



WORTH Partnership Project is funded by COSME Programme of the European Union for the Competitiveness of Enterprises and Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

**WORTH**  
**PARTNERSHIP**  
**PROJECT**

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# WORTH PARTNERSHIP PROJECT

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## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



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## WORTH Frequently Asked Questions

**Questions that may be relevant to all applicants, together with the answers, will be published in this section. It is, therefore, highly recommended to consult it regularly. Replies will be given within 5 days.**

To ask a question, please contact us via live chat on the website platform (inside the “Participate” section) or via email at [helpdesk@worthproject.eu](mailto:helpdesk@worthproject.eu)

### 1. General information on the call for proposals

#### 1.1 Q. What is WORTH looking for?

A. WORTH is looking for projects where designers with SME Manufacturers and/or tech firms from fashion and lifestyle sectors co-create a design-oriented product/ prototype.

#### 1.2 Q. When is the deadline for this call?

A. The WORTH call will remain open over the course of three years with respective selection processes and several cut-off dates. The WORTH call has been launched on 18<sup>th</sup> of September 2017. The second call for application opens on 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2018 with a cut-off date 24<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 at 23.59 CET.

#### 1.3 Q. How many projects does the initiative expect to fund?

A. WORTH will fund a total of 150 projects over the course of three years. 26 projects were awarded during the first call.

#### 1.4 Q. Is there a limitation on the number of proposals that may be submitted by the same applicant/partner?

Partners involved in already awarded projects by WORTH can participate in future calls with a completely new idea and a new consortium but cannot be involved in more than one partnership project proposal per call.



### 1.5 Q. What is the Gallery?

A. The “Gallery” is the dedicated section on the WORTH Platform, where people can view and search potential partners to work with. The Gallery is filled with eligible applicants and therefore, all the members have passed the eligibility check, which is the first stage of the selection process.

Partners can be found by using the search filters and hashtags.

### 1.6 Q. Who is an “applicant”?

A. An applicant is a registered user requesting the eligibility check. To pass the eligibility check, the applicant is required to enter the information into the registration form.

### 1.7 Q. Who is a “potential partner”?

A. Potential partners are applicants that have passed the eligibility check and can work on a Partnership Project Proposal.

### 1.8 Q. What is a WORTH partnership?

A. A **team formed of two or three partners from different participating countries and working in one of the eligible industry sectors. At least two** of the following target groups must be involved in the project: *designers, makers or tech firms*.

### 1.9 Q. Can I submit a project proposal of over 10,000€ to show our investment?

A. Yes, this is welcome, as it shows your determination and strong commitment to results.

1.10 Q. Under which circumstances may partnerships be granted a 3-month extension? Can you ask for 12 months from the beginning or should the need for an extension be identified during the implementation?

The standard duration of partnership projects is set as 9 months. Exceptional partnerships may last up to 12 months depending on the level



of readiness and complexity identified during the evaluation process. Therefore, the duration of each partnership project will be determined from the beginning and extension requests due to failures in the implementation of the partnership work plan will not be accepted.

## 2. Eligibility of applicants, partners, and partnerships

### 2.1 Q. What are the eligibility criteria?

A. The eligibility criteria that all the individual applicants must fully meet are:

- **Applicants must be a SME** (under de EU definition)<sup>1</sup>, a start-up, self-employed or professional freelancers legally established as a business under the national law and **based in an EU member state** (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and United Kingdom) **or a COSME associated country** (Iceland, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey, Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia),
- Applicants must be active in an eligible WORTH industry sector,
- SMEs companies must be legally established for at least six months prior to the date of the application deadline.
- Self-employed applicants must be legally established according to the laws of each participating country **from the signature of the Grant Agreement and during the whole duration of the partnership project**. For self-employed applicants, it is not required the legal establishment six months prior to the date of the application deadline.
- Applicants must have completed the application form in full conformity.

### 2.2 Q. Which countries are eligible? Is the United Kingdom eligible?

A. Eligible countries are the EU-28 member states and COSME associated countries:

Austria, Albania, Armenia, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania,

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<sup>1</sup> What is an SME? ([http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en))  
Staff headcount <250 and either Turnover<= €50M or Balance sheet total <=€43M



Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine and United Kingdom.

United Kingdom is a fully eligible country during the stages of BREXIT negotiations and up to European Commission resolution.

### 2.3 Q. What makes a company an SME?

A. As the EU definition explains, an SME is a company that has less than 250 Staff headcounts **and either** Turnover  $\leq$  €50M **or** Balance sheet total  $\leq$  €43M

### 2.4 Q. Which industry sectors are eligible?

A. Sectors of fashion and lifestyle industries including *textile, footwear, leather, fur, furniture, home decoration, jewellery, and accessories.*

### 2.5 Q. What are the stages of the application process?

A. The WORTH application process consists of:

- 1<sup>st</sup> stage: Eligibility Check
- 2<sup>nd</sup> stage: Partnership Formation
- 3<sup>rd</sup> stage: Partnership Project Proposal evaluation

### 2.6 Q. What steps should I follow to complete the 1<sup>st</sup> stage of the application process?

- Complete the registration by filling in the registration form <http://www.worthproject.eu/register/>

### 2.7 Q. What steps should I take once my eligibility has been approved?

- Once eligible, you will gain access to the Gallery and the Partnership Project Proposal form.



- If you do not know a partner to work with yet, we invite you to search for a potential partner on the Gallery.
- If you do not find a suitable partner on the Gallery, you may request support from WORTH to help scout the right partner for you outside of the Gallery. There is an area inside the platform to submit your request for support.
- If you need advice to improve your idea, you may request support from WORTH by following the instructions inside the platform.
- If you already have a partner to develop your idea, you may go ahead with the completion and submission of the partnership project proposal.
- The partnership project proposal must be submitted with a signed “Terms and Conditions” document.
- Note that **only one** partnership project proposal must be filled **per partnership**, which must be submitted by the lead partner.
- Please, read the instructions inside the platform on how to manage your partnership project proposal.

### 3. Application Process

#### 3.1 Q. What documents must I complete to successfully submit my project proposal?

Fillable pdf templates are available to be downloaded by applicants. The application consists in submitting the following application package:

- a) The project proposal form (a model and guidelines are available in the helpdesk area).
- b) A project dossier (as an annex including sketches, drawings or moodboards and a preliminary business plan of the project - 3 pages maximum in pdf).
- c) Portfolio of applicants (a free-form portfolio in pdf – 3 pages maximum).
- d) Video (recording guidelines are available in the helpdesk area)

#### 3.2 Q. What is the language that the proposal should be submitted in?

A. Proposals must be submitted in ENGLISH.

#### 3.3 Q. Can I send all requested information by email, and consider it successfully received?



A. No, all information must be entered into the respective sections of the partnership project proposal form.

3.4 Q. How are you going to match SMEs without a specific idea? How do you guarantee that you will put me in contact with the most suitable partner and what if the collaboration does not work?

A. We do not match SMEs without a specific idea. To be matched at least one of the partners must have an idea to develop. WORTH can support partners in improving an already conceived idea.

3.5 Q. Can I submit the partnership project proposal without a partner?

A. No, the partnership project proposal must be submitted as a partnership by the lead partner and completed in full conformity.

3.6 Q. Is the submission of a video explaining the project in the 2nd Stage optional or compulsory?

A. It is compulsory to present your idea in a video. Note that only one video is required for each project proposal. Questions 11 and 12 of the application form must be addressed in the video.

Question 11: Why should WORTH Partnership Project support your idea/project?

Question 12: How does the project fit with your strategy? How will this project benefit you? E.g. new skills, increase profits, expand in new markets

3.7 Q. How can WORTH guarantee that any of our ideas are not “stolen” by any of the players, directly or indirectly involved in the project?

A. Disclaimers regarding IPRs protection are present on the website (homepage and throughout the different sections of the application process: registration, eligibility form, the gallery and the partnership project proposal). Moreover, confidentiality terms are ruled in:

- Agreements between partnership members.
- Agreements between the partnership and the consortium.





- Agreements between the WORTH consortium and the key players involved such as the ambassadors, steering committee, and coaches.

An idea cannot be protected in general. Only the implementation of a certain idea can be protected and give rise to an exclusive right when original and innovative.

WORTH Partnership Project aims to support projects when finalised to create a prototype.

Moreover, access to projects' information is restricted to registered and eligible users only and when registering the user acknowledge such confidentiality agreements and clearly accept that each IPR belongs to the entitled party.

In general, the WORTH Partnership Project can be considered as a community of inventors or an R&D Community, so that all the exchanges of information are confidential and protected from possible disclosure until the invention is fully protected by IPRs.

Finally, one of the many areas of support provided by WORTH Partnership Project is namely to impart consultancy and guidance to the selected partnerships on IPRs organisation.

Also, there will be some sessions on IPR management and advice when rolling out the coaching program provided by WORTH.

For further inquiries on this, **eligible applicants** could reach out to the consortium via email at [privacy@worthproject.eu](mailto:privacy@worthproject.eu).

### 3.8 Q. Can an S.A. company participate as a member of a partnership?

A. Yes. An SME legally established under the national laws and under the EU definition can participate regardless the type of corporation and as long as they are eligible according to the eligible legal status: *self-employed, micro size enterprise, small size enterprise, medium size enterprise, private for-profit organisation, private non-profit organisation, universities, a research organisation.*

### 3.9 Q. Can an unsuccessful partnership resubmit a project proposal in the next call for application?



A. Yes. Unsuccessful projects are invited to continue refining and improving either the previous or a new project idea.

All the partnerships will receive an evaluation report with helpful remarks and final conclusions from the steering board with the aim of providing feedback.

WORTH really hopes that unsuccessful projects do not discourage from applying to future calls for applications with an improved project proposal.

## 4. Formalisation of partnerships and administrative issues

4.1 Q. Can you let us know about the administrative duties beforehand, as we do not want to lose time applying to a project that we may not be able to deliver afterward?

A. Selected Partnerships will become WORTH beneficiaries.

Contracts with beneficiaries will be managed by the Consortium. The administrative tasks for the beneficiaries, including activity reporting obligations and related documents will be provided during the partnership agreements formalization.

The lead partner of the selected partnerships will be requested to sign a Grant Agreement with the consortium leader (AITEK). The main objective of this agreement is to validate financial and technical operational capacity from the partners and to establish rules for receiving support from the WORTH project.

Partnerships will have to submit proof of:

- Legal existence: Legal Entity Form accompanied with the supporting documents (registration, tax certificates). Legal entity form can be found [here](#).
- Bank Account information: Financial Identification Form. Financial Identification form can be found [here](#).
- Founders IDs
- Existence of a Consortium Agreement between the participants

4.2 Q. What is the funding scheme?

The following payment scheme will apply:

- The first 20% will be provided 30 days after the invoice submission.
- Based on the positive evaluation of the midterm report, another 40% will be paid 30 days after issuing the second invoice.



- The remaining 40% payment will be carried out following the formal approval of the final report and corresponding work validation by the consortium and 30 days after issuing the third invoice.
- Funds will be disbursed to the lead partner.

## 5. Evaluation process

### 5.1 Q. Who evaluates the project proposals?

A. Project proposals are evaluated by a Steering Board of renowned experts with expertise in the fashion and lifestyle industries.

### 5.2 Q. Will my proposal be selected if this is scored above the threshold?

A. Project proposals above the threshold will not be automatically selected. Highest scores will be ranked within a shortlist of finalist projects considering a balanced coverage of the industry sectors.

### 5.3 Q. What is the next step after entering the shortlist of finalist projects?

A. Finalist projects will be invited to join the WORTH Weekend event, where the final evaluations will take place.

### 5.4 Q. What is the “WORTH Weekend event”?

A. The WORTH Weekend Event is the last stage of the evaluation process to reach the final verdict of which partnerships will be proposed for funding. Shortlisted projects will be required to take part in the event and pitch a presentation and video as well as to participate in the interviews with the steering board members to elaborate on the concerns that may arise during the initial evaluations and know firsthand the operational capacities of the partnership to successfully implement the project.

### 5.5 Q. Who pays the travel expenses of the WORTH Weekend?

A. WORTH will cover the travel expenses as follows:

- In case the partnership is selected after the final evaluations, travel expenses will be included in the founding.



- In case the partnership is not selected after the final evaluations, WORTH will cover the eligible travel expenses upon the presentation of an invoice along with the duly-justified tickets/invoices. Eligible expenses are: flight tickets, accommodation, transport from/to the airport for one representative from each party involved in the partnership.

#### 5.6 Q. Can a project be unsuccessful after the final evaluations conducted during the WORTH Weekend?

A. Yes, the evaluation process consists of 3 stages:

- Evaluation of the drafted project proposal (submitted before the cut-off date)
- Pitch presentation and video (during the WORTH Weekend)
- On-site interviews with the Steering Board (during the WORTH Weekend)

The final resolution will be based on a collegiate decision by the whole Steering Board, considering the partners' performance during the WORTH weekend activities.

#### 5.7 Q. What is the confidentiality policy of the WORTH Weekend event?

A. All the WORTH Weekend attendees are required to sign a confidentiality memorandum of understanding which addresses aspects related to:

- Confidential information
- Intellectual property rights
- Data privacy consent form
- Video taping and photography

## 6. Other questions

#### 6.1 Q. How in-depth must the answers on the Partnership Project Proposal be?

A. All the information provided through the partnership project proposal should be accurate, clear and summarised. The maximum characters for each field in the Partnership Project Proposal form is set depending on the importance of the question.

#### 6.2 Q. What does the coaching programme consist of?

A. The coaching programme consists of:

- 15 hours of specialized mentoring (each partnership will be assigned a mentor who will provide advisory).



- Up to 30 hours of training delivered via webinars in topics of common interest (A minimum of 15 hours are mandatory for the partners to attend).
- Continuous monitoring performed by a dedicated project manager.

### 6.3 Q. How is the project implementation calendar implemented?

A. The project implementation calendar consists of both *the partnership work plan and the mentoring plan*. Both to be addressed and agreed in the kick-off meeting organized by the mentor and attended by the partnership members and the assigned project manager as well. This meeting should be organized at the earliest once the partnership agreement has entered into force.

The partnership work plan and the partnership mentoring plan must be interconnected in terms of:

- Mentoring needs and preferences.
- Time framework.
- Service delivery model of the specialized mentoring.
- Expected interim and final outcomes.