



leadershipIP
4SMEs

Guide for Applicants

LEADERSHIP4SMEs

2nd Open Call
(October 2021)

*Applications' submission starts on Monday, 11th October 2021 at 12:00
(CEST).*

Submission deadline on Friday, December 3rd, 2021 at 18:00 (CET)



*LEADERSHIP4SMEs is funded by the European Union's
Horizon 2020 "Enhancing the innovation capacity of SMEs"
under the Grant Agreement n° 951164*

HOW TO APPLY for Leadership4SMEs 1st OPEN CALL

(Follow the link, for the technical instructions on how to apply.)

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1. What is LEADERSHIP4SMEs?

LEADERSHIP4SMEs is a European project financed by the European Commission under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 “*Enhancing the innovation capacity of SMEs*” Programme.


Intellectual property rights (IPR) can be an ignored value due to intangibility and missing ways / methods to consider it for the funding and investment of SMEs and start-ups. The EU-funded LEADERSHIP4SMEs project will support innovative SMEs and start-ups to improve and strengthen, and thus valorize their IPR, facilitating their access to adequate funding that is vital to their growth. The project will set a platform of specific tools to:



- strategically manage and place IPR in the business model and plan to attract funding;
- to define the most value-creating business strategy;
- to better value and protect their intangible assets;
- to generate business and encourage collaborations;
- as well as to help identifying financial guarantees, at regional, national and European level.

The platform relies on a compilation of the best practices in the domains of IPR management, business acceleration and funding that allows a better valuation of IPR and acts as an online hub of support from IPR, innovation and business support, and private and public funding and cooperation.

In addition to the implementation of this platform, a support program for startups and SMEs is being deployed, with the aim of operationally helping beneficiaries to effectively leverage their IP assets to stimulate their growth.


The LEADERSHIP4SMEs consortium is made up of 8 European partners with complementary expertise about intellectual property protection and the financing of companies with high growth potential:

	<p>As the leading business initiative to promote Baden-Württemberg as a location for innovation and high-tech, Baden-Württemberg: Connected (bwcon) connects around 700 companies and research institutions with a total of more than 6,000 experts.</p> <p>bwcon GmbH offers founders and companies end-to-end guidance and support for the innovation process and is</p>
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	<p>involved in numerous state-wide and European activities and projects.</p>
	<p>Iceberg has developed from a consulting firm into an ecosystem of multi-disciplinary experts providing strategy, consulting, digital and technology services across Central & Eastern Europe. Iceberg is based in Brasov and Bucharest, Romania, with project ambassadors and delivery partners all over Romania and in France, Bulgaria, Serbia, Slovenia and Moldova.</p> <p>Part of Iceberg ecosystem is a network of hubs, acceleration programs, technology transfer centers and startup-focused projects that they have set up throughout the region. They have been delivering consulting and technical to startups, SMEs, mid-caps, local as well as local/regional and central government, partnering on projects with various other consultants, clusters, Digital Innovation Hubs and RTOs from across Europe. They are running one of the 3 Digital Innovation Hubs in Romania (https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/digital-innovation-hubs-tool/-/dih/1218/view) - ALT Brasov (www.altbrasov.eu/en) and setting up their own deep tech focused facilities – an industry 4.0 incubator and a smart city living labs. They biannually organize the think tank event I4T - focused on the emerging role of digital in the key industries of Romania, as well as numerous other workshops, hackathons and challenges.</p>
	<p>INNOVA is a private technology and business accelerator, created in Rome in 1993, and has been appointed Certified Incubator in 2015 and Qualified Investor in January 2021 by the Italian Government investment agency (CDP Venture Capital).</p> <p>INNOVA provides specialised support for technology validation, market acceleration, IPR protection and internationalisation. Since 2015, INNOVA has assisted more than 600 European companies by providing them IPR Management services within the Italian Trade Agency (ITA) programmes. INNOVA offers incubation and acceleration services to startups and innovative companies operating in cutting edge disruptive technologies in ICT (AI, IoT, machine learning, Industry 4.0 technologies) and biotech fields. Main areas of</p>



	<p>expertise ranges from IPR management, technology transfer and market take-up.</p>
	<p>With 16 offices worldwide, Bugnion (Milano, Italy) is one of the top European IP firms. Bugnion has assisted over 8000 global companies developing strong IPR strategies for protecting and exploiting their intangible asset.</p> <p>To be more involved in innovative projects, Bugnion has recently established the IP-UP and the Tech Transfer Depts with the goal of assisting SMEs and start-ups in leveraging their IP, searching for licensees or collaborative parties, scouting for new opportunities, and easing their access to both private and public funding.</p>
	<p>CNRS Innovation is the national technology transfer office of CNRS, the largest fundamental science agency in Europe. Its main mission is to support valorisation projects of CNRS and its partners on the whole value chain of transfer and innovation.</p>
	<p>Aster is a leading venture capital firm that invests in entrepreneurs focusing on the sectors inseparable from the world's shared challenges - climate change, social inequality and the sustainability of economic growth.</p> <p>Aster Fab, a spin-off of Aster, is an innovation consulting firm dedicated to supporting public and private players by leveraging Open Innovation for a more sustainable economy.</p>
	<p>The Austrian Institute for SME Research is an independent non-university research institute in the field of economics and social sciences. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) constitute a core research area. The Institute is a private, non-profit association providing analyses and data to facilitate economic policy making and business decisions.</p> <p>The research results of the Austrian Institute for SME Research address policy makers, advocacy groups, advisory bodies, and company managers at regional, national and international levels, as well as the interested public in general. The Institute's fields of expertise include: entrepreneurship and innovation, economic sectors and industries, regional analyses, labour market and skills,</p>

	<p>evaluations and impact analyses as well as benchmarking.</p>
	<p>BCR is part of ERSTE Group and is no. 1 bank on the Romanian market for banking transactions, having the largest national ATM network with over 2,500 automatic teller machines and 17,800 card payment terminals to merchants.</p> <p>In the last years, BCR had developed specialized teams as Internal Tech Labs and business related teams involved in projects and products focused on startups and tech startups across CEE (ex.: InnovX.BCR business accelerator).</p>

2. What does the support program offer?

As an intangible asset, the economic valuation of an IPR portfolio might be difficult to perform. However, it is well known that IPRs provide a real strategic advantage to companies: a recent study from European Patent Office (EPO) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) demonstrated that “SMEs that have filed at least one IP right are 21% more likely to experience a growth period afterwards and are 10% more likely to become high growth firms (HGF) than firms without IP rights applications (9% for patents and 13% for trade marks)”¹.

Based on these facts, LEADERSHIP4SMEs designed services that will help you get the most of your IP:

Our experts will:

- Challenge your IP strategy and coach you on IP management
- Assess, consolidate, and develop your IPR portfolio to leverage it in accessing and securing private funds (equity/debts)
- Assess, consolidate, and develop your IPR portfolio to strengthen your strategic positioning
- Exploit your IPR portfolio to identify new business opportunities

¹ “High-growth firms and intellectual property rights: the IPR profile of high-potential SMEs in Europe” <https://www.epo.org/service-support/publications.html?pubid=192#tab3>

Moreover, IP information can be a real business intelligence tool. Patents, for example, include administrative information (name of the applicant, inventors, etc.), technical information (state of the art, claims) and business information (protected areas, cluster strategy, etc.). **Knowing how to use this information allows to stay ahead of the curve:**

Our experts will help you:

- Analyze your competitors' IP strategy and keep your strategic lead
- Identify new competitors and potential technical / business partners
- Identify key opinion leaders to ease the diffusion of your innovation

The support program integrates a **mentoring / coaching component** as well as **the provision of IP-related services** (eg. patent cartography, identification of IPR complementary to the beneficiary's IP strategy, valuation of the beneficiary's IPR portfolio, assessment of freedom to operate, etc). The duration of this operational support is **6 months**.

3. Am I eligible for this program?

3.1. Regarding the applicant status

The applicant must be incorporated/registered before the deadline of the LEADERSHIP4SMEs application (i.e. Friday December 3rd, 2021 at 18:00).

The LEADERSHIP4SMEs support program targets IPR driven micro, small and medium enterprises (according to the [EU definition of SMEs](#)) established in an EU member state or in one of the Associated Countries to H2020.

Beneficiaries of previous LEADERSHIP4SMEs calls for applications are not eligible to apply a second time.

3.2. Regarding the application

The application must be in English, submitted through the Venture Development System platform (**please refer to the application guidelines for more information related to the application platform**). Incomplete submissions, late submissions or



submissions *via* any other routes will not be accepted. All the information requested in the submission platform must be provided before final submission.

Additional information may be attached to the application. This may include graphs or video links (maximum three minutes' duration in English language or with English subtitles). Document emailed rather than submitted to the platform may be accepted at will. Please be aware that the reviewers may not consider these attachments as a basis for their evaluation.

Applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be excluded.

4. Evaluation process?

4.1. *Selection criteria*

Applications will be evaluated according to 3 main criteria:

- **Impact:** the applicant should demonstrate that the project will generate income, create jobs and is based on a sound business model and a solid commercialisation strategy.
- **Excellence and implementation:** the applicant should provide evidence of high potential of the proposed innovation and their competencies and the motivation to bring it to the market.
- **Relevance of the IP strategy for the implementation:** the applicant should highlight in which ways the definition of the IP strategy is key for the implementation of the project and how the IP strategy is aligned to the innovation and business strategies.

Special consideration will be given to candidates who are laureates of an [European Innovation Council - EIC program](#) or an [European Institute of Innovation & Technology - EIT program](#), as well as to companies that have received the EIC Accelerator Seal of Excellence.



4.2. Selection process

Online application

From Oct. 11th to Dec. 3rd, Start-ups and SME's can apply via the Venture Development Platform.

The evaluation of collected applications will be done by consortium members from Dec. 3rd to Dec. 17th.

Pitch Session

Pitch Sessions will take place for the **15 SME's and 15 SU preselected**. The format of this event will be usual, with a 15minutes pitch followed by a 15 min Q&A session.

These sessions will be planned between Jan. 10th 2022 and Jan. 14th 2022.

Beneficiaries Integration

The results of the selection phase will be announced starting from Jan. 17th 2022.

Following this announcement, **kick-off meetings will be organized** with beneficiaries to better understand their needs and goals, prioritize actions and select the coaching team.

Applicants will receive a save-the-date for the pitch sessions



4.2.1 Online application

Applicant must complete the short online application form accessible from the LEADERSHIP4SMEs website. All the information requested is necessary to properly process the application.

All information submitted via the application form is treated confidentially and will only be transmitted to the members of the pre-selection jury for evaluation purposes. The candidate remains the owner of the account created on the application platform, which can be withdrawn at any time.

Submitting an application on the platform implies *de facto* acceptance of its terms and conditions available at the following address: https://www.bwcon.de/fileadmin/bwcon/VDS_Grafiken/Vertraege_und_allg._Dokumente/Nutzungsbedingungen_Plattform_Stand_November2015_Englisch.pdf

The preselection committee will be constituted of the LEADERSHIP4SMEs consortium members. The European Commission will/may assist as observer.

For any question or request for further information about the pre-selection, candidates can contact us at the following e-mail address: contact@leadership4smes.eu.

4.2.2 Pitch sessions

All pitch sessions will take place remotely. Applicants will have to send their presentation material **in advance**, in order to avoid any projection problems. These materials will be destructed at the end of the selection process.

A candidate who does not show up for the pitch session will be automatically refused. The rescheduling of a pitching session following a force majeure event may be granted at the discretion of the selection committee.

The selection committee will be composed of the LEADERSHIP4SMEs consortium members, LEADERSHIP4SMEs consortium advisors and representants of the European Commission as observers.

4.3 Announcement of results and integration of beneficiaries

Results will be announced from January 17th, 2022. The winners will be contacted by email to plan a kick-off meeting. A specific IPR support agreement will be signed between LEADERSHIP4SMEs CONSORTIUM and the BENEFICIARY.

Candidates who have been unsuccessful in this call for applications may re-apply. At their request, a debriefing can be organised with pre-selected applicants in order to share the points raised during the selection committee and thus improve a possible future application.



5. Application form: questions list and expected content

5.1. General information

Question number	Question	Precision on expected content
1.1	Applicant family name	-
1.2	Applicant first name	-
1.3	Applicant mail	-
1.4	Applicant phone	Including area code
1.5	Industry segment	-
1.6	Company name	-
1.7	Legal form	-
1.8	Origin of incorporation	-
1.9	Strength of the connectedness with other companies	-
1.10	Phase of the business cycle	-
1.11	Date of incorporation	-
1.12	Number of employees	-
1.13	Turnover per year	Amount of turnover for the last financial year
1.14	Searched investment	Total amount of the financing requirement, including dilutive financing, debt and grants.

5.2. Core business description

Question number	Question	Precision on expected content
2.1	Business concept: Describe your business idea in one sentence	State your value proposition
2.2	Product: Which product is the core of your business idea?	If you have several products that make up your core business, focus on the 2 (max 3) key products
2.3	Problem: What problem does your product solve?	Detail the operational problem(s) that is (are) addressed by each of your previously listed products.
2.4	Size of the market: How big do you estimate the market?	Please specify the geographic distribution (if available)
2.5	What is/are the targeted market(s)? Where are located your main customers?	List the targeted markets / main customers locations for all the products presented above.
2.6	Competitors: Which competitors are there?	Please specify their country of origin and their commercial locations.
2.7	Differentiation from competitors: How do you differ from your competitors?	Present the competitive advantage of each of the products listed above.



Question number	Question	Precision on expected content
2.8	Management team: Please describe your management team (experience in key word):	Specify the names of the members of the executive team, their function in your company and the key experiences of their careers. Add LinkedIn profiles if available
2.9	Planning market entry: How do you plan to place the product on the market?	Present the main milestones of your business strategy and how you want to achieve them.
2.10	Partner: Which partners do you need or already have for the business implementation?	Present only your structuring partnerships (technological, business, distribution, etc.).
2.11	Implementation status: Please describe the implementation status and next steps:	Present the main milestones of your business, technological and IP roadmaps
2.12	Financing plan: Please describe your financing strategy:	Present the main steps of your financing plan based on the previously presented milestones.
2.13	Opportunities and risks: What opportunities and risks do you see for your project?	Include technical, human, business, legal & IP and funding aspects.

5.3. Additional information Industrial property strategy

Question number	Question	Precision on expected content
3.1	Place of incorporation	Specify the country and city of incorporation
3.2	Website	-
3.3	Are you beneficiary from an EIT program?	-
	Are you beneficiary from an EIC program?	
3.3.1	<i>if yes, provide your PIC number</i>	-

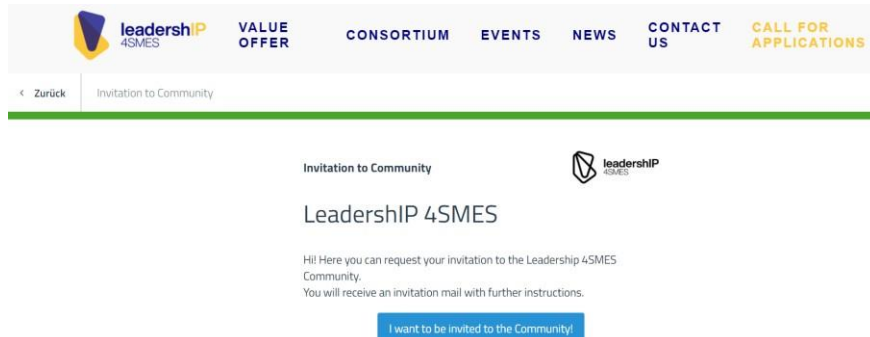
Question number	Question	Precision on expected content
4.1	Have you defined an IP strategy?	By IP strategy, we understand the implementation of an action plan that helps entities manage their intangible assets—including patents, trade secrets, trademarks, and copyrights—in a way that aligns with their overall business strategy and goals.
4.1.1	<i>if yes: Present your Industrial Property Rights portfolio - IPR (patents, protected software, trademark, industrial design rights). For each IPR precise if</i>	By IPR, we understand formal IP rights, such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, industrial design rights, plant varieties, ...



Question number	Question	Precision on expected content
	<i>you are owner or licensee and provide the application number, the date of application and area covered. Explain what you want to achieve with your IP strategy.</i>	Mention here only IPR that have been made public (e.g. patent application published in the public domain)
4.1.2	<i>if yes: have you allocated a specific budget for the implementation of your IP strategy?</i>	This budget can be dedicated to the integration of dedicated employees, training or the use of third parties.
4.1.3	<i>if yes: have you already performed a Freedom to Operate analysis regarding your solution?</i>	By Freedom to Operate analysis, we understand an analysis undertaken to determine whether your product may infringe on a third party's patent claims.
4.1.4	<i>if answer to 3.1 is no: precise why</i>	-
4.2	Are you planning to expand your IPR portfolio via new IPR applications?	By IPR, we understand formal IP rights, such as patents, copyrights, trademarks, industrial design rights, plant varieties, ...
4.3	Are you assisted by an external partner for the definition of your IP strategy? If so, please detail the kind of partner you work with (e.g. lawyer, patent attorney, IP firm, public IP institution, ...)	-
4.4	Are you a beneficiary of any coaching program integrating IP related action? If so, please provide the name of the program.	By coaching program we understand part of the support dedicated to IP within the framework of an incubation or acceleration generalist programme, or any other support action within the framework of a programme dedicated to IP.
4.5	Please present the IPR challenges you are currently facing	These challenges may be related to the implementation of an IP strategy, the identification of potential applications for your IPR portfolio, the rationalisation of your IPR portfolio, the evaluation of IP in the context of a fund raising, ...
4.6	Please detail if you have contacted other suppliers/accelerators	-
4.6.1	<i>if yes, what was the outcome?</i>	-
4.7	What are your expectations regarding the Leadership4SMEs coaching program?	Based on your needs and the catalogue of services, explain how the support offered by Leadership4Smes will have a positive impact on your development.

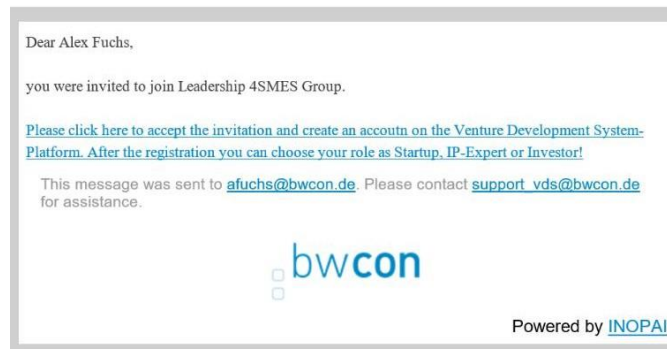
6. Application guidelines: technical information

- 1) Go to the [„calls for applications“](#) subpage on the website, fill out the form and join the community



The screenshot shows the website's navigation bar with the Leadership 4SMES logo and menu items: VALUE OFFER, CONSORTIUM, EVENTS, NEWS, CONTACT US, and CALL FOR APPLICATIONS. Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: < Zurück | Invitation to Community. The main content area features the Leadership 4SMES logo and the text: 'Invitation to Community', 'Leadership 4SMES', and 'Hi! Here you can request your invitation to the Leadership 4SMES Community. You will receive an invitation mail with further instructions.' A blue button labeled 'I want to be invited to the Community!' is prominently displayed.

- 2) You will receive an invitation via email, please follow the link to register on the platform



- 3) Please fill in the platform registration // if you are already registered on the platform, skip to step 5)

Platform Registration

First name

Last name

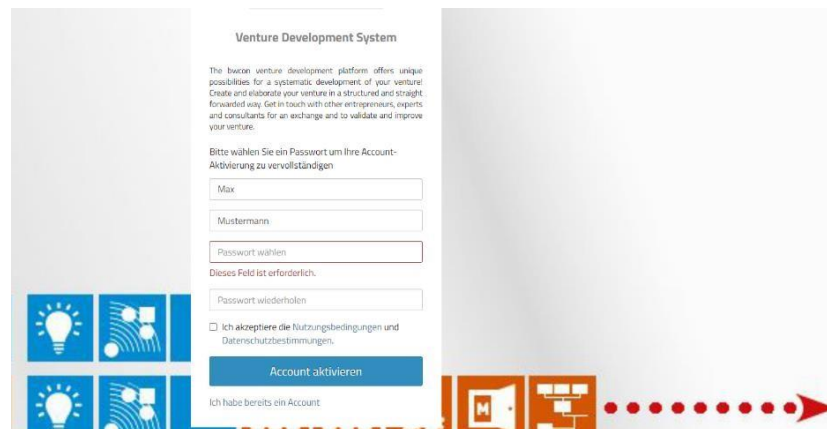
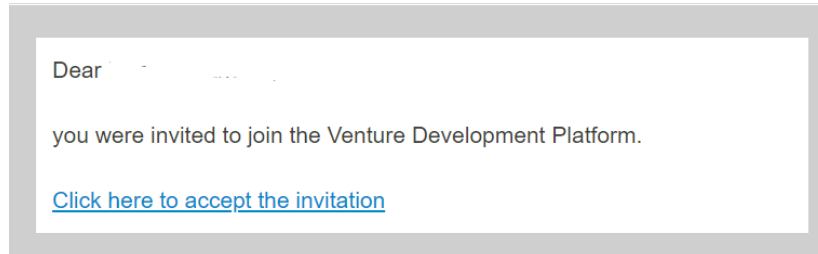
Email address

Nutzungsbedingungen *
 Ich stimme den Nutzungsbedingungen der bwcon zu.
 I agree to the General Conditions of Registration and Use of bwcon.

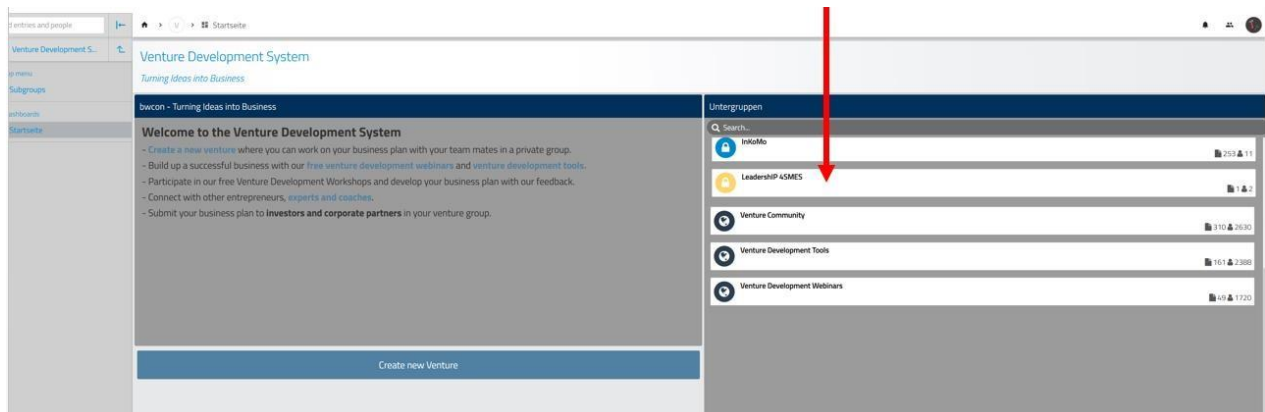
Datenschutzbestimmung *
 Ich stimme der Datenschutzbestimmung der bwcon zu.
 I agree to the Data privacy statement of bwcon.



4) You will receive another email to confirm your registration, choose a password and join the platform



5) After the (first) login join the Leadership4SMEs subgroup

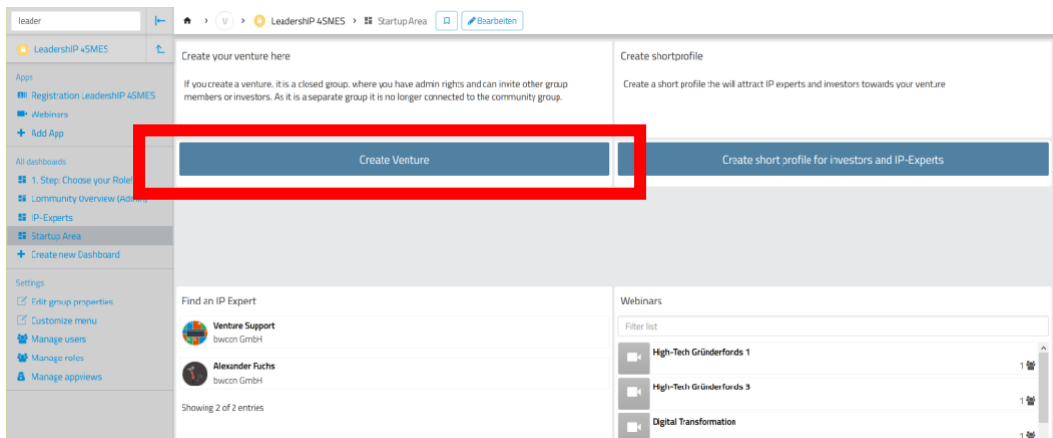


WELL DONE! You are now a member of the Leadership4SMEs community

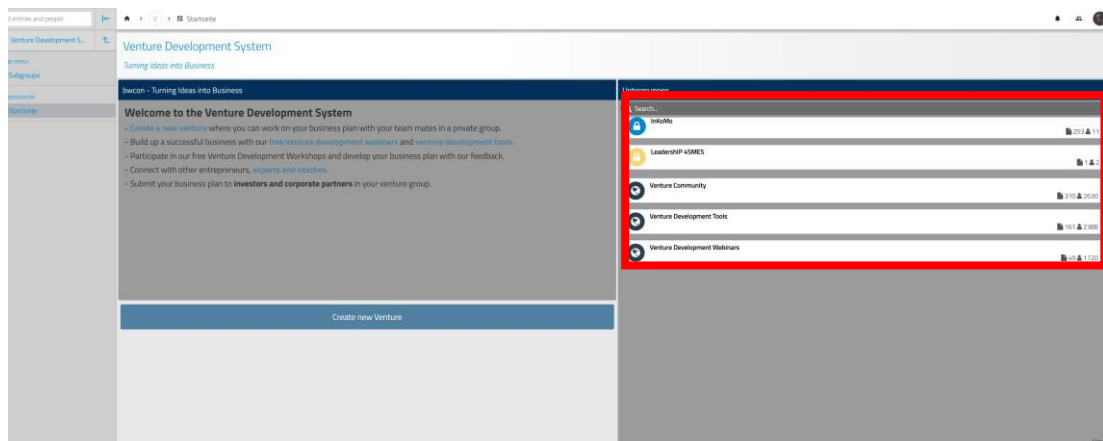
To apply for the 2nd call for applications, continue with step 6!



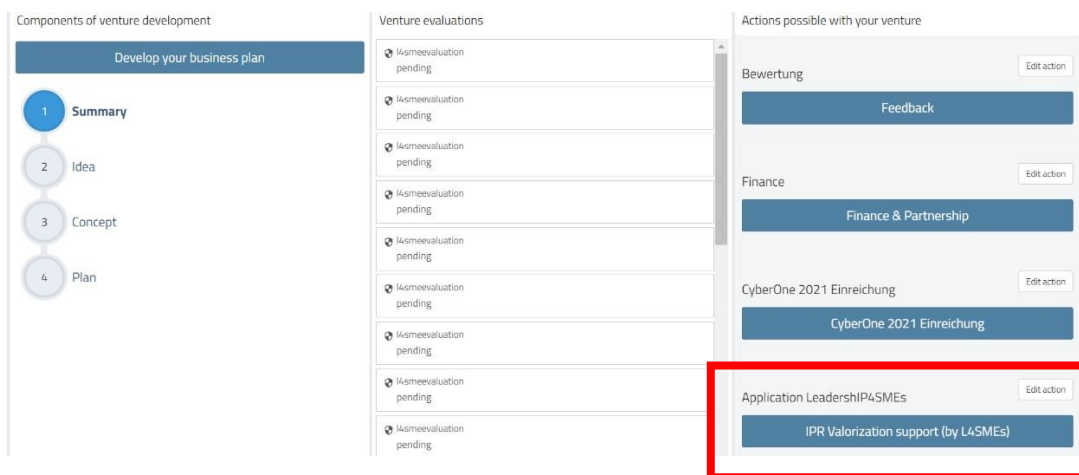
6) Push the button „Create venture” and fill in and submit the application form according to chapter [5.1](#) & [5.2](#) of this document



7) After you have submitted the registration form, the subgroup of your company will be created automatically, to which only you have access and which you will then find here (see screenshot) under your groups



8) After entering your subgroup, press the "IPR Valorization support" button on the right side



- 9) **After pressing the button, a final set of questions will appear, please fill in the form according to chapter [5.3](#) of this document and submit the application**

Your application has been successfully received if you have received a confirmation email!

GOOD LUCK!!! 😊

7. Contact us

Candidates can contact us for any questions relating to the support programme at the following e-mail address: contact@leadership4smes.eu.

