

CALL FOR SELECTION

Partnership Brokers for Strategic EU-Ukraine Business Collaboration

UA_EU_CLUSTER5.0 Project

Grant Agreement No. 101195937

History of Changes

General Information

- **Document Title: Call for Selection**
- **Project: UA_EU_CLUSTER5.0**
- **Current Version: 1.1**
- **Date: 2 January 2026**
- **Issued by: X23**

This section records all amendments made to the Call for Selection after its initial publication, ensuring transparency and traceability of changes.

Change Log

Version	Date	Type of Change	Description of Change	Author / Issuer
1.0	26 November 2025	Initial Issue	Initial publication of the Call for Selection	X23
1.1	2 January 2026	Amendment	<u>In Phase 1 - Initial Screening (Jan 18th - January 23th 2026)</u> , the coordination team verifies the completeness of applications and satisfaction of mandatory minimum requirements: English language competence C1 or higher, minimum three years of experience in Industry 4.0/5.0 technologies, and availability for the engagement	X23

			<p>period. This preliminary phase allows evaluative attention to be concentrated only on applications that satisfy base criteria.</p> <p><u>Phase 2 - Individual Expert Evaluation (January 26th - February 3th 2026)</u> sees each Committee member independently evaluate all qualified applications, assigning scores according to the pre-established grid. Evaluative independence in this phase is crucial to avoid anchoring effects or group conformism. Each evaluator completes detailed individual sheets with written justifications for assigned scores, creating that decision-making traceability essential for transparency and for any appeal procedures.</p> <p><u>Phase 3 - Collegial Discussion (February 4th - February 5th 2026)</u> is perhaps the most delicate and important. The Committee meets to compare individual evaluations, with particular focus on borderline cases (candidates with scores between fifty-five and sixty-five) and cases of significant variance between evaluators. This is not about mechanically mediating scores, but about building consensus through reasoned dialogue. When an evaluator has assigned a score significantly different from others for the same</p>	
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			<p>candidate, they must make explicit the rationale of their evaluation, allowing the group to assess whether elements not considered emerge or whether they are divergent interpretations of the criteria.</p> <p><u>Phase 4 - Final Decision (February 6th, 2026)</u></p>	
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Notes

- This amendment only affects the submission deadline and subsequent deadlines; all other terms and conditions of the Call for Tender remain unchanged.
- Brokers are required to consider this updated deadline when preparing and submitting their offers.

End of History of Changes

Article 1 - Object of Selection

1. A public selection procedure by qualifications and examination is hereby announced for the formation of a shortlist of thirty (30) Partnership Brokers specialising in facilitating strategic collaborations between Small and Medium Enterprises belonging to the innovation ecosystems of Italy, Portugal, and Ukraine.
 2. The selection is aimed at entering into specialist consultancy agreements for partnership development services within the UA_EU_CLUSTER5.0 project, co-funded by the European Commission.
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Article 2 - Eligible Applicants

1. This selection is open to all applicants, whether natural or legal persons, who meet the requirements set out in Article 3 below.
2. There are no restrictions based on nationality or residence, subject to compliance with European legislation concerning cross-border service provision.

3. Applications are welcomed from freelance professionals, specialist consultants, consultancy firms, and organisations specialising in partnership development and business matching.
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Article 3 - Participation Requirements

1. Participants in the selection must possess, at the closing date for application submission, the following requirements:
 - a) **Professional qualifications:**
 - documented minimum experience of five (5) years in partnership development activities, international business consultancy, or facilitation of cross-border collaborations;
 - proven competence in developing international business relationships with particular reference to European markets;
 - b) **Language competencies:**
 - professional competence in English not below level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference;
 - preferential competence in additional languages relevant to target markets (Italian, Portuguese, Ukrainian);
 - c) **Specialist technical competencies:**
 - documented knowledge of Industry 4.0 and Industry 5.0 principles;
 - experience within innovation ecosystems, technology clusters, or startup environments;
 - familiarity with European regulations for cross-border collaborations;
 - d) **Operational requirements:**
 - legal authorisation to provide consultancy services in country of residence;
 - availability for minimum three (3) month engagement period with flexible scheduling;
 - commitment to participate in assigned events according to track allocation;
 - access to professional digital infrastructure for communication and collaboration.
 2. Requirements must be possessed at the closing date for application submission and maintained throughout the duration of any contractual relationship.
 3. Absence of any single requirement shall result in exclusion from the selection.
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Article 4 - Application Submission Methods and Deadlines

1. Applications for participation must be submitted exclusively through electronic means using:
 - a) Online application form: <https://forms.gle/G3CStyk5sYFyXiBfA>;
 - b) submission via certified electronic mail to: ua.eu.cluster5.0@gmail.com.
 2. The deadline for application submission is set for **16th January 2026, 23:59 CET (Brussels time)**.
 3. Applications received after the established deadline shall not be admitted for any reason whatsoever, even if due to postal disruptions or technical malfunctions not attributable to the candidate.
 4. Submission of an application constitutes unconditional acceptance of the provisions of this call and the attached contractual regulations.
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Article 5 - Required Documentation

1. The application for participation must contain the following documentation:
 - a) **Mandatory documentation:**
 - curriculum vitae in Europass format or equivalent professional standard;
 - self-certification of possession of requirements as per Article 3;
 - copy of valid identity document;
 - declaration of availability for required engagement period;
 - b) **Professional portfolio:**
 - detailed description of three (3) most significant partnership development projects with evidence of quantifiable results;
 - list of specialist competencies with particular reference to innovation ecosystems and Industry 5.0;
 - documentation proving required language competencies;
 - c) **Professional references:**
 - contact details of three (3) verifiable professional references;
 - authorisation to contact references for competency verification;
 - d) **Motivational statement:**
 - text of maximum one thousand (1,000) words explaining interest in the opportunity and strategic approach to facilitating EU-Ukraine partnerships.
2. Optional supplementary documentation includes:

- a) professional endorsements from cluster organisations or chambers of commerce;
 - b) evidence of thought leadership through publications or speaking engagements;
 - c) certifications in intercultural competencies or cross-border business development.
 3. All documentation must be submitted in English or accompanied by certified translation.
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Article 6 - Evaluation Criteria

1. Evaluation of candidates shall be conducted through a scoring system based on objective criteria and quantifiable parameters, for a maximum total of one hundred (100) points.
 2. Evaluation criteria are structured as follows:
 - a) Fundamental Competencies (maximum 40 points):**
 - international partnership experience (15 points);
 - knowledge of innovation ecosystems and Industry 5.0 (15 points);
 - quality and reach of professional network (10 points);
 - b) Strategic Capabilities (maximum 35 points):**
 - excellence in partnership facilitation (15 points);
 - cultural and cross-border communication competency (10 points);
 - problem-solving capability and adaptability (10 points);
 - c) Excellence Indicators (maximum 25 points):**
 - orientation towards sustainability and social impact (10 points);
 - digital competency and innovation mindset (8 points);
 - thought leadership and professional development (7 points).
 3. The minimum score for admission to the shortlist is set at sixty (60) points.
 4. The minimum score for access to wild card status is set at eighty (80) points.
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Article 7 - Evaluation Commission

1. Evaluation of applications is entrusted to a multidisciplinary Commission comprising:
 - a) one representative from each consortium partner;
 - b) two experts in innovation ecosystem development;
 - c) one expert in international business development;
 - d) one expert in Industry 5.0 and digital transformation.
 2. The Commission operates according to principles of transparency, impartiality, and professionalism.
 3. Commission members are bound by duties of confidentiality and must abstain in cases of conflict of interest.
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Article 8 - Selection Procedure

1. The selection procedure comprises the following phases:

Phase I - Preliminary screening:

- a) verification of mandatory requirements as per Article 3;
- b) completeness check of submitted documentation;
- c) elimination of incomplete or non-conforming applications.

Phase II - Technical evaluation:

- a) application of scoring system as per Article 6;
- b) evaluation by multidisciplinary Commission;
- c) attribution of scores according to predefined criteria.

Phase III - Shortlist formation:

- a) compilation of shortlist in descending order of score;
 - b) identification of selected candidates within the limit of thirty (30) positions;
 - c) formation of reserve list for qualified candidates beyond the numerical limit.
2. The deadline for completion of the procedure is set at fifteen (15) working days from the closing date for application submission.
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Article 9 - Shortlist and Communication of Results

1. The definitive shortlist is approved by determination of the Project Coordinator and published on the project website at www.ua-eu-cluster-partnership.eu.
 2. Communication of results to participants shall take place by **6th February 2026** through:
 - a) publication of shortlist on the project website;
 - b) individual communication via electronic mail to selected candidates;
 - c) availability of shortlist position information for all participants.
 3. The shortlist remains valid until **30th April 2026** for any substitutions or progressions.
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Article 10 - Reserve List and Substitutions

1. Qualified candidates not selected for numerical reasons are placed on a reserve list in order of score.
 2. The reserve list is utilised for substitutions in case of:
 - a) withdrawal by selected candidates;
 - b) early termination of contracts for supervening causes;
 - c) need to expand the number of brokers for project requirements.
 3. Substitutions from the reserve list are effected strictly following shortlist order.
 4. Substitution periods are:
 - a) **priority period** (7th-16th January 2026): automatic substitution according to shortlist;
 - b) **conditional period** (17th - 31th January 2026): substitution subject to feasibility assessment;
 - c) **final deadline** (6th February 2026): no substitutions admitted beyond this date.
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Article 11 - Remuneration and Contractual Structure

1. Remuneration for required services is established at eight hundred Euros (€800.00) per contractual engagement, inclusive of fiscal and contributory charges borne by the service provider.
2. Remuneration is disbursed according to milestone-linked system:
 - a) One hundred fifty (€150.00) for completion of Milestone BM1/BM4;
 - b) One hundred fifty Euros (€150.00) for completion of Milestone BM2/BM5;

- c) One hundred fifty Euros (€150.00) for completion of Milestone BM3/BM6;
 - d) Three hundred and fifty Euros (€350.00) as bonus for achievement of two (2) Memoranda of Understanding (one per each assigned SME).
 - 3. The wild card system for exceptional performance provides:
 - a) twenty per cent (20%) bonus on payments for qualified brokers;
 - b) possibility of assignment of additional SMEs;
 - c) priority access for future project collaborations.
 - 4. Contractual relationships are governed by the standard contract annexed to this call, forming an integral and essential part thereof.
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Article 12 - Acceptance and Contract Execution

- 1. Selected candidates are invited to confirm acceptance by **8th February 2026**.
 - 2. Failure to communicate acceptance within the established deadline results in forfeiture of selection and progression of the shortlist.
 - 3. Contract execution takes place during the period **9th-13th February 2026** through electronic means using qualified digital signature.
 - 4. Service activation is differentiated according to track assignment:
 - a) Track SMAU: immediate activation with SME assignment by 17th February 2026;
 - b) Track SIM: deferred activation with SME assignment by 17th April 2026.
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Article 13 - Personal Data Processing

- 1. Processing of personal data is carried out in conformity with EU Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR) and applicable national legislation.
- 2. Data Controller is X23 Srl - The Innovation Bakery, with registered office at [address to be specified].
- 3. Personal data are processed for the following purposes:
 - a) management of the selection procedure;
 - b) execution and management of contractual relationships;
 - c) legal compliance and obligations arising from the European Grant Agreement;
 - d) project-related communications (subject to specific consent).
- 4. Retention periods are:

- a) selected candidates: five (5) years from project conclusion (EU audit requirement);
 - b) non-selected candidates: two (2) years from selection conclusion;
 - c) reserve list: until April 30, 2026.
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Article 14 - Grounds for Exclusion and Appeals

1. The following constitute grounds for exclusion:
 - a) absence of requirements as per Article 3;
 - b) application submission beyond deadlines or in non-conforming manner;
 - c) incompleteness of required documentation;
 - d) false or misleading declarations.
 2. Exclusion is communicated to interested parties with indication of reasons and available means of redress.
 3. Administrative appeal to the Project Coordinator is permitted against the shortlist and exclusion decisions within thirty (30) days of communication.
 4. The right of appeal to competent judicial authority within statutory deadlines is preserved.
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Article 15 - Final Provisions

1. For matters not expressly provided for in this call, the applicable legal provisions concerning public selections and commissioning of intellectual services shall apply.
2. This call is supplemented by the annexed standard contract and project technical documentation available on the institutional website.
3. Participation in the selection constitutes full acceptance of all provisions of this call.
4. The Responsible Officer for the procedure is [to be designated] in the capacity of Project Manager of the UA_EU_CLUSTER5.0 project.
5. For information, contact:
 - a) email: ua.eu.cluster5.0@gmail.com;
 - b) telephone:
For Italy +39 0363 7032 47
For Portugal +351 210 438 600
For Ukraine +38 093 917 08 52 / +380-99-240-4750 / +380-50-643-4344
 - c) website: www.ua-eu-cluster-partnership.eu.

Article 16 - Publication and Effectiveness

1. This call is published:
 - a) on the project website www.ua-eu-cluster-partnership.eu;
 - b) on institutional websites of consortium partners;
 - c) through professional networks and cluster organisations.
2. The call comes into effect from the date of publication on the project website.
3. Any amendments or additions are published by the same means and constitute an integral part of this call.

THE PROJECT COORDINATOR

X23 Srl - The Innovation Bakery

Bergamo, 26/11/2025

[Digital signature]

ANNEXES: - Annex A: Standard Contract for Partnership Brokerage Services - Annex B: Technical Specifications of UA_EU_CLUSTER5.0 Project - Annex C: Application Form Template - Annex D: Complete Privacy Notice

This call is issued within the framework of the UA_EU_CLUSTER5.0 project, co-funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement No. 101195937. The provisions comply with European legislation concerning public procurement and intellectual service provision.

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