

# oPEN Lab Open Call Guide for Applicants

## oPEN Lab Open Call

**Call open:** 16 January 2023

**Call closed:** 20 March 2023,  
17:00 Brussels time



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 101037080.

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## oPEN Lab project

oPEN Lab is a project funded by the European Union under the [Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation \(2014-2020\)](#) leading the transition to Positive Energy Neighbourhoods (PENs) in Tartu (Estonia), Pamplona (Spain) and Genk (Belgium).

The oPEN Lab project has the ambition to change the landscape of urban areas in small to medium-sized cities across Europe by mobilising innovation and system integration within a combined construction and energy value chain leading existing buildings and neighbourhoods towards positive energy level.

oPEN Lab aims at designing and implementing replicable and commercially viable services of Positive Energy Neighbourhoods in a set of three European urban contexts, and finally integrating these technologies and packages within existing urban contexts.

oPEN Lab foresees to solve **three main challenges for PEN Technologies**:

1. Showcase the integration of novel technologies.
2. Accelerate PEN developments in existing neighbourhoods.
3. Upscale and replicate the solutions implemented.

Under the coordination of VITO, 32 partners from 7 countries are working together in oPEN Lab. More details on the oPEN Lab partners are available on the oPEN Lab website: <https://openlab-project.eu/about/partners/>

## What are the objectives and scope of oPEN Lab Open Call?

### Objectives

The oPEN Lab Open Call is aimed at involving innovators based in Europe and interested in enhancing their innovation capacity by exploiting solutions for Positive Energy Neighbourhoods in one or more of different oPEN Living Labs in Genk (Belgium), Tartu (Estonia) and Pamplona (Spain).

More in details, the oPEN Lab Open Call will have a twofold objective:

- Broaden the innovation capacity of the oPEN Living Labs
- Enable dynamic response to the rapidly changing market.

The challenge of the oPEN Lab's ambition to lever the testbeds beyond state of the art is on integrating these technologies both on building and neighborhood level, and balancing them within the wider energy system by providing minimum energy consumption, minimum cost, maximum comfort, as well as an optimal generation and storage of energy.

The oPEN Lab project creates time and resource efficiency conditions for route-to-market approaches through its open-innovation and co-creation environment in its three oPEN Living Labs.

### oPEN Living Labs

In oPEN Lab, three open innovation Living Labs in Tartu (Estonia), Pamplona (Spain), and Genk (Belgium) will contribute to make interventions and test combinations of different close-to-market ready technologies and services and study their performance as a unique operating system for accelerating service innovation by adopting cross-sectoral integration.

The three Living Labs will demonstrate a PEN design integrating PEN energy systems and enabling 50% of building demand reduction and maximise local capacity of installed RES covering beyond 100% of the primary energy demand (Genk and Pamplona) or preparing for this (Tartu).

The innovations to be selected from the Open Call will be requested to address specific technical challenges identified by the oPEN Living Labs in the different application scenarios.

Details on the context, goals and identified Technical Challenges to be addressed by innovations selected through the Open Call are available for each oPEN Living Lab on the oPEN Lab website:

- Tartu Living Lab – <https://openlab-project.eu/living-labs/tartu/open-call-tartu/>
- Pamplona Living Lab – <https://openlab-project.eu/living-labs/pamplona/open-call-pamplona/>
- Genk Living Lab – <https://openlab-project.eu/living-labs/genk/open-call-genk/>

## Target audience

### Who should apply?

The oPEN Lab Open Call intends to involve innovators based in Europe and interested in enhancing their innovation capacity by exploiting innovative solutions for Positive Energy Neighbourhoods in one or more of different local contexts in Genk (Belgium), Tartu (Estonia) and Pamplona (Spain).

oPEN Lab Open Call is aimed at innovators from the whole quadruple helix ecosystem: **SMEs, start-ups, large enterprises, research institutes, governments and associations representing citizens**. Application from SMEs and start-ups will be highly encouraged and favoured in the evaluation and scoring phase. Applications from individuals will not be accepted.

For each application there will always be a **Lead Applicant**.

Applicants can apply alone as a **single entity**, or as a **Pilot Group** formed of two organisations or more. Individuals cannot apply to the Open Call.

In the latter case, the Lead Applicant will coordinate the Pilot Group and is responsible for providing the oPEN Lab project management with reports and feedback for the relevant European Commission auditing.

There are no restrictions on the number of organisations that can become part of a Pilot Group. However, applicants need to demonstrate the partners have complementary skills and can deliver the project within the timeline set by the project (see section below).

Applicants need to be based in any of the European Union Member States or countries Associated to Horizon 2020. It is not necessary for the applicant organisations to be located in one of the three oPEN Living Labs (i.e., Tartu, Pamplona, Genk). In fact, oPEN Lab actively encourages demonstrations from organisations coming from different locations with the aim to increase the potential for scalability and replicability of PENs in Europe.

The focus of oPEN Lab is on the enhancement of solutions starting from a Technological Readiness Level (TRL) > 5-6 to achieve an expected pre-commercial readiness by project end with TRL of 7-8. Based on this, the main eligibility criteria for the innovators applying to the oPEN Lab Open Call is to have a solution that has been already demonstrated in a relevant controlled environment (**TRL 5 or above**).

## Why apply?

The oPEN Lab Open Call will enhance the selected innovators capacity by offering them the opportunity to collaborate and engage with end users and other industrial parties in a real-life setting within the three oPEN Living Labs for solutions' enhancement, tailoring and validation.

Although there is no funding provided for the oPEN Lab Open Call, the innovators will have the opportunity to benefit from the oPEN Lab infrastructure and collaborate with stakeholders from the oPEN Lab quadruple helix network, thereby increasing their promotion, visibility, and access to the market.

Moreover, oPEN Lab will set up an Accelerator Programme to support the innovators in developing a roadmap for commercialisation and market entry of the solutions demonstrated in the oPEN Living Labs, and linking them with future potential clients (e.g., local authorities, project developers but also “integrators”, such as engineering companies, utilities, etc.), as well as with existing business support programmes from EIT KICs and marketplaces (e.g., Smart Cities Marketplace). The Accelerator programme is supported by the oPEN Lab network of innovation clusters across the EU.

## Open Call stages and timeline

The Open Call process will be structured over six main stages:

1. Call publication, 16 January 2023
2. Application period, 16 January - 20 March 2023
3. Evaluation, 21 March - 21 April 2023
4. Award and publication of call results
5. Implementation of awarded solutions
6. Follow-up and evaluation of the solutions

This schedule may be amended as required at the discretion of the oPEN Lab team. The most updated version will be available on the oPEN Lab website: [www.openlab-project.eu](http://www.openlab-project.eu)

## Intellectual Property Rights

- Each party involved – either on the Applicants or oPEN Lab consortium side – remains the sole owner of background results, products, and processes (patented or not).
- Management and ownership of the results obtained and/or validated within the context of the oPEN Lab Open Call, as well as eventual access to existing background necessary to implement the Pilot Project will be negotiated bilaterally between the Lead Applicant and/or Pilot Groups and the oPEN Living Lab through a legally binding Pilot Agreement.
- oPEN Lab or the European Commission may ask Lead Applicants and/or Pilot Groups to present their work as part of our public relations and networking events to showcase the benefits of the oPEN Lab project and use results for promotional reasons.

## Privacy and personal data protection

Several personal data (e.g., name, contact details, gender, nationality, age, etc.) will be collected within the oPEN Lab Open Call, as well as during the Pilot implementation. Compliance with GDPR and applicable national legislations will be ensured over the entire project.

Personal data of applicants will be collected during the application phase. Such data will be safely stored and maintained by the oPEN Lab partners only for the purpose of this Open Call.

In the framework of the implementation of the Pilot Project, Lead Applicants or Pilot Groups will collect or access various data, possibly containing personal information. Compliance with GDPR will thus be requested to Lead Applicants and Pilot Groups and will represent a primary admissibility criterion.

## Application

### Step 1: Download and read all the relevant documentation

The Lead Applicant or Pilot Group should read the Open Call information available on the oPEN Lab website providing an overview of the main parameters of the Open Call, relevant to decide if they would like to proceed further with the Open Call application.

In case the Lead Applicant or Pilot Group decides to proceed with the application, the next step is to read the full instructions under the oPEN Lab Open Call - Guide for Applicants. It is important that Applicants familiarise themselves with the conditions of the oPEN Lab Open Call.

Lead Applicants or Pilot Groups should also consult:

- The technical challenges identified by the oPEN Living Labs to be addressed by the Open Call.
- The oPEN Lab Open Call Application Template providing instructions on how to fill in the Application Form.

All documentation is available for download from the oPEN Lab project website: [www.openlab-project.eu](http://www.openlab-project.eu)

### Step 2: Identified challenges and information sessions

The Lead Applicant or Pilot Group should ensure that the solutions they offer are relevant to the technical challenges identified by the three oPEN Living Labs and select the one(s) that is (are) most relevant for them. Each solution/project must be deployed in at least one of the three oPEN Living Labs.

### Step 3: Complete and submit the application

The application form is available on the oPEN Lab project website ([www.openlab-project.eu](http://www.openlab-project.eu)) and includes both an administrative and a technical section. Applicants must complete all required fields of the application form. Applicants may submit more than one applications: one application per solution/project.

Only complete applications will be considered for evaluation. Applications may be submitted in English or according to the oPEN Living Lab they apply to, in one of the following languages:

For oPEN Living Lab Pamplona: **Spanish**

For oPEN Living Lab Genk: **Dutch**

For oPEN Living Lab Tartu: **Estonian**

Proposals written in any other language will not be eligible. After the call deadline, changes or additions will no longer be possible. Within the application process, Lead Applicants will be asked to:

- provide general information about their institution/organisation, partners, and other Pilot Group applicants.
- Complete all fields in the online application form within the space limits.



## Evaluation process

The evaluation will be carried out by the oPEN Lab partners in each oPEN Living Lab in collaboration with the oPEN Lab Coordination Team and Executive Board. Representatives of each of the three oPEN Living Labs will review and score the applications related to their respective Living Lab (Evaluation Committee).

The applications will be reviewed by the Evaluation Committee, who will evaluate and score them against the evaluation criteria of “Excellence, Impact and Implementation” detailed below and verifying their alignment to the Technical Challenges identified by each oPEN Living Lab.

Technical feasibility will be of critical importance in this Open Call, which aims to show the replicability and scalability of PEN solutions at a wider European level. Therefore, proposals could be rejected only based on poor technical feasibility, amongst the other criteria of Excellence, Impact, and Implementation.

All applications will be evaluated and ranked in terms of the highest score. Only applications meeting the threshold criteria of 12 points will be approved if no potential conflict with other applications (e.g., covering the same solution). In case of proposals with the same score, the one providing the best fit to the technical challenges and identified as the most innovative will be selected. Proposals with a score above the threshold and included in the winning list will undergo an ethics and privacy review by the Eligibility Committee who will revise the Ethics self-assessment to ensure compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations.

Selected applicants will be informed via email, possibly requesting eventual additional clarification regarding Ethics & Privacy issues within a fixed deadline for the Eligibility Committee to finalise the review. Notwithstanding other merits, proposals may be rejected on the grounds of ethical and privacy reasons.

Notifications of acceptance or rejection, together with any evaluation feedback, will be sent out to all Lead Applicants by 22 April 2023. It is the responsibility of the Lead Applicant to communicate the results to other members of the Pilot Group.

Feedback and any possible complaints must be sent back by 27 April 2023 at 17:00 CEST.

## What are the eligibility criteria?

There are eight eligibility criteria as listed below:

1. Applicant(s) are SMEs, start-ups, large enterprises, research institutions, governments, and associations.
2. Applicant(s) are located in the European Union Member States or countries Associated to Horizon 2020
3. Applications are submitted on time by 20 March 2023, 17:00 CET.
4. The proposal is providing solutions to the technical challenges identified by the respective oPEN Living Labs.
5. Completeness of the proposals (i.e., all fields included within the space and page limit).
6. The language of the applications, according to the oPEN Living Lab they apply to (i.e., English, Spanish, Dutch, Estonian).
7. Compliance with ethical principles and relevant legislations.
8. Applications are aligned with the scope of the oPEN Lab Open Call.

## What are the evaluation criteria?

If admissible and eligible, evaluators will evaluate and rank proposals based on the following three criteria: Excellence, Impact, and Implementation. Each criterion has a different weight in the scoring and includes several sub-criteria defined here below.

| <b>Excellence<br/>(weight: 30%)</b>  | <b>Impact<br/>(weight: 40%)</b>   | <b>Implementation<br/>(weight: 30%)</b>   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambition of the proposed solution.</li> <li>• Innovative nature of the technologies, products or services offered.</li> <li>• Soundness of the technical approach within the context of developing Positive Energy Neighbourhoods and TRL level.</li> <li>• Novel use of value chains inside and outside the energy field.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Market opportunity and market readiness level.</li> <li>• Commercial Strategy and Scalability (generation of new business).</li> <li>• Positive Energy Neighbourhoods impact (value added, service quality and outcome improvement).</li> <li>• Economic impact (e.g., cost saving and job transformation, skill enhancement etc.).</li> <li>• Environmental impact (e.g. energy efficiency, CO2 savings, co-benefits, renovation depth, workflows, consumption reduction, improvement of users' quality of life).</li> <li>• Development of business model and funding plan.</li> <li>• Reusability of existing solutions.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team capabilities and management capacity of action.</li> <li>• Reach of end users and alignment with citizen centric co-creation approach.</li> <li>• Resource utilisation and efficiency.</li> </ul> |

For each criterion, each proposal will be given scores from 0 to 5, as per the list of scores detailed below:

- **0 – Very poor:** the proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information (unless the result of an „obvious clerical error“).
- **1 – Poor:** the criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **2 – Fair:** the proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses.
- **3 – Good:** the proposal addresses the criterion well but with several shortcomings.
- **4 – Very good:** the proposal addresses the criterion very well but with a small number of shortcomings.
- **5 – Excellent:** the proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion; any shortcomings are minor.

For scoring and ranking, evaluators will consider the following aspects under each of the evaluation criteria:

| <b>Excellence<br/>(0-5 points)</b>  | <b>Impact<br/>(0-5 points)</b>   | <b>Implementation<br/>(0-5 points)</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the vision, ambition, and value proposition of your solution?</li> <li>• Is your project proposition clear in meeting the objectives of the Open Call/s?</li> <li>• How innovative are your technological solutions, products or services offered?</li> <li>• Has your solution been demonstrated in a relevant environment (with a starting TRL 5 or above)?</li> <li>• Is your project offering an innovative use of value chains within and outside the energy domain?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does your project address a challenge recognised or prioritised by the oPEN Living Labs or can you argue for another challenge that is as important for the city and its communities? Do you have evidence?</li> <li>• How will you measure the quality of your outputs (methodology and key performance indicators)?</li> <li>• Evidence of a sound commercial strategy.</li> <li>• How credible is your methodology in proving the scalability of your solution, product or service?</li> <li>• What's your exploitation/ commercialisation plan for this solution? How clear is your revenue model and monetisation strategy?</li> <li>• How big is the market you are addressing?</li> <li>• Is your business model/plan clear and sound?</li> <li>• What is the long-term social, environmental, and economic impact if your solution is implemented at a larger scale?</li> <li>• How much is your project reusing existing, relevant, and validated technological components?</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the proposal feasible in the time given? Is there an achievable deployment plan?</li> <li>• Is the project achievable considering the skills and expertise of the team? Does the team have the capacity to run the project?</li> <li>• Is the proposal feasible given the technological features and their maturity?</li> <li>• Are there any additional infrastructure and resource requirements? Do you have a plan to unlock these assets?</li> </ul> |



## Awarding process

### What should I expect if I am successful?

Slight rescoping of the awarded projects can be requested based on the feedback from the three oPEN Living Labs. The rescoping period will take place in May 2023. After the rescoping period, if you are successful, you will:

- Receive an email communicating your success and feedback from the application.
- Slight re-scoping of the awarded projects can be requested based on the feedback from the three oPEN Living Labs. The re-scoping period will take place in May 2023.
- Be requested to formally sign a legally binding Pilot Agreement. Such agreement will define the terms whereby the Lead Applicant/Pilot Group will implement the Pilot Project in collaboration with the oPEN Living Lab(s) in the framework of the oPEN Lab project, including detailed IPR provisions. The conditions and full text of the Pilot Agreement will be shared between the Lead Applicant/Pilot Group and the relevant oPEN Living Lab. Be aware that Pilot Groups will need to provide evidence that the Pilot Group has been formally established (e.g., Collaboration Agreement or other) before signing the Pilot Agreement. The Pilot Agreement will be shared with successful applicants only at the end of the awarding procedure.

