



Open Call Financial Support BIOMAN4R2

Report

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Open Call Financial Support BIOMAN₄R₂ - Report

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1. Disclaimer

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2. Document Information

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| Deliverable description | This document concerns the reporting of the BioMan4R2 Open Call process. The report provides insight into the Open Call process and the level of interest from different European countries in the Bioman4R2 initiative. |
| Key words | Financial support scheme, Open Call, Impact, Innovation Financial Support, Business Transformation Financial Support |

3. About the Bioman4R2 Open Call

BioMan4R2 (Biomanufacturing Eurocluster for Recovery and Resilience in EU) - Euroclusters project offered financial support to European small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) from the Biomanufacturing and MedTech sector. SMEs from these sectors were eligible to apply for up to €60,000 under the BioMan4R2 Eurocluster funding scheme until July 2, 2023.

Two types of financial support were available (Fig. 1):

- I Innovation (up to €60,000 per SME): Funding was offered for collaborative projects between SMEs and partners from different sectors, focusing on resilience, sustainability, digital transformation, and product evaluation.
- II Business Transformation (up to €15,000 per SME): Funding was provided for technology adoption, digitalization, sustainable supplier business models, resilience analyses, business continuity plans, market access strategies, and advice on reimbursement or regulation.

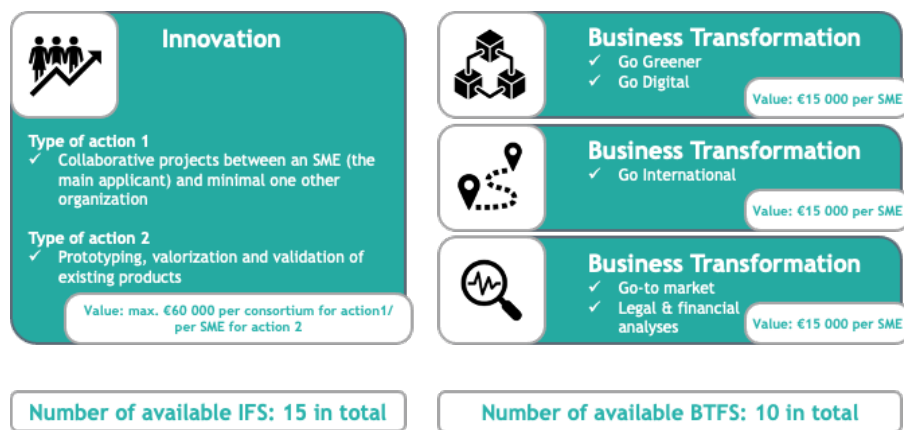


Figure 1. The Bioman4R2 Open Call offering in a graphical overview.

4. Awareness and Dissemination

The BioMan4R2 Open Call was made known to the target group through various channels, including publications on the ECCP (European Cluster Collaboration Platform) website, LinkedIn, Cluster newsletters, and websites, as well as events (Fig. 2). Additionally, the Open Call was prominently featured on the BioMan4R2 website, which also offered a matchmaking service.

All partners were actively engaged in dissemination and promoting the call within their ecosystem and beyond via regional webinars amongst other activities. Partners ensured dissemination within their respective ecosystem but also to other regions nationwide by participating in info sessions and mailings for example. Additionally, partner CEBR was actively involved in the dissemination to their community which includes 40+ European cluster organisations thereby ensuring outreach to the wider European Biomanufacturing and MedTech ecosystem.

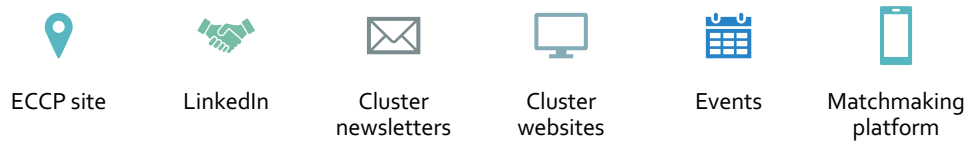


Figure 2. Awareness of the Open Call was raised via a wide array of communication channels.

5. Open call support to SMEs

As part of the BioMan₄R₂ Open Call, interested parties were offered multilevel support by all project partners through various means:

1. Guidelines

Detailed guidelines and instructions were provided to interested applicants, outlining the application process, eligibility criteria, and requirements for submitting proposals.

2. Webinars

Two webinars were held to further explain the Open Call, answer any questions from potential applicants, and provide additional insights into the funding opportunity. The webinars were recorded and published on the BioMan₄R₂ site. Frequently asked questions (FAQ) were gathered based on these webinars – and directly received questions. The FAQ sheet was published on the BioMan₄R₂ site and on LinkedIn the link to the document was communicated.

3. Matchmaking platform

The BioMan₄R₂ consortium offered a dedicated matchmaking platform that featured an extensive database of key stakeholders in the Biomanufacturing and MedTech industries within the consortium regions. This platform facilitated connections between SMEs and various stakeholders, including service providers, large corporations, research organizations, public institutions, and investors. The aim was to provide valuable support to SMEs looking to expand their operations and to foster collaboration within the BioMan₄R₂ SME Support Programme. This networking and collaboration platform promoted innovation and growth in the Biomanufacturing and MedTech sectors within the consortium regions. In the matchmaking area we saw 53 matchmaking opportunities and 13 meetings scheduled.

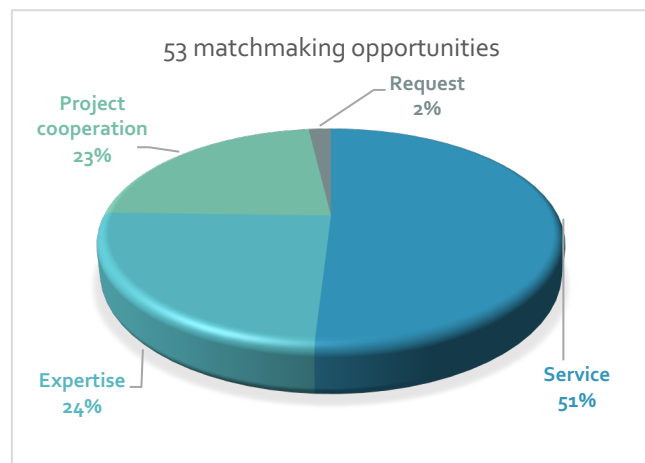


Figure 3. The BioMan₄R₂ matchmaking platform saw 53 matchmaking opportunities.

We did not track & trace the number of collaborations sealed through this platform, since we encouraged the SMEs to use other channels (such as EEN) too, but based on individual feedback the platform has contributed to novel cross-border partnerships.

4. Cluster support

The BioMan₄R₂ partner regions offered support to national applications, meaning that applicants from within the consortium partner regions received assistance and guidance during the application

process. On the other hand, for applicants outside of the partner regions, they were supported by partner STERN, who was responsible for managing the financial support scheme. This arrangement ensured that all applicants, regardless of their location, had access to the necessary support and resources to participate in the Open Call and potentially benefit from the BioMan₄R₂ funding opportunities.

Overall, the BioMan₄R₂ Open Call aimed to offer comprehensive support to interested parties, providing them with the necessary tools, resources, and matchmaking opportunities.

6. Applications received

The application deadline was July 2, 2023, at 23:59 (CEST). The BioMan₄R₂ consortium received 80 applications for the "Innovation" financial support category, out of which only 15 projects could be awarded financial support (Fig. 4).

This resulted in a success rate of 19%, meaning that approximately 19% of the submitted projects could be awarded financial support. Please note, as some of the awarded applications requested a lower amount of funding, one additional application has been awarded leading to a slightly larger success percentage in hindsight.

Similarly, for the "Business Transformation" financial support category, the consortium received 38 applications, and only 10 projects could be awarded financial support. As a result, the chance of being awarded financial support in this category was 26%, indicating that around 26% of the applicants could be awarded financial support for their projects.

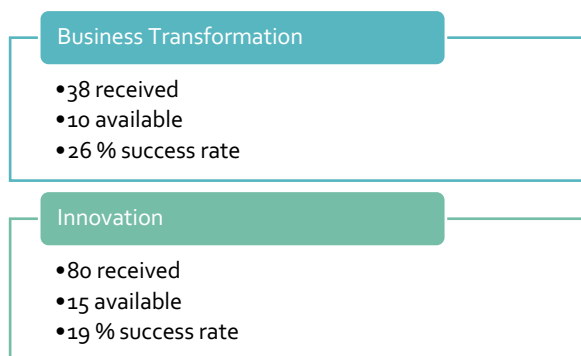


Figure 4. A vast number of applications were received.

6.1 Geographical spread

In total, the Bioman₄R₂ initiative received 118 eligible applications. The majority (91 applications) originates from countries in which the partner clusters are located - Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Poland, demonstrating their active involvement and commitment to driving innovation in the Biomanufacturing and Medtech sector and potentially an increased awareness of the Eurocluster program. It must be noted that the partners are based in part of the country only and thus not all projects submitted are based in the partner's cluster.

Additionally, the initiative received 15 applications from other EU countries, showcasing the widespread interest and participation from various regions across Europe. Moreover, there were 19 applications received from EU-13 countries, highlighting the active engagement and growing

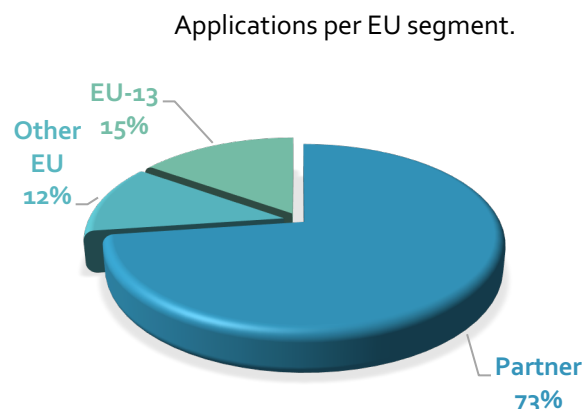


Figure 5. Applications received from the partner countries, other EU countries and EU-13 regions.

interest in Biomanufacturing and Medtech innovation from newer member states within the European Union.

It is important to note that the partner country Poland is also considered within the EU-13 category. As a result, out of the total 91 applications received from partner countries, some of these applications would also be included in the EU-13 category, showcasing Poland's dual representation in figure 5.

6.2 Business Transformation Financial Support applications

The Business Transformation Financial Support scheme attracted interest from various European countries, showcasing a widespread commitment to fostering business transformation and driving innovation across diverse industries (Fig. 6).

Germany, Spain, Slovenia, and Poland have shown substantial engagement, with numerous applications from each country. France and Denmark also showed significant interest, with a considerable number of applications.

Additionally, several other countries, including Austria, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands, and Sweden, have each contributed with at least one application, illustrating a diverse and wide-ranging participation in the Business Transformation Financial Support initiative.

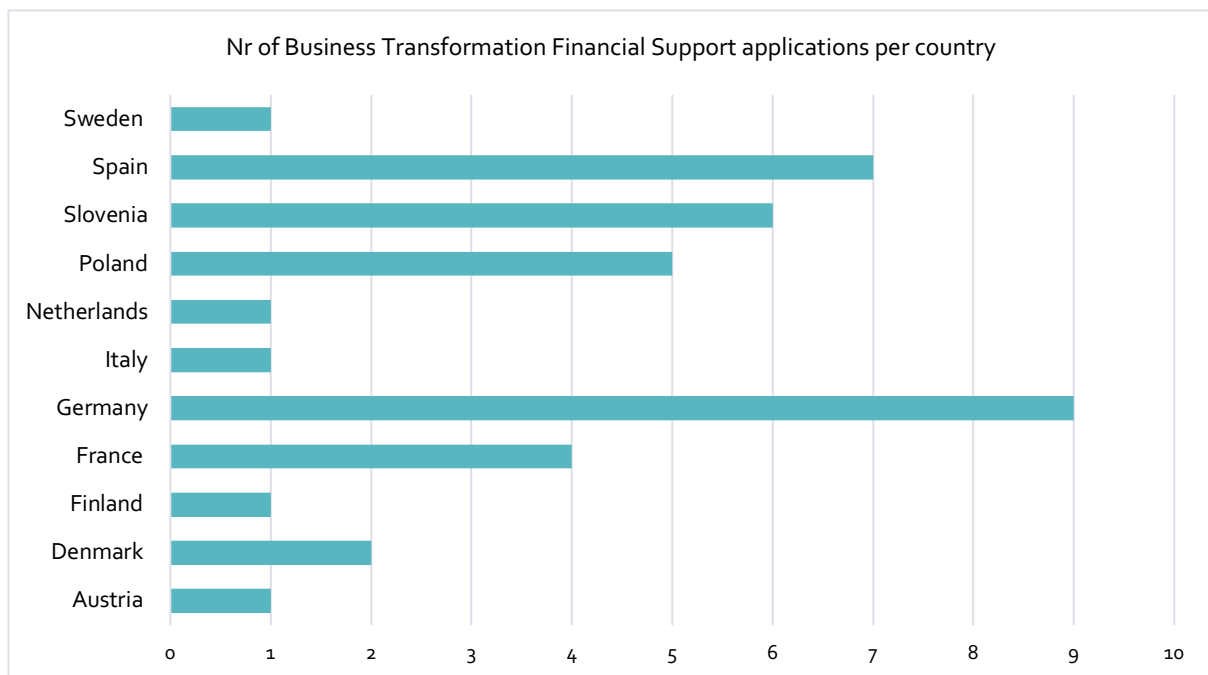


Figure 6. The number of Business Transformation Financial Support applications per country.

Three categories were available within the Business Transformation Financial Support scheme:

- Business/Legal/Financial: Initiatives seeking support for business, legal, and financial analysis, including continuity plans, resilience analysis, go-to-market strategies, and advice on reimbursement or regulatory challenges.

- Go International: Applications from SMEs aiming to expand business agreements and collaborative projects internationally. Support includes assistance with travel, market discovery, access advice, and regulatory challenges in foreign markets.
- Train Your Worker/Go Greener-Digital: Support for SMEs to acquire training on technology uptake, digitalization, and sustainable business models from supported providers. Aims to enhance digital skills and capabilities in the digital era.

The Business Transformation Financial Support initiative received a significantly higher number of applications in the Business/Legal/Financial category, with 20 applications (Fig. 7).

In comparison, the Go International category received 14 applications, also showing a considerable interest from SMEs aiming to expand their businesses and projects to international markets.

The Train Your Worker/Go Greener-Digital category received 8 applications. These initiatives focus on acquiring training and skills related to digitalization and sustainable business models.

Please note that a few applicants demonstrated interest across multiple categories.

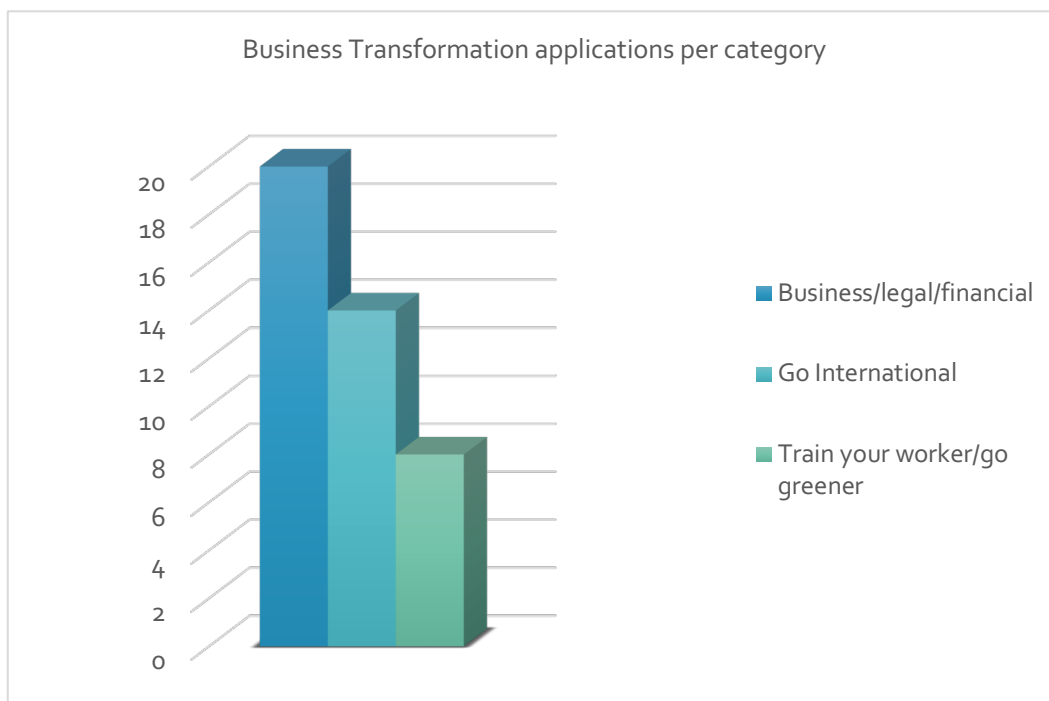


Figure 7. The Business Transformation applications per category. Summary of Traction is Business/Legal/Financial: 20 applications, Go International: 14 applications, Train Your Worker/Go Greener-Digital: 8 applications. A few applicants ticked multiple boxes for which all selected categories have been included.

In total, there 35 applications with service providers from European countries and 7 applications with service providers from non-European countries (Hong Kong, the United States, UK and Singapore) involved in the "Business Transformation" applications within the BioMan₄R₂ Open Call (Fig. 8). There were two applications in which two service providers were listed and one application with three service providers. We thus see that most applications aimed to target one specific action with one service provider in the projects. Service providers outside of the EU were selected when the applicant was targeting internationalisation and achieving market access outside of the EU.

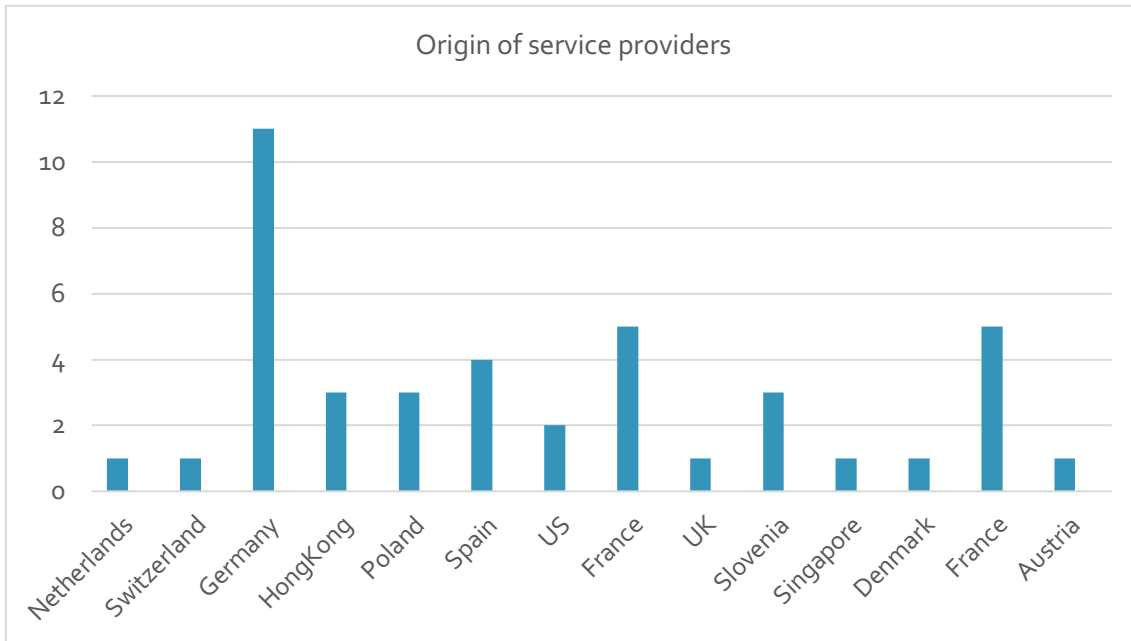


Figure 8. Origin of service providers selected by the applicants for delivering the Business Transformation service.

6.3 Innovation Financial Support Applications

The geographical distribution of Innovation Financial Support applications demonstrates a diverse range of participation across European countries (Fig. 9). Germany emerged as the front-runner with 29 applications. Spain closely followed with 16 applications.

Other noticeable contributors include France with 10 applications, the Netherlands with 4 applications, and Austria, Finland, and Denmark with 3 applications each.

Multiple countries, such as Belgium, Greece, Poland, and Slovenia, also actively participated, with 1 to 2 applications each.

This geographical spread stresses the widespread enthusiasm in Europe for promoting innovative solutions that can positively impact the Biomanufacturing and Medtech sector and drive sustainable growth.

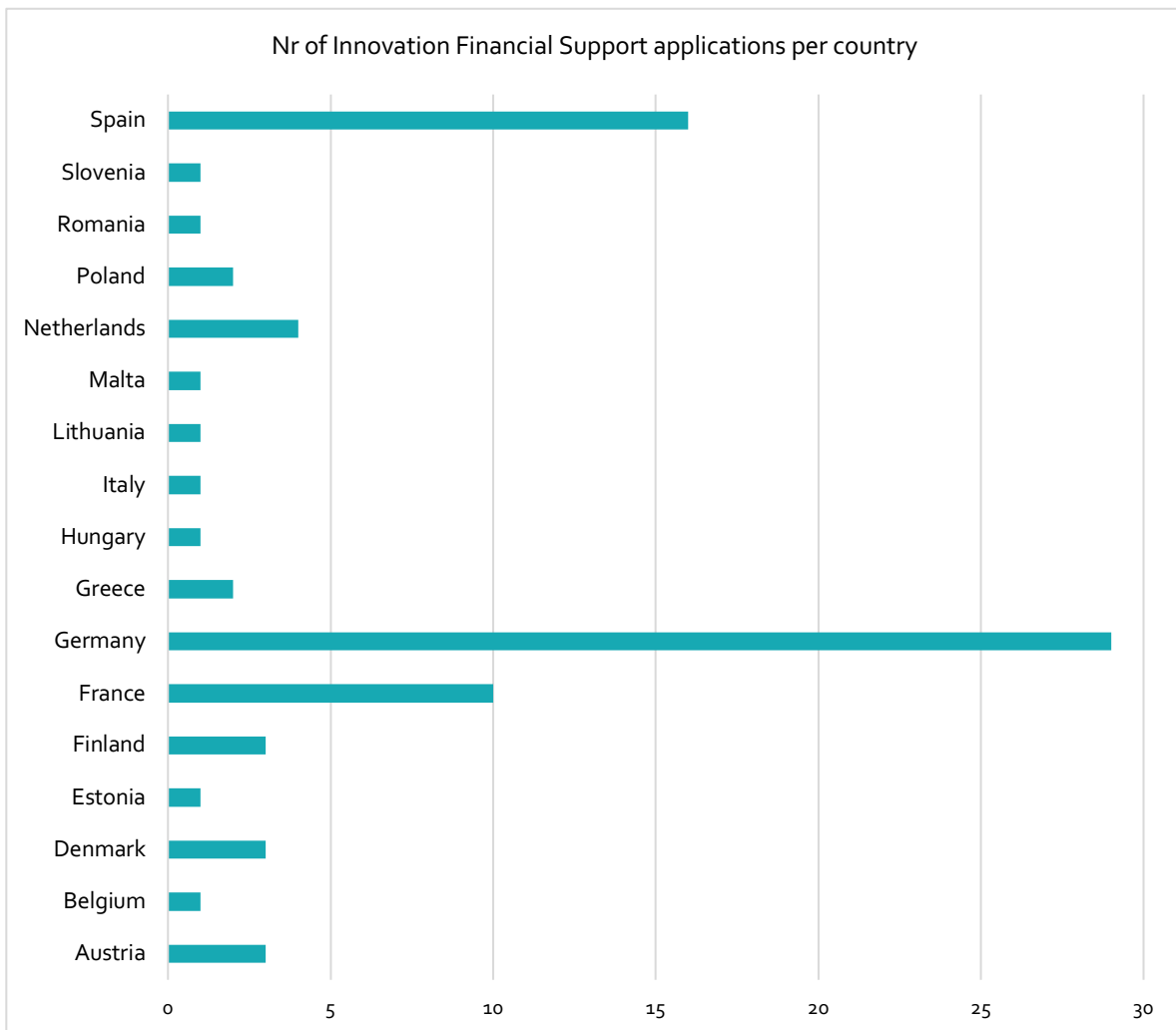


Figure 9. The number of Innovation Financial Support applications per country.

6.4 Recovery and resilience focus

Many of the project applications received by BioMan₄R₂ have a strong focus on creating a more sustainable and affordable healthcare system. These projects plan to leverage advanced biomanufacturing and medtech technologies and expertise to make medical products and treatments more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.

Furthermore, a diverse range of companies has sought funding to explore and navigate the regulatory landscape while expanding their market reach geographically. Through these initiatives, BioMan₄R₂ anticipates it will contribute to accelerating the introduction of innovative solutions into the market, thereby realising a positive impact on the recovery and resilience of the EU biomanufacturing and medtech sector.

7. The evaluation process

The evaluation process aimed to identify projects with the most potential for making a lasting impact in the Biomanufacturing and Medtech field and driving positive outcomes for the EU ecosystem.

Two experts from different partner regions were assigned to evaluate each proposal, ensuring that local experts did not evaluate local applicants to maintain objectivity in the evaluation. The evaluation was based on three main criteria: Impact, Implementation, and Excellence (Fig. 10). Each of these criteria was scored on a scale of 0 to 15 for Impact and 0 to 10 for both Implementation and Excellence.

The evaluation thresholds for each criterion were as follows:

1. Impact: The minimum acceptable score for impact was 8 out of 15.
2. Implementation: The minimum acceptable score for implementation was 6 out of 10.
3. Excellence: The minimum acceptable score for excellence was 6 out of 10.

Additionally, there was an overall threshold that the proposal had to meet. The total overall threshold was 20, considering the scores from all three criteria combined.

To calculate the final scoring for a proposal, the individual assessments provided by the two evaluators were averaged. The average scores from all three criteria were added together to get the total score for the proposal. If the total score met or exceeded the overall threshold of 20, the proposal was considered successful and was able to proceed further within the BioMan₄R₂ consortium. Otherwise, it may not have been accepted.



Impact



Implementation



Excellence

Figure 10. The evaluation was based on three main criteria: Impact, Implementation and Excellence.

On July 18, 2023, the consortium made the announcement of the selected projects and the provision of financial support for the chosen applications.

8. Awarded projects.

The applications were, as elaborated on above, ranked based on average scores for impact, implementation, and excellence criteria. The impact section held the highest weight, followed by implementation and excellence. Successful applicants showcased a strong impact focus, demonstrating their commitment and solid approach to achieving positive outcomes and impact in the Biomanufacturing and MedTech sector and beyond.

Some applicants requested less funding than expected, which allowed for an additional project to be partially funded. This presented an opportunity to support an extra project and maximize the impact of the financial support scheme.

This led to awarding the following list of projects:

Innovation Financial Support (IFS)

Business Transformation Financial Support (BTFS)

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|----------|
| Robeauté | France | SITEC pharmabio | Spain |
| Plantibodies | France | Zeisberg GmbH | Germany |
| InSpek SAS | France | Egerton sp. z o.o. | Poland |
| Antleron NV | Belgium | Manitty | France |
| Fibrothelium GmbH | Germany | JAFRAL d.o.o. | Slovenia |
| ATTOM | France | Breaz Medical SL | Spain |
| MindAhead UG | Germany | Earlab GmbH | Germany |
| ALTA sp. z o.o. | Poland | Egerton sp. z o.o. | Poland |
| MIRA Vision Microscopy GmbH | Germany | Gate2Brain S.L. | Spain |
| Time is Brain SL | Spain | ONIRIA THERAPEUTICS, S.L. | Spain |
| MAGIC GENOMIX | France | | |
| PolyAn GmbH | Germany | | |
| IntegraSkin GmbH | Germany | | |
| Basic Pharma | Netherlands | | |
| Care4living Oy | Finland | | |
| EVOMEDIS GmbH | Austria | | |

Table 1. The awarded applicants per financial support type are listed.

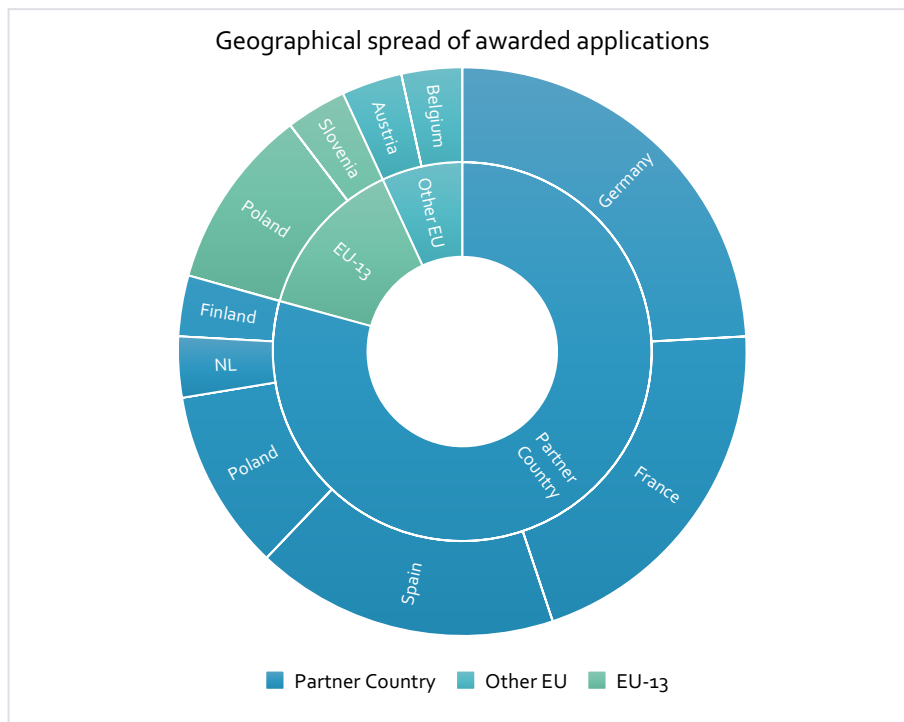


Figure 11. Geographical spread of awarded applications (NL = Netherlands).

The awarded applications include a diverse range of partners and countries (Fig. 11). In the countries where the BioMan₄R₂ partners are based the following results were achieved:

- France: 6 awarded applications
- Finland: 1 awarded application
- Netherlands: 1 awarded application
- Spain: 5 awarded applications
- Germany: 7 awarded applications
- Poland: 3 awarded applications

It has to be noted that the partners are based in part of the country only and thus not all awarded projects are in the partner's cluster.

In addition to the partner countries, the awards were also given to applicants from other EU countries:

From other EU countries Belgium and Austria were each awarded 1 application

Furthermore, applicants from EU-13 countries were also recognized for their innovative initiatives:

- Slovenia: 1 awarded application
- Poland: 3 awarded applications

Please note that Poland is listed as both a partner and an EU-13 country.

8.1 Reasons for Rejected Applications

Upon conducting a thorough analysis of the applications received, we identified specific reasons for rejections. The overall quality of the applications was high, but the following factors contributed to the rejection decisions:

1. Budget and Implementation Details:

For BTFS applications, several rejections were due to insufficiently detailed descriptions of the budget allocation and track record of service providers during implementation. Clear and comprehensive financial planning is crucial for the success of the project and instilling confidence in the evaluators.

2. Proven Track Record

Within both Business Transformation and Innovation Financial Support applications, some proposals lacked detailed information regarding the proven track record in the Biomanufacturing and MedTech field.

3. Ambition and Clarity

For Innovation Financial Support applications, rejections occurred when the ambition section was not adequately addressed, or questions were left unanswered. Clarity and a strong vision for the project was important to assure evaluators of the project's potential impact.

4. Project Leader and Team Description

Several Innovation Financial Support applications faced rejection due to incomplete descriptions of the project leader and team members. Evaluators looked for well-qualified and capable individuals to lead and execute the project.

5. Impact and Sustainability

In both Business Transformation and Innovation Financial Support applications, the impact and sustainability aspects were often not sufficiently detailed. Evaluators looked for clear indications of how the project can make a positive difference and contribute to the resilience of the Biomanufacturing and Medtech sector and ecosystem.

6. Budget Alignment with KPIs

Some Innovation applications failed to clearly correlate the budget descriptions with the specified Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

7. Regional and European Impact

Several applications were rejected due to very limited information on the expected impact on strengthening the Biomanufacturing and Medtech sector and ecosystem at regional and European levels. Evaluators looked for a clear understanding of the project's broader implications.

9. The next steps

9.1 Awarded applications

The applicants of the awarded applications have received an official letter. The next steps for this group are:

1. Grant Agreement Signing

The first step involves signing the Grant Agreement. This formal contract outlines the terms, conditions, and obligations of the grant provided to the SME for the specific project. It lays out the scope of the project, the agreed-upon budget, reporting requirements, deliverables, timelines, and any other relevant terms.

Upon the successful signature of the Grant Agreement, the project can start. At this stage, 50% of the Initial Financial Support (IFS) and/or Business Transformation Financial Support will be transferred to the SME to initiate the project's activities.

2. Mid-Way Quality Check

At the midpoint of the project timeline, the SME is obligated to provide an Intermediary Report. This report should include information on the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) progress and the impact achieved up to that point. The aim of this check is to assess the project's performance and make any necessary adjustments for the successful completion of the project.

3. Final Step - Reporting

The SME must submit an online final report in line with the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) mentioned in the application. This report should highlight the project's activities, achievements, and outcomes. Once approved, 50% of the remaining funds will be transferred.

9.2 Non-awarded applications

Applicants that have unfortunately failed to secure funding via BioMan₄R₂ have been referred to the ECCP website where they can find Open Calls from other Eurocluster projects.

10. Conclusion

The BioMan₄R₂ financial support scheme has gained abundant traction and brought new partnerships, not only motivating but foremost involving many SMEs in further strengthening the EU's Biomanufacturing and Medtech sector. This underlines the observation from the BioMan₄R₂ need analysis exercise that the investment needed to strengthen ecosystem resilience in the Biomanufacturing and MedTech sector is one of the significant hurdles for SMEs.

Many project applications received focus on creating a more sustainable and affordable healthcare system. Using advanced Biomanufacturing and Medtech technologies and/or expertise, these projects aim to make medical products and treatments cheaper and better for the environment. With these actions BioMan₄R₂ expects to contribute to acceleration of innovations coming to the market.

This will make healthcare more accessible and affordable for people in the EU and beyond. By working together, these projects are expected to make positive changes in healthcare and support the EU to become a more resilient ecosystem in biomanufacturing and medical innovations.