

Admantex 2i

Country Mission California USA

February 06 – 10, 2023

ATEVAL

CALL FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR SME PARTICIPATION TO THE INTERNATIONALISATION MISSION TO CALIFORNIA

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1. ABOUT ADMANTEX2i

Industrial digitalization and the green transition are the two pillars of the European Commission for building resilience, as highlighted during the Cluster conference 2020 that builds on top of the new industrial strategy of the European Commission and the EU Green Deal as significant pillars. Furthermore, strengthening digital and green-based SMEs' competitiveness is also a core pillar from the Next Generation EU initiative for recovery.

The primary strategy for this project is bridging the gap between technology producers and users to boost innovation and industrial modernization to catalyze sustainability and circular economy in the textile manufacturing industry.

It will enable the alignment of each cluster strategy with the RIS3 priorities of each region and the uptake of digitalization and advanced production systems as a standard driver for growth via internationalization by exploiting innovation towards sustainability and circular economy. In addition, ADMANTEX2i will provide tools and support to partner's members to be globally competitive for going international.

ADMANTEX2i will also favor the cross-regional value chains involved and foster cross-regional cooperation with specialized eco-systems across Europe, focusing on the industrial smart specialization priorities where all partners are already active. For example, AEI TÈXTILS, CITEVE, and ATEVAL are part of the REGIOTEX platform for textile innovation. In contrast, PRODUTECH, EMC2, and AFIL are members of the S3P-Industry platform within the areas of 3DP and ESM and the participation in the pilot actions under the Vanguard Initiative umbrella.

ADMANTEX2i will continue driving the long-term cooperation strategy among the partners already seeded in CLAMTEX (ESCP4x) and GALACTICA (Innosup-01). The continued fostering of cross-regional and cross-sectoral cooperation among all clusters will provide their members the leverage needed to become globally competitive with digitalization uptake.

1.1 ADMANTEX2i PARTNERS

The ADMANTEX2i partnership is composed by six European clusters: three advanced textile materials clusters (AEI Tèxtils in Catalonia as project coordinator, ATEVAL in Valencia and CITEVE in Portugal) and three advanced manufacturing clusters (PRODUTECH in Portugal, EMC2 in France and AFIL in Italy).

1.2 ADMANTEX2i CONTACT POINTS

Partner	Contact	Email
AEI TÈXTILS	Mònica CASTELLÀ	aeitextils@admantex2i.eu
ATEVAL	Julia VERCHER	ateval@admantex2i.eu
CITEVE	Maria José CARVALHO	citeve@admantex2i.eu
PRODUTECH	Carla VAGOS	produtech@admantex2i.eu
EMC2	Fearghus ROCHE	emc2@admantex2i.eu
AFIL	Andrea MAZZOLENI	afil@admantex2i.eu

1.3 ADMANTEX2i SUPPORT MECHANISMS

ADMANTEX2i has established a comprehensive approach to facilitate SME participation in the missions organized by the consortium during the implementation phase. Support will consist of 4 major pillars:

- **Pre-mission coaching**: in order to ensure SMEs and participants are fully aligned with the mission, to gather feedback in order to better prepare the mission to participant needs and to facilitate skills and mindset for growth via internationalization. This action will also include the support in drafting model business agreements, providing templates to participating SMEs.
- ***Financial support to third parties*** *: the object of the present document*.
- **Mission implementation** : SMEs selected and supported will participate in the joint activities of the mission (i.e. welcome, briefing, joint visits, joint networking sessions, debriefing, etc.) in addition to their pre-scheduled individual agendas.

The goal of this support to SMEs is to establish the first contact and start the signature of business agreements.

- **Post mission follow-up and technical assistance**: After the missions, ADMANTEX2i partnership will seek technical feasibility support schemes such as SME Go International, Low Carbon Business Action in the Americas, EREK, IPR helpdesk among others to facilitate the follow up of the meetings held by SMEs and to turn them into viable business agreements and cooperation projects.

2. USA COUNTRY MISSION

2.1. USA MARKET OVERVIEW

2.1.1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The United States of America is the third most populated country in the world with a population of 334.998.398 people. According to the US Census Bureau, the majority of Americans are of European or Middle Eastern origin, representing more than 73% of the population. In addition, more than 17.6% of the population has Hispanic or Latino roots, 12.7% are African American, and about 5.4% are Asian.

Currently, the United States is positioned as the main economic power in the world, followed in second place by the European Union and by China in third place. Its GDP represents approximately 24.7% of the total worldwide, making this country a highly strategic market in the international economy due to its magnitude and its influence on other markets.

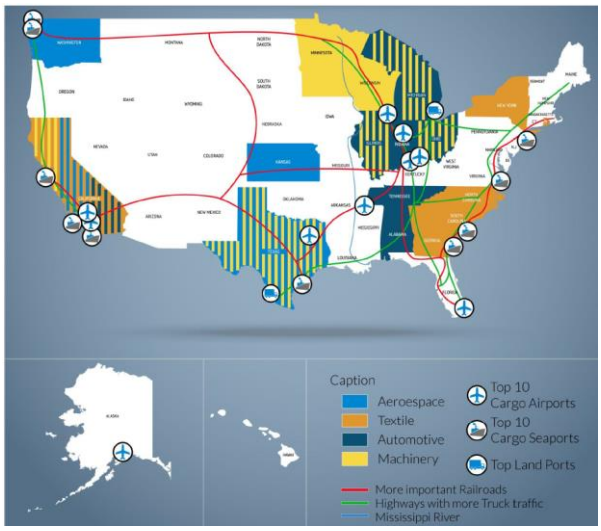
Some key structural points of United States:

POLICY	• Political stability and low risk	• COFACE A2 Country Risk
ECONOMY	• Huge economic market with strong growth perspective	• 13th country in GDP per capita (more than 60,000 $USD)
INNOVATION	• Innovation and technology-intensive, consolidated R&D investment mentality	• Global Innovation Index: 3rd
ENVIRONMENT	• Increasing environmental and sustainability sensitivity in consumers, companies and governments	• Environmental Performance Index: 25th
LEGAL	• Legal security but existence of some trade barriers	• Absence of Free Trade Agreement

2.1.2. MARKET OUTLOOK

The United States market presents consolidated economic, political, environmental, technological and sociodemographic factors, which makes this country as a strategic market to the expansion for internationally focused companies. For the geographic location of the different industries of interest for ADMANTEX2i, they are located in some key States, being critical to focus the commercial actions due to the vast amplitude of the country.

GEOGRAPHY



The aerospace sector activity is highly concentrated within the country in the main poles, especially Seattle (WA), followed by other important ones such as Los Angeles (CA) or Dallas (TX). However, these territories have lost numerous jobs in the aerospace sector in recent decades, as a result of relocation. Around two dozen major aerospace firms merged into three (Lockheed Martin, Boeing-McDonnell Douglas and Raytheon-Hughes).

Regarding the textile manufacturing sector, it is worth noting the concentration in two main areas: on the one hand, in the southern states of the east coast (Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina), and on the other hand in the states north of the east coast, in New York and Massachusetts. It also has a significant presence in the state of California.

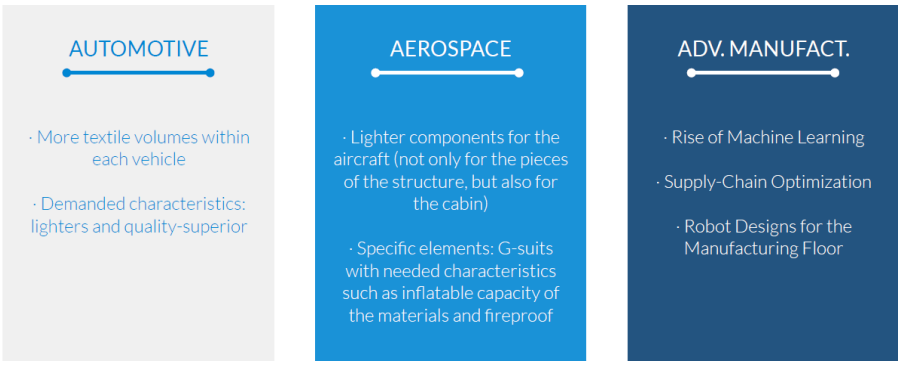
The automotive industry in the United States has a historical concentration in the area known as Auto Alley, which includes a corridor of states that starts from the Great Lakes to the Gulf Coast, in the eastern part of the country (east of the Mississippi River that runs vertically across the country from the center). Without a doubt, Detroit is the most important focus in the sector, which currently concentrates the vast majority of jobs, despite having also been the area that has lost the most jobs in recent decades due to the restructuring of companies, the closure of factories and the transfer of production to other countries with lower labor costs such as Mexico.

Regarding the location of companies dedicated to manufacturing and production technologies, in the United States they are located in different states, depending on where the industries they supply are present. For this reason, companies in this sector are present in areas where the previously analyzed sectors (Aerospace, Automotive and Textile) have a significant concentration, such as California, Illinois, Texas, Wisconsin, Ohio or Michigan.

2.1.3. MARKET OPPORTUNITIES

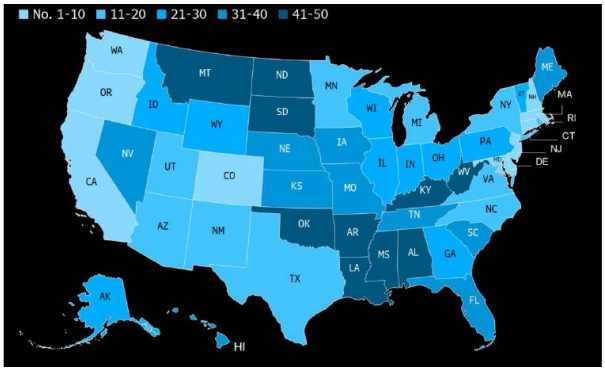
The legislation and regulations of the market provides a stable framework for the companies that are seeking to expand its business to the United States. However, the absence of a Free Trade Agreement with the European Union implies the application of some trade barriers such as tariffs or the request for certifications that can hinder exports.

The market trends for the sectors aerospace, automotive, textile and advanced manufacturing share some important aspects such as perspectives of a future increase in production due to the reshoring of manufacturing capacity, as well as a highly exigent demand for the quality and environmental impact of the fabrication. This would have a direct impact on the employment of some value-added material on these industries such as technical and sustainable textiles. The main trends for those sectors in terms of technical and sustainable textiles are:



2.1.4. INNOVATIVE COMPANIES

The United States of America is the third most innovative country in the world following the Global Innovation Index. Its strengths are the market sophistication (2nd), the business sophistication (2nd), and the Knowledge and technology outputs (3rd). Nevertheless, they also have negative points, such as their Infrastructure which is ranked as the 23rd. In addition to this, they are ranked 11th in Human capital and research, and 12th in Institutions and Creative outputs.



United States of America Bloomberg Innovation Index by State. **Source:** *Bloomberg, 2021*

California and Massachusetts are ranked as the 1st and 2nd innovative states respectively, thanks to their historical commitment with learning and innovation.

California is positioned 1st in the ranking because of their great performance in the different fields. It is ranked as 1st in patent activity, and second for both technological companies density and concentration of science and engineering degree holders. Both state university systems along with Stanford University were influential in building Silicon Valley for tech companies including Google and Apple. Massachusetts as 2nd in the ranking is the 1st ranked for tech-company density. Before, the pandemic, Boston-based Toast which is a restaurant management platform and one of the favourites for venture-capitals raised $400 million at a $4.9 billion valuation last year. Together with California and Massachusetts, Washington (3rd), Connecticut (4th) and Oregon (5th) are the states that form the Top5 states in innovation of the United States. It is also interesting to see that Colorado is the only state in the Top 10 that is not in the East or West coast.

In conclusion, the USA market offers great expansion opportunities for European companies, which have the capacity to tackle it. These companies, in addition to being aware of the possibility of generating business in the country, must take into account that this market requires a high commitment and dedication of resources for a successful entry. That is why, through collaboration programs such as ADMANTEX2i, synergies can be promoted that allow a process of commercial opening to begin in the United States that can be supported by different companies, both small and medium-sized, as well as larger ones and with more experience in international development.

2.2 CALIFORNIA MISSION ACTIVITIES

2.2.1. MISSION PROFILE

The ADMANTEX2i California mission will take place from **February 6th until February 10th, 2023.**

The mission will be exploratory in nature, in order to discover this important global market and its diverse opportunities. The delegation will visit some of California's world-renowned companies and innovative SMEs in the fields of **advanced manufacturing** and **textiles** to look at best practices in terms of **digitalisation** and **sustainability**. Industiral visits will be lined to the core sectors defined in the ADMANTEX2i Joint Internationalisation Strategy: the **Advanced manufacturing; Advanced textiles; Aerospace** and **Automotive** sectors**.**

In addition to the programme of industrial visits, **B2B matchmaking** activities will be carried out with local enterprises in order to boost opportunities for **business and innovation partnerships**.

The participating delegation will be composed of **SMEs** and Research and technical organisations (RTOs) from France, Italy, Portugal and Spain, and will number between 20 – 30 participants.

2.2.2. MISSION FORMAT

The ADMANTEX2i mission to California will have a “tour” format that will begin in Sacramento on Monday 6th February and finish in Greater Los Angeles on the 10th of February. The following are the planned stages:

- Monday 6th February
  - Visits & meetings in Sacramento
- Tuesday 7th February
  - Transfer by bus to San Francisco
  - Visits & meetings in San Francisco
- Wednesday 8th February
  - Visits & meetings in San Francisco
  - Transfer by plane to Los Angeles
- Thursday 9th February
  - Visits & meetings in Los Angeles
- Friday 10th February
  - Visits & meetings in Los Angeles
  - End of mission

2.2.3. PROVISIONAL PROGRAMME

The provisional agenda for the mission is as follows:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Sacramento	San Francisco	San Francisco	Los Angeles	Los Angeles
Morning	Siemens Mobility	Toyota Research Institute	Banana Republic (GAP Inc)	SpaceX	Quiksilver
Afternoon	Huston Textile Company	Carbon 3D	Stanford School of Sustainability	Rivian	Northrop Grumann
Evening	Dinner –“Doing business in California”	B2B networking event	Networking Travel	B2B networking event	Team networking dinner

This provisional programme may be subject to modification, the ADMANTEX2i partnership is currently developing the agenda and the final programme will be confirmed to participants 6 weeks in advance of departure.

2.2.4. LOGISTICS

Local ADMANTEX2i contact points will provide their participating companies with the necessary logistical information in advance of the mission, notably:

- Suggested flights
- Suggested hotels

Delegates are responsible for their own reservations and based on their own personal and/or corporate criteria may choose to travel or lodge separately from the delegation if they so wish.

3. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

This Call for Expression of Interest (EoI) has been launched in order to engage SMEs and RTOs in the participation in the mission to CALIFORNIA which will take place from *06/02* to *10/02,* 2023.

This Call for EoIs will distribute the financial support to ATEVAL cluster members needed to attend the ADMANTEX2i mission to CALIFORNIA.

This Call for Expression of Interest is published on the project website and is regulated by the Call for Expression of Interest Guidelines available on the project website ADMANTEX2I | A cluster go international project.

This Call for Expression of Interest is public and communicated through the project website, European Cluster Collaboration Platform and social media.

Key facts about the current Call for EoIs:

Call publication Date: 09/11/2022

Submission deadline: 09/12/2022, 17:00 CET

Submission by email to: ateval@admantex2i.eu

EoI Evaluation period: 11th to 16th December 2022

EoI Ranking: 16th December 2022

Total call budget: €3000

Financial support will cover the following expenses:

- International travel
- Hotel/accommodation

3.1. AVAILABLE FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Each ADMANTEX2i cluster has allocated financial support to cover travel expenses of its members participation in the mission.

The maximum amount of financial support available through this call for each selected third party is 1.000€ for three participants.

Selected organizations will sign a sub-grant agreement with ATEVAL, specifying the terms and conditions of the financial support and the engagements of both parties.

It is expected that at least 12 entities will benefit from financial support for this mission, representing at least 2 entities receiving support per cluster.

3.2. ELIGIBLE COSTS

Eligible financial support will cover flight ticket(s) and hotel invoice(s) costs incurred when participating in an international mission organized by ADMANTEX2i. The maximum financial contribution of ADMANTEX2i to the third party participating in these international mission shall be EUR 1.000€ for three participants in the form of a reimbursement of expenses for eligible costs (flight ticket costs plus hotel costs).

The actual financial contribution of ADMANTEX2i shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the sub grant agreement and will cover 100% of real and justifiable travel and accommodation costs up to the limit of 1.000€ for three participants. Any exceeding amount is co-financed by the third party beneficiary.

Over the course of the ADMANTEX2i project, FSTP is capped at 3.000€ per eligible organization. In addition, each eligible organization may participate in up to 2 missions receiving financial support.

3.3 PAYMENT CONDITIONS

In general, payment of Financial support will be made within 30 days of the mission taking place and/or the completion of the justification, whichever is later. Payments will be made as per sub grant agreement signed by beneficiaries, supported by justification of costs incurred including flight ticket and hotel invoice.

Beneficiaries are expected to sign the attendance list of the mission and participate in pre-event and post-event sessions.

Recipients of financial support must ensure that the European Commission, the Agency, the European Court of Auditors (ECA) and the European Anti-Fraud Office can exercise their rights carry out checks reviews or audits.

4. APPLICATION

4.1 WHO CAN APPLY ?

This Call for Expression of Interest is aimed at SMEs and other key stakeholders in the innovation chain, that are active members of ATEVAL cluster. Specifically, the entities targeted by the calls for Expression of Interest include:

- SMEs, according to the EU definition
- Research and technical organizations (RTO), including
  - Technical/competence centers
  - Applied research institutes
  - Technology transfer offices

4.2 HOW TO APPLY ?

Applicants must submit their application (the so called “Expression of Interest” – EOI in short) by completing **in English** the short Annex 1 available at the following link [admantex2i.eu/financial-support], and sending it to ateval@admantex2i.eu before the **09/12/2022, 17:00 CET**. Proposals who do not meet the eligibility criteria (use of different application form, language of application, active membership in ATEVAL) will not be considered.

For all necessary questions and support in replying to the calls for expression of interest, please reach out to your ADMANTEX2i contact point.

4.3. EVALUATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be examined and ranked according to the following criteria:

- Complete application received before the close of the Expression of Interest call
- Applicant is a member of ATEVAL
- Applicant active in the textile sector
- Development strategy in line with ADMANTEX2i objectives
- Articulated technological offer for target market
- Priority will be given to SMEs

After the close of the call – and no later than 16/12/2022 – successful applicants will be notified of their selection for the financial support, the conditions of said support and proceed to signature Sub Grant Agreement.

The following tool will be used to weight the different evaluation criteria and rank the received applications:

	Evaluation criteria	Max. Score
1	Complete application received before close of the Expression of Interest call Submission time ranking with 3 points decrements	20
2	Applicant is a member of ATEVAL	20
3	Applicant active in the textile sector	10
4	Development strategy in line with ADMANTEX2i objectives	20
5	Articulated technological offer for target market	20
6	Priority for SMEs (+10pts)	10
	Total score	**0-100**

In the event of two or more applications receiving the same evaluation score, applications will be differentiated according to the following criteria and applied in the following order:

1. Preference will be given to companies who have not previously benefitted from financial support in the framework of the ADMANTEX2i project
2. Preference will be given to companies who declare an interest to participate in more than one international mission (even without financial support)
3. Where appropriate, preference will be given to companies with no previous export experience in the target countries of the ADMANTEX2i project

The initial evaluation will be carried out by ATEVAL before validation by the ADMANTEX2i Steering Committee.

5. DATA PROTECTION

The General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU) guarantees that the processing of data is carried out in compliance with the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the dignity of the data subject with particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity.

ADMANTEX2i consortium protects the information collected; the information is intended for the exclusive use of the ADMANTEX2i project.

Contacts and details of companies participating in international delegations may be shared with parties of 3rd countries outside EU for the organisation of missions to USA, Japan and Canada, by applying, participants confirm consent.

6. DISCLAIMER

This Call for Expressions of Interest is part of the project ADMANTEX2i which has received funding from the European Union's COSME programme under grant agreement No. 101035895.

The content of this Call for Expressions of Interest represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.

Mistakes or inconsistencies: The ADMANTEX2i consortium is not responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations that this text may cause. In the case of inconsistencies, the ADMANTEX2i Consortium will determine the steps to be taken, in cooperation with the applicant concerned.

Consequential damages: In no event shall either party be liable to the other or any of its affiliates for any consequential, incidental, indirect, special, punitive or exemplary damages (including, without limitation, lost profits, business or goodwill) suffered or incurred by such other party or its affiliates in connection with this voucher scheme, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.

Direct Damages: ADMANTEX2i's liability for direct damages will be limited to the amount of the financial contribution awarded to the applicant pending of payment.