



Call for Expression of Interest (CEI) for the selection of members of the Stakeholders Group of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking

The present CEI is launched pursuant to Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19th November 2021, establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, also referred to as the Single Basic Act-SBA¹.

The results of this CEI, including the list of selected members, will be subject to confirmation and formal appointment by the Governing Board of the Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking.

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¹ Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 of 19 November 2021 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe and repealing Regulations (EC) No 219/2007, (EU) No 557/2014, (EU) No 558/2014, (EU) No 559/2014, (EU) No 560/2014, (EU) No 561/2014 and (EU) No 642/2014 ; OJ L 427, 30.11.2021, pp. 17–119

1. Introduction: SNS JU missions and 2025 call for a stakeholders' group

The European Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking ('SNS JU') is a **European Public-Private Partnership** established by [Council Regulation \(EU\) 2021/2085](#)² (Single Basic Act, hereunder 'SBA') that aims to facilitate and develop industrial leadership in Europe in 5G and mainly 6G networks and services. The SNS JU funds projects under **Horizon Europe** that shape a solid research and innovation (R&I) roadmap and deployment agenda by engaging a critical mass of European stakeholders and facilitating international cooperation on various 6G initiatives.

The SNS JU has **two main missions**. Firstly, SNS JU aims to **fostering Europe's technology sovereignty in 6G by implementing the related research and innovation (R&I) programme** leading to the initial conception and standardisation. It encourages preparation for early market adoption of 6G technologies by 2031, by mobilising a broad set of stakeholders that are key to address strategic areas of the networks and services value chain. This ranges from the overall system architecture, its building blocks, 6G enablers, edge- and cloud-based service provisioning to market opportunities in new components and devices beyond smartphones. Secondly, SNS JU aims to **boosting 5G deployment in Europe** in view of developing digital lead markets and enabling the digital and green transition of the economy and society in cooperation with vertical sectors and the Connected Europe facility (CEF) Programme.

To fulfil these missions, the SNS JU's program harnesses and expands European research and innovation capacities to develop advanced networks and services that will **drive the digital transformation towards 2030 and beyond**.³ The SNS JU approach is holistic, extending beyond connectivity to include cloud-edge infrastructure, microelectronics, and secure, sustainable, and inclusive technologies. The research projects funded are addressing key societal and political challenges, accelerating the digitalisation of verticals, and creating new business opportunities for Europe in the global technology race. SNS JU is focused on ensuring networks and services reflect the values for competitiveness, security, resilience, sustainability, and openness and committed to explore new cutting-edge domains such as AI, quantum, cybersecurity, and energy efficiency.⁴ These activities are closely aligned with EU policy priorities, assuring resilient supply chains, promoting sustainability, ethics, and cybersecurity and ensuring Europe's technological sovereignty and global competitiveness as highlighted in the [Draghi report on EU competitiveness](#) and by the [Von der Leyen Commission 2024-2029](#).

As to **governance**, the main decision-making body of the SNS JU is the **Governing Board (GB)**⁵ that is responsible for the JU's decision-making, including the adoption of the work programmes and the overall responsibility for its strategic orientations. The GB is composed of representatives of the public and private members, i.e., the European Commission and the

² Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe, Official Journal of the European Union, L 427, Pages 17-119.

³ See Article 159 of the SBA.

⁴ For an overview, see [SNS JU 2024 Annual report](#).

⁵ Articles 15 to 17 and Articles 166 to 168 of the SBA.

6G Smart Networks and Services Industry Association (6G-IA). The SNS JU is led by the **Executive Director**⁶, who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the SNS JU in accordance with the decisions of the GB. The SNS JU is assisted by two advisory groups. The first one is the **States' Representatives Group (SRG)**⁷, composed of representatives of each Member State and Associated Country and that provides guidance on all strategic issues as well as all relevant activities of the partnership. The second one is the **Stakeholders Group (SG)**⁸, which brings together public and private stakeholders in the field of the SNS JU.

The **SG is an advisory body** that must be regularly informed of the activities of the joint undertaking, can be invited to provide comments on the joint undertaking's planned initiatives and may be consulted on specific questions, at the request of the Executive Director, to advise the JU's Governing Board (see Section 2).⁹

The SNS JU GB will decide on the number of **members of the SG** selected to reflect the entire connectivity value chain (including vertical services and adjacent technology areas). An **observer status** may be granted to other organisations, at the discretion of the SNS JU GB, in regard to their special roles in supporting the SNS JU's missions.

This Call for Expression of Interest (CEI) is launched by the Executive Director of the SNS JU upon **Decision of the SNS JU GB 15-2025 from 18 December 2025**.

The Executive Director will foresee the overall selection process under the authority of the SNS JU GB.

This CEI is published on the **website of the SNS JU** as well as on other medium as necessary to ensure the widest possible dissemination.

2. Statutory role and tasks of the Stakeholders Group

2.1. Statutory role

As envisaged in the SBA, Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe should be able to set up their respective **advisory** Stakeholders Groups to ensure a very broad participation of, all public and private stakeholders. The SGs are set up to ensure that joint undertakings are aware of the positions and views of stakeholders from the entire value chain in their respective fields and to be consulted on horizontal issues or specific questions as per the needs of each joint undertaking¹⁰. Application to the SGs must be **open to all public and private stakeholders**, including organised groups, international interest groups from Member States, associated countries or other countries, active in the field of the SNS JU.¹¹

Against this backdrop, the SNS SG is established as an advisory body supporting the Joint Undertaking and its Governing Board. Its purpose is to provide the positions and views of

⁶ Articles 18 and 19 of the SBA.

⁷ Article 20 and 169 of the SBA.

⁸ Article 22 of the SBA.

⁹ Article 22 of the SBA.

¹⁰ See Recital 34 of the SBA.

¹¹ Article 22 of the SBA.

stakeholders across the **entire connectivity value chain** (including vertical services and adjacent technology areas). This ranges from connectivity technologies and services including edge- and cloud-based service provisioning to new components, applications (e.g. AI, microelectronics) and devices beyond smartphones. The SG engages, in a structured and systematic manner, public and private actors across the value chain from research and development to deployment and end-user applications.

2.2. Tasks

Pursuant to Article 22 of the SBA:

- The SG shall be regularly informed of the activities of the SNS JU
- The SG shall be invited to provide comments on the SNS JU's planned initiatives, including:
 - Provide comments for the preparation of the SNS JU's multi-annual Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) taking due account of the progress and needs in adjacent technology sectors (such as microelectronics, AI, 3D communications and dual use technologies, etc).
 - Provide comments on the strategic and the technological priorities to be addressed by the SNS JU as laid down in the Annual Work Programme.
 - Facilitate dialogue and alignment across adjacent technology sectors, with Member States, and with other European initiatives.
 - Provide advice on any topics falling within the remit of SNS JU missions.
- The SNS JU Executive Director may advise the GB to consult the SG on specific questions. Where such consultation takes place, a report shall be submitted by the SG to the GB and to the SRG after the relevant discussion in the SG. Such a report should concern relevant aspects of the JU's activities, including:
 - policy and regulatory alignment with research and innovation activities, particularly in areas like standards, and spectrum.
 - synergies between JU-funded activities and members' own research, deployment and investment strategies to foster collaboration and avoid duplication.
 - scale-up of European innovations, especially through private investment and industry adoption.

2.3. Rules of engagement and operation of the Stakeholders Group

The SG will meet at least once a year, in principle at the SNS JU premises or virtually depending on the circumstances.¹² The Executive Director convenes and participates in the SG meetings. The Stakeholders Group will elect its Chair and Vice-Chair from among its members based on its Rules of Procedures.

¹² The SG's members will incur their own expenses, including daily, travel and accommodation costs.

In addition to the Members, the meetings may be attended, as required, by SNS JU Programme Office staff members acting as the secretariat of the SG and by observers invited by the Chair with the agreement of the GB.

The reports submitted by the SG to the GB and to the SRG will be made publicly available on the website of the SNS JU in accordance with Article 22 of the SBA.

More detailed rules of engagement and operation of procedures including the chairperson appointment will be detailed in the SG rules of procedure (RoP) to be agreed upon by the GB.

3. Application procedure to the Call for Expression of Interest

Interested organisations are requested to submit their expression of interest by filling in a structured [application form](#).

The application form must enclose all relevant information, including:

- the organisation's area of activity and country of registration;
- the names of one nominated representative and one alternate representative;
- all the information necessary to evaluate the application in accordance with the selection procedure according to Section 5.

The following supporting documents should be provided in addition of the completed application form:

- The organisation registration numbers;
- The organisation bylaws;
- The organisation's commitment letter, which confirms that they have the appropriate profile and the capacity to provide the necessary resources to contribute to the activities envisaged for the SNS JU SG;
- Any other relevant supporting document deemed necessary to allow the Selection Committee to verify that the eligibility and the selection criteria are met by the candidate organisation;
- A curriculum vitae of the nominated representative and of the alternate representative. The CV should describe applicant's professional and/or academic experience proving they have the professional capacity and expertise needed to participate in the activities of the SNS JU.

Applicants should carefully review their suitability and potential candidacy including the eligibility and selection criteria stated below (Section 4) and submit their expression of interest by filling in a structured [application form](#).

Applications shall be submitted and received by the SNS JU **by 23:59 CET on March 31, 2026**.

4. Criteria and selection criteria of the members of the Stakeholders Group

In compliance with paragraph 3 of article 22 of the SBA, the GB of the SNS JU establishes the following eligibility criteria for candidate organisations and selection criteria for the composition of the members of the Stakeholders Group.

4.1. Eligibility criteria for candidate organisations

Applications to the SNS JU's SG are open to public and private stakeholders, including companies, industry associations, research organisations and public bodies.

Candidates to the SNS JU's SG shall meet the following **eligibility criteria**:

a) Type of Organisation

Candidates must be active in one or several areas falling within the remit of SNS JU activities and missions, including notably:

- Equipment vendors and operators in the areas of ICT/digital infrastructures and services;
- Large enterprises and industry associations/interest groups active in key vertical industries (e.g. automotive, energy, health, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity);
- European, national or regional industry associations and consumer associations in the areas of ICT/digital infrastructures and services;
- EU national, regional or local authorities or public bodies active in the areas of ICT/digital infrastructures and services (including 3D communications and dual use technologies);
- Standard Essential Patent (SEP) holders with own manufacturing, network deployment and/or network operation activities and implementers active in the areas of ICT/digital infrastructures and services;
- Other Joint Undertakings and European partnerships (under condition of reciprocity);
- Institutional investors and accelerators active in the areas of ICT/digital infrastructures and services.

b) Type of activities

The areas of activity of the candidates should fall under one or more of the following fields:

- Provision of ICT/digital infrastructures and services (including for use by vertical industries as a key component of their business strategies);
- Research and innovation activities in ICT/digital infrastructures and services;
- Industry stakeholders' representation in ICT/digital infrastructures and services;
- Regulation and policymaking in ICT/digital infrastructures and services.

c) Capacity requirements

Candidates must fulfil the following requirements:

- be an entity registered in one of the Member States of the European Union or one of the Countries associated to Horizon Europe programme, in accordance with Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 2021/695¹³ establishing Horizon Europe and laying down its rules for participation and dissemination¹⁴;
- not be subject to grounds excluding them to participate in EU activities (e.g. bankruptcy);
- have the capacity to engage with relevant stakeholders in the value chain, in particular with relevant industry players, policymakers and other stakeholders operating at national, regional or local level and, more specifically, have the capacity to contribute and provide comments to the SNS SRIA and all strategic areas of SNS JU;
- ensure that at least one of the nominated representatives (main or alternate) represents a gender different from the other, in line with the appointment procedure in section 5.

4.2. Selection criteria for the composition of the Stakeholders Group

In order to reflect the entire **connectivity value chain (including vertical services)** throughout the European Union and the **qualifications and skills** necessary to ensure effectiveness of the SNS JU SG, the candidate organisations should meet the relevant following selection criteria¹⁵:

a. Be a private entity/company active in the domains mentioned in section 4.1. for at least three years;

or

b. Be an EU national, regional or local authority or public body performing one or several activity(ies) and fulfilling the requirements mentioned in section 4.1;

or

c. Be an industry association/interest group or sector representative with at least 15 members performing one or several activity(ies) and fulfilling the requirements mentioned in section 4.1;

¹³ Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 (Text with EEA relevance), OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, pp. 1–68

¹⁴ According to Regulation (EU) 2021/695, 'legal entity' means a natural person, or a legal person created and recognised as such under Union, national or international law, which has legal personality and the capacity to act in its own name, exercise rights and be subject to obligations, or an entity which does not have legal personality as referred to in point (c) of Article 197(2) of the Financial Regulation.

¹⁵ To ensure adequate diversity of representation within the Stakeholders Group, 6G-IA members and members of other relevant organisations in the areas of 5G and 6G networks and services that are already providing inputs to SNS JU may apply as well to become members of the SNS JU SG should they fulfil the eligibility criteria and meet the selection criteria. To ensure an adequate diversity of the SG's composition, 6GIA members shall not exceed one third of the total number of the SG's members. 6G-IA members joining the SG as members shall express their own views and do not represent the 6G-IA association.

or

d. Be a European association or a European organisation representing the interest of its members from at least three Member States performing one or several activity(ies) and fulfilling the requirements mentioned in section 4.1.

Furthermore, in its final assessment and appointment:

e. The GB will aim to balance representation in terms of the organisation's geographical distribution, sector and stakeholders' expertise, in terms of gender of the nominated representatives and take into account the potential candidates proposed by the SRG, having regard to paragraph 3 of article 22 of the SBA.

f. The GB will take into account any risk-mitigating measures, including the need for restrictions and exclusions, in compliance with security requirement as described in Recital 100 of the SBA.

g. Where relevant, the GB will take into account the potential candidates proposed by the SRG having regard to paragraph 3 of article 22 of the SBA.

5. Selection and appointment procedure of the Stakeholders Group members and their individual representatives

5.1. Selection procedure

Based on the applications received, the Executive Director of the SNS JU will prepare (with the support of the Programme Office of the JU) a **list of all candidates eligible** to become members of the SNS JU SG on the basis of the eligibility criteria and requirements listed above in section 4.

An **Evaluation Panel** will be appointed ahead of the deadline for submission of applications. It shall be composed of representatives of SNS JU GB and of SNS JU SRG, supported by the SNS JU Programme Office.

The Evaluation Panel will assess all eligible candidate based on the selection criteria listed above. It will propose a **shortlist of candidates** considered best suited for appointment, as well as a reserve list of candidates.

On the basis of the **panel outcomes**, and considering any candidates proposed by the SRG, the Executive Director will present the selection results to the GB. The presentation will also include the list of candidates not retained, with reasons for their rejection, as well as the list of candidates found ineligible.

5.2. Appointment procedure of the Stakeholders Group members

Based on the lists established by the Evaluation Panel, the GB will **appoint the Members of the SG** and **approve a reserve list**.

Members of the SG shall be appointed for a **2 year period**, which may, subject to a decision of the Governing Board, be renewed for additional periods of **2 years**.

The established reserve list shall remain valid for the entire duration of the mandate of the SG, including any subsequent renewal of its appointed members. In case of a vacancy, and provided the eligibility criteria in Section 5 are still met, the GB will appoint a new member from the reserve list for the remainder of the term.

5.3. Appointment procedure of the Stakeholders Group members' individual representatives

Each Member of the SG, shall appoint two individuals that are staff members as its **individual representative and its alternate representative**, who shall perform the tasks pertaining to the SG on their behalf.

Each Member of the SG may decide the term of office of its individual representatives in accordance with its internal rules. If the office of a representative falls vacant, the respective Member shall appoint a new representative for the remainder of the term of office.

The names and functions/posts of the individual representatives will be published on the SNS JU website, in accordance with Article 22 of the SBA and with the applicable EU data protection rules, in particular Regulation (EU) 2018/1725.

The representatives of the SG members and their alternates shall demonstrate appropriate **ethical conduct**, absence of conflict of interest and shall respect the confidentiality of the information and documents to which they will have access.

The representatives of the SG members and their alternates shall be 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 sensitive non-classified and Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 and 2015/444¹⁶ respectively. Specific clauses to this effect will be included in and/or annexed to the declaration of confidentiality. Each SG member shall also sign an individual non-disclosure agreement prior to the start of his/her activities.

In order to ensure the independence of the SG in performing its mandate, before appointment, all members of the SG (and their representatives and alternates) shall be required to complete and sign a declaration of absence of conflict of interest as well as a commitment to disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest that may prejudice the independency and impartiality of their duties when acting as SG member. Specific rules on the prevention, avoidance and management of conflict of interest will be detailed in the SRG rules of procedure to be adopted by the GB to give effect to Article 42 of the SBA (Conflicts of interest). Applicants shall notify in written any direct or indirect involvement in any of the Members other than the Union and other stakeholders participating in SNS JU in order for the Executive Director to determine any recourse to mitigate any potential conflict of interest in their duties for the SG.

¹⁶ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission, OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, pp. 41–52, and 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, pp. 53–88

6. Other information

No correspondence will be exchanged on the status of the applications except in the case of a positive or negative final decision, or in the case of any necessary documentary evidence the Executive Director or the Evaluation Panel may deem necessary for the establishment of eligibility and assessment of the selection criteria as set out in sections 4 and 5 of this call. Applicants are therefore formally requested not to enquire about the progress of their application neither by email, telephone or fax, nor by letter.

7. Start of assignment

Conclusion of the evaluation process and appointment decision of the members of the Stakeholders Group by the SNS JU GB is expected to take place before Q3 2026.

8. Protection of personal data

The SNS JU will ensure that candidates' personal data are processed as required by EU Regulation No 2018/1725 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions and bodies¹⁷.

¹⁷ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC (Text with EEA relevance.) ; OJ L 295, 21.11.2018, pp. 39–98