**FAQ’s Challenge Owner**

**Who can submit a challenge as a challenge owner?**

Challenge Owner is a party (private, public, non-profit) from an organization focused on national sustainability transition to a corporate deadline with a specific circular economy value chain challenge) which sets a specific regional, circular innovation challenge for the SoTecIn Factory program as they have an interest in it being solved through high-value circular solutions.

Individual Members of the Mission Council are also allowed to submit a challenge. However, they won’t own the challenge. Rather, a concerted effort will be made over the course of the project to attract pilot customers for the developed solution of the tech-savvy innovators to these challenges.

**Is the size of the company of a challenge owner relevant?**

the size of the organization is not significant. However, the representative of the company needs to be accessible in the further course of the project (cf. question regarding commitment of a challenge owner).

**What is the relationship between challenge owners and regional missions?**

The challenge of the challenge owner needs to refer to the regional mission of the region, in which the challenge owner is located.

**What are the regional missions that the challenges need to refer to?**

Netherlands (North-West, including Northern France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Ireland)*:*  *"Leverage digitisation and data by connecting actors in the textile value chain in the EU to empower decision-making towards higher R circular economy by increasing transparency and traceability."*

Romania (South-East, including Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Serbia, Ukraine)*:*  *"Foster closer collaboration between farmers, distributors, and retailers throughout the regional food value chain, and increase their capacity to leverage R&D, sustainable technologies and production methods, and circular strategies to help them become more resilient, in the move towards a regenerative, circular food value chain."*

Hungary (North-East, including Slovakia, Poland, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia)*:*  *"Build more resilient regional food systems by improving farmers’ access to resources and fostering closer connections between farmers and consumers to reduce the distance between production and consumption, to facilitate production of quality food, and to inspire more sustainable localised consumption and production."*

Germany (Centre-North, including Denmark, Austria, Sweden, Finland)*:*  *"Leverage circular design, enabling technologies, and knowledge sharing to reduce and replace single use plastics and to maximise the potential of packaging solutions that close material loops, while enabling the main value chain actor across to adopt them by 2030."*

Turkey (East, including Armenia and Georgia)*:*  *"Leverage digitalization, data centric approaches, biotech, and other solutions to increase the transparency and traceability of the agri-food value chain, reduce food waste, and radically reduce impacts stemming from meat and dairy production."*

Portugal (South-West, including Spain, Southern France)*:*  *"Support Iberian farmers, producers and consumers in a 3R agricultural revolution (one that is regional, regenerative, and resource-efficient) through platforms, tools, financial incentives, education, and transparent information."*

Italy (Centre-South, including Slovenia, Croatia, Malta)*:*  *"1. Enable greater transparency, traceability and verifiability of product-level data and incentivise reduced production impacts by improving mechanisms for data collection, verification and sharing.*

*2. Develop new digital solutions, production technologies and services to drive circularity throughout the whole lifecycle of products, whilst encouraging greater collaboration across the value chain, and increasing awareness of consumers of the impacts of their clothing."*

**Who are tech-savvy Innovators?**

The selected challenges will be published in the open call for tech-savvy innovators, to which they apply to solve a challenge. Tech-savvy innovators can be an already established SME as well as an unaccompanied person. A Jury will select the tech-savvy innovators, that will then get a funding to develop their solution to solve the challenge of the challenge owners.

**How will the challenges be submitted?**

Challenges can be submitted [here](https://www.f6s.com/sotecinfactory-oc-challengeowners/apply) via f6s.

The content of the online form consists of:

1. Description status quo (brief company description, what is the „problem“)
2. More detailed description of what kind of solution is being sought for ((technical) requirements etc.)
3. Summary of the challenge (possibly different options that the solution can address)

**Can someone submit a challenge and apply to another challenge as a tech-savvy innovator?**

Yes, if the eligibility criteria are met. However, someone cannot apply to their own submitted challenge (cf. guide for challenge owners and guide for tech-savvy innovators).

**How will the challenges be selected?**

The Mission Councils of SoTecIn Factory will review the submitted challenges depending on the selection criteria.

**What are the selection criteria for the challenges?**

The main selection criteria are the fit of the challenges to the respective regional missions. The challenge should also initiate the development of solutions, that provide a greater societal value. This balance of interests is critical to the system change required across the regional value chain.

**What happens if a challenge will not be selected?**

It is possible that the Mission Council requests the reformulation of a challenge. If the challenge owner agrees, the reformulated challenge will be selected.

In the rare case that a challenge does not fit the project despite a possible reformulation, the challenge owner will be informed accordingly and has the possibility to submit a challenge that fits the project one year later.

**When will the selected challenges be announced to the challenge owners?**

Challenge owners will be informed about the selected challenges in April 2023.

**Will the challenges be published?**

The selected challenges will be published in the open call for tech-savvy innovators, which represents a Europe-wide public open call.

**Can someone submit a challenge anonymously?**

If the challenge owner does not want the company name to be published, he/she can indicate this as additional information in the contact data field when submitting the challenge. In this case, the company name will not be published in the open call for tech-savvy Innovators.

**Will the challenge owner receive a funding?**

No, the selected tech-savvy innovator will be funded to develop the solution approach in order to solve the challenge of the challenge owner. Accordingly, the challenge owner has the opportunity to obtain a funded solution within the framework of this project for their specific challenge.

**What are the benefits for challenge owners?**

Challenge owners can not only receive a funded solution of highly innovative startups for their specific challenge but also will be part of an European innovative network in the field of circular economy. They can also increase awareness for their company and their activities in this area.

**What is the required commitment of a challenge owner?**

Once the tech-savvy innovators are selected, they will be linked to the respective challenge owners. After signing a NDA between both parties and the SoTecIn Factory consortium, it is desired that the challenge owners have a meeting with their tech-savvy innovators at least once every two months.

It is also desired that the challenge owner provides a real business environment to test and validate the solution of a tech-savvy innovator. If this is not possible, the SoTecIn Factory consortium and its network will look for suitable pilot customers to test the solution.

**How to formulate a challenge?**

A good challenge is formulated as specific as necessary and as open as possible. This way the challenge owner increases the chances that tech-savvy innovators will be ambitious and challenged to apply for the challenge. By addressing a social impact in the challenge, a transferability to other potential customers is given, which ensures the sustainability of the developed solution.

**What is an exemplary challenge?**

An exemplary challenge for the following mission:

Romania (South-East, including Greece, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Serbia, Ukraine)*:*  *"Foster closer collaboration between farmers, distributors, and retailers throughout the regional food value chain, and increase their capacity to leverage R&D, sustainable technologies and production methods, and circular strategies to help them become more resilient, in the move towards a regenerative, circular food value chain."*

1. Description status quo (brief company description, what is the „problem“)

A farmer cannot reach its potential of a bigger customer base, because many potential customers refuse the long way to the farmer and would prefer a delivery to their door. How can the farmer serve these customers preferably without involving a third party (retail) and in a relatively eco-friendly way?

1. More detailed description of what kind of solution is being sought for ((technical) requirements etc.)

The solution can be run by a service provider. Incoming orders should be received by the farmer and the solution provider at the same time so that the farmer can prepare the order and get it ready for onward transport, while the solution provider can start optimizing the route for delivery. The average purchase from a farmer can vary from x-y kg and should be considered when deciding on means of transportation.

1. Summary of the challenge (possibly different options that the solution can address)

It is desired to receive solutions, that enable a door-to-door delivery in an ecofriendly way (from drones to cargo bikes). It is desir4ed to receive solutions, that

1. Involve retail
2. do not involve retail

**Who owns the IP rights of a developed solution to a challenge?**

The tech-savvy innovator owns the IP rights to the solution they develop. Of course, individual agreements between the Challenge-owner and the Tech-savvy innovators can be reached, in order to share the right over the IP  when relevant (eg, project-based, NDA, when both parties have contributed towards the IP creation).

**Are funded solutions to the challenges allowed to raise more funds?**

Yes, during the project, the selected tech-savvy innovators will also be supported in acquiring further funding etc. for their projects (pitch training, pitch events etc.).

**Can a challenge owner be a Mission Council member?**

Yes, a challenge owner can be a Mission Council member.

**What is the timeline for challenge owners?**

Challenges can be submitted until March 16, 2023 (extended deadline is March 23, 18:00 CET).

The challenges will be selected until April 2023 and published in the open call for tech-savvy innovators, which will be open from May-June 2023. Tech-savvy Innovators will be selected from a Jury in July 2023. Sub-Grant Agreement phase with the selected tech-savvy innovators will take place from August-September 2023 (the legal documents NDA etc. will be signed).

I.e., from September 2023 there will be a first real meeting between Challenge Owner and the selected tech-savvy innovator. These tech-savvy innovators will not only receive the funding within the project, but also the support to develop their business plan, fundraising, IPR etc. (this activity is planned until May 2024). The sessions and workshops in this framework are provided by the SoTecIn Factory consortium in the project and are planned for the startups, if the challenge owner wants to participate, he can do it, but it is not mandatory. The co-development phase will start in December 2023 with the selected startups receiving 85k€ for implementation. From this point on, the challenge owner should get more involved as he should allow the startup to test and validate the developed idea in a real business environment. This activity also goes until May 2024).