

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS FOR THE SELECTION OF MEMBERS OF THE STRATEGIC FORUM FOR IMPORTANT PROJECTS OF COMMON EUROPEAN INTEREST

1. Background

The Communication on a renewed industrial policy of 13 September 2017 has stated: " To ensure a highly competitive manufacturing sector in Europe, a successful strategy must build on Europe's strengths and assets in strategic value chains in new technologies and make these more robust. This often requires joint, well-coordinated efforts and investments by public authorities and industries from several Member States. The Commission's Communication concerning Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) is designed for such strategic projects¹. Examples of value chains of strategic importance for Europe include energy storage as well as electronic chips. Where used by Member States, they can play a vital role in promoting policies and actions in key areas for economic growth. To achieve a more proactive approach with Member States and industry with regard to Important Projects of Common European Interest, the Commission will establish a strategic forum involving key stakeholders to identify key value chains and investment projects and monitor progress achieved."

By decision of 30.01.2018, the Commission has set up the Strategic Forum for Important Projects of Common European interest ("the group").

The mandate of the group shall be to facilitate agreements between public authorities and key stakeholders from several Member States for taking forward new Important Projects of Common European Interest and build a common vision at Union level for joint, well-coordinated efforts and investments in key value chains.

The group's tasks shall be in particular

1. to advise the Commission on the key value chains for Europe, defined as the value chains of strategic importance for Europe which require joint, well-coordinated actions and investments by public authorities and industries from several Member States to ensure Europe stays or becomes a world industrial leader in key areas;
2. to help the Commission build a common European vision for these key value chains, shared among Member States and key stakeholders;
3. to advise the Commission on the Important Projects of Common European Interest needed within key value chains;
4. to help the Commission establish cooperation and coordination between public authorities and key stakeholders from several Member States to facilitate agreements to take forward new Important Projects of Common European Interest;

¹ The EU provides State aid rules (Official Journal C 188 of 20 June 2014) specifically designed to encourage Member States to channel public funding towards such integrated projects which have clear spill-over effects for a wider part of the Union such as on Key Enabling Technologies: KETs are knowledge intensive and associated with high R&D intensity, rapid innovation cycles, high capital expenditure and highly-skilled employment – COM/2012/0341.

5. to help the Commission monitor progress achieved; report on bottlenecks or obstacles encountered when designing and taking forward Important Projects of Common European Interest; and propose solutions to overcome these obstacles or bottlenecks;
6. to advise the Commission on the accompanying measures necessary to ensure the successful implementation of new Important Projects of Common European Interest;
7. to advise the Commission on alternative solutions for fostering joint, well-coordinated investments in key value chains where an Important Project of Common European Interest is not feasible

The Commission is calling for applications with a view to selecting members of the group other than Member States' authorities and other public entities.

The objective of the present call for applications is to select members that can bring high-level expertise and useful contributions to the work of the group **for all of its tasks and for its entire duration**. The Commission may invite experts with specific competence and experience in one particular value chain to participate to meetings of the group on an ad-hoc basis, but **specific expertise in one value chain is not sufficient to be appointed as a member**.

2. Features of the Group

2.1. COMPOSITION

In accordance with Article 4 of the above Decision the group shall consist of up to 50 members.

Members shall be

1. organisations representing the interests of academia and research, finance, industry and SMEs, and employees and workers;
2. individuals appointed in a personal capacity;
3. Member States' authorities; and
4. other public entities.

Members appointed in a personal capacity shall act independently and in the public interest.

Member States' authorities, organisations and other public entities shall nominate their representatives and shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of expertise. DG GROW may refuse the nomination of a representative by an organisation if it considers this nomination inappropriate in light of the requirements specified in chapter 4 of this call. In such case, the organisation concerned shall be asked to appoint another representative.

2.2. APPOINTMENT

Members shall be appointed by the Director General of Directorate-general for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs ('DG GROW') from applicants complying with the requirements referred to in chapter 4 of this call.

Members shall be appointed for 2 years. Their term of office may be renewed.

Registration in the Transparency Register is required in order for organisations to be appointed.

In order to ensure continuity and the smooth functioning of the group, DG GROW shall establish a reserve list of suitable candidates that may be used to appoint replacements. DG GROW shall ask applicants for their consent before including their names on the reserve list.

Members who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the group's deliberations, who in the opinion of DG GROW do not comply with the conditions set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union or who resign, shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

2.3 RULES OF ENGAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE GROUP

The group shall be chaired by the the Director General of Directorate-general for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs ("DG GROW").

The group shall act at the request of DG GROW in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules on expert groups ('the horizontal rules').

In principle, the group shall meet 2 to maximum 3 times per year on Commission premises in Brussels in order to discuss industrial value chains of strategic importance for Europe and related investments. DG GROW shall provide secretarial services.

Members and members' representatives should be prepared to attend meetings systematically, to contribute actively to discussions in the group, to be involved in preparatory work ahead of meetings, to examine and provide comments on documents under discussion, and to act, as appropriate, as 'rapporteurs' on ad hoc basis.

The Commission intends to also establish a group of Sherpas to be involved in preparatory, technical work ahead of meetings and thus facilitate consensus within the group.

As a general rule, working documents will be drafted in English and meetings will be also conducted in English.

The group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus. In the event of a vote, the outcome of the vote shall be decided by simple majority of the members. The members that voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

In agreement with DG GROW, the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.

Participants in the activities of the group shall not be remunerated for the services they offer. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the group shall be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

The members of the group and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443² and 2015/444³.

² Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

³ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

On a proposal by and in agreement with DG GROW, the group shall adopt its rules of procedure on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups.

DG GROW may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group on an ad hoc basis.

Individuals, organisations and public entities may be granted an observer status, in compliance with the horizontal rules, by direct invitation. Organisations and public entities appointed as observers shall nominate their representatives. Observers and their representatives may be permitted by the Chair to take part in the discussions of the group and provide expertise. However, they shall not have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group.

DG GROW may set up sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by the DG. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled. The members of sub-groups that are not members of the group shall be selected via a public call for applications.

2.4. TRANSPARENCY

The group shall be registered in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups').

As concerns the group composition, DG GROW shall publish the following data on the Register of expert groups:

- the name of individuals appointed in a personal capacity;
- the name of member organisations; the interest represented shall be disclosed;
- the name of other public entities;
- the name of observers;
- the name of Member States' authorities⁴;

DG GROW shall make available all relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, either on the Register of expert groups or *via* a link from the Register to a dedicated website, where this information can be found. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, DG GROW shall ensure publication of the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be foreseen where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001⁵.

⁴ To be inserted as required. According to the horizontal rules, it is not mandatory to publish the name of the Member States' authorities, see Article 23.1 (c).

⁵ These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.

Personal data shall be collected, processed and published in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001.

3. Application procedure

Interested individuals and organisations are invited to submit their application to the European Commission, DG GROW.

Applications must be completed in one of the official languages of the European Union. However, applications in English would facilitate the evaluation procedure. If another language is used, it would be helpful to include a summary of the CV in English.

Organisations shall indicate the name of their representative(s) in the group.

An application will be deemed admissible only if it is sent by the deadline and includes the documents referred to below. All documents submitted by applicants should be duly filled in, legible, signed and numbered sequentially.

Supporting documents

Each application shall include the following documents:

- a cover letter explaining the applicant's motivation for answering this call and stating what contribution the applicant could make to the group;
- a classification form duly filled in specifying the member category for which the application is made (Annex I).
- a selection criteria form duly filled in documenting how the applicant fulfills the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call (Annex II).

For individuals applying to be appointed as members of the group in a personal capacity, as well as for individuals indicated by organisations as their representatives, a *curriculum vitae* (CV) shall also be provided, preferably not exceeding three pages. All CVs shall be submitted in the European format (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>).

Individuals applying to be appointed as members of the group in a personal capacity must disclose any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest by submitting a declaration of interests ('DOI') form on the basis of the standard DOI form for expert groups attached to this call. Submission of a duly completed DOI form is necessary in order to be eligible to be appointed in a personal capacity. DG GROW shall perform the conflict of interest assessment in compliance with the horizontal rules⁶. The Commission draws the attention of applicants on the importance of submitting all relevant information in their DOI, with sufficient details. This is necessary to ensure a proper and timely assessment by the Commission of possible conflict of interest.

Additional supporting documents (e.g. publications) may be requested at a later stage.

Deadline for application

The duly signed applications must be sent by 16 March 2018 at the latest. Applications shall be sent by email to the following email address: GROW-Strategic-Forum@ec.europa.eu. The date of sending will be the date of the email.

⁶ Article 11 of the horizontal rules.

4. Selection criteria⁷

DG GROW will take the following criteria into account when assessing applications:

- 1) proven and relevant competence and a minimum of 10 years experience, including at European and international level, **in at least one and preferably several** of the following areas (all applicants)
 - a) advanced technologies, in particular advanced digital and key enabling technologies, and EU's technological advantages;
 - b) industrial value chains and industrial base in Europe, including EU industry's positioning and comparative advantages;
 - c) needs, obstacles and strategies for investments in industrial value chains in Europe, in particular investments in first industrial production of innovative products and/or large-scale investment projects in innovative manufacturing;
 - d) international integration and trade;
 - e) global market trends;
 - f) industrial and high-tech skills;
 - g) security and defence and related implications for industrial value chains, e.g. dual-use applications and critical assets and infrastructures; and
 - h) public subsidies and other support measures to selected investments, in particular (first) industrial production, existing in the EU and in other regions of the world.
- 2) absence of circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest (individuals applying to be appointed in a personal capacity only);
- 3) competence, experience and hierarchical level of the proposed representatives (organisations only);
- 4) good knowledge of the English language allowing active participation in the discussions.

5. Selection procedure

The selection procedure shall consist of an assessment of the applications performed by the DG GROW against the selection criteria listed in chapter 4 of this call, followed by the establishment of a list of the most suitable applicants, and concluded by the appointment of the members of the group.

When defining the composition of the group, DG GROW shall aim at ensuring, as far as possible, a high level of expertise, as well as a balanced representation of relevant know how and areas of interest, while taking into account the specific tasks of the group, the type of expertise required, as well as the relevance of the applications received.

Where individual experts are appointed in their personal capacity, DG GROW shall seek a geographical balance and a gender balance.

For any further information please contact Ms Ekroth-Manssila, Head of Unit F3, Digital Manufacturing, Key Enabling Technologies and Interoperability, Telephone: (32-2) 2950708, e-mail: GROW-Strategic-Forum@ec.europa.eu.

ANNEXES:

- Classification form

⁷ To be adapted in light of the group's membership and of the work to be performed.

- Selection criteria form
- Standard declaration of interests form
- Guidance for filling in the declaration of interests
- Privacy statement