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***“EUropean ALLiance for International business
development on Advanced materials and
coNnectivity for defenCe and sEcurity markets”***

**Call for Expression Of Interest (EOI) SMEs participation to the
international missions to Japan, USA, Canada and Indonesia**

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Subject	Call for Expression Of Interest (EOI) SMEs participation to the international missions to Japan, USA, Canada and Indonesia
Project	EUropean ALLiance for International business development on Advanced materials and coNnectivity for defenCe and sEcurity markets.
Project duration	Sept.2021 – Sept.2023

This call opens on 25th November 2021; the deadline for the EOI submission is 15 December 2021.

1. Background and context

The general objective of EU-ALLIANCE is to support SMEs internationalisation of six leading European clusters in the fields of technical textile, connectivity, deep tech and advanced materials to address dual-use markets in four targeted countries: the United States, Canada, Japan and Indonesia.

The EU-ALLIANCE project is a follow-up of the successful activities implemented in the ALLIANCE Strand 1 project funded under the COSME programme. During the course of ALLIANCE project, the partners have signed one Memorandum of Understanding in the US and have developed close business relationship with several entities in Japan.

The key objective of EU-ALLIANCE is to help SMEs in the global competition in providing internationalisation-customized services to enter new international markets and in organising a delegation of SMEs supporting by the partners in the four targeted countries.

The expected results of the project are:

- Establishment of business agreements between European SMEs and international partners in the four target countries;
- Establishment of cooperation projects between the European SMEs and the international partners of targeted market;
- Animation of the cooperation agreements already established in the US and Japan.

This Call for Interest has the aim of involving EU companies keeping into consideration the specific needs and expectations.

2. The international missions to the target markets

EU-ALLIANCE partnership will organise the international missions in the four targeted countries: United States, Canada, Japan and Indonesia.

The consortium will contact key stakeholders to facilitate the organisation of each mission by facilitating the implementation of matchmaking events in each of the target country (namely embassies, development agencies, cluster organisations, etc.); several exhibitions regarding advanced materials, textiles, dual use technologies and connectivity have been pre-selected.

The agenda will be developed in collaboration with the international partners and intermediaries and the participating SMEs, as it will depend on the feedback received through this Call.

The agenda of the missions will include:

- Visit to relevant tradeshows/events
- Training sessions on market trends of the target countries
- B2B meetings
- Visit to companies/actors/institutions of interest
- Meetings with research and development local actors

3. Target countries short overview

Japan

Japan has been confirmed as a country of very high interest by all EU-ALLIANCE partners. Japan is the world's fourth largest economy. With a population of 127 million, its economy is about one third larger than Germany's. Japan is the EU's second biggest trading partner in Asia after China.

Japan is technology-oriented country and an open region in terms of international cooperation with existing bilateral agreements on defence equipment with the UK, Spain, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden. There are also great opportunities of cooperation in the fields of research and development, and innovation. In terms of targeted markets, the textile products represent 0,4% of the production of the defence industry, about 5,6 million euros. Cross-fertilisation between the textile and the electronic industries offers new added value possibilities for the textile products.

EU-ALLIANCE partners will leverage from the previous first success (more than 30 contacts, 42 B2B meetings, 1 MoU under discussion with Fujitsu, 1 Letter of interest from Kuraray) to organise a joint international business mission well planned and customized to showcase the SMEs products and know-how to relevant potential customers and local actors.

US

The United States ranks as first position in terms of military expenditure globally and exceed widely any other country in the world. It represents by itself a third of the global military expenditure. Furthermore, it is committed to continue strengthening its large-scale arm modernisation programme.

The United States is the most important market in the world in terms of security and defence. The US Army, the first in the world, is composed of more than 13,000 aircraft (fighter, bomber, transport, training) and 5,700 helicopters.

Outside of the EU, the USA is the largest single technical textile (TT) market worldwide. With 2.3 Bn USD EU TT export volume towards the USA, it is also the largest single non-EU export market for European TT producers. The US develops innovative textile materials such as conductive fabric with antistatic properties, electronic textiles that can monitor heart rate and other vital signs, antimicrobial fibers, lifesaving body armor, and new fabrics that adapt to the climate to make the wearer warmer or cooler. Technical textiles represent an increasing share value inside the textile industry in the US, representing the 37% of the national textile production.

The mission will be organised by the EU-ALLIANCE delegation taking into consideration the achievements obtained during the previous one: 24 contacts during the AUSA trade show, 1 MoU with ACM (Aerospace Components Manufacturers), 1 meeting with NDIA (National Defense Industry Association).

The Dual-use focus will facilitate the European companies in the selling of products to the US since they will have opportunity also for the civilian market, overcoming the limits of the defence sector.

Indonesia

Indonesia is currently one of the most attractive defence market in South Asia. The country is expected to be the fourth largest economy by 2050.

With respect to the defence sector, the country geo- strategic circumstances explains its maritime interests. The Indonesian military spending has increase by the 109% between 2009 and 2013.

Indonesia is one of the major player in the manufacturing of good quality textile, textile products and footwear. The Indonesian government accords textiles and footwear the highest importance in the context of the nation's economic development, placing it among the country's top key strategic industries. Through the government initiative Making Indonesia 4.0, the country is targeted to enter the ranks of the top five textile and textile products (TPT) producers in the world by 2030.

The EU-ALLIANCE partnership has identified potential partners to be contacted during the international mission to Indonesia such as the Indonesian Textile Association, the Indonesian Synthetic Fiber Producers Association, the Indonesia Footwear Association and others.

Canada

Canada is one of the founding members of NATO in 1949 and engaged in the world, with the Canadian Armed Forces through peace support operations and peacekeeping. Canada is committed to develop stronger relationships with other multilateral partners, such as the European Union. The defence and security industry contributes \$6.2B in annual GDP and 60,000 jobs to the Canadian economy. Thus, the Canadian defence and security market is mature and technology rich.

In relation to the textile sector, more than 8.400 companies are active in textile materials production in Canada, with a 56% specialized in technical textiles and 27% in other value-added textiles.

The dynamism of the aerospace and defence industries in Canada combined with its technical and connectivity textile markets makes it an ideal country to target, also considering the close relationship between Canada and Europe.

Some of the EU-ALLIANCE partners already have strong connections with Canadian institutions; this will permit an additional network to the existing one and new collaboration benefits for the European SMEs. The project will leverage and participate also to European matchmaking events supported by the ECCP.

Potential targeted partners include the Canadian association of defence and security industries, the CTT Group, the Canadian Textile Industries Association (CTIA), the Institute of Textile Science and more others to be contacted.

4. Call for Expression Of Interest (EOI)

The main goal of this call for EOI is to gather the interest of the EU SMEs to the participation to the international missions organized by the EU-ALLIANCE partnership to the four target countries: Japan, US, Indonesia and Canada.

In order to involve as much as possible, the companies in the organisation and implementation of the missions, this call is necessary to gather information regarding the following topics:

- Characteristic of the SMEs and their position in the value chain
- Interest in each of the Eu-ALLIANCE target country (Canada, US, Japan and Indonesia)
- Need for financial support
- Other specific support needed to access international markets
- Participating in training activities, webinars and other collective activities
- Identification of preferred activities during the international business missions
- SMEs contacts.

The participation to the missions is open for companies based in the European Union; only SMEs can receive financial support from EU ALLIANCE.

The participation to the missions will be decided on the basis of a selection procedure whose specific eligibility criteria will be made public with proper advance on the mission dates.

This call is open to all companies based in the European Union.

Only SMEs from the EU-ALLIANCE clusters submitting an EOI will be included in a priority list for the selection of eligible participants to the missions as well as for the financial support covering the travelling expenses.

The submission of an EOI does not give automatic access to the missions' participation. Also SMEs not submitting an EOI can take part to the selection procedure.

Click on the following link to start filling the Expression of Interest (Google Form):

<https://forms.gle/bjjhKAr8A3JtG2re9>

5. GDPR

Within the framework of GDPR, the organization of the international mission to the target countries of the EU-ALLIANCE project will comply with the obligations deriving by the General Data Protection Regulation. The EU-ALLIANCE consortium protects the information collected; the information are confidential and intended for the exclusive use of the EU-ALLIANCE project.

6. Disclaimer

This Call for Expression of Interest is part of the project EU-ALLIANCE which has received funding from the European Union's COSME research and innovation program under grant agreement no. 101035924. The content of this Call for Expression of Interest represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.