

A woman on the left and a man on the right are speaking at a conference. The woman is wearing a bright yellow blazer over a dark floral top and has a microphone clipped to her ear. The man is wearing a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and has a microphone clipped to his ear. They are both looking towards the right of the frame. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

# **3<sup>o</sup> EDITION BIND 4.0 SME CONNECTION**

**PROGRAMME PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS FOR THE SME  
AND STARTUPS**

## CONDITIONS OF THE PROGRAMME

### 1. Aims of the initiative

**BIND SME Connection** was founded in September 2021 with the objective of utilizing all the knowledge generated in the BIND 4.0 Programme about the relationship dynamics between startups and partner companies. In this case, attention is focused on the **generation of new opportunities for collaboration between SMEs and startups**; with the difference that on this occasion, the relationships will be created based on a model of joint sectoral challenges between the participating SMEs.

This initiative thus came to life, conceived as an experience focused on promoting shared technological projects between complementary SMEs belonging to different Cluster Dynamizing Organizations in the Basque Country.

This model aims to identify shared needs/opportunities among the participating SMEs that can be transmitted to the startups in the form of a challenge, materialising them through the joint execution of pilot projects aimed at testing technological solutions that can be scaled up further on.

For **startups**, the ultimate goal of the programme is to facilitate their access to the market, as well as to financing. This is mainly done by connecting them with SMEs linked to the specialisation sectors and areas of opportunity of the Basque Country Specialisation Strategy, through collaboration with the ODCs that represent these sectors, such as: Hegan, Basque Food Cluster, ACICAE, Basque Health Cluster, ERAIKUNE, ACE+Fluidex, MAFEX, AFV+Fundigex+Sife, Habic, FMV, Aclima, Basque Paper Cluster, SIDEREX, AFM+Invema+Eskuin, GAIA+AVIC+Basquegame, and MLC+Uniport.

With respect to **SMEs**, the programme aims to promote a fast track for the incorporation of new technologies and innovative solutions, improve their competitive position, and bring entrepreneurship closer while promoting the adoption of a collaborative work philosophy, especially through joint work with other SME peers within each of the Cluster Dynamizing Organizations (ODC).

## 2. Acceptance of terms and conditions

The following terms and conditions are intended to establish the **participation conditions** for the BIND 4.0 SME Connection initiative. Participation in the 3rd call of this initiative implies the **acceptance of these rules**, without exceptions or conditions, as well as any decision that SPRI and/or the Management Team of the BIND 4.0 programme may take.

## 3. Terms and definitions:

For the purposes of this initiative, the following definitions apply:

- **"SPRI":** SPRI-BASQUE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, a public entity under private law attached to the Department of Economic Development, Sustainability and Environment.
- **Cluster Development Organization (ODC):** A business association that brings together different interrelated companies that work and/or compete in the same industrial and geographic area and that strategically helps them to improve competitiveness through collaboration.
- **BIND 4.0 Team:** Programme management team made up of technical personnel from the Spri Group, the Basque Government and the BICs.
- **Coordination and Evaluation Committee:** Working team composed of members of both SPRI and the ODCs, whose main function will be the organisation of the initiative, the coordination of the different agents involved, and the monitoring of the activities. As many committees will be created as there are ODCs participating in the initiative, which means that each group of sectoral SMEs will have its own reference committee.
- **Startup:** Startup company seeking a scalable business model through the development of innovative products and/or services aimed at a target market.
- **SME:** Company with less than 250 employees associated with one of the ODCs participating in the initiative and with products and processes based on the application of 4.0 technologies.



- **Workshop:** A workshop, or participative work session, is where the SMEs participating in the initiative develop different collaborative actions to achieve common results.
- **Pitchings:** Joint sessions with SMEs and startups, where participants present their proposals through a presentation and expose an idea or a business in a defined place and amount of time.
- **Matching:** This phase consists of collaborative work between the Evaluation and Coordination Team and the SMEs that, supported by an expert, will analyse and select the proposals of the startups with the best fit with the challenges and specificities proposed. This selection will be the starting point for developing potential business relationships that will lead to the signing of a project contract.
- **B2B event:** Event aimed exclusively at facilitating networking between startups and SMEs, with a matching system that streamlines interaction between interested parties.

#### 4. How the 2nd edition of BIND 4.0 SME Connection will work

The third edition of the initiative will be carried out as a competitive activity, in which the ODCs interested in participating in the dynamics proposed by the programme will submit a "cluster application" to the BIND 4.0 Team that will be the value of a group of SMEs willing to participate in the programme, and consequently, SMEs that accept these rules.

For the participation of each SME in the programme, the ODC will have previously sent an application highlighting a group of SMEs with a common problem that they intend or aspire to solve with the help of a startup. This problem must be shared, and the intention is for it to be subsequently transferred to the market in the form of a joint sectoral challenge.

Applications must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Each ODC will prepare a single application proposing a group of companies to participate.

- These groups of companies must be made up of a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 SMEs.
- Each working group can propose up to a maximum of 2 challenges. All SMEs in the working group must participate in the challenges, which means that no subgroups can be made within each ODC.
- The applications (challenges) will have a specific structure, must meet standard requirements for all of them, and will be evaluated on the basis of a set of predefined criteria. For more details on this point, see sections 5 (Application structure) and 6 (Criteria for evaluating applications).
- Those that meet the minimum quality criteria will be selected.

Likewise, the SMEs included in these proposals must comply with the characteristics defined in the following section.

## 5. Characteristics of participating SMEs

- SMEs associated with the ODCs that are members of the initiative.
- SMEs external to the ODCs that have been accepted by the corresponding sectoral ODC to be included in its application.
- SMEs linked to the BIND 4.0 verticals and/or to the areas of the Basque Country RIS 3 smart specialisation.
- SMEs with at least one centre of activity in the Basque Country.
- SMEs with less than 250 employees.
- SMEs with interest in and commitment to working with the startups and that have the resources to provide sufficient dedication and involvement in the different activities of the initiative.
- SMEs with sufficient technological maturity, or human resources trained for the process, who assign a person to be responsible for the programme and who commits to the different activities of the initiative.

## 6. Characteristics of the startup candidates

BIND SME Connection is mainly focused on the following startup profiles:

- Startups that develop new innovative technologies applied to the industrial sector and its related services, or that have direct application in the production processes and/or services of the participating SMEs that have already completed their technological development, and that are in a position to finalise the configuration of their service/product. That is, that have a product or service that can be seen, tested, proven, or that is already available on the market.
- Startups no more than 8 years old, proposing the use of new technologies to improve business processes, and that need to accelerate their business development.
- Startups with application in the challenges proposed by the SMEs, and that are a fit with the specialisation sectors and opportunity areas of the Basque Country Specialisation Strategy.

The process of proactive identification of startups by the Coordination and Evaluation Committees to invite them to submit applications will include at least:

- Startups that participated in previous editions of BIND 4.0 that have already developed collaborative projects with the partner companies of the BIND 4.0 programme.
- Startups from the network of public incubators in the Basque Country (BIC Araba, BIC Bizkaia and BIC Gipuzkoa).
- Startups associated with the ODCs participating in the initiative.

## 7. SME commitments

Participating SMEs commit to:

- Accept and comply with the terms and conditions of the initiative.
- Attend and actively participate in the dynamics proposed in the initiative, and comply with the work and tasks defined.
- Provide the required dedication for the development of the project once a collaboration contract between the SME and the startup has been signed.

The latter implies a minimum dedication of 40 hours in order to get involved and benefit from the programme, which implies a proactive participation in the

programme and the work to be done internally in the organisation. The minimum tasks and hours to be performed are as follows:

- Launching + Identification and Characterisation of challenges = 12 hours
- Analysis + Selection of startups = 8 hours
- Matchmaking Sessions (Pitching + B2B Event with startups) = 10 hours
- Other internal reflection work + Communication = 10 hours

For more information on the phases and how they work, please refer to sections 13 and 14 of this document.

## 8. Startup commitments

Participating startups will also commit to:

- Accept and comply with the terms and conditions of the initiative.
- Attend and actively participate in the dynamics proposed in the initiative, and comply with the work and tasks defined.
- Provide the required dedication for the development of the project once a collaboration contract between the SME and the startup has been signed.

## 9. Relationship between the initiative and the SME

Each participating SME will appoint a contact person who must maintain fluid communication with its Committee (SPRI/ODC) of reference, who must be over 18 years of age, and who must be available to deal with communications related to the initiative.

Repeated negative assessment of the attitude of any participating SME by the Coordination and Evaluation Committee may result in its expulsion from the initiative, without any compensation or consequence from SPRI. Negative attitudes are all those related to non-compliance with the obligations established in the work plan.

## 10. Privacy policy

The contents of the applications that the startups submit to BIND 4.0 SME Connection, as well as the contents of the different phases of intervention and provision of



information by the SMEs, will be confidential and restricted, and will be treated as such by the promoters of the initiative.

## 11. Protection of personal data

In accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (hereinafter, GDPR) and other applicable regulations on the protection of personal data, you are informed that the data provided will be processed in order to manage the file of the requested action, with the legal basis for which personal data are processed being the public function in accordance with the purposes set out in the statutes of creation of SPRI as Basque Agency for Business Development.

Such information may be transmitted to collaborating companies, Public Administrations with competence in the matter, and SPRI Group companies (see <http://www.spri.eus/es/quienessomos/sociedades-del-grupo-spri>).

All data subjects have the ability to exercise their rights under data protection regulations against SPRI by writing to [lopd@spri.eus](mailto:lopd@spri.eus). Likewise, they can contact the Data Protection Officer of the entity by email at [dpd@spri.eus](mailto:dpd@spri.eus).

For additional and detailed information on Personal Data Protection at SPRI, please refer to the Privacy Policy included in [www.spri.eus/privacidad](http://www.spri.eus/privacidad).

The supervisory authority in case you need to request data protection is the Basque Data Protection Agency ([<http://www.avpd.euskadi.eus>]) [www.avpd.euskadi.eus](http://www.avpd.euskadi.eus).

## 12. Content

All SMEs and startups participating in the initiative will ensure that the work and content provided voluntarily (including abstracts or presentations) do not infringe the rights of any kind corresponding to third parties and have all the necessary authorisations for participating in this initiative. They must not be offensive or denigrating, incite violence or racism, violate the fundamental rights or public freedoms recognised by current legislation, including laws for the protection of children and young people, constitute or imply an intrusion into the personal or family privacy of individuals, violate the right to honour or secrecy of communications of a third party, or be contrary to any current legislation.



Likewise, the projects submitted must guarantee a non-sexist use of language and images.

In addition, each participating startup and SME authorises the promoting entities to use its name and image in publicity material related to the initiative, in any media or format, without receiving any financial compensation.

### 13. Work plan, schedule, and project milestones

#### Operational aspects

- The initiative will last for an **estimated duration of 6-7 months (October - April)**, regarding the accompaniment of the ODCs and the SPRI project team.
- However, both **SMEs and startups undertake to report to the promoter team on the progress of possible projects developed under a programme within 1 year.**
- The **initiative will be carried out mainly in Spanish**, although the material created may appear in both Basque and English.
- In some cases, it is possible that the SME-startup relationship can only be conducted in English due to the international background of the participating startups.
- SMEs that wish to become involved in the initiative must actively participate in the activities detailed in the work plan below.

## Main phases and milestones in SME participation

PHASE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MILESTONE
<b>0 - Awareness raising and presentation of the initiative</b>	<b>27 September</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Joint workshop bringing together all selected ODCs with participating SMEs for the official presentation of the initiative (schedule, methodology and dynamics) and the benefits of working with startups.</li> </ul>	<b>H1</b> - Public launch of the initiative
<b>1 - Identification, characterisation, and presentation of challenges.</b>	<b>From 2 October to 10 November</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Workshop with SMEs for the definition of priority challenges</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Characterisation of the prioritised challenges.</li> </ul>	<p><b>H2</b> - Workshops (1 or 2) to identify common challenges for each ODC</p> <p><b>H3</b> - Definition and publication of sectoral challenges on the official BIND SME Connection website</p>
<b>2- Startup scouting</b>	<b>From 27 November to 10 January</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identification of startups aligned with the challenges posed by SMEs and proactive invitation to participate from the Coordinating Committee</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Possible presentation and contrast of challenges by SMEs to startups (not definitive)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Communication and recruitment of candidates on the official website</li> </ul>	<b>H4</b> - Public launch of the call for startups

<b>3 - Matching</b>	<b>From 11 January to 20 March</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation and selection of startup proposals by each Committee and by each SME <input type="checkbox"/> Prioritisation of startups for participation in the joint presentation sessions (Pitchings) and SME-startup networking event (B2B event) <input type="checkbox"/> Support in the choice of proposals	<b>H5</b> - Evaluation and prioritisation of startup proposals <b>H6</b> - Pitching session <b>H7</b> - B2B SME-startup sessions
PHASE	DATE	DESCRIPTION	MILESTONE
<b>4- Project configuration and development</b>	<b>April 2024 to December 2024</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Search for collaboration and implementation of joint SME-startup projects. <input type="checkbox"/> Follow-up of contacts/projects.	<b>H8</b> - Possible beginning of projects
<b>5- Publication of results</b>	<b>From end of matchings until December 2024</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Actions for the visibility of the projects' results.	<b>H9</b> - Presentation of the project at Cluster Day or other similar initiative of the promoters

*The dates indicated are approximate and may be subject to change.*

*Deadlines and final dates will be proactively communicated by the BIND 4.0 Team.*



## 14. Startup invitation and selection process, and project development agreement

### Invitation phase: Startup scouting

The Coordination and Evaluation Team will analyse the challenges posed by the SMEs and perform an initial identification of startups among the pool of startups described in point 4 of this document " 4. Characteristics of the startup candidates".

Once the startups likely to fit the challenges posed by each ODC have been identified, the Coordination and Evaluation Committee will invite them to participate in the initiative.

To this end, the challenges identified by the SMEs will be published on the BIND 4.0 initiative website and a form will be available for startup applications.

### Selection phase: startup evaluation and SME-startup matching

The startup selection process will be carried out in two phases: **the evaluation phase and the matching phase.**

- The **startup evaluation phase** is in turn structured in two sub-phases:
  - The **startup candidate pre-selection phase** is led by the Coordination and Evaluation Committee, who will offer a short list of startups to the SMEs for evaluation. For this purpose, once the proposals are received, the Coordination and Evaluation Team will analyse the proposals, evaluating their adaptation to the published challenges, the technical capacity to respond to the challenge posed described by the startup, the innovative component of the proposed solution, as well as the capabilities and experience of the team proposed by the startup. The evaluation will be based on a total of 100 points with the following distribution:

Evaluation criteria
<b>1) Value proposition (40%)</b>
Level of innovation of the proposed solution.
Maturity level of the proposal (market stage of the technology, product or service).
Impact of the proposed solution on the SME and the market.
Advantages of the proposed solution over market alternatives.
<b>2) Promotion team (20%)</b>
Training and professional competencies of the promotion team.
Experience and knowledge of the sector.
<b>3) Adaptation to the challenges posed (40%)</b>
Fulfilment of the technical requirements of the challenge.
Project description level (phases, scope, objectives, examples).
Scalability of the proposed solution to SMEs with similar needs.

- **Startup prioritisation phase:** After receiving the shortlist from their committee with the appropriate recommendations, the SMEs will choose the startups they consider most appropriate for addressing their challenges. As a result, these are the ones that will finally be invited to attend the pitching sessions.
- **Matching phase:** After the prioritisation of the favourite startups, the corresponding startup proposal presentation sessions will be carried out by each ODC to the SMEs.
  - During the **pitch sessions**, the startups will present their solutions applicable to the challenges posed and will serve as a starting point for the SME to request a meeting agenda for the B2B event.

- During the B2B event, the SME will be able to prioritise up to 5 startups to meet with in a first working meeting.
- This can be commercial or technical and will be the starting point for the possible future configuration of projects in the following months.

### **Project configuration and development phase.**

Through this B2B event, the BIND 4.0 Team will enable contact between the SMEs and the selected startups, without generating any obligation or incurring any liability in terms of business relationships that may be established.

The associated SMEs that have found a technological solution with the capacity to respond to the challenges posed, will sign, where appropriate, a direct contract with the startups and will notify the ODCs of the main general aspects of the agreements reached, projects in whose subsequent development SPRI/ODC will have no role or participation whatsoever.

The scope, objectives, duration, and economic conditions under which the joint project will be developed will be defined and agreed freely by both parties, without the participation of SPRI.

The content of the contract will bind only the signing parties, i.e. The SME and the startup, as it is a private agreement that establishes rights and obligations between them.

Therefore, the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by the parties (SME and startup) will be the sole responsibility of the party responsible for such obligation. Specifically, the payment of the price agreed upon by the parties (SME and startup) will be made by the participating SME, SPRI/ODC being expressly exonerated from any responsibility or obligation, both in relation to the payment of the price, as well as any of the obligations agreed upon by the parties (SME and startup).



## 15. Communication

All notifications regarding the initiative, including the challenges and the call for startups, will be published on the [www.bind40.com](http://www.bind40.com) website, or will be communicated directly by both the BIND 4.0 Team and the participating ODCs.

Participating startups will receive all communications issued by SPRI/ODC via email to the email account of the responsible person identified in the registration process.

## 16. Legal aspects

The participants, formally waiving any other jurisdiction that may correspond to them, expressly submit themselves to the Courts and Tribunals of Bilbao for the resolution of any controversy, disagreement, question or claim that may arise directly or indirectly in relation to the interpretation or execution of this initiative.

## 17. Contact details

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