

# SURE5.0

## Acceleration Programme 2 Guide for Applicants



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# 1. Introduction

SURE 5.0 is a project funded by the European Commission under the Horizon Europe programme, which aims to support SMEs from the Mobility, Transport & Automotive, Aerospace & Defense and Electronics manufacturing domain, to integrate in their production processes three key principles of Industry 5.0 (Human-centricity: empowering people; Sustainability: circular and low carbon economy and Resilience: digital technologies innovation and investments).

To reach the project objectives, SURE5.0 consortium is launching an Open Call for SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2. The Open Call is the competitive process by which SMEs apply to have access to the Acceleration Programme. The Acceleration Programme is the set of services and direct funding provided by the SURE5.0 project to support SMEs in the manufacturing domain in their Industry 5.0 transition.

The Guide for Applicants provides an overview of the programme's approach and detailed information on how to participate in the Open Call 2.

**Disclaimer:** This guide aims to support potential applicants to apply for the Open Call of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2. It is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources. Neither the European Commission nor the Health and Digital Executive Agency can be held responsible for the use made of this guidance document.

# 1.1. Programme Overview

An overview of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2 can be found in Figure 1.

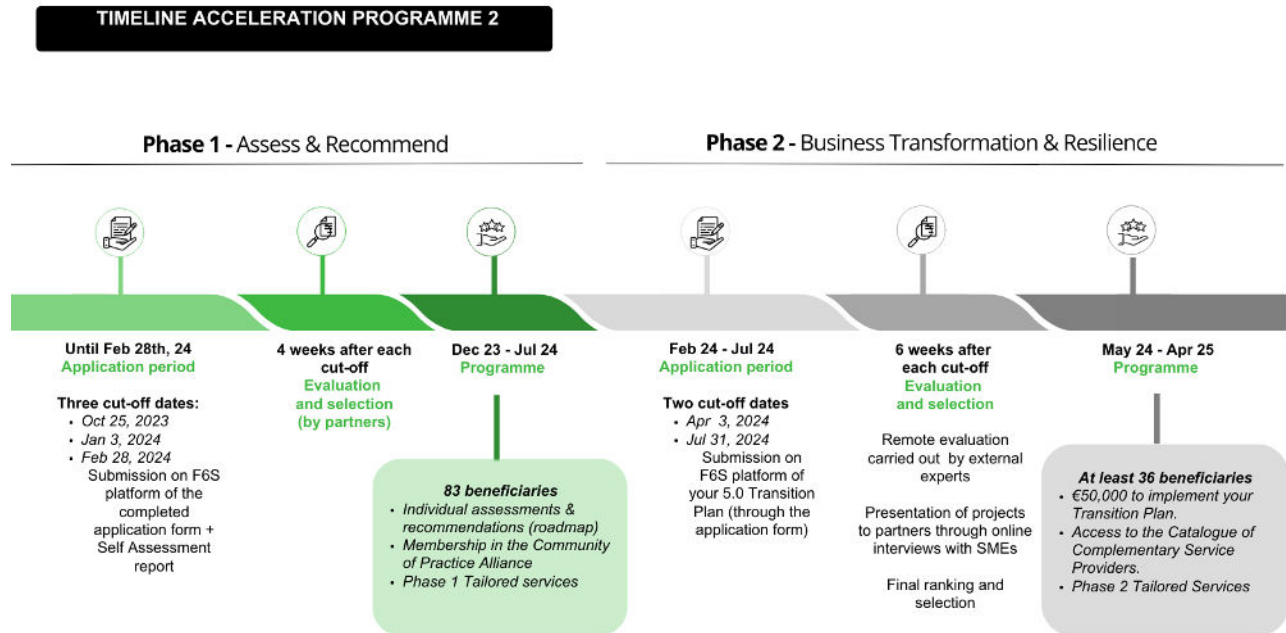


Figure 1 Open Call and Acceleration Programme overview

Applications to the Open Call 2 will be accepted from July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023, with three cut-off dates:

- October 25th, 2023 5pm CET (Phase1 Cut-off 1)
- January 3th, 2024 5pm CET (Phase1 Cut-off 2)
- February 28th, 2024 5pm CET (Phase1 Cut-off 3)

The Acceleration Programme 2 is organized in two phases in a funnel approach:

- Phase 1 Assess & Recommend, from December 2023 until July 2024 with the participation of 83 SMEs
- Phase 2 Business Transformation & Resilience, from May 2024, until April 2025 with the participation of at least 36 SMEs that completed Phase 1.

## Evaluations, Selection and Phase 1 programme start

After each cut-off, there will be a period of evaluation, selection and onboarding for the

SMEs selected which is expected to last for a period of approximately four weeks. Depending on the number of applicants and quality of applications this period may be extended.

## **Phase 1 Assess & Recommend**

During Phase 1 SMEs will receive an individual assessment provided by the consortium members to cover the entire spectrum of Industry 5.0 transformation including advanced technology uptake, sustainability, social innovation, and business issues. The consortium members will also provide tailored services for SMEs aimed at facilitating the understanding and assimilation of industry 5.0 in their company.

Besides interacting with the project consortium members, SMEs selected at Phase 1 will be invited to join the SURE 5.0 Community of Practice Alliance, which is a trans-sectoral and pan-European community of SMEs and larger organizations established with the aim to share best practices, knowledge, and connections among members, both through virtual and physical peer-networking.

## **Applications for Phase 2**

Only Phase 1 beneficiaries will have the possibility to apply for Phase 2.

Applications for Phase 2 will be open from February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, with two cut-off dates:

- April 3rd, 2024 (Phase 2 Cut-off 1).
- July 31st, 2024 (Phase 2 Cut-off 2).

Phase 2 will expect the submission of applications consisting of an Industry 5.0 Transition Plan to turn the production processes more sustainable, human-centric and resilient in the applicants' own organizations.

## **Evaluations, Selection, Contracting and Phase 2 programme start**

After each cut-off, there will be a period of evaluation, selection and onboarding for the SMEs selected which is expected to last for a period of approximately six weeks. Depending on the number of applicants and quality of applications this period may be extended.

## **Phase 2 Business Transformation & Resilience**

The 36 SMEs selected for Phase 2 will receive funding in the amount of €50,000 each in the form of financial support to third parties. The total budget for the call is 1.8M€.

SURE5.0 consortium will also propose to Phase 2 SMEs the Catalogue of Complementary Service Providers, a database of external experts experienced in the domain of industry 5.0 and industry 4.0 that could complement the services delivered by consortium members for the deployment of the SMEs Industry 5.0 Transition Plan.

After the selection is completed, the SMEs will be invited to sign the service agreement and enter the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2.

## 1.2. Relevant Links and Contacts

Project website: <https://sureproject.eu/>

Self-assessment tool: <https://websites.fraunhofer.de/sure50-selfassessmenttool/index.php/477326?lang=en>

Open call application form: <https://www.f6s.com/sure5.0-open-call-2>

Help desk: [help@sureproject.eu](mailto:help@sureproject.eu)

F6S helpdesk: [support@f6s.com](mailto:support@f6s.com)

## 1.3. Structure of the Document

The Guide for Applicants, this document, groups relevant information in 7 sections.

- Section 1 (Introduction) provides an overview of the programme and the document structure.
- Section 2 (General Information) defines concepts applicable to the Open Call and Acceleration Programme.
- Section 3 (Phase 1 Submission Process) defines the rules and procedures to apply to the Phase 1 Assess & Recommend.
- Section 4 (Phase 1 Evaluation and Selection) defines the rules and procedure to perform the selection of SMEs to enter the Acceleration Programme 2.
- Section 5 (Phase 2 Submission and Selection) defines the procedures for submission of the Phase 2 Industry 5.0 Transition Plan application and selection for the direct funding services.
- Section 6 (Phase 2 Procedures) describes procedures for the Phase 2 of the programme.
- Section 7 (Responsibilities of the Beneficiaries) defines the obligations of the SMEs that join the Acceleration Programme in both phases.



## 2. General Information

### 2.1. Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Term / Expression	Definition
Acceleration Programme	Set of services and direct funding provided by the SURE5.0 project to support manufacturing SMEs in the digital transformation.
Application Eligibility Criteria	Criteria used to assess if an application can be considered for the programme. Possible values (Yes/No)
Application Eligible or Non-Eligible	Application that is or is not compliant with eligibility criteria
Application Time stamp	Time stamp of the final submission of an application. If the application is reopened and resubmitted the last date will be considered.
Contract Deadline	Date and time until when the selected SMEs need to provide contractual information.
Cut-off date	Date/time until when applications are accepted, and when the evaluation and selection process start. Applications submitted after the cut-off date are considered in the next cut-off or not allowed if it's the last one.
F6S Application Form	Application form available in F6S Platform.
F6S Platform	Platform provided by F6S.
FSTP	Financial support to third parties. Payments made to entities that are not members of the consortium.
FSTP – Lump Sum	Payment made to the third party based on the achievement of a milestone.
Open Call	Competitive process to access the Acceleration

Term / Expression	Definition
	Programme.
Open Call Deadline	Date and time when applications close.
Open Call Selection Prioritization	Rules used to order applications and select for funding.
Reserve List	Eligible SMEs that will wait, per country, in case selected SMEs do not provide contractual data.
SME	An incorporated enterprise that complies with the rules defined by the European Commission to be qualified as an SME <sup>1</sup>
SME – Autonomous Enterprise	An autonomous enterprise is not a partner with or linked to another enterprise.
SME – Partner Enterprise	The enterprise holds a minimum of 25% (Capital or voting rights in another enterprise, or 25% (Capital or voting rights) are owned by another enterprise.
SME – Linked Enterprise	Linked enterprises are those that form a group. through the direct or indirect control of the majority of voting rights of an enterprise by another or through the ability to exercise a dominant influence on an enterprise.
SME Reserve List	Eligible SMEs that did not enter the Acceleration Programme but are in a waiting list in case contracting procedures are not complete by the deadline.
SME Selected	SME that would receive individual assessment to participate in Phase 1, as well as SME that would

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<sup>1</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/conferences/state-aid/sme/smedefinitionguide\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/conferences/state-aid/sme/smedefinitionguide_en.pdf)

Term / Expression	Definition
	receive financial services to participate in Phase 2.
Score, Expert	<p>Unless otherwise stated, experts will rank each criterion with marks between 0 and 5. Half point scores are not given.</p> <p>Score values will indicate the following assessments:</p> <p><b>0: Fail.</b> The application fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.</p> <p><b>1: Very poor.</b> The criterion is addressed in an unsatisfactory manner.</p> <p><b>2: Poor.</b> There are serious inherent weaknesses.</p> <p><b>3: Good.</b> While the application broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.</p> <p><b>4: Very Good.</b> The application addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.</p> <p><b>5: Excellent.</b> The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.</p>
Score, Per Committee	<p>When the evaluation is made by a committee the average score of each criterion is rounded to the nearest point or half point (1, 1.5, 2, ..., 4, 4.5, 5), before computing the overall score.</p> <p>Overall score is the sum of the scores of each criterion multiplied by the respective weight, rounded to the nearest integer value.</p>
Threshold, evaluation	Minimum score that a proposal must have to be considered for the next phase.

## 2.2. Eligibility Criteria

### 2.2.1. Type of Beneficiary

The accepted applicants for the SURE5.0 Open Calls are Manufacturing SMEs acting in the domain of Mobility, Transport & Automotive (MTA), Aerospace & Defense, and Electronics.

- An SME will be considered as such if complying with the European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC and the [SME qualification guide](#). As a summary, the criteria which define an SME are:
  - Independent (not linked or owned by another enterprise), in accordance with Recommendation 2003/361/EC.
  - Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250.
  - Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million.
- SMEs that do not have yet annual turnover or balance sheets are also considered eligible given that they fulfill the criteria (a) and (b) of the SME definition.
- In case an SME enters the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme, it will remain eligible even if, at a certain point during the sub-project execution, it does not fulfill criteria (b) or (c) of the SME definition.
- The organizations must not have had convictions for fraudulent behavior, other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practices.
- The participating organizations must not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
- The participating organization is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty according to the [Commission Regulation No 651/2014](#), art. 2.18.
- The participating organization is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of either national or EU authority.
- Please note that a signed version of the Declaration of Honour and the SME Declaration will be requested during the contract preparation phase.

The following statements clarify which types of companies are or are not eligible:

## Who is eligible

- Manufacturing Companies
- Producers of at least one product
- Assemblers if they sell the product afterwards
- Software developers and producers if they focus on the production part of their company
- Within our three ecosystems

## Who is ineligible

- Non-producers
- No link with the manufacturing process
- Service providers only
- Software developers only
- Not in our industrial ecosystems

## Service providers that are eligible

Companies that can be considered as service providers can be selected if:

- They have a hardware production (even if offered at the end as a service).
- The focus of the application is on the production stage and not on the services they are offering
- The SURE5.0 support will be limited to their production stage

## 2.2.2. Eligible Countries

Applicants eligible to receive funding through this Open Call are legal entities established and based in the European Union or [EU Associated Countries](#) only.

## 2.2.3. Technological Areas

Eligible participants will only be SMEs operating in the Mobility, Transport & Automotive (MTA), Aerospace & Defense, and Electronics manufacturing value chains

- The Mobility – Transport – Automotive (MTA) ecosystem covers automotive, rail and waterborne sectors<sup>2</sup>.
- The Aerospace and Defense ecosystem covers manufacturing companies in

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<sup>2</sup> [Annual Single Market Report 2021, European Commission](#)

aeronautics, space, and defense; space operators and data and service providers; research institutes<sup>2</sup>

- Electronics ecosystem covers manufacture of computer, electronic and optical products<sup>3</sup>

## 2.3. Support Provided

During the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2, the SMEs will receive the following support:

### Phase 1 Assess & Recommend

- Full, individual assessment of SMEs practices and recommendations by consortium experts to SMEs to support their transition towards Industry 5.0.
- Tailored services for SMEs provided by consortium members based on the recommendations given in the assessment, with an estimated total value of €10,000 per SME.
- Membership in the Community of Practice of Alliance.
- The possibility to apply for Phase 2.

### Phase 2 Business Transformation & Resilience

- Direct equity-free funding of maximum €50,000 per project to implement the recommendations given in their assessment.
- Tailored services.
- Access to Industry 5.0 Catalogue of Complementary Service Providers.

## 2.3.1. Individual Assessment

Each of the selected SMEs will receive an individual assessment and set of recommendations provided by the consortium members, to cover the entire spectrum of Industry 5.0 transformation including advanced technology uptake, sustainability, social innovation, and business issues. The recommendations will be used by the SME to define the strategy for the transition towards industry 5.0 and apply for Phase 2 of the Acceleration Programme.

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<sup>3</sup> [NACE Code, C2](#)

## 2.3.2. Tailored Services

The services will be delivered by consortium partners and divided by two phases of the acceleration programme. SMEs will receive targeted services in Phase 1 based on the assessment and recommendations (once the individual roadmaps are made), while the services for SMEs in Phase 2 will be based on their needs and requests per specific services as defined in their Industry 5.0 Transition Plan - Phase 2 application.

SURE 5.0 tailored services will be delivered as follows:

### Support on Social Innovation and Human Centricity

The aim of this advanced training programme and activities will be for the consortium to make SMEs entering the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme aware of social innovation and human centricity and acknowledge the benefit to their businesses.

The service will be implemented by the actions as indicated below:

#### Phase 1

- Make a presentation of it and deliver to the SMEs a “Guide for Social Innovators (Aligning with Industry 5.0 Principles)” that will cover the following topics:
  - What is Social Innovation?
  - Why social innovation and a human-centric approach matter to business?
  - What are the business benefits?
  - How to get started: A framework for implementation
  - Typical examples of social innovation worldwide
  - Inspiring examples from the 27 European States
  - EU funding opportunities for Social Innovation
- One training session on “Business model elaboration addressing more human-centric and social approaches”. This session will point out that although global business activities are one of the major causes of the current environmental as well as many social issues, businesses also hold great potential to take the lead in creating more sustainable organizations and practices.

#### Phase 2

- One Training Session to present the Social Innovation Tournament or any other similar opportunity, addressed to all selected SMEs to get familiar with the Tournament as a possibility for additional funding along with other funding opportunities.

- Inform about the SURE5.0 project and its scope relevant authorities and stakeholders, e.g. local municipalities, central / regional RIS3 authorities etc. Purpose is for all stakeholders to be exposed to Industry 5.0 principles (and especially human-centricity and social innovation), to be aware of ambitious local SMEs adopting these principles and to understand, embrace and to assist to the possible extend, SMEs to this direction.

## Investment Readiness Support

**Phase 1** - The SMEs will be initially assessed to support their investment readiness preparation for industry 5.0 transition. **The investment readiness assessment** will be delivered in the format of the summary report for each SME, and it will distinguish among different readiness dimensions including leadership team capability, product readiness, market readiness and financial strategy. The assessed SMEs will be categorized under 3 Investment Readiness Levels: (i) Investment ready, (ii) Almost ready and (iii) non-ready.

**Phase 2** - As a complement to the FSTP service, the consortium will offer business **consultancy services** to support the implementation of the Industry 5.0 Transition Plan and identify the gaps regarding further financing for technological deployment in industrial facilities, innovative and sustainable business modeling, management of the new supply chains and partnerships etc. These personalized business support services will be based on the assigned investment readiness levels and will provide benefits such as business modeling, business planning, route-to-market, recommendations for financial needs and IPR management.

## Advanced training programme for the industry 5.0 transition

The advanced Industry 5.0 training programme designed for SURE will consist in a total of 7 modules.

**Phase 1** - includes the mandatory training introduction to Industry 5.0. Challenges and Success Stories

**Phase 2** - SMEs will be able to customize their training itinerary by choosing at least 2 modules to follow out of optional ones from the list below.

Within each module, success stories coming from relevant industrial companies as part of the SURE 5.0 ecosystem will be presented to SMEs. Furthermore, for the technology-based modules, online demo tours of the RTOs facilities will be included, showing the potential of different technologies to SMEs in an interactive way.



The SURE5.0 training programme includes the following modules:

- Introductory training module
  - Introduction to Industry 5.0. Challenges and Success Stories
- Technological training modules
  - AI-enabled sustainability for industrial value chains
  - Safe and connected factories based on 5G, IoT and cybersecurity technologies
  - Digitalization as a main enabler for advanced manufacturing processes and products
  - Human-centric approaches for manufacturing shopfloors and value chains
- Innovation training modules
  - Designing of innovative and sustainable business models for the ecosystems under the perspective of Industry 5.0
  - Soft skills and HHRR challenges under Industry 5.0 paradigm

The final list of modules to be available to SMEs may be updated to match the needs of the SMEs that will be selected for Phase 2.

### **Service provisioning for SMEs uptake of advanced technologies:**

Phase 2 - These specific services are envisioned to facilitate SMEs deployment of an Industry 5.0 Transition Plan with the use of Advanced Technologies for Industry (ATI) such as Advanced Manufacturing, Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Robotics, Cybersecurity, AR/ VR, Cloud Computing, Internet Of Things and Photonics. The services will be delivered by Consortium partners in the following format:

- **individual technological assessments** regarding Industry 5.0 uptake and specific technological challenges for their businesses.
- **and/or proof-of-concept testing:** Based on the Phase 2 Industry 5.0 Transition Plan provided, some SMEs may require specific proof-of-concept for better understanding the potential of certain ATIs and Industry 5.0 technologies, instead of directly moving towards deployment of the Transition Plan. In those cases, the RTOs will provide support for these SMEs to define this testing programme and will offer their Open Pilot facilities and expertise to establish a clear research and innovation plan, to be deployed within and after SURE 5-0 project lifespan. The additional financial support required for this proof-of-concept will be assessed under Investment Readiness Assessment.

### 2.3.3. Community of Practice Alliance

Phase 1 beneficiaries will be invited to join the SURE 5.0 Community of Practice Alliance. This Group in LinkedIn aims to share knowledge and experience in the field of industry5.0, as well as to promote networking in the framework of virtual and physical events.

### 2.3.4. Catalogue of Complementary Service Providers (CSP)

Access to the Catalogue of Complementary Service Providers (CSP) will be free of charge to SMEs in the Community of Practice Alliance.

The CSP will cover the following categories:

- Environmental Sustainability services
- Human-Centricity services
- Industrial Resilience services
- Smart Factory

SMEs will have the option of choosing among the registered CSP or to propose new ones to be added. Acceptation of a provider in the CSP by the SURE 5.0 consortium will be a condition to include it in the FSTP beneficiary budget. Doing so, SURE 5.0 will ensure that the providers selected by funded SMEs will comply with the recommendations made in the frame of the assessment and the consortium services.

Costs incurred with contracting services listed in the CSP will be fully eligible in the budget of SMEs receiving FSTP.

### 2.3.5. Direct Funding (FSTP)

The SURE5.0 project will allocate 1.8M€ ( one million eight hundred thousand euros) in direct funding which will be provided in addition to the services provided by the consortium, Phase 2 beneficiaries will be awarded with direct funding of maximum €50,000 to deploy their Industry 5.0 Transition Plan, with a minimum of 60% being used to acquire services from service providers.

Financial support may be used and may cover different types of expenses:

- Procurement of external advance technology, consulting and coaching services that are not available within the consortium. External service providers with

expertise in one or several of the industry 5.0 principles will be available in the Catalogue of Complementary Service Providers (CSP). Nonetheless, SME will have the possibility to suggest the inclusion of other service providers in the Catalogue.

- Personnel, consumables, equipment, and other costs necessary to set up a feasibility study, a pilot testing, or the building of a prototype/demonstrator to implement Industry 5.0 transformation, with or without supervision by consortium partners.

## 2.4. Number of Companies to be Supported

### Phase 1 Assess & Recommend

- Phase 1 Cut-off 1 - 40 SMEs
- Phase 1 Cut-off 2 - 25 SMEs
- Phase 1 Cut-off 3 - 18 SMEs

### Phase 2 Business Transformation & Resilience

- Phase 2 Cut-off 1 - 21 SMEs
- Phase 2 Cut-off 2 - 15 SMEs

Indicative number of SMEs to be accepted per cut-off, depending on the number and quality of applications (the consortium can decide to on the different number of applications to be accepted)

## 2.5. Language

English is the only official language of the SURE5.0 project. Submissions done in any other language will not be eligible and will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme. This means that all communication will be in English, and all deliverables will only be accepted if in English.

## 2.6. Document Formats

Unless otherwise stated in specific questions of the application form, any document requested in any of the phases must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing.

## 2.7. Multiple Submissions

Only one proposal will be accepted per SME. In case an SME submits more than one proposals, only the application submitted last will be considered.

If an SME is not selected in one cut-off, the application will automatically be considered in the next cut-off, if there is one, with the same score. The SME can request reopening of the application which will trigger a new evaluation.

## 2.8. Absence of Conflict of Interest

Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the SURE5.0 selection process and during the project implementation. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case by a review committee.

SURE5.0 consortium partners, its affiliated entities, employees, and permanent co-operators cannot become a recipient of support via the Open Call. This would be in breach of the European Commission's rules.

## 2.9. Ethical Issues

SURE5.0 complies with the fundamental ethical issues particularly those outlined in the "European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity".

All applicants must submit a self-assessment ethics questionnaire, available in the Proposal Template, to confirm that their proposal does or does not have ethical issues. If the SME must answer "Yes" to any of the questions in the template, the SME needs to contact the SURE5.0 Helpdesk for guidance, as required. The SURE5.0 consortium may check during the evaluation of a proposal if this declaration is in line with the contents of the proposal itself and reserves itself the right to contact the companies for clarification and eventually take necessary steps depending on the ethical issues. Proposals that fail to properly address ethical issues or data protection concerns will be rejected.

## 2.10. Data Protection

To process and evaluate applications, SURE5.0 will need to collect Personal and Industrial Data. F6S Network Limited, as the Open Call Coordinator, will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. A Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed by F6S generally, to ensure compliance

with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and that personal data is collected, processed, and stored in a secure manner. The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). The F6S Privacy Policy can be accessed here <https://www.f6s.com/privacy-policy>.

#### Data storage

Applications will be stored in the project repository on Next Cloud, hosted and managed by the coordinator of the project, Aerospace Valley. This data will be stored within the EU.

#### Data retention

The consortium must retain generated data until five years after the balance of the project is paid or longer if there are ongoing procedures (such as audits, investigations or litigation). In this case, the data must be kept until they end.

Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure coverage. Please refer to <https://www.f6s.com/terms> to check F6S platform data privacy policy and security measures.

## 2.11. Fixed Dates and Tentative Dates

The SURE5.0 project has planned the Open Call and Acceleration Programme in a way to ensure that enough time has been allocated to each phase for successful completion. The project recognizes that unforeseen events might occur.

To keep transparency and fairness among applicants the Open Call closing dates are fixed dates and will only be updated in case of unforeseen events.

All other dates mentioned in this document are tentative and may be updated to accommodate specific needs of the SMEs and the consortium.

## 3. Phase 1 Submission Process

### 3.1. Overall Process

Applications are submitted by the SMEs on the [F6S](#) platform which include questions related to the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme and specific acknowledgment to the conditions of the programme.

After the Open Call cut-off dates, the programme management committee will select eligible applications and invite the SMEs to participate in Phase 1.

If after two weeks of the formal notification an SME fails to acknowledge and accept the invitation, the invitation is canceled, and another SME, who was placed on the reserve list, will be invited to participate.

### 3.2. Open Call Publication

The Open Call is defined by the following documents:

- Guidelines for Applicants: This present guide aims to assist potential applicants. The document provides a full set of information regarding the Open Call for application to the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2.
- Service Agreement Template, to be used in Phase 2, which provides a template of the service agreement that the successful applicants will be requested to sign, which will include:
  - Declaration of Honour, which declares that all conditions of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2 are accepted by an SME legal representative and no conflict of interest with SURE5.0 Consortium partners exists.
  - SME Declaration, which evaluates the status of the SMEs participating in the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme

### 3.3. SURE5.0 Online-Self Assessment

The SURE5.0 Online-Self Assessment is an online tool to evaluate the current level (and future potential) of industry 5.0 principles integration within their company. Only SMEs which have finalized their online-self assessment will be able to apply for Phase 1.

The SURE5.0 Online-Self Assessment is available at:

<https://websites.fraunhofer.de/sure50-selfassessmenttool/index.php/477326?lang=en>.

Applicants must download the pdf report provided by the tool and upload it in the application form.

## 3.4. Proposal Preparation

For the proposal preparation, the applicants are requested to apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception) at:

<https://www.f6s.com/sure5.0-open-call-2/>

If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and provided the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the F6S team to re-submit the proposal (for this purpose please contact us at [support@f6s.com](mailto:support@f6s.com)). However, SURE5.0 cannot guarantee resubmission will be done in time if requested shorter than 2 working days before the deadline.

If a proposal is reopened and resubmitted the time stamp considered is the one of the final submission.

It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. Late submissions are not permitted. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

## 3.5. Proposal Submission

The F6S platform will be the entry point for all SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme proposals that will be submitted to SURE5.0. Interested applicants should register at the SURE5.0 F6S page <https://www.f6s.com/sure5.0-open-call-2>

Only proposals submitted within the Open Call duration will be accepted. Proposals submitted by any other means will not be considered nor evaluated. A full list of applications will be drafted containing basic information for statistical purposes (in accordance with GDPR), and clarity (which will also be shared with the European Commission for transparency).

The application reception will close in the date and time mentioned in Section 1.1. There will not be any deadline extensions unless there is a Force Majeure situation (e.g., a major

problem caused by the F6S platform and not by the applicants, which makes the system unavailable for a long period).



## 4. Phase 1 Evaluation and Selection

Phase 1 applications will be collected, analyzed and assessed by an Evaluation Board composed of SURE5.0 consortium members. Applications will be sorted and selected following three main steps

- Eligibility check
- Proposal evaluation
- Ranking and final selection

### 4.1. Proposal Eligibility Criteria

The following proposal eligibility criteria also apply:

- I. The online self-assessment was completed.
- II. Each SME may submit only one (1) proposal. In case an SME submits more than one proposal, only the last application will be accepted.
- III. SMEs that applied and were not selected for Phase 1 in the first cut-offs and scoring above threshold, will be qualified for the following cut-offs without the need to reapply. If they so desire, they can request to re-open the application and resubmit. The new application will need to be flagged as a re-application which will be scored independently from the previous application.
- IV. SMEs that participated in Phase 1 and were not selected for phase 2, scoring below threshold are excluded from the programme, without the possibility of re-applying.
- V. SMEs that were not selected in the Acceleration Programme 1 can apply to the Acceleration Programme 2; however, it is mandatory to flag that this is a resubmission.
- VI. Proposals from a partner or linked SMEs (see table of Terms and Definitions) must demonstrate that there is no risk of double funding. The fundamental principle underpinning the rules for public expenditure in the EU states that no costs for the same activity can be funded twice from the EU budget, as defined in the Article 111 of Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2002 on the Financial Regulation.

## 4.2. Eligibility Check

A manual filtering process will be used to discard ineligible proposals. The eligibility criteria check will verify:

- I. The proposing entity is an SME as defined in section 2.2.1 [Y/N]
- II. The proposing entity is a legal entity established the countries defined in section 2.2.2 [Y/N]
- III. SMEs operating in the technological areas defined in 2.2.3, [Y/N]
- IV. The language used in the proposal is English 2.5 [Y/N]
- V. The proposal was submitted via F6S platform 3.4 [Y/N]
- VI. The proposal meets all the requirements mentioned in section 4.1 [Y/N]

A Proposal is eligible if ALL answers to the previous criteria are Yes.

After each cut-off, proposals being marked as ineligible will get a rejection letter including the reasons for being considered as ineligible. No further feedback on the process will be given. Applicants are entitled to use the redress process defined in section 4.6, in case they don't agree.

## 4.3. Proposals Evaluation

Applications will be evaluated with the following criteria:

- I. **SME context and strategy (10%)** Applicants must provide a clear description of their company (strategy, type of product and services provided and overall business model) and the value chain in which they are operating. This should demonstrate that the applicant is the type of beneficiary expected in the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2 (see 2.2.1 Type of Beneficiary).
- II. **Alignment to Industry 5.0 principles (30%)** Application/SME must demonstrate a clear set of objectives aligned with the definition of the SURE5.0 goals and with the general objectives of the project.
- III. **Impact (30%)**: Applicants must define their ambition and a clear set of expectations aligned with the objectives of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2. Proposals must demonstrate the impact of the programme and its contribution to SME development.
- IV. **Feasibility of transformation (30%)**: Applicants must provide credible evidence

that the project team is committed to learn/ grow and has the necessary skills, infrastructure, and management experience to be able to implement the industry 5.0.

Individual scoring and the final score are defined in section 2.1.

The percentage included in the criteria definition corresponds to the weight of each item in the overall score.

The minimum score to be considered for the next phase is 3 in each criterion.

## 4.4. Consensus Meeting

In the end of the evaluation period the consortium will review the scores provided by the different experts to assess the following items:

- I. Significant discrepancies in the scores of specific proposals.
- II. Consistent significant deviations in scoring from specific evaluators.

If any of the deviations identified, the consortium will hold consensus meetings to consolidate the scores. If significant discrepancies are not resolved, the consortium may request a third evaluator to score the relevant proposals.

In the case of adding a third evaluator, the final score of each criterion is computed according to the following formula:

$$\text{Score} = (\text{lowest score} + \text{medium score} * 4 + \text{highest score}) / 6$$

## 4.5. Ranking and Final Selection

At the end of the evaluation process all applications will be ranked in a single list. The criteria for the ranking will follow the rules:

- I. Rule 1; The Applications will be ranked based on their **overall score** (sum of the criterion I to IV).
- II. Rule 2: In case following Rule 1 there are Applications in the same position, priority will be given to Applications that have higher scores in the criterion **Alignment to Industry 5.0 principles**.
- III. Rule 3: In case following Rule 2 there are Applications in the same position, priority will be given to Applications that have a higher score in the criterion **Impact**.

- IV. Rule 4: In case following Rule 3 there are **Applications** in the same position, priority will be given to the one submitted earliest.

## 4.6. Programme Invitation

After each cut-off selection, the SURE5.0 coordinator will invite the selected SMEs to join the programme. SMEs may be required to provide additional data to verify compliance with programme eligibility rules.

SMEs will be granted a period of two weeks to accept the invitation. In case an SME does not answer to the invitation within that period, the invitation will be canceled and the next SMEs in the reserve list will be invited to participate in the programme.

## 4.7. Redress Process

Within 3 working days of the delivery of a rejection letter considering the proposal as ineligible, the proposer may submit a request for redress if they believe the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied.

In that case, an internal review committee of the SURE5.0 consortium will examine the request for redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants.

Requests must be:

- I. Related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- II. Clearly describe the complaint.
- III. Received within the time limit (3 working days) from the reception of a rejection letter considering the proposal as ineligible or the Selection Report information letter delivered.
- IV. Sent by the SME legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note:

- I. This procedure is concerned only with the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not call into question the scientific or technical judgment of appropriately qualified experts.
- II. A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that

affects the final decision on whether to fund it or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.

- III. The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
- IV. Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee. All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to the Project Coordinator via email to [help@sureproject.eu](mailto:help@sureproject.eu)

In case the redress procedure accepts the complaint, and the application was submitted earlier than a selected application, both applications will be invited to enter the Phase 1.

# 5. Phase 2 Submission and Selection

## 5.1. Overall Process

Only SMEs that were selected for Phase 1 under this open call 2, will be eligible to apply for Phase 2. The services and funding will have to be used to implement Industry 5.0 Transition Plan based on the recommendations from the full-assessment or the consortium services the SME may receive.

The evaluation process is made of 5-Steps:

1. Eligibility check
2. Remote evaluation by external experts based on written proposals.
3. Ranking and selection for interviews
4. Online interviews where pre-selected SMEs present their projects to members of the consortium.
5. Final ranking and selection

## 5.2. Eligibility check

The following proposal eligibility criteria apply:

- I. Applications to Phase 2 are restricted to SMEs that successfully participated in Phase 1.
- II. SMEs that applied and were not selected for Phase 2 in the first cut-off and scoring above threshold, will be qualified for cut-off 2, without the need to reapply. If they so desire, they can request to re-open the application and resubmit. The new application will need to be flagged as a re-application which will be scored independently from the previous application.
- III. SMEs that applied and were not selected for Phase 2 in the first cut-off and scoring below threshold, will not be able to reapply for Phase 2.
- IV. Applications must include ethics assessment, identifying ethics and security issues and include appropriate mitigation measures. Failing to identify ethical issues or providing inadequate mitigation measures, will result in proposal disqualification.
- V. Each SME may submit only one (1) Phase 2 Application. Multiple submissions are a disqualifying factor. In case an SME submits more than one Industry 5.0 Plan, only the last one will be considered for evaluation.

- VI. At least 60% of the funding of the grant is allocated to purchase services from the Catalogue of Complementary Service Providers

## 5.3. Criteria to Evaluate Phase 2 Applications

Applications will be evaluated by two external experts with the following criteria:

- I. **Alignment and Excellence:** Industry 5.0 Transition Plan is aligned with the goals of the project and services available in the catalogue provided by the project.
- II. **Impact:** Applicants must define their ambition and a clear set of expectations aligned with the objectives of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme. Application must demonstrate the impact of the Industry 5.0 Transition plan and its contribution to SME development.
- III. **Implementation:** Applicants must provide a credible Work Plan, define a set of Milestones and KPIs to monitor project progress. Additionally, the application must specify a clear allocation of staff, infrastructure, and budget to the implementation of the Industry 5.0 Transition Plan.

Individual scoring and the final score are defined in section 2.1. All criteria have the same weight.

The minimum score to be considered for the next phase is 3 in each criterion.

## 5.4. Remote evaluation

Each proposal will be evaluated and scored by two external evaluators, using the criteria stated in 5.3.

## 5.5. Ranking and selection for interviews

In the end of the evaluation period the consortium will review the scores provided by the different experts to assess the following items:

- I. Significant discrepancies in the scores of specific proposals.
- II. Consistent significant deviations in scoring from specific evaluators.

If any of the deviations are identified, the consortium will hold consensus meetings to consolidate the scores. If significant discrepancies are not resolved, the consortium may request a third evaluator to score the relevant proposals. In the case of adding a third evaluator, the final score of each criterion is computed according to the following formula:

Score = (lowest score + medium score \* 4 + highest score) / 6

Only SMEs scoring at least 3 in all criteria will be considered for the next stages of evaluation.

After the discrepancies are resolved, Industry 5.0 Transition Plans will be ranked in a single list. The criteria for the ranking of the Industry 5.0 Transition Plans will follow the rules:

- I. Rule 1; The Industry 5.0 Transition Plans will be ranked based on their **overall score** (sum of the criterion I to III).
- II. Rule 2: In case following Rule 1 there are Industry 5.0 Transition Plans in the same position, priority will be given to Industry 5.0 Transition Plans that have higher scores in the criterion **Alignment and excellence**.
- III. Rule 3: In case following Rule 2 there are Industry 5.0 Transition Plans in the same position, priority will be given to Industry 5.0 Transition Plans that have a higher score in the criterion **Impact**.
- IV. Rule 4: In case following Rule 3 there are Industry 5.0 Transition Plans in the same position, priority will be given to the one submitted earliest.

The SMEs with the highest scores will be selected to participate in the online interviews.

## 5.6. Online interviews

The purpose of the online interviews is to allow the applicants to clarify and confirm the information provided in the written application and to allow the internal experts, members of the consortium, to have a better understanding of the application and address/resolve comments or shortcomings identified by the external experts.

The internal experts will use the same criteria used by external experts, defined in 5.3. As the applicants will provide further information, the scores of the interviews replace the scores provided by the external experts. Therefore, it is possible that scores provided by external evaluators are raised or lowered by the internal experts.

## 5.7. Final ranking and selection

Only SMEs scoring at least 3 in all criteria will be considered for the next stages of evaluation.

After the interviews, Industry 5.0 Transition Plans will be ranked in a single list. The criteria for the ranking of the Industry 5.0 Transition Plans will follow the rules:

- I. Rule 1; The Industry 5.0 Transition Plans will be ranked based on their **overall**



**score** (sum of the criterion I to III).

- II. Rule 2: In case following Rule 1 there are Industry 5.0 Transition Plans in the same position, priority will be given to Industry 5.0 Transition Plans that have higher scores in the criterion **Alignment and excellence**.
- III. Rule 3: In case following Rule 2 there are Industry 5.0 Transition Plans in the same position, priority will be given to Industry 5.0 Transition Plans that have a higher score in the criterion **Impact**.
- IV. Rule 4: In case following Rule 3 there are Industry 5.0 Transition Plans in the same position, priority will be given to the one submitted earliest.

The SMEs with the highest scores will be selected to participate in Phase 2.

If the number of applications to be selected is lower than the capacity for the second phase, additional applications will be selected for interviews.

## 5.8. Contract preparation

The selected SMEs will be invited to start the contract preparation. The Contract preparation will go via an administrative and financial checking (and potentially into technical or ethical/security negotiations). On a case-by-case approach, a phone call or teleconference may be needed for clarification.

The objective of the contract preparation is fulfilling the legal requirements between the SURE5.0 consortium and every beneficiary of the call.

It should be emphasized that each SME should provide at contract preparation time a valid VAT number. Failure to provide the VAT number will automatically result in proposal rejection.

The request, by the SURE5.0 consortium, of the above documentation will be done including deadlines. In general, the sub-project negotiation must be concluded within two weeks. In case an SME fails to provide all information within the above period, the application is automatically rejected and the next application on the reserve list is invited.

At the end of the negotiation phase, the service agreement will be signed between the SURE5.0 Consortium represented by its coordinator and the beneficiary SME.

## 5.9. Redress Process

Within 3 working days of the delivery of a rejection letter considering the proposal as non-eligible or an Evaluation Summary Report that ranks the proposal below the selection borderline, the proposer may submit a request for redress if s/he believes the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if s/he feels that there has been a shortcoming in the way his/her proposal has been evaluated that may affect the final decision on whether to enter the Phase 2 of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme 2 or not.

In that case, an internal review committee of the SURE5.0 consortium will examine the request for redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants.

Requests must be:

- I. Related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- II. Clearly describe the complaint.
- III. Received within the time limit (3 working days) from the reception of a rejection letter considering the proposal as non-eligible or the ESR information letter delivered.
- IV. Sent by the SME legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.
- V. The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.
- VI. Please note: This procedure is concerned only with the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not call into question the scientific or technical judgment of appropriately qualified experts.
- VII. A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund it or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.
- VIII. The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.
- IX. Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee.

All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to Project Coordinator via the help desk email address.

- X. In case a proposal under the redress procedure is re-evaluated and the new evaluation score is higher, it will be compared with the proposal that has entered the Phase 2 of the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme with the lowest ranking. The comparison will use the ranking rules as expressed in section 5.6. In case the proposal under the redress procedure ranks higher then both proposals will be invited to enter the Phase 2.

## 6. Phase 2 Procedures

During Phase 2, SMEs will implement the Industry 5.0 Transition Plan submitted for evaluation, and selected for support.

### 6.1. Industry 5.0 Transition Plan Updates

The SURE5.0 project acknowledges that SMEs need to adapt their strategy to react to changes in the business and technological domains. During the Phase 2 SMEs are allowed to update the Industry 5.0 Transition Plan as long as the actions to be implemented remain in the scope of the SURE5.0 project and the SME notifies the consortium of such updates.

Updates will be assessed case by case. If the SME or the actions to be implemented cease to be in the scope of the SURE5.0 project the participation in the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme may be terminated.

### 6.2. Procedures Related with Direct Funding

The granted SMEs will be called to deliver progress reports where they will describe the status of their project and their results. The interim report is due by the end of month 4 of the phase 2. Final report is due at the end of phase 2, month 8. Monitoring of the progress of the plan implementation will be made at mid-project and at project closure.

Payments will be made after positive assessment of the reports. The consortium commits to evaluate all reports within one month of delivery and complete payment procedures within three weeks after the acceptance of the report.

Payment scheme will be as follows:

- 40% as pre financing after contract signature
- 30% as midterm payment after the acceptance of the interim report.
- 30% as final payment after the acceptance of the final report.

If the SME fails to deliver a report within ten working days after the due date, the consortium will take measures to ensure verity that the work foreseen was performed and eventually terminate the project.

## 7. Responsibilities of the Beneficiaries

The selected SMEs are indirect beneficiaries of European Commission funding. As such, they are responsible for the proper use of the funding and ensure that the recipients comply with obligations under Horizon 2020 specific requirements as described in Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

### 7.1. Conflict of Interest

Beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the sub-project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must formally notify the SURE5.0 coordinator without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The SURE5.0 coordinator may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

If the sub-contract consortium member breaches any of its obligations, the sub-contract may be automatically terminated. Moreover, costs may be rejected.

### 7.2. Data Protection and Confidentiality

During implementation of the sub-project and for four years after the end of the sub-project, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at sub-contract signing time ('confidential information').

If a beneficiary SME requests, the Commission and the SURE5.0 consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial four years. This will be explicitly stated in the sub-contract.

If information has been identified as confidential during the sub-project execution or only

orally, it will be confidential only if this is accepted by the SURE5.0 coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the Agreement.

The sub-project may disclose confidential information to the SURE5.0 consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bounded by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

## 7.3. Promoting the Action and Give Visibility to the EU Funding

The beneficiary SMEs must promote the sub-project, the SURE5.0 project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC. The SURE5.0 Communication team will guide and support these communication activities.

Unless the European Commission or the SURE5.0 coordinator requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must:

- I. display the EU emblem.
- II. display the SURE5.0 logo and
- III. include the following text: This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 101057369.

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the Beneficiary is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior

permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page.

Any publicity made by the beneficiary SME in respect of the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or SURE5.0 project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

- I. The EC and the SURE5.0 consortium shall be authorized to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:
- II. the name of the beneficiary SME.
- III. contact address of the beneficiary SME.
- IV. the general purpose of the project.
- V. the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the project; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received.
- VI. the geographic location of the activities carried out.
- VII. the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground.
- VIII. the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the sub-project, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication.
- IX. the publishable reports submitted to SURE5.0.
- X. any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and SURE5.0 in the framework of the project.

The beneficiary SME shall ensure that all necessary authorizations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and SURE5.0 does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the sub-project coordinator, if such permission is provided by the EC, the SURE5.0, may agree to embargo project publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

## 7.4. Financial Audits and Controls

The European Commission (EC) will monitor that SURE5.0 beneficiaries, and the beneficiary SME comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 of the SURE5.0 grant agreement and may take any action foreseen by the grant

agreement in case of non-compliance vis à vis the beneficiary concerned.

Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the SURE5.0 project and up to four years after the end of the SURE5.0 project, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such audits may cover financial, systemic, and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The beneficiary SME shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorized by it, with a view to verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise, complete, and effective.

The beneficiary SME shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the project. These shall be made available to the EC were requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

To carry out these audits, the beneficiary SME shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorized by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the sub-project applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the project. They shall ensure that the information is readily available on the spot at the moment of the audit and, if so requested, that data be handed over in an appropriate form.

Based on the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorized representative to the beneficiary concerned, which may make observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The Commission may decide not to consider observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the beneficiary concerned within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

Based on the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures which it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the



payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of November 11<sup>th</sup>, 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

## 7.5. Internal Communication

Formal and informal communications channels will be agreed with SMEs selected on onboarding to the SURE5.0 Acceleration Programme. Indicative rules are as follows:

Formal communications, all that may have an impact on the contract performance and evaluation will be performed via email. Beneficiaries will need to notify the project coordinator of updates in contact persons and email addresses.

Informal communications, day-to-day communications, will be performed via an instant messaging system, to be designated, such as Slack or Teams.