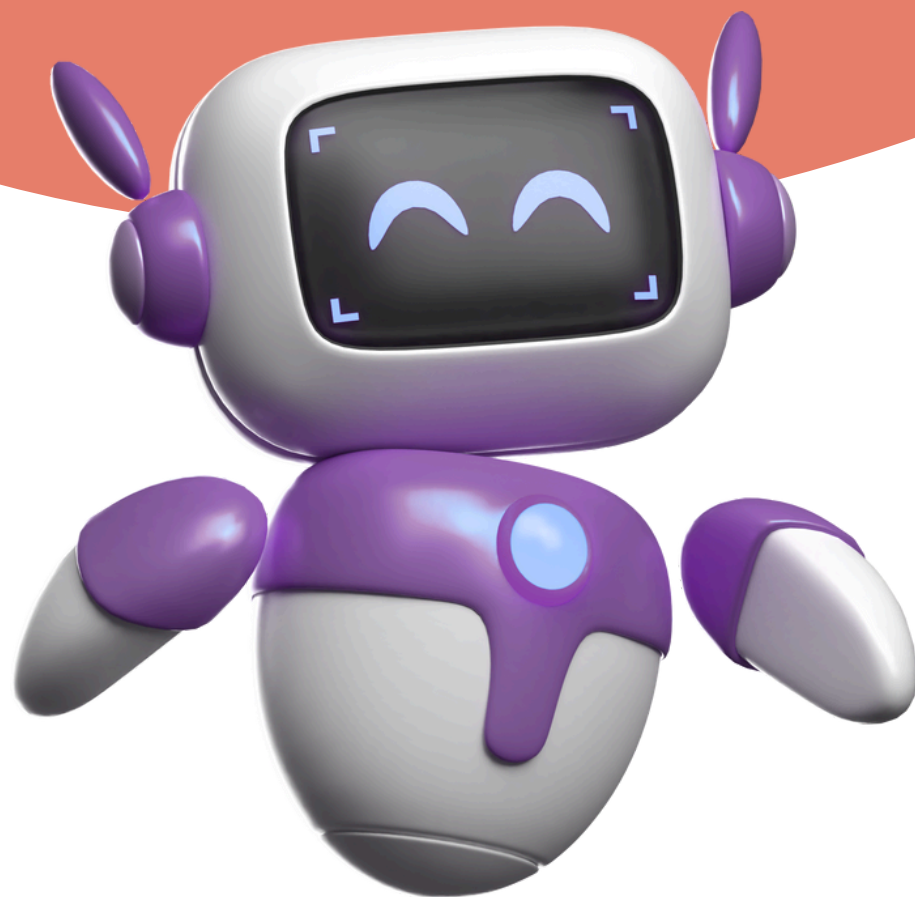


SustainX



SustainX for SMEs: Build, Partner, Unlock EU Innovation

#I3Instrument



KEARNEY

IMP³ROVE



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European
Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

Agenda

- 13:00 – 13:05 – Introduction – Cristina Baghiu, EDIH DIZ & SustainX coordinator
- 13:05 – 13:15 – What the SustainX Open Call (Sep 1 – Oct 17, 2025) offers to innovative SMEs – Cristina Baghiu, EDIH DIZ & SustainX coordinator
- 13:15 – 13:25 – How the programme supports SMEs with training, advisory, and matchmaking across Europe – Cristina Baghiu, EDIH DIZ & SustainX coordinator
- 13:25 – 13:40 – Opportunities & advantages for SMEs to collaborate in S3 Partnerships Coen de Graaf Expert Innovation, Competitiveness & Sustainability at Idea Consult-Brussels
- 13:40 – 13:50 – What it takes to build an I3-ready project and consortium – SustainX partners
- 13:50 – 14:00 – Practical steps to apply and maximize your chances of selection – Laura Lorenzo Brito, Fundacion Santa Cruz Sostenible
- 14:00 – Q&A



Introduction

Submit your Application to become a SustainX SME

[Apply here](#)

SustainX

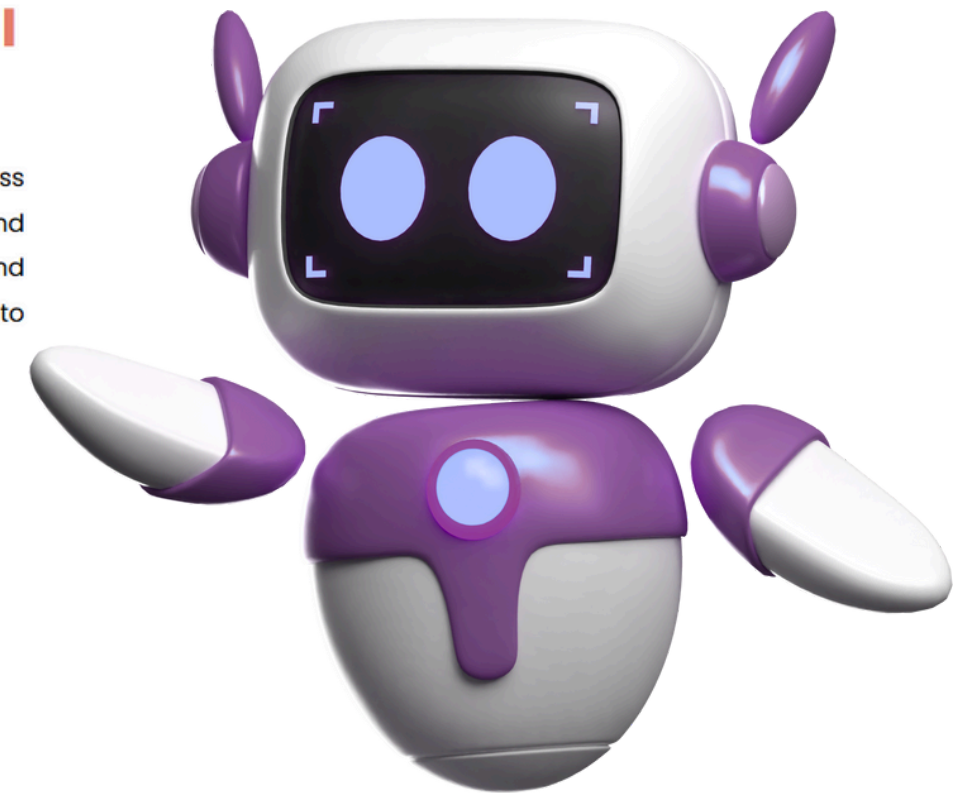
[Home](#) [About](#) [Approach](#) [Open Call](#) [Partners](#) [News](#) [Contact](#) [🔍](#)



Driving Innovation for a Sustainable Future

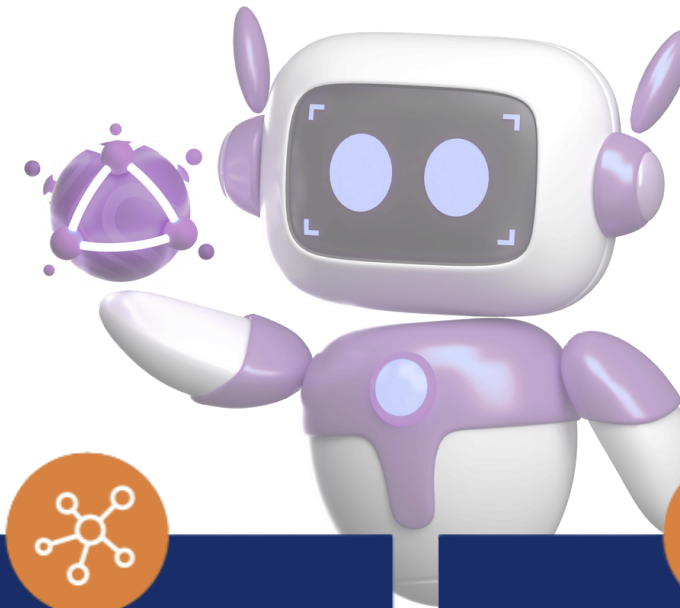
Empowering SMEs and fostering interregional collaboration to accelerate Europe's Green and Digital transition.

SustainX is a strategic initiative designed to accelerate innovation in less developed European regions, including Romania, Greece, Bulgaria, Latvia, and the Canary Islands. Our mission is to enhance the capabilities of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), fostering sustainability-driven digital innovation to support Europe's transition to a Green and Digital Economy.



**Funded by
the European Union**

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.



INTERREGIONAL

**MINIMUM
3-5
PARTNERS**

from different
Member States and
regional ecosystems

INNOVATION

CLOSE TO MARKET
activities (TRL 6-9)

**INNOVATION &
IMPACT-ORIENTED**
investments

INVESTMENTS

**OVER
€570**
million available in
the **2021-2027**
programming period

**UP TO
€10**
million per project

**70
%**
of EU contribution for
all beneficiaries and
cost categories

INTERREGIONAL

- Creating links between EU regions around **shared or complementary smart specialisation (S3)** areas and involving all components of the regional or national innovation ecosystems
- Supporting the development of value chains in less developed regions

INNOVATION

- Testing, demonstration, piloting, large-scale product validation and market replication, adaptation of existing prototypes
- Accelerating innovation, bringing innovative solutions and new products in:
 - Digital transition**
 - Green transition**
 - Smart manufacturing**

INVESTMENTS

- Financial and advisory support for joint innovation projects
- Smart economic transformation by moving from investment ideas to actual implementation
- Direct investment to companies (mainly SMEs)

European Commission I3 instrument



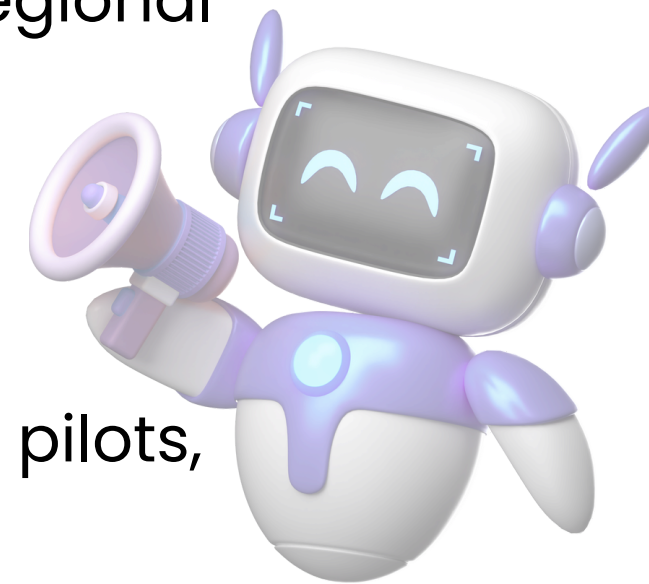
Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

SustainX Open Call

At scale: ~**100 SMEs** trained;
~**20 innovation projects** advanced
toward I3 in 2026 calls

- **Free, expert-led training in Phase 1:** local workshops on your region's challenges + interregional virtual sessions with proven playbooks.
- **Peer learning that saves time:** real SME cases, templates, and checklists you can reuse.
- **1-to-1 guidance (for selected projects in Phase 2):** sharpen your innovation plan, metrics, pilots, and funding route.
- Curated EU partners: **structured matchmaking** across multiple regions to form cross-border consortia and potential business partnerships
- **One-stop access:** proposal clinics, TRL upgrade roadmaps, budget & co-funding guidance, and partner search tools — everything SMEs need to be **I3-ready for the 2026 calls**.



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

Why SustainX vs. Traditional SME Support?

Goal: innovation-to-investment pathway built to get you I3-ready in 2026

Training: multi-month curriculum + interregional best practices tied to your S3 priorities

Partnerships: curated matchmaking across several EU regions → faster, better-fit partners for pilots and consortia

Advisory: 1-to-1 deal-style advisory (workplan, pilots, KPIs, budget, co-funding, IP/data/ESG)

Funding route: I3-ready track (TRL6–9 expectation, 3–5 partners, interregional value chain) with proposal clinics and timeline alignment

Goal: general business help

Training: one-off, generic

Partnerships. ad-hoc networking

Advisory: light mentoring

Funding route: explore funding when ready

Outcomes: new knowledge, few partnerships



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

How You Get In & What Happens Next

- **1 Sep – 17 Oct 2025:** SME Open Call for Training & Advisory Support Services
- **End of Oct 2025:** Selection & onboarding
- **November 2025 – March 2026: Programme Phase 1 — Training** (initial estimation of up to **100 SMEs**)
- **March 2026 – September 2026: Programme Phase 2 — Advisory & Consortia** (~**20 innovation projects** & I3 applications)

Q3–Q4 2026: I3 proposal finalisation & submission (aligned to 2026 call windows)

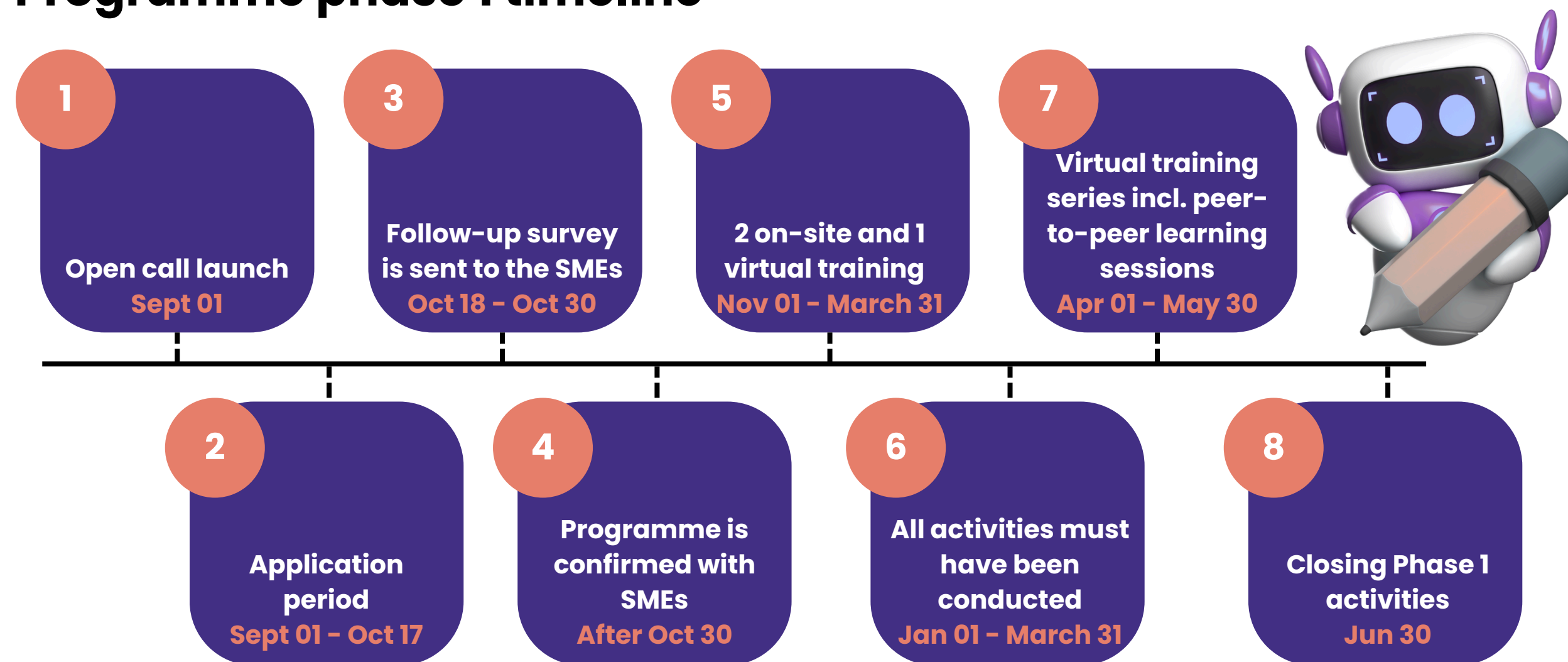


Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

How the programme supports the SMEs

Programme phase 1 timeline



Programme Phase 2

All activities within the programme Phase 2 will be discussed and aligned with the participating SMEs to ensure that the outcomes are tailored to their specific needs.

The selected SMEs will be notified and invited for further discussions by the date specified in the open call description.



Funded by
the European Union

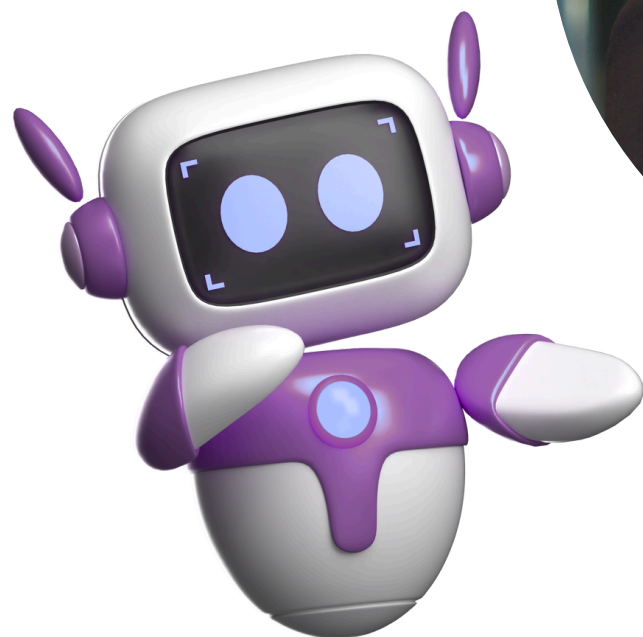
This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

Opportunities & advantages for SMEs to collaborate in S3 Partnerships



Coen de Graaf

Expert Innovation, Competitiveness & Sustainability
Idea Consult- Brussels



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

What it takes to build an I3-ready project and consortium

✓ Vision & Alignment

Addresses clear societal/economic challenge
Fits EU priorities (green, digital, regional)

✓ Strong Consortium

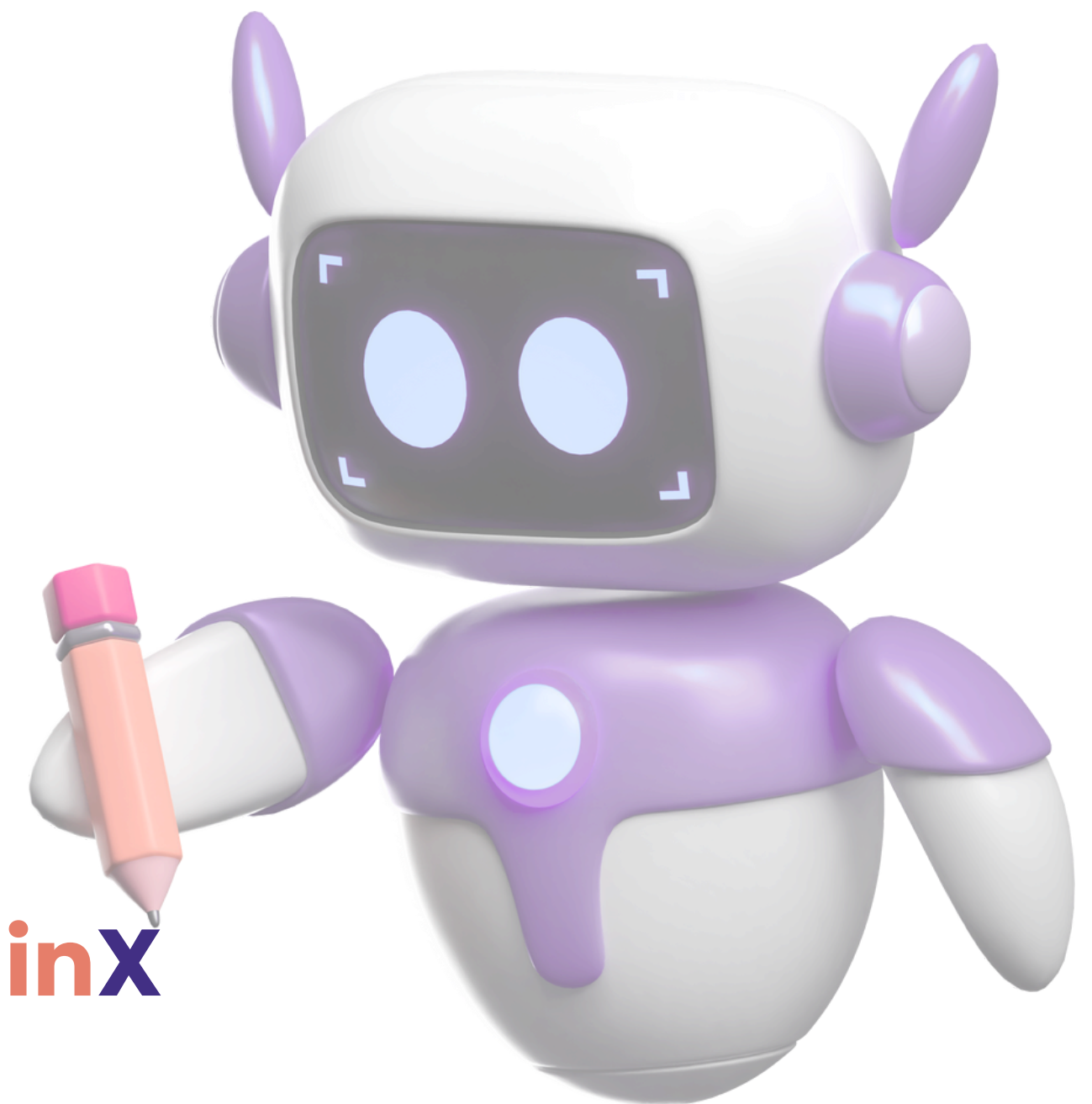
Mix of SMEs, corporates, clusters, public bodies, RTOs
Geographic & skills diversity
Clear governance & complementarity

✓ Market & Investment Focus

Solid business case & path to market
Investor commitment & sustainability

✓ Readiness & Impact

Mature tech (close to market)
Measurable KPIs (jobs, growth, investment leveraged)
Scalable & replicable results across regions



SustainX



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

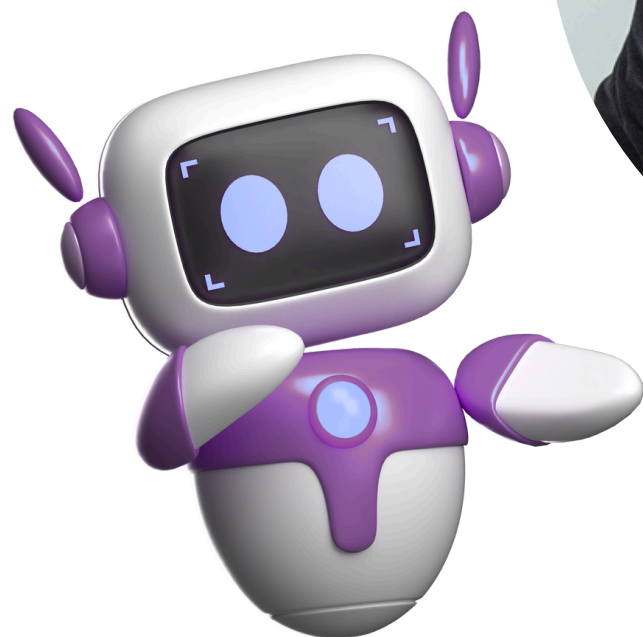
What it takes to build an I3-ready project and consortium



Ints Viksna

Chairman of Board

Latvian Technological center



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

Practical steps to apply and maximize your chances of selection

1

✦ Read the Open Call announcement

The open call announcement is [AVAILABLE HERE](#)

2

✦ Apply to the SustainX open call

The registration form is [AVAILABLE HERE](#)

3

✦ Participate to the regional events if you have questions

The regional event will be organized as follows:

Canary Islands - 16 September 2025 [REGISTER HERE](#)

Greece - 14 October 2025 [REGISTER HERE](#)

Romania - 02 October 2025 [REGISTER HERE](#)

Latvia - 9 October 2025 [REGISTER HERE](#)

Bulgaria - 30 September 2025 [REGISTER HERE](#)

4

✦ Contact the regional representatives if you have questions

Representatives and contact details from each region:

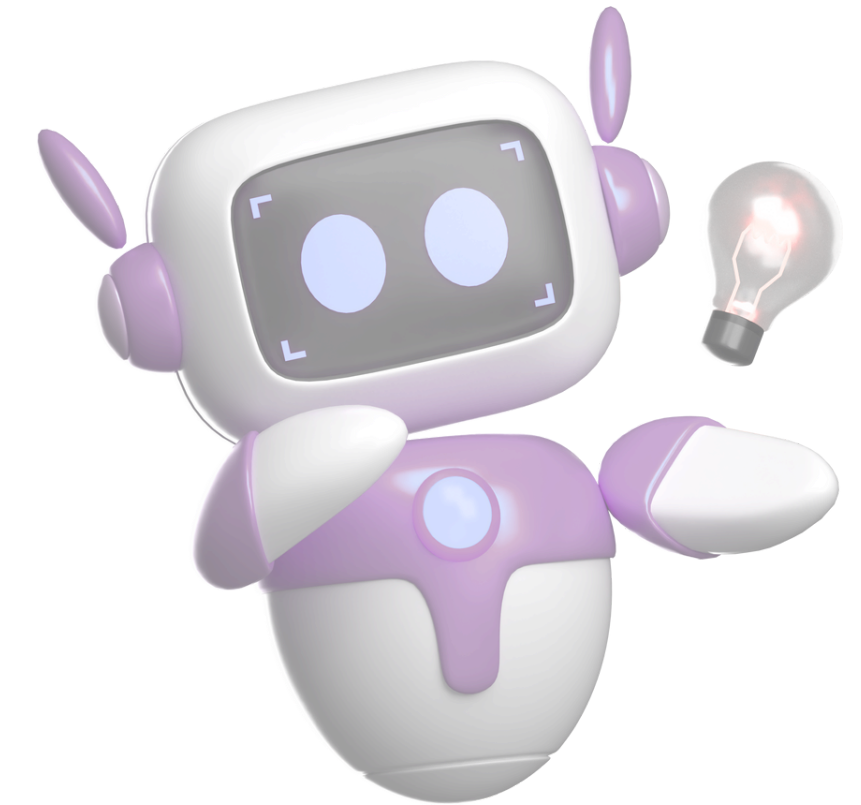
Canary Islands - Laura Lorenzo Brito llorbri@santacruzdetenerife.es

Greece - Georgia Lalou glalou@ied.eu

Romania - Andreea Văculișteanu innovation@digital-innovation.zone

Latvia - Agnese Kore agnese.kore@techcenter.lv

Bulgaria - Michaela Dineva michaela.dineva@arcfund.net



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

Evaluation criteria for SMEs Application to the Open Call

★ Mandatory

✓ **S3 Regional Sector**
Priority S3 Sectors

✓ **Consortium Region**
NE-Romania Latvia
Thessaly (Greece) Canary Islands (Spain)
Bulgaria

★ Scoring criteria

✓ **Digital Transformation**
Current or intended digital innovations in your SME

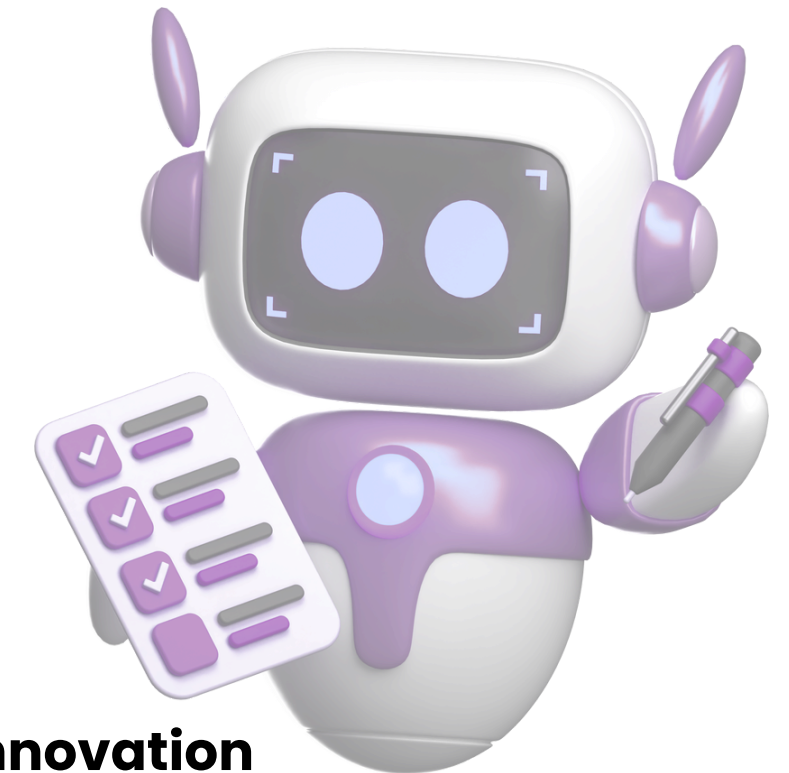
✓ **Sustainable Practices**
Current or intended sustainable practices in your SME

✓ **Sustainability in Innovation**
Current or intended sustainability in your innovations

✓ **English Proficiency**
Ability to communicate in English

✓ **Collaboration Willingness**
Learn, share knowledge, and collaborate

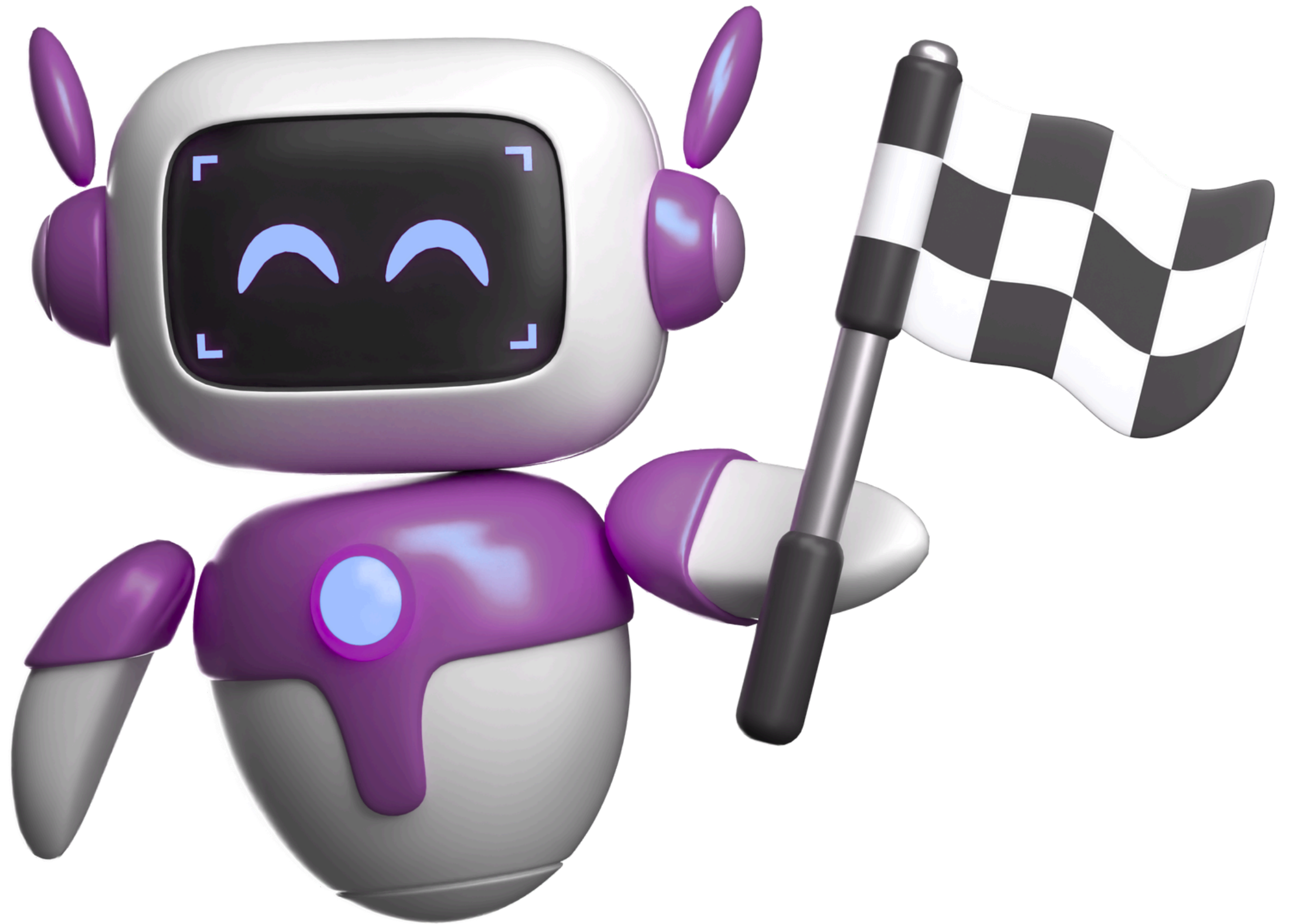
✓ **Women Leadership**
Priority for women-led or founded companies



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

Q&A TIME
To apply [CLICK HERE](#)



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410.

SustainX

Programme partners



Funded by
the European Union

This project received funding from the European Union through grant agreement no. 101184410. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.