a project that lasts one year submits an application and is selected at the end of 2026, would receive the first payment at the beginning of 2027; and approximately at the beginning of 2028 it would receive the second and final payment, after the final justification.

### **Legal framework**

The concession will be made through publication in the DOE (Diario Oficial de Extremadura), governed by the Law on Subsidies of the Autonomous Community of Extremadura (Ley 6/2011 del 23 de marzo)<sup>13</sup>.

### **Aid intensity**

The aid constitutes grants.

For **enterprises** see in the previous section on "Aid intensity".

**For Research and Knowledge dissemination organizations** it can be financed up to 100% as non-aid, if compatible with section 2.1 of the Communication from the Commission Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2022/C 414/01) and specifically, with non-economic activities included in Section 2.1 articles 20a and 20b.

Recoverable value added tax (VAT) is not eligible for public funding; therefore, when the applicant recovers VAT, the eligible expenditure must be presented excluding tax.

### **Additional criteria**

The company must be up to date with its **tax** or **Social Security obligations**, and, in general, fulfil all the requisites to be granted subsidies in the Autonomous Community of Extremadura (Article 12 Law 6/2011).

Applicants wishing to submit a proposal are suggested to first **contact** [rivcircular@extremaduraempresarial.es](mailto:rivcircular@extremaduraempresarial.es) and [rivcircular@fundecyt-pctex.es](mailto:rivcircular@fundecyt-pctex.es) as soon as the consortium is completed and before submitting the proposal. This communication must take place at least **3 working days** before the deadline of the call.

**Visibility requirements:** for all dissemination activities, entities funded under this RIVCircular call must indicate (in addition to the general requirements in section 7 "Visibility and disclaimer"), that the projects are co-funded by Junta de Extremadura and include its logo.

**Additional requirements:** will be provided in later phases of the call.

### **Specificities related to expenditures in Extremadura**

**Personnel:** Only personnel expenses directly related to the project are eligible

**Ineligible expenses:** beneficiaries cannot claim bank charges, insurance premiums, fines, or penalties.

**Indirect costs:** 20% of direct costs (excluding external hires)

All expenses must be paid **through a bank**, and payments in cash are not allowed.

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<sup>13</sup> [DOE 2011 - N° 059.qxd](#)

## 4 Eligible costs

In terms of cost eligibility, RIVCircular project follows the guidelines of the European Commission<sup>14</sup> and Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014<sup>15</sup> (Art. 25(3)). Eligible costs are those directly related to and strictly necessary for the implementation of project activities and incurred within the project period.

The following cost categories are considered eligible:

1. **Personnel costs** – Researchers, technicians and other supporting staff to the extent employed on the project. In the proposal budget template, only the total allocated amount for personnel costs needs to be provided. Personnel costs are considered direct costs and can't be managed as indirect costs.

2. **Travel costs** – Travel, accommodation and subsistence costs necessary for the execution of the project.

3. **Equipment costs** – Costs of instruments and equipment to the extent and for the period used for the project. Where such instruments and equipment are not used for their full life for the project, only the depreciation cost corresponding to the life of the project, as calculated on the basis of generally accepted accounting principles are considered as eligible.

4. **Other goods & services** – Other goods and services include, for instance, consumables and supplies, communication and dissemination activities, costs related to intellectual property rights (IPR), certificates on the methodology, translations, publications (including open access). A CFS (Certificate Financial Statement) is obligatory for all beneficiaries who request a contribution reaching or exceeding the threshold of 430,000€ for the entire duration of the action. The costs for this obligatory CFS are eligible and must therefore be budgeted in the proposal phase.

5. **Subcontracting** – Subcontracting could be up to 10% of the direct costs, provided that the need is duly justified. Subcontracting should be based on the beneficiary's usual purchasing practices and ensuring best value for money and no conflict of interest.

6. **Indirect costs** – for Indirect costs (overheads), each entity should check the specific criteria of their region/territory, as indicated in section 3.

In the submitted proposals, costs must be described by each participating party in the consortium. The budget must be filled in using the **Excel template available**. Applicants **should explain and justify the budget (for each budget category separately)**.

To ensure the costs eligibility, the following core principles must be applied:

- Costs must be actually incurred and directly related to the implementation of the project within the agreed timeframe.
- Costs must comply with the terms and conditions set out in the Specific Agreements.

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<sup>14</sup> Horizon Europe Work Program 2026-2027 ([European Commission Decision C\(2025\) 2779 of 11 Dec 2025](#)) and in particular, conditions for 'innovation actions' set in General Annexes

<sup>15</sup> [Commission Regulation \(EU\) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014](#)

- Costs must be necessary for the project's implementation and proportionate to the work performed and results achieved.
- Costs must be identifiable, verifiable, and supported by adequate documentation.
- Payments and eligibility of costs are contingent on the satisfactory completion of project deliverables and achievement of KPIs.

## 5 How to submit the proposal?

Proposals must be submitted in a **single-stage** modality through the RIVCircular website <https://www.rivcircular.eu> by **17 September** at 14h00 CET (the deadline date).

A **complete submission includes the four (4) duly filled templates** (available on the <https://www.rivcircular.eu>), as follows:

- **Form A:** Administrative Data Sheet (Word Template), includes data on the participants, legal declarations and contact persons (must be uploaded as PDF).
- **Budget:** Detailed Financial Plan Table (Excel Template).
- **Form B:** Proposal (Word Template) – Technical Narrative and Description (**max. 30 pages**), with the planned activities, work packages, etc. (must be uploaded as PDF).
- **Annex 8 (Declaration on double funding for recipients)** (Word Template that must be uploaded signed).

*Make sure that the 4 templates have been followed and all sections are completed!*

**English is the official language.** Submissions written in any language other than English will not be eligible or evaluated. English is the only official language during the whole implementation of the RIVCircular programme. This means that all required documentation and deliverables must be submitted in English to be considered eligible.

Please follow the structure of the template “Form B” when preparing your proposal. It has been adapted to ensure that the important aspects of your innovation and planned work are presented in a way that will enable the evaluators to make an effective assessment against the award criteria. Any pages exceeding the **30-page** limit in Form B (excluding the cover page but including the executive summary) will be rejected and not considered. However, please do not regard the page limit as a target! It is in your best interest to keep your text as concise as possible, as evaluators rarely view unnecessarily long proposals in a positive light. To help applicants, a PDF document is available with information regarding format, conditions and explanations to fill in the Form B.

***Re-submissions are not allowed.***

- *Proposals submitted later than the deadline will be considered ineligible.*
- *Any submission provided by any means other than through the RIVCircular website will not be accepted.*

## 6 How will the proposed projects be evaluated?

Proposals will be reviewed for formal requirements (admissibility and eligibility) by the competent decision-making body of the corresponding region, in line with Horizon Europe principles of transparency, equal treatment and non-discrimination.

The coordinator of the consortium is responsible only for the information related to their own entity. Each applicant remains responsible for the information declared for their respective entity.

If the proposal is selected for funding, the participants will all be required to sign a declaration of honour.

Once admissibility and eligibility are verified, proposals will be evaluated by a panel of 3 external and independent experts (bound by an obligation of confidentiality and avoiding conflict of interest) appointed specifically for each topic.

The evaluation process will ensure full impartiality and the absence of conflicts of interest for each proposal. The consortium will guarantee that all experts involved in the evaluation:

- Act in a personal capacity and do not represent any entity or country;
- Are fully independent and external to the beneficiaries and any third parties involved in the project.

Reviewers will be required to formally confirm, at all stages of the evaluation process, that no conflict of interest exists and that they will ensure full confidentiality with regard to all documents and the overall evaluation process.

All evaluators will comply with Horizon Europe standards on evaluation procedures, conflict of interest, and confidentiality. To this end, they will sign a declaration confirming that:

- (i) they will carry out the evaluation in a fair, impartial and confidential manner;
- (ii) they act independently and without representing any entity;
- (iii) they have no conflict of interest, whether actual or potential;
- (iv) they will not discuss the proposals with third parties;
- (v) they will not contact applicants under any circumstances; and
- (vi) they will comply with all applicable European Commission rules.

Any breach of these obligations or of the evaluation criteria defined in the guidelines may result in the immediate termination of the evaluator's contract. In such cases, any payments made may be recovered, and the proposals concerned will be reassigned to another evaluator.

The Evaluation Committee will assess technical, financial and operational capacity, and assign scores. Proposals will then be ranked based on their quality and feasibility, as outlined by the applicants in Form B Instructions document and the Budget.

The Evaluation Committee's ranking list and funding recommendation will be forwarded to the Project Steering Committee, which will verify and confirm that the evaluation process has been carried out in full transparency and in compliance with rules. The final selection of projects to be funded will be confirmed

by the Steering Committee. Participants will receive notification by email within an estimated maximum period of four (4) months from the deadline. The final list of approved and rejected projects will be published on the RIVCircular website <https://www.rivcircular.eu>.

The evaluation is based on a 15-point scale, and proposals must exceed a **threshold of 11** points to be considered for funding.

At least one (1) project per topic is expected to be funded for areas 1, 2, 3, and 4, while three (3) projects are expected to be funded under topic 5 (Table 4). The final ranking and allocation of funds will be determined based on the evaluation score and budget availability. In case a topic receives no proposals meeting the required quality standards, the allocated budget may be reallocated to other topics.

Table 4. Funding allocation: minimum number of projects per topic expected to be funded

Topics	Minimum nr. of projects expected to be funded
Topic 1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity	1
Topic 2: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency	1
Topic 3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse	1
Topic 4: Circular economy in the textile industry	1
Topic 5: Digital solutions for circular economy	3

• **Evaluation criteria**

The following criteria are essential, as they appear in the evaluation form and are referenced in the *Instructions on the Application Form – Part B*. This ensures that applicants understand the key questions evaluators will consider when reviewing each section of a proposal. While some sections do not require evaluators to provide specific answers (e.g., the abstract), they may still influence their overall impression of the proposal.

Each of the three sections (1. Excellence (30%), 2. Impact (40%) and 3. Quality and efficiency of Implementation (30%)) will be scored in the range from 0-5. The maximum score for a proposal is 15. Half marks (0,5) are allowed, no decimals.

- 0 — The proposal fails to address** the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 — Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 — Fair.** The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 — Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- 4 —Very Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

**5 — Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The default threshold for individual sections (1. Excellence, 2. Impact and 3. Implementation) is 3, and the default overall threshold is 11.

The ranking, together with budget availability, will be the selection criteria. In case of a tie, the impact section will weight 1.5.

Table 5 outlines both the general and specific criteria applicable to this call.

Table 5. Evaluation criteria for RIVCircular proposals

<b>1. Excellence (30%)</b>	
Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious and goes beyond the state of the art. Inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end users <sup>16</sup> where appropriate.	<p>Assess the project's objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they clear and pertinent to the topic?</li> <li>• Are they measurable and verifiable?</li> <li>• Are they realistically achievable?</li> <li>• Is the proposed work ambitious and goes beyond the current state-of-practice? Does the proposal address needs in the respective innovation ecosystem of the involved region(s)?</li> <li>• Does the proposal include technology-based innovation(s), novel approaches, new products, services or business and organizational models with clear connection to the expected outcomes of the call?</li> <li>• Is the proposal aligned with the technical request of the proposal? Is the project addressing regional strategies for innovation, building on regional initiatives such as smart specialisation strategies? This includes a focus on place-based value chains, needs and opportunities.</li> <li>• Does the project cover relevant key stakeholders, either by partnership or through other methods of involvement where appropriate?</li> <li>• If applicants justify that an inter-disciplinary approach is unnecessary, is it credible?</li> <li>• Has the gender dimension in research and innovation content been properly considered?</li> <li>• Are open science practices implemented as an integral part of the proposal?</li> <li>• Is the research data management properly addressed?</li> </ul>
<b>2. Impact (40%)</b>	
<b>2.1 Impact pathways</b> Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes specified in the topic, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from to the project.	<p>Assess the proposed pathways towards impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the contribution of the project towards the expected outcomes of the topic, in the longer term, <b>credible and does the proposal present a pathway to commercialisation?</b></li> <li>• Are <b>potential barriers and risks</b> to the expected outcomes and <b>mitigation measures</b> proposed? Is <b>any potential negative outcome or impact (i.e. environmental, structural, social) identified</b> (including when expected results are brought at scale, such as at commercial</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> in terms of knowledge co-creation

	<p>level)? Is the <b>management of the potential negative impacts</b> properly described?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the <b>scale and significance</b> of the project's contribution to the expected outcomes and impacts <b>estimated and quantified</b> (including baselines, benchmarks and assumptions used for those estimates)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2.2 Dissemination, exploitation and communication plan</b> Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.</p>	<p>Assess the measures to maximise impact – Dissemination, exploitation and communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the proposed dissemination, exploitation and communication measures <b>suitable</b> for the project <b>and of good quality</b>? All measures should be <b>proportionate to the scale</b> of the project and should contain concrete actions to be implemented both during and after the end of the project.</li> <li>• Are the <b>target groups</b> (e.g. industry/commercial actors, stakeholders in the regional innovation system, scientific community, end users, financial actors, public at large) for these measures identified?</li> <li>• Is the <b>strategy for the management of intellectual property</b> properly outlined and suitable to support the exploitation of results?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Quality and efficiency of implementation (30%)</b></p>	
<p><b>3.1 Work plan and resources</b> (the tables and the narrative) Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.</p>	<p>Assess the proposed work plan, and the effort and resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the work plan <b>of good quality and effective</b>?</li> <li>• Does it include <b>quantified information</b> so that progress can be monitored? Do the defined Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) measure the effectiveness of the solutions?</li> <li>• Does it follow a <b>logical structure</b> (for example, regarding the timing of work packages)?</li> <li>• Are the <b>resources allocated</b> to the work packages <b>in line with their objectives and deliverables</b>?</li> <li>• Are <b>critical risks</b>, relating to project implementation, identified and <b>proper risk mitigation</b> measures proposed?</li> <li>• Do the partners meet their required cofunding for the project?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3.2 Capacity of participants and consortium as a whole</b> (the narrative) Capacity and role of each participant, and the extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.</p>	<p>Assess the quality of participants and the consortium as a whole:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the consortium match the project's objectives and bring together the <b>necessary disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge</b>?</li> <li>• Does the consortium include <b>expertise in open science practices, and gender aspects of R&amp;I</b>, as appropriate, relevant and necessary?</li> <li>• Are the participants <b>complementing one another</b> (and cover the value chain, where appropriate)?</li> <li>• In what way does each of them <b>contribute to the project</b>? Does each of them have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role (so they have sufficient operational capacity)?</li> <li>• Is there industrial/commercial involvement in the project to ensure exploitation of the results?</li> <li>• Is the involvement of the industry and commercial actors sufficient to ensure exploitation of results?</li> </ul> <p>Does the partnership involve key innovative enterprises such as SMEs or spin-outs?</p>

## • Ethics assessment

It is mandatory for applicants to complete an “Ethics and security self-assessment table” which is in the Form A:

1. PERSONAL DATA		Page		
Does this activity involve processing of personal data?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If YES:	Does it involve the processing of special categories of personal data (e.g.: sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, genetic, biometric and health data, political opinion, religious or philosophical beliefs)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>If YES:</td> <td>Does it involve processing of genetic, biometric or health data?</td> </tr> </table>	If YES:	Does it involve processing of genetic, biometric or health data?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
	If YES:	Does it involve processing of genetic, biometric or health data?		
Does it involve profiling, systematic monitoring of individuals, or processing of large scale of special categories of data or intrusive methods of data processing (such as, surveillance, geolocation tracking etc.)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>			
Does this activity involve further processing of previously collected personal data (including use of preexisting data sets or sources, merging existing data sets)?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
Is it planned to export personal data from the EU to non-EU countries?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If YES:	Specify the type of personal data and countries involved:			
Is it planned to import personal data from non-EU countries into the EU or from a non-EU country to another non-EU country?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		
If YES:	Specify the type of personal data and countries involved:			
Does this activity involve the processing of personal data related to criminal convictions or offences?		Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>		

2. ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH and SAFETY		Page
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to the environment, to animals or plants (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Does this activity deal with endangered fauna and/or flora / protected areas?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
Does this activity involve the use of substances or processes that may cause harm to humans, including those performing the activity (during the implementation of the activity or further to the use of the results, as a possible impact)?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE		Page
Does this activity involve the development, deployment and/or use of Artificial Intelligence based systems? (if yes, detail in the self-assessment whether that could raise ethical concerns related to human rights and values and detail how this will be addressed).	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. OTHER ETHICS ISSUES		Page
Are there any other ethics issues that should be taken into consideration?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Please specify: (Maximum number of characters allowed: 1000)</i>		

Proposals will be subject to an ethics review based on the Ethics Self-Assessment and carried out by the Evaluation Committee, supported by independent experts if needed. This includes verification of compliance with EU ethics standards (e.g., data protection, environmental and safety regulation, permitting requirements, and avoidance of prohibited practices). Where necessary, applicants may be requested to provide additional documentation (e.g. permits, risk assessments, GDPR compliance statements). Only those proposals approved by ethical assessment, complying with the central Horizon Europe and regional/national ethical requirements, will be funded.

## 7 Terms and Conditions

The terms and conditions that apply to the RIVCircular project (Grant Agreement 101161013) under which the work is performed also apply, however, only correspondingly for the legal relationship between the Contractor and the Beneficiary. In particular, the Beneficiary agrees that the following articles of the Grant Agreement are explicitly part of this Agreement ensuring that the European Commission (EC), the

European Court of Auditors (ECA), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) can exercise their rights under Articles 25 of the Model Grant Agreement towards the Beneficiary.

Furthermore, the obligations of the Beneficiary include the obligations under articles 12 (conflict of interest), 13 (confidentiality and security), 14 (ethics and values), 17 (communication, dissemination and visibility), 18 (specific rules for carrying out the action), 19 (information obligation), and 20 (records keeping) of the Model Grant Agreement<sup>17</sup>. These obligations also apply to the third parties receiving the support (recipients).

The bodies mentioned in Article 25 of the Model Grant Agreement (e.g. granting authority, OLAF, Court of Auditors (ECA), etc.) can also exercise their rights towards third parties receiving the support (recipients).

## 8 Visibility and Disclaimer

All communication activities carried out by project partners, including media relations, participation in conferences and seminars, and the development of informational materials, whether in electronic format or shared through traditional or social media, along with dissemination efforts and any infrastructure, equipment, supplies, or major results funded under this RIVCircular call must clearly acknowledge the EU co-fund by displaying the EU and RIVCircular emblems and the corresponding funding statement provided below.



*Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.*

## 9 Exclusion

Individual applications and applications from natural persons are not eligible.

Applicants who are subject to EU administrative sanctions (i.e. exclusion) or are in one of the following exclusion situations<sup>18</sup>, banning them from receiving EU grants, can NOT participate:

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<sup>17</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga\\_horizon-euratom\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> See Article 136 of [EU Financial Regulation](#)

- Bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangements with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- They are in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- They are guilty of grave professional misconduct (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- They are guilty of fraud, corruption, having links to a criminal entity, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- They have shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, subgrant agreement or subgrant decision (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the subgrant).
- They are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the subgrant).
- They have created under a different jurisdiction an entity with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be refused if, it turns out that during the subgrant agreement process, they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information, or they were previously involved in the preparation of the call, and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

## 10 Complaints about proposal rejection

### How to submit a complaint

To file a formal complaint regarding the call process, evaluation, or communication, applicants must use the template provided in Annex 7, which should be filled out with the applicant's information.

1. Send a written statement to [info@rivcircular.eu](mailto:info@rivcircular.eu), with a clear and detailed description of the issue (a template is provided in Annex 7)
2. Use the subject line: "Complain-RIVCircular Open Call"

3. Include: Applicant's full name
4. Entity name
5. Application ID (it will be provided when the application is submitted)
6. No more information is needed in the body of the email; the template is the only document that is considered.

### Valid grounds for complaints

Complaints could focus on procedural aspects or assessment-related errors, including:

Procedural irregularities, factual errors, manifest errors of assessment, lack of coherence between scores and comments, inadequate or missing reasoning in conclusions, exceeding discretion limits, possible conflicts of interest, and abuse of power. Disagreements with the evaluation outcome or comments when supported by evidence of a procedural, factual or assessment error.

### Limitations

- Only one request for review per proposal will be considered
- Review requests must concern only the applicant's own proposal
- The proposal will be reviewed as originally submitted; no new information may be added.

### Response procedure

1. **Acknowledgement of receipt:** each complaint will receive an **acknowledgement of receipt within 5 working days**.
2. **Internal review:** if the complaint proceeds, the request will be forwarded to the project coordinator and the responsible parties.
3. **Internal Investigation:** If necessary, the complaint will be forwarded to the Project Coordinator and the relevant responsible parties for analysis.
4. **Formal Response:** A **written response will be sent** to the complainant **within 30 calendar days**, specifying the conclusions and any corrective measures.
5. **Escalation:** If the response is not considered satisfactory, the complainant may request a review by the Call Steering Committee.
6. **Traceability:** All complaints and responses will be documented and archived to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

## 11 Payment principles

All coordinators of the projects selected for funding under the RIVCircular initiative will be required to sign a Grant Agreement on behalf of their consortium. This Grant Agreement outlines the provisions related to the joint interregional project, its objectives, and general conditions. The Grant Agreement will include Specific Agreements (added to the Grant Agreement as annexes) signed between each partner and their corresponding regional authority that will grant their projects. Those Specific Agreements will include region-specific funding provisions and particular requirements based on the territories' rules.

The financial payments to the project partners will be governed by the respective regional Specific Agreements and can consist, depending on the region/territory, of pre-financing<sup>19</sup>, interim, and final payments for projects of 2-3 years duration, and pre-financing and final payments for projects of 1 year duration. To receive the pre-financing payments, partners must first fulfil the necessary administrative requirements requested by their corresponding regional authorities. The interim payments will be released following the submission and positive evaluation of the intermediate performance reporting conducted to ensure effective project progress. The final payments will be processed after the project completion, upon the successful assessment of the final project results and outcomes, including all required deliverables and defined KPIs.

## 12 Projects monitoring

All projects selected for funding undergo continuous monitoring by the RIVCircular Team, who will be supported by external independent experts. The project monitoring will encompass various aspects of project implementation, including, but not limited to, the achievement of outputs, deliverables, financial oversight, quality assurance, progress in meeting KPIs and delivering impact, communication and dissemination efforts. The RIVCircular Team will request interim and final reports to evaluate the implementation of the projects. The regional authorities will review the financial statements.

In cases of under-performance, significant implementation delays, consortium misconduct, or any other issues jeopardising the timely execution of the project identified during monitoring, the funding regions of RIVCircular reserve the right to discontinue or restructure the project funding at any time during its implementation.

## 13 Support and FAQs

For questions related to the call text, general administrative eligibility, application procedures, or evaluation criteria, please contact the Call Secretariat at: [info@rivcircular.eu](mailto:info@rivcircular.eu).

For specific questions regarding regional eligibility requirements, please write to the email addresses listed in section 3 for each region.

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<sup>19</sup> Please refer to the specific conditions of each region/territory regarding the pre-financing (section 3).

In addition to the email address, there is a collection of FAQs available on the website [Call – RIVCircular](#). This document will be continuously updated based on the questions received. We encourage you to revise the FAQs document.

## 14 Auto-checklist

We suggest you review these aspects before submitting your proposal:

- ✓ Have you checked that the consortium consists of at least 3 partners from 3 different countries between the eligible territories (according to Table 2), and with available funds (according to Table 3)?
- ✓ Have you ensured that all partners of your consortium have a PIC number?
- ✓ Have you verified that all consortium members are based and active in one of the eligible territories?
- ✓ Is the TRL of your proposal between 6 and 8?
- ✓ Is the pathway for innovation and advancement along the TRL scale clearly defined within the project?
- ✓ Have you completed the 4 compulsory documents you have to send? Form A, Form B, Budget template and Declaration on double funding for recipients?
- ✓ Have you converted your final versions of forms A and B to pdf format to be able to submit them?
- ✓ About Form A: Have you completed all the sections requested?
- ✓ About Form A: Have you entered the data of all the members of your consortium by replicating the pages?
- ✓ Have you checked that the application is coherent and that Form A, Form B and the Budget are consistent?
- ✓ About Form B: Have you completed all the sections required?
- ✓ About Form B: Have you checked it does not exceed 30 pages?
- ✓ About Form B: Have you included the mandatory deliverables listed in section 3-general common eligibility criteria?
- ✓ On the budget:
  - Have you checked that the budget does not exceed €600,000 per entity in the call, regardless of the number of proposals submitted (if more than one) by the same applicant to the call?
  - Have you checked the funding rates by entity type and region as indicated in Table 2?
  - Have you checked that subcontracting does not exceed 10% of the direct costs?
  - Is subcontracting duly justified?
  - Are all eligible costs duly justified and necessary?
  - Have you checked the percentage of the indirect costs allowed by region?
  - Have you checked the budget requisites per region?
- ✓ For topic 5: Have you checked that the consortium includes at least 1 SME?
- ✓ If, for any reason, the project has a pilot or demo site outside the eligible territories, have you ensured that it is duly justified as being necessary to help meet the proposed objectives?

## 15 Relevant Terminology

Term	Definition
AI- Artificial Intelligence	<a href="#">According to EU</a> , development and application of intelligent systems across sectors to solve complex problems while ensuring ethical, human-centric use.
Call Secretariat	RIVCircular primary helpdesk for applicants, addressing all aspects of proposal elaboration and submission, i.e., in supporting the technical follow-up and facilitating communication related to the call.
Cooperation Agreement	A formal contract that defines how different entities collaborate within the funded project. It is usually signed between the project participants to ensure smooth cooperation and compliance with the call rules. Sets roles and responsibilities, defines rules for sharing results, data, and intellectual property, including funding distribution, reporting and conflict resolution.
Effective Collaboration	Effective collaboration means collaboration between at least two independent parties to exchange knowledge or technology, or to achieve a common objective based on the division of labour, where the parties jointly define the scope of the collaborative project, contribute to its implementation and share its risks, as well as its results. Contract research and provision of research services are not considered forms of collaboration. (see <a href="#">Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014</a> )
Experimental development	<p>Experimental development means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills,</li> <li>• to develop new or improved products, processes or services, including digital products, processes or services,</li> <li>• in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as, for example, super-computing, quantum technologies, blockchain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud or edge technologies). This may also encompass, for example, activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services.</li> </ul> <p>Experimental development may comprise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions</li> <li>• where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set.</li> </ul> <p>This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot, which is NOT necessarily the final commercial product. Such a prototype/pilot may be too expensive to be produced and, as such, be used only for demonstration and validation purposes.</p> <p>Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines,</p>

	<p>manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements. (see <a href="#">Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014</a>)</p>
External Independent Experts	<p>Specialists who are not part of the European Commission or any project consortium, and who are hired to provide objective, unbiased expertise and are appointed to evaluate the project proposals, ensuring a fair and transparent evaluation process.</p>
Grant Agreement	<p>A legally binding contract that establishes the terms, funding, and responsibilities for a RIVCircular project between the granting authority and its beneficiaries.</p>
Granting Authority	<p>The granting authority is the body/entity that awards, funds, and oversees a RIVCircular grant</p>
Incentive Effect	<p>Aids shall be considered to have an incentive effect if the beneficiary has submitted a written application for the aid to the funding organisation concerned before work on the project or activity starts. (see Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014, Article 6 and Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe)</p>
Knowledge transfer	<p>Knowledge transfer refers to any process aimed at obtaining, gathering, and sharing both explicit and tacit knowledge, including skills and competencies, across economic and non-economic activities. These activities may involve research collaborations, consultancy services, licensing, the creation of spin-offs, publications, and the mobility of researchers and other staff. It encompasses not only scientific and technological knowledge, but also other forms of knowledge, such as understanding standards and regulations, real-world operating conditions, and methods for organizational innovation. Additionally, it includes knowledge related to the identification, acquisition, protection, management, and use of intangible assets.</p>
Open call	<p>An open call refers to a publicly announced funding opportunity offered by RIVCircular, inviting eligible applicants to submit proposals for evaluation and potential support.</p>
Research and Knowledge Dissemination Organisation	<p>A research and knowledge dissemination organisation (or research organisation) is an entity such as a university, research institute, technology transfer office, innovation intermediary, or a collaborative research structure.</p> <p>It can be established under public or private law and funded in different ways, but its main purpose is to independently carry out fundamental research, industrial research, or experimental development, or to widely share the results through teaching, publications, or knowledge transfer.</p> <p>If the organisation also engages in economic activities, these must be financially separated, with clear accounting of their costs, revenues, and funding.</p>

	Moreover, companies or other entities that have a decisive influence over the organisation (for example, as shareholders or members) must not receive preferential access to the research results it produces.
RIVCircular Funding Territories	RIVCircular Funding territories for the Call are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Madrid Region (Spain)</li> <li>2. Hauts de France Region (France)</li> <li>3. Kyiv Oblast Region (Ukraine)</li> <li>4. Extremadura Region (Spain)</li> <li>5. Vienna Region (Austria)</li> <li>6. Innlandet Region (Norway)</li> <li>7. Greece at a National Level</li> </ol>
Steering Committee	The governing body that provides strategic direction, oversight, and key decisions for RIVCircular project.
Subgrant Agreement	A contract by which a project beneficiary allocates part of its EU funding to a third party to carry out specific project-related activities.
Technology readiness level (TRL)	RIVCircular Open Call supports interregional projects with a TRL between 6 and 8. The following definitions apply, unless otherwise specified (see Communication from the Commission, 'A European strategy for Key Enabling Technologies – A bridge to growth and jobs', <a href="#">COM(2012) 341 final, 26 June 2012</a> ): TRL 6 — Technology demonstrated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies) TRL 7— System prototype demonstration in an operational environment TRL 8— System is complete and qualified

# ANNEXES

## The topics: Introduction (common to all topics)

All topics contribute to the following Horizon Europe R&I Strategic Plan's Key Strategic Orientations (2025-2027); therefore, the projects proposals should also be aligned to contribute to the:

- ✓ Green transition,
- ✓ Digital transition, and
- ✓ A more resilient, competitive, inclusive & democratic Europe.

Proposals should seek to contribute and/or consider the **territorial goals** of the involved territories, demonstrating how the planned activities address the regional priority areas, strengthen their respective research and innovation ecosystems, and contribute to achieving smart, sustainable, and inclusive interregional development. This should be clarified in the proposals.

Projects are encouraged to consider a **Life Cycle Analyses (LCA)** and/or a **market analyses**.

Engage with the European Commission's Circular Cities and Regions Initiative (CCRI) and establish **synergies** with other RIVCircular-funded projects.

Align with ongoing EU-funded initiatives within Horizon Europe, particularly those under the 'Climate-neutral, circular, and digitized production' Cluster 4 destination.

Proposals should follow regional priorities and strategies.

Consider the **social dimension** of digital circular economy solutions, including the gender perspective in research and development to create more inclusive and equitable innovation environments.

**DNSH Principle:** The entities must sign a responsible declaration that its activities comply with the principle of "Do No Significant Harm" to the environment.

## • Topic Overview and Key Elements

TOPICS	OBJECTIVE	EXPECTED OUTCOMES
<b>Topic 1: Construction and demolition waste (CDW) circularity</b>	The topic aims to enhance the circular economy of Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) by developing and demonstrating innovative solutions in rural, urban, and industrial areas. By implementing advanced dismantling and processing techniques, promoting material recovery, and ensuring high-quality recycled materials.	Projects are expected to contribute to at least <b>two</b> of the following expected outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased deployment and market uptake of innovative solutions</li> <li>2. Increased recovery and recycling rates of construction and demolition wastes</li> <li>3. Improved the elimination of hazardous substances from secondary materials</li> <li>4. Increased recycling, remanufacturing</li> <li>5. Increased knowledge, knowledge preservation and knowledge transfer</li> <li>6. Development of game-changer waste treatment</li> </ol>
<b>Topic 2: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising local waste streams for industrial efficiency</b>	Projects are expected to demonstrate technologies that leverage the untapped potential of local side- and waste streams in industry and their local areas, as well as new technologies that can improve the energy integration.	Projects are expected to contribute to at least <b>three</b> of the following expected outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Systems for increased use of low- and medium-temperature heat as a resource demonstrated.</li> <li>2. Industrial symbiosis and support to cross-sectoral energy resource optimisation.</li> <li>3. Refining, conversion and filtering processes of bio-based side streams.</li> <li>4. Technologies that increase circularity in the production of energy and energy carriers.</li> <li>5. Deployment of circular practices to reduce energy and raw material consumption in industrial ecosystem.</li> <li>6. Knowledge exchange among regions on circular energy production.</li> </ol>
<b>Topic 3: Electric vehicles (EV) batteries recycling and reuse</b>	This topic aims to contribute to the creation and development of value-added loops for materials, products or components resulting from optimized battery management, by integrating life cycle thinking for EV batteries.	Projects are expected to contribute to at least <b>two</b> of the following expected outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eco-design of batteries to enhance recyclability and durability.</li> <li>2. Promote sustainable uses of batteries.</li> <li>3. Development of technologies that enable the reuse of electric vehicle batteries</li> <li>4. Technologies to sort the strategic battery materials</li> <li>5. Innovate recycling processes, improving environmental performance</li> <li>6. Support circular business models</li> <li>7. Promote the optimization of end-of-life battery management.</li> <li>8. Circular solutions for stationary use to extend life span of batteries.</li> </ol>
<b>Topic 4: Circular economy in the textile industry</b>	This topic aims to contribute to the development of circularity for the textile industries, from materials, products, components, to processes, by integrating life-cycle principles into the production of textiles.	Projects are expected to contribute to at least <b>two</b> of the following expected outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ecodesign and durability textile development</li> <li>2. Materials quality to reduce environmental impact</li> <li>3. Innovation on fibres to reduce pollution.</li> <li>4. Digitalisation of processes</li> <li>5. Bio-based innovation</li> <li>6. Value chain circular structuring</li> <li>7. Business models and product service system (PSS)</li> <li>8. Standards and tracing.</li> </ol>
<b>Topic 5: Digital solutions for circular economy</b>	Projects under this topic should integrate novel approaches, digital tools, and strategic methodologies to enhance circular economy ecosystems. They should contribute to the digital transformation of resource management by leveraging AI, blockchain, IoT, and big data analytics, among other related technologies.	Funded projects are expected to contribute to at least <b>three</b> of the following outcomes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increased adoption of digital tools for material tracking.</li> <li>2. Enhanced security of digital infrastructure for the circular economy</li> <li>3. Enhanced capabilities for data-driven decision-making: IoT, AI, Blockchain</li> <li>4. Improved efficiency in resource recovery and closed-loop production systems</li> <li>5. Ensure seamless data exchange and market integration.</li> <li>6. Extend product life cycles and reduce overall waste generation</li> <li>7. Digital platforms for public awareness</li> </ol>

# Annex 1 Topic: Construction and demolition wastes (CDW) circularity

## Topic description

The topic focuses on maximizing CDW prevention, reuse, and high-value recycling, reducing the sector's environmental footprint, and fostering sustainable resource management practices in line with the EU Green Deal and Circular Economy Action Plan.

## Introduction

Construction and demolition waste (CDW) accounts for nearly 40% of total waste in the EU, highlighting the need for innovative and efficient management to support the circular economy. Although the EU has already exceeded the 70% recovery target, much of this recovery is based on low-quality applications such as backfilling, meaning that the circular potential of construction and demolition waste remains underexploited. Therefore, EU policies increasingly promote reuse and high-quality recycling of materials<sup>20</sup> Key materials—such as concrete, construction minerals, bricks and wood—underscore the benefits of building transformation over new construction. Innovative CDW management strategies, including "design for deconstruction," aim to enhance sustainability, reduce resource waste, and promote high-quality recycling and reuse while supporting transparent and green public procurement practices.

This topic aligns with the aforementioned directives and the EU's broader circular economy goals, making it highly relevant for advancing sustainable practices in the construction sector.

## Expected outcomes

Development and demonstration of innovative solutions that enhance the circular economy for construction and demolition waste (CDW) in rural, urban, and industrial areas. This includes promoting closed-loop systems for mineral materials and resource by-products by optimizing dismantling processes and material processing techniques. As a result, high-quality recycled construction materials will be produced, contributing to sustainable resource utilization and waste reduction.

Projects are expected to contribute to at least **two** of the following expected outcomes:

1. **Increased deployment and market uptake of innovative solutions** to eco-design and manufacture for disassembly, waste prevention and management, reuse and recycling in the construction sector.

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<sup>20</sup> European Parliament and Council. (2008). *Directive 2008/98/EC on waste and repealing certain Directives (consolidated version 2018)*. EUR-Lex. Retrieved from <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02008L0098-20180705> European Commission, Joint Research Centre, 2025 [https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/resources-and-tools/publications/policy-measures-promote-reuse-and-high-quality-recycling?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://build-up.ec.europa.eu/en/resources-and-tools/publications/policy-measures-promote-reuse-and-high-quality-recycling?utm_source=chatgpt.com) Foster, G., Cristobal Garcia, J., Gallo, F., Gaudillat, P., Marschinski, R. et al., Policy measures to promote reuse and high-quality recycling of construction and demolition waste - Problem analysis; state-of-play in the EU; exploration of policy options; and recommendations for consideration in future Circular Economy policy, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/9337398>, JRC143206.

2. **Increased recovery and recycling rates of construction and demolition waste** by designing and developing a robust system for traceability and quality assurance as evolutive to up to date/current quality control procedures, and by enhancing possibility of deconstruction (especially for materials with plastic and wood components).
3. **Improved the elimination of hazardous substances from secondary materials**, especially by integrating policies (e.g. on POPs) to guarantee a safe, responsible and effective waste management of polluting and interfering substances (e.g. addressing Br-sorting activities of plastics in private sector).
4. **Increased recycling, remanufacturing**, upcycling and reuse of construction materials, products and buildings, by considering the entire value chain, spatial planning and selective demolition stage, as well as thorough creation of secondary materials market and new constructive systems.
5. **Increased knowledge, knowledge preservation and knowledge transfer** about the environmental footprint methods of buildings and construction materials, including the integrated life cycle assessment and inventory regarding possible trade-offs and synergies, and increased practical application of the European Commission's Environmental Footprint methods for products (both goods and service).
6. **Game-changer waste treatment** starting from undisturbed recycling to dedicated waste valorisation of CDW and engagement of/with local authorities in relation to urban development, or land ownership/managing (capacitation).

## Scope

The project aims to enhance the circular economy of Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) by developing and demonstrating innovative solutions in rural, urban, and industrial areas. By implementing advanced dismantling and processing techniques, the project will promote material recovery, ensuring high-quality recycled construction materials and sustainable reuse, considering these methodologies:

- **Closed-loop systems** for mineral materials, wood, and other by-products, reducing waste and maximizing resource efficiency.
- **Advanced separation techniques** to maintain clean material flows, including for streams containing Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).
- **High-quality recycled construction materials**, supporting a more sustainable and resilient building sector.
- **Safe and cost-effective reuse of recovered materials**, minimizing environmental impact and promoting circular construction practices.

## Annex 2 Topic: Circular Energy Integration: Valorising Local Waste streams for Industrial Efficiency

### Topic description:

The topic focuses on the circular use of local side streams and waste for increased energy efficiency and optimised resource use in industrial processes. The project(s) will contribute to creating a more circular energy system, enabling biomass and waste heat utilisation as outlined in the EU Strategy for Energy System Integration. Side- and waste streams include biomass, organic mass, residues, sludge, as well as low- and medium-temperature heat. Projects under this call should demonstrate solutions for sustainable energy efficiency by leveraging local waste streams and creating an integrated energy system. The innovations are expected to improve energy efficiency accounting for the local conditions in the RIVCircular region where it is demonstrated.

### Introduction:

Circularity is key to enable a sustainable economy in Europe. The topic of this call aims to support actions that will contribute to the green transition by **minimising waste and using it as a resource for energy needs**. For example, waste-to-energy recovery plays a strategic role in Europe's renewable energy landscape, with bioenergy from agricultural, forestry and organic waste feedstock accounting for about 59% of renewable energy consumption in 2021. For bioenergy, primary solid biofuels represent the largest share at 70.3 %, while liquid biofuels account for 12.9%, biogas/ biomethane for 10.1% and renewable share of municipal waste for 6.6%.<sup>21</sup> These figures underscore the potential for further development of waste-based energy solutions to replace fossil fuels and to enhance energy resilience through resource optimisation.

In the industrial sector, clusters and industrial sites are locations with a diverse mix of energy carriers. Integrated energy systems offer significant potential for energy efficiency and reduced costs through circular energy system integration. For example, heat accounts for more than 60% of the energy use in industry, and studies assess the technical potential for waste heat from Europe's key industries to be around 300 Twh/year.<sup>22</sup> Byproducts presenting potential energy sources can be in the form of biomass and other waste streams with the potential for further utilisation as part of a diversified energy system. Depending on the quality of the surplus energy, it can be used as an input in industrial processes, shared with local actors in the cluster or externally, like district heating, or it may be stored for later use, or converted into energy carriers.

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<sup>21</sup> European Commission. (2023). *Report from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: State of the Energy Union Report 2023 (pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action)* (COM(2023) 650 final). EUR-Lex. <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=COM%3A2023%3A650%3AFIN&qid=1698237100377>

<sup>22</sup> Tudoroiu-Lakavičė, A., & Milusheva, S. (2023). *Policy paper (June 7, 2023). HEATLEAP Project Consortium.* [https://heatleap-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/HEATLEAP\\_Policy\\_Paper\\_7-June-2023.pdf](https://heatleap-project.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/HEATLEAP_Policy_Paper_7-June-2023.pdf)

To accelerate the development of integrated energy systems, this call seeks to support innovations that leverage local renewable energy production, enhance efficiency and surplus energy utilisation. The goal is to enhance circularity, improve energy efficiency, and boost the implementation of a sustainable, secure and resilient energy supply in Europe.

### Expected outcome:

Projects are expected to demonstrate technologies that leverage the untapped potential of local side- and waste streams in industry and their local areas as well as new technology that can improve the energy integration. The type of side- and waste streams covers biomass, organic waste, residues, sludge as well as low- and medium-temperature heat. The innovations should demonstrate integrated energy systems on an industrial site and/or in a symbiosis with other actors.

### Key outcomes include:

Projects are expected to contribute to **at least three** of the following expected outcomes:

- Systems for increased use of low- and medium-temperature heat as a resource demonstrated, including heat recapture, solar heat for industrial processes and other types of renewable energy
- Regional circular economies strengthened by addressing challenges to industrial symbiosis and supporting cross-sectoral energy resource optimisation
- Refining, conversion and filtering processes of bio-based side streams as feedstock enhanced to increase the use of local side streams, leading to a more resource efficient industrial system
- Technologies that increase circularity in the production of energy and energy carriers, including biofuels, gas and green hydrogen demonstrated
- Total electricity, fuel, and raw material needs in a local multi-actor industrial ecosystem are reduced through the deployment of circular practices.
- Knowledge exchanges and collaborations facilitated between the regions supporting the deployment of innovations that resolve challenges in circular energy production.

### Scope:

By addressing regional Smart Specialisation Strategies in each region, the projects under this call should:

- **Demonstrate innovations** enabling the circular use of resources for energy production in the RIVCircular regions based on local context. This should involve real-world pilot implementations and validation through key performance indicators (KPIs) measuring energy efficiency, waste reduction, and resource optimisation.
- **Promote the integration** of circular innovation ecosystems between the RIVCircular regions by implementing cross-regional collaboration models, joint technology demonstrations, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms such as living labs and co-creation platforms. Facilitating connections between industries, research institutions, public actors, and investors can help uncover synergies, navigate regulatory challenges, and accelerate collaboration for sustainable circular value chains.
- **Contribute to the green transition** of European industry by demonstrating progress towards circular and integrated energy systems, that optimise the utilisation of industrial side streams, including waste heat recovery, biomass valorisation, and organic waste conversion. Projects may

leverage digital tools (e.g., AI-driven resource mapping, blockchain for material traceability) to enhance efficiency and scalability.

- **Validate cross-sectoral resource optimisation solutions** through industrial symbiosis approaches, ensuring measurable reductions in raw material demand, energy consumption, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

# Annex 3 Topic: Electric vehicle (EV) batteries recycling and reuse

## Topic description

This topic focuses on enabling and supporting the reuse, repurpose and recycling of batteries for electrical vehicles, reducing the environmental impact of these technologies, fostering the development of circular loops and sustainable resources management, in line with EU regulation on batteries and battery waste, the EU Green Deal and the EU Circular Economy Action Plan.

## Introduction

Batteries for Electrical Vehicles (EV) are a key element in the process of decarbonation and the transition to more sustainable modes of transport and energy management. These products contain different strategic or critical resources (cobalt, nickel, lithium, graphite, etc.) that are essential to the deployment of many technologies in the digital, energy and ecological transition, on a European, national and regional scale.

Over and above environmental concerns, the issue of battery life cycle management (from design to end-of-life management) has emerged at the European level as a key question of sovereignty, insofar as controlling the supply of critical raw materials (and components) is a key factor in boosting the competitiveness of industry and ensuring the success of the ecological transition in our regions.

Against this backdrop, the European Commission has adopted a new [Regulation on batteries and battery waste](#)<sup>23</sup>, covering the entire battery life cycle from production to reuse and recycling. More specifically, it sets ambitious targets for end-of-life battery collection, lithium recovery and recycling efficiency, and mandatory minimum levels of recycled content for industrial and mobility batteries. It also makes it compulsory for batteries to be easier to dismantle, and introduces labelling and information requirements, notably for the traceability of recycled content and easier health diagnosis of the batteries. Several European initiatives are tackling this priority and could provide project proponents with relevant initiatives as well as state of the arts on developments. Namely, project proponents should align with the [European Green Deal](#) as well as the [Circular Economy Action Plan](#).

Nevertheless, expected increase in demand for batteries is less important than previously forecasted, thus lowering the input feedstock for recyclers and “reusers”. Industrials are facing setbacks and delays due to various economic factors that hinder the deployment of integrated battery recycling / reuse value chains.

## Expected outcomes

This Call focuses on all types of batteries and all markets of electric vehicles (automotive, rail, electro-mobility, etc.). Innovative initiatives may be considered, tackling **at least two** of the following outcomes:

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<sup>23</sup> Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 July 2023 concerning batteries and waste batteries, amending Directive 2008/98/EC and Regulation (EU) 2019/1020 and repealing Directive 2006/66/EC (Text with EEA relevance).

- Eco-design of batteries to enhance recyclability and durability, and optimize their lifespan, or reduce the product's environmental impact with a view to sobriety
- Promoting the development of sustainable uses and/or optimizing the sustainable use of batteries (remanufacturing, maintenance and servicing, issues relating to Battery Management Systems (BMS), etc.),
- Contribute to the generation of technologies that enable the reuse of electric vehicle batteries at the end of their first life, as well as their components: spare parts, components for remanufactured products, components in new products, etc.,
- Enabling the separation of all the strategic battery materials that should be integrated into existing/innovative reuse and recycling processes
- Innovate recycling processes (e.g. direct recycling) to improve environmental performance,
- Support business models in transitioning towards new economic, sustainable ones (Product-service-system, sharing economy, servitisation...),
- Promote the optimization of end-of-life battery management and related sustainable practices within a framework of regional cooperation,
- Promote the development of circular solutions for the reuse of batteries within stationary infrastructures

### Scope

The aim of this Call is to contribute to the creation and development of value-added loops for materials, products or components resulting from optimized battery management, by integrating life cycle thinking for EV batteries.

'EV' designates all types of vehicles (cars, trains, scooters, bicycles, etc.) that are powered by a battery system.

Expected projects will seek to maintain and/or capture local resources, including "blackmass", and contribute to setting up the complete value chain in the European Union.

The development of activities linked to battery reuse, repair or remanufacturing is essential to ensure a comprehensive approach to the battery life cycle and associated business models on a value chain scale (e.g. articulation between reuse and recycling).

Other issues could also be addressed, such as the integration of best practices to extend battery life, or the study of the conditions required for the use of reconditioned or reused batteries: warranty, safety, technical and legal acceptability, etc.

It may also involve encouraging eco-design of current and future batteries through new manufacturing processes, seeking to reconcile the battery's performance in use (energy capacity and safety) with its environmental performance (deconstruction, recyclability, longer service life).

Questions linked to the collection of batteries at the end of their life cycle, and to the logistics issues that arise from this, can provide avenues for organizational innovation: acceptance of reuse processes and products, the importance of storage time after the end of the first life cycle, and the potential for reuse or recycling.

On the specific question of batteries for large-scale mobility, the economic model of the battery and the electric vehicle and the contractual models that result from it must be considered. The reuse of second-life batteries, or the repurpose of EV batteries within stationary systems are considered.

Overall, the aim is to develop local knowledge and skills, and create or strengthen links between economic players, universities, research entities and technical centres. Innovation can take place at various levels: development of knowledge useful for the design of batteries of the future, new components, new manufacturing processes, studies of battery ageing, etc. The development of skills and technical tools useful for the transition to more sustainable economic models and logics can also be supported.

# Annex 4 Topic: Circular economy in the textile industry

## Topic description

This topic focuses on maximising the circularity for the textile industries, from materials, products, components to processes, by fostering life-cycle principles into the production of textiles, reducing this sector's environmental impact and sustainable resources management.

## Introduction

Textiles are a key material and product stream in the European circular economy action plan. Textiles are indeed the fourth highest-pressure category for the use of primary raw materials and water and the fifth one for greenhouse gas emissions<sup>24</sup>. They are a major source of micro-plastic pollution in production, use phases and end of life. Improvements in the circularity of the textile value chains will help reduce GHG emissions and environmental pressure.

As stated in 'Ready to Transform'<sup>25</sup>, “the potential for optimisation of resource footprint in production and use of current materials and processes is still massive and needs to be unlocked through better design, more durable products, more resource-efficient processing and manufacturing, regionally closer value chains, smarter purchasing decisions, new business models favouring longer and more intense use of each produced item – in short, less but better production and consumption”.

For this purpose, the European authorities developed several initiatives, in line with UN Sustainable Development Goals. Namely, the [EU Strategy for Sustainable and Circular Textiles](#) addresses the production and consumption of textiles, whilst recognising the importance of the textiles sector.

It may also involve encouraging eco-design of textiles products through innovative manufacturing processes, establishing new and innovative circular bio-based<sup>26</sup> value chains with a positive impact on EU competitiveness and jobs creation at interregional and local levels.

Should the project demonstrate positive impact(s) on textile industries' circularity, systemic solutions for textile design, analysis, disassembly prior to recycling, sorting, using innovative digital technologies are within the scope of this Call.

This topic also encompasses innovative mechanical recycling solutions that deliver competitive, high-quality secondary materials and thermo-mechanical, chemical and other (e.g., enzymatic) recycling solutions that are sustainable from a zero-pollution, circular material and energy efficiency perspective. Upcycling solutions should be favoured over downcycling ones.

Other issues could also be addressed, such as the integration of best practices for extending textile products' lifespan, limit their impacts on the environment during their life cycle, or the study of the

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<sup>24</sup> European Environment Agency, Textiles in Europe's circular economy briefing, November 2019

<sup>25</sup> The European Technology Platform for the Future of Textiles and Clothing a.i.s.b.l, Ready to Transform, a strategic research and innovation agenda to underpin the EU strategy for sustainable and circular textiles, March 2022

<sup>26</sup> Textile components or products wholly or partially derived from biomass, replacing petroleum-based fibres

conditions required for the use of reconditioned or reused textiles: guarantees, safety, technical and legal acceptability, and properties. These considerations should align with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes for textiles, the Digital Product Passport (DPP), and the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR)<sup>27</sup>.

### Expected outcomes

This Call for projects focuses on innovative initiatives or approaches leading to TRL 6 – 8 innovations within the textile industries, tackling **at least two** of the following expected outcomes:

- **Ecodesign & durability:** Enhancing the design, manufacturing concepts and business models for textile product quality, longevity and circularity (including design for reuse / recycling and with recycled materials).
- **Materials quality and impacts:** Reducing the negative environmental impact of textiles throughout their lifecycle. This outcome encompasses primary raw materials and water consumption, land use and indirect land use change, as well as GHGs and other pollutants emissions.
- **Fibres innovation:** Innovating to increase durability and reduce fibre / particle release of textile products, from textile processing to consumer use.
- **Digitalisation:** Enhancing systemic solutions for textile reconditioning, reuse and sorting, etc. using innovative digital technologies.
- **Bio-based innovation:** Increasing the use of European (locally/regionally) sourcing alternatives, bio-based textile fibres (including the reuse of bio-based textiles in their present form and in novel forms of use), by correlating and increasing SMEs participation, and improving academia /industry /feedstock & fibres suppliers' interactions and collaboration.
- **Value-chain structuring:** Significantly increasing recyclability and circularity of textile resources; notably through the efficient collection, sorting, separation, reuse, pre-treatment and recycling concepts and technologies for all types of textile waste considered under this topic.
- **Business models and PSS:** Support business models in transitioning towards new economic, sustainable ones (notably Product-service system, sharing economy...),
- **Standards & tracing:** Improving quality standards, identification and tracking of recycled textile materials, notably in line with EPR and DPP schemes.

### Scope

The aim of this Call for projects is to contribute to the development of circularity for the textile industries, from materials, products, components to processes, by integrating life-cycle principles into the production of textiles.

Overall, this call addresses the design, demonstration and scale-up of production of sustainable and circular textiles (materials and processes) for one or more applications: e.g., technical textiles, garments, industrial textiles, home textiles; including also innovative smart textiles and those providing additional

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<sup>27</sup> Regulation (EU) 2024/1781 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 establishing a framework for the setting of ecodesign requirements for sustainable products, amending Directive (EU) 2020/1828 and Regulation (EU) 2023/1542 and repealing Directive 2009/125/EC, Official Journal of the European Communities (OJ L, 2024/1781, 28.6.2024)

functionalities. All textile fibres are considered within this call, including polyester, recycled, artificial and technical fibres, as long as the innovation(s) developed demonstrates a positive impact on the circularity of the industry as well as sustainability indicators. This topic excludes textiles belonging to the Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) streams.

Expected projects will seek to maintain and / or recapture local textile resources, ensuring the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible, and the generation of waste is minimised.

# Annex 5 Topic: Digital solutions for circular economy

## Topic Description

Projects under this call should integrate novel approaches, digital tools, and strategic methodologies to enhance circular economy ecosystems. They should contribute to the digital transformation of resource management by leveraging AI, blockchain, IoT, and big data analytics, among other related technologies.

## Introduction

The circular economy is a key driver of sustainable growth, aiming to minimize waste, extend product lifecycles, and optimize resource efficiency. Achieving its full potential, however, requires overcoming significant challenges, including fragmented data ecosystems, lack of interoperability, and security concerns in digital platforms. Digitalization presents a transformative opportunity to address these barriers through advanced technologies such as AI, blockchain, and IoT. These innovations enable smarter and more secure resource tracking, process automation, and data-driven decision-making.

To accelerate the transition, projects should integrate novel approaches, digital tools, and strategic methodologies that enhance circular economy ecosystems. This includes ensuring seamless data exchange, real-time material tracking, and automated processes that support efficient resource management. By leveraging digital solutions, we can build a more connected, transparent, and resilient circular economy.

Relevant intervention areas include:

- Circular industries: Implementing digital solutions to optimize resource use, recycling, and waste management processes.
- Artificial intelligence and big data: Applying AI-driven solutions to enhance material tracking, predictive analytics, and automated decision-making.
- Manufacturing technologies: Developing digital tools that enable eco-friendly production and efficient material reuse.
- Net-zero and less polluting industries: Supporting industries in reducing their carbon footprint through innovative digital circularity solutions.
- Cyber security: Protecting data platforms, digital infrastructure, and interconnected systems in the circular economy from cyber threats, ensuring data integrity, resilience, and compliance with security standards.
- Citizen engagement and knowledge transfer: Promoting awareness, education, and participatory digital tools to foster a circular mindset, increase recovery and recycling rates, and enhance collaboration across stakeholders for closing resource loops.

## Expected Outcomes

Each project should aim to deliver concrete, tangible outcomes. This initiative seeks to accelerate the development and adoption of digital innovations that enhance circular economy practices across industries. Funded projects should introduce breakthrough technologies that optimize resource efficiency, minimize waste, enable end-to-end traceability of materials and products, or tackle other key circular economy challenges.

Funded projects are expected to contribute to at least three of the following outcomes:

- Increased adoption of digital tools for material tracking, waste reduction, and supply chain optimization in circular economy sectors.
- Enhanced security of digital infrastructure for the circular economy.
- Enhanced capabilities for data-driven decision-making through AI, blockchain, and IoT applications in circular business models, such as secure digital infrastructure.
- Improved efficiency in resource recovery and closed-loop production systems across industries such as manufacturing, construction, and mobility.
- Strengthened interoperability between different circular economy platforms to ensure seamless data exchange and market integration.
- Expansion of digital-driven market opportunities for secondary raw materials, extending product life cycles and reducing overall waste generation.
- Increased public awareness and engagement in circular economy practices through digital platforms, educational initiatives, and participatory tools, fostering a culture of sustainability and responsible consumption. These efforts should support closing the loops by promoting reuse and recycling, increasing recovery and recycling rates, and enhancing knowledge transfer to accelerate the adoption of circular solutions.

## Scope

A strong proposal should support the creation of digital platforms, data-driven analytics, and automation systems that drive sustainable business models, fostering economic growth while minimizing environmental impact. Additionally, projects should strengthen collaboration among industries, policymakers, academia, and citizens, ensuring knowledge transfer and the scalability of digital circular economy solutions.

Below, are examples of methodologies and activities that may be considered for the proposals:

- **Problem/Solution:** A well-defined solution addressing a significant business challenge, with the potential to create or disrupt markets, aligned with digital solutions for the circular economy.
- **Development of methodologies** that cover the entire value chain of a product or service, ensuring end-to-end sustainability from design to disposal.
- **Blockchain-based tracking:** Development of secure blockchain-based tracking and transaction systems to enhance traceability and trust.
- **Data standardization and sharing:** Standardization of data exchange and promotion of cross-platform collaboration to boost industry synergies.
- **Promote SMEs acquisition** of digital solutions for key challenges such as waste valorisation, product life cycle tracking and regulatory compliance.

## Annex 6: Keywords by topic and its subcategories

The following list includes keywords to help select the most appropriate for your proposal. The keywords should be included in Form B under “keywords section”.

General terms	Topic 1	Topic 2	Topic 3	Topic 4	Topic 5
<b>Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):</b> Cross-sector collaboration Stakeholder engagement Co-financing mechanisms Policy-driven innovation	<b>General Construction and Demolition Waste (CDW) Circularity:</b> Urban mining CDW valorization Selective demolition Material recovery & reuse Waste-to-resource transformation	<b>General Waste-to-Resource &amp; Energy Recapture:</b> Waste valorization Energy recovery from waste Circular bioeconomy Zero waste strategies Urban symbiosis Industrial symbiosis	<b>General EV Battery Circularity:</b> Battery lifecycle management End-of-life (EoL) battery strategies Closed-loop battery supply chains Battery circular economy Sustainable battery value chains	<b>General Circularity in Textiles:</b> Textile waste valorization Sustainable fashion Closed-loop textile supply chains Eco-design for textiles Cradle-to-cradle textile production	<b>General Digitalisation for Circular Economy:</b> Smart resource management Digital circular economy platforms Data-driven sustainability Real-time waste tracking IoT-enabled circular ecosystems
<b>Green Transition:</b> Carbon neutrality strategies Renewable resource integration Circular business models Decarbonization pathways Sustainable infrastructure	<b>Innovative Materials &amp; Technologies:</b> Recycled aggregates Low-carbon concrete Bio-based construction materials Geopolymer technology Advanced sorting technologies	<b>Technologies for Waste-to-Energy &amp; Resource Recovery:</b> Anaerobic digestion Pyrolysis & gasification Integrated energy systems Biogas production technologies Green and bio hydrogen	<b>Recycling &amp; Material Recovery Technologies:</b> Hydrometallurgical recycling Pyrometallurgical processing Direct cathode regeneration Lithium-ion battery (LIB) material recovery Critical raw materials (CRM) extraction	<b>Recycling &amp; Material Recovery Technologies:</b> Mechanical textile recycling Chemical fiber regeneration Cellulose-based textile recovery Polyester depolymerization Textile-to-textile recycling	<b>Artificial Intelligence &amp; Automation:</b> AI-driven material classification Predictive analytics for waste reduction Automated sorting technologies Machine learning for supply chain optimization Computer vision in recycling
<b>Eco-Innovation:</b> Waste-to-resource solutions Bio-based materials Industrial symbiosis Eco-design principles Smart waste management	<b>Digital &amp; Smart Solutions:</b> Building Information Modeling (BIM) for circularity AI-driven waste classification Blockchain for material traceability Digital twins in construction Smart deconstruction planning	<b>Bio-Based and Organic Waste Utilization:</b> Biogas & biomethane production Biochar & soil enhancers Biofuels Industrial biotechnology for waste conversion Nutrient recovery from wastewater	<b>Second-Life Applications &amp; Repurposing:</b> EV battery repurposing Battery-as-a-service (BaaS) Stationary energy storage from EV batteries Vehicle-to-grid (V2G) & battery reuse Smart battery health diagnostics	<b>Bio-Based &amp; Sustainable Materials:</b> Biofabricated textiles Mycelium leather alternatives Hemp & organic cotton innovation Waterless dyeing technologies	<b>Blockchain &amp; Digital Traceability:</b> Blockchain for material passports Supply chain transparency in circularity Smart contracts for waste trading Decentralized waste management systems Digital twins for circular economy modeling
<b>Value Chain Optimization:</b> Supply chain circularity Resource efficiency Product lifecycle assessment (LCA) Reverse logistics	<b>Circular Business Models &amp; Value Chains:</b> Material passports Product-as-a-Service (PaaS) in construction Closed-loop supply chains Reverse logistics in construction Circular procurement strategies	<b>Circular Business Models &amp; Smart Waste Management:</b> Decentralized energy recovery Waste heat utilization Material flow analysis (MFA) Waste-to-hydrogen pathways Energy-positive wastewater treatment	<b>Smart Solutions for Battery Circularity</b>	<b>Smart Solutions for Textile Circularity</b>	<b>IoT &amp; Smart Infrastructure:</b> IoT-enabled waste collection Sensor-based resource tracking Circular logistics automation Edge computing for waste monitoring Smart meters for resource efficiency
<b>Impact Investment:</b> Sustainable finance instruments ESG-driven funding Green bonds & impact bonds	<b>Regulations, Policies &amp; Finance:</b> EU Green Deal & CDW compliance	<b>Policy, Finance &amp; Sustainability:</b>	<b>Policy, Regulations &amp; Sustainable Finance:</b> EU Battery Regulation compliance	<b>Circular Business Models &amp; Consumer Engagement:</b> Textile-as-a-service Resale & rental fashion models	<b>Digital Circular Business Models &amp; Policy:</b> Product-as-a-service (PaaS) platforms

<p>Blended finance models Circular economy venture capital</p>	<p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for construction Green public procurement (GPP) Deconstruction tax incentives Circularity impact assessment</p>	<p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for energy recovery Green tax incentives for waste-to-energy Carbon credit mechanisms for circularity EU taxonomy for sustainable activities Techno-economic assessment (TEA) for resource recovery</p>	<p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for EV batteries Carbon footprint assessment for LIBs Green financing for battery recycling Circular economy incentives for battery manufacturers</p>	<p>Product life extension strategies Extended Producer Responsibility in textiles Green public procurement (GPP) for textiles</p>	<p>Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) digital solutions Green digital finance for circular economy EU taxonomy for digital circularity Regulatory frameworks for digital sustainability</p>
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# Annex 7: Complaint Submission Template

## RIVCircular Open Call – Complaint Form

Please complete all fields. This is the **only document** that will be assessed. Attach the completed template to your email and send it to [info@rivcircular.eu](mailto:info@rivcircular.eu) with the subject line: **“Complaint – RIVCircular Open Call”**

### 1. Applicant Information

Applicant full name: .....

Entity name: .....

Application ID: .....

Email address: .....

Phone number (optional): .....

### 2. Grounds for the Complaint

Please indicate which type(s) of error apply to your complaint.  
Select all that apply:

- Procedural irregularity
- Factual error
- Manifest error of assessment
- Lack of coherence between scores and comments
- Inadequate or missing reasoning in conclusions
- Exceeding discretion limits
- Possible conflict of interest
- Abuse of power
- Disagreement with the evaluation outcome **supported by evidence of an error**

### 3. Description of the Issue

Provide a clear and detailed description of the issue, focusing on procedural or assessment-related errors (e.g. procedural irregularities, factual mistakes, manifest errors of assessment, lack of coherence between scores and comments, inadequate reasoning, conflicts of interest, etc.).

**Description of the issue** (No more than 500 words):

(Attach additional pages if strictly necessary.)

### 4. Declaration

I hereby declare that:

- The information provided in this complaint is accurate and complete.
- The complaint concerns **only my own proposal**.
- I understand that **only one request for review per proposal** is permitted.

- I acknowledge that the proposal will be reviewed **as originally submitted**, and that no new information may be added.

**Date:** .....

**Name and signature:** .....

## Annex 8: Declaration on double funding for recipients

AT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

	YES/NO
<p><b>Information concerning other EU or national/regional grants for this project. Please note that there is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget (except under EU Synergies actions).</b></p>	
<p>We confirm that to our best knowledge neither the project as a whole nor any parts of it have benefited from any other EU grant (including EU funding managed by authorities in EU Member States or other funding bodies, e.g. EU Regional Funds, EU Agricultural Funds, etc). If NO, explain and provide details.</p>	
<p>We confirm that to our best knowledge neither the project as a whole nor any parts of it are (nor will be) submitted for any other EU grant (including EU funding managed by authorities in EU Member States or other funding bodies, e.g. EU Regional Funds, EU Agricultural Funds, etc). If NO, explain and provide details.</p>	

SIGNATURE

[forename/surname]

[function]

[signature]

[date]