D3.1 Open Call for digital demonstration

Project number: 101074552

Silicon Eurocluster

Serving the electronics value chain for maintaining sovereignty in microelectronics, components and systems for a greener, more digital and resilient future Europe.

Call	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER		
Topic	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01		
Type of action:	SMP-GFS	**Service**	EISMEA/I/02
Start date of project:	1 September 2022	**Duration:**	30 months

Co-funded by
the European Union

D 3.1 Open Call for digital demostration

Related WP	WP3
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Planned delivery month	M6
Actual delivery month	M7
Document Dissemination Level[1]	
Document Nature[2]	R

Synopsis:	The document describes the steps the aplicants need to take to submit an aplication
List of keywords:	Management, Milestones, Communication, FSTP, quality, data

DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version	Status [3]	Date	Comments	Author
1	Issued	31/03/2023		Alma Sandberg

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Silicon Eurocluster Open Call for demonstration projects

Adopting processes and technologies into a greener and more digital industrial ecosystem.

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1. About Silicon Eurocluster

Silicon Eurocluster is an EU-funded project aiming to achieve greater European self-sufficiency, with increased competitiveness and resilience in the electronics value chain, and with specific attention to small- and medium size companies (SMEs).[1]

The intention of Silicon Eurocluster is to:

- Develop and strengthen value chain interlinkages in the EU single market
- Increase strategic autonomy in the most critical supplies and technologies of these ecosystems
- Support transformation to a greener and more digital economy
- Attract talent to stimulate and scale up the workforce
- Reconnect and boost access to global supply and value chains.

Silicon Eurocluster wants to place Europe in a leading position in the development and production of Micro- and Nanoelectronics (key enabling technologies) by harnessing the teamwork of existing high-potential clusters in Spain, Portugal, France, Italy, Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, Sweden, and the Netherlands. The Silicon Eurocluster project is coordinated by Minalogic and involves 10 partners from 9 EU countries.

This document summarizes the main points of the Open Call for Applicants, under the Silicon Eurocluster project.

- **Opening date:** 28/03/2023
- **Deadline for applications:** 31/05/2023 at 17:00 CET
- **Decision date:** 31/07/23
- **Earliest projects start date:** 01/09/2023
- **Latest projects start date:** 01/10/2023
- **Project duration:** 6 to 9 months
- **Total budget of the Open Call**: 960.000€

Where can you find key information regarding this Open Call?

- Open call website: Silicon Eurocluster open call webpage
- If you have any technical problems or doubt when filling in the online application form, tell us directly by contacting silicon@mobileheights.org
- Application website: **https://siliconeurocluster.grantplatform.com/**

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[1] https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

2. Scope and expectations: Challenge-driven innovation

Innovation and collaboration are more important than ever, and necessary to achieve a sustainable society. That's why we will ask the applicants in this call for applications incorporate the sustainability goals in Agenda 2030.[2]

The challenges and proposed solutions should describe how to improve resource efficiency, support green entrepreneurship, and facilitate market access for SMEs offering green products and services.

- We will finance small and market-oriented projects involving SMEs, consisting of the integration and use of technologies (list of technologies addressed in section 2.1)

In the call for applications, projects not aiming at demonstrating a complete solution to the challenge will not be considered. Textual/graphical presentation/drawings alone of the solution do not qualify as demonstrating a complete solution.

Eligible projects shall:

- Support an innovative and efficient way to improve an existing business process, or the implementation of a novel business process, by means of digitalisation;
- Prepare and help less digitalised SMEs to adopt advanced technologies (list of technologies addressed in section 3.1);
- Engage and involve the end customers, users, and other relevant claimants;
- Establish strategic collaboration between tech-savvy companies and less digitalised businesses;
- Be carried out in an equal manner by considering the gender distribution and the distribution of power and influence between women and men;
- Promote technology adoption within and across specific industrial ecosystems;
- Have a clear European dimension;
- Have a clear industrial application;
- Contribute to the green transition and demonstrate how the solution addresses sustainability improvements (greening) e.g., energy efficiency, less waste etc.

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[2] https://sdgs.un.org/goals

2.1   Technologies

The proposed solution shall consist of a microelectronics system with Technology Readiness Level 6 (technology demonstration) that includes one or several of the below listed technology priority areas:

- Radio communications
- Cyber security
- Artificial intelligence
- Energy harvesting
- Photonics
- Sensors

2.2   Vertical sectors (INDUSTRIES)

Targeted vertical sectors are any that have a need for electronics and microelectronics solution using the technologies as described above.

2.3   Impact

Projects shall demonstrate that the integration and application of technologies can improve the market competitiveness of the involved SMEs.

2.4   Who can apply?

We are looking for a consortium of at least 2 SMEs [registered legal persons], (see the EU definition of a SME) established in EEA countries, and countries associated with the COSME part of the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature (list of participating countries).

At least one SME in the consortium should be a technology solution provider. Applicants should complement each other in any part of a coherent value chain. By value chain we mean all the steps that gradually refine an idea from raw materials and components to a final product, finished good or service that is offered on a market.

All SMEs applying as one consortium should be autonomous to one another (without ownership, capital, or personal links).

The Silicon Eurocluster partners or their employees, are NOT considered as eligible applicants and can NOT apply for funding.

Applicants from the EU-13 countries[3] which have joined the EU the latest are encouraged to apply.

2.5   What type of activities can be funded?

The activities in the project must aim at acquiring new knowledge and skills for the development of new or significantly improved products, processes, or services.

The result (deliverable) of the activities should be a demonstrator / physical prototype of the proposed solution. The activities may range from the creation of components forming part of complex systems, to pilot activities demonstrating/testing said systems.

Eligible activities include:

- Investigation of technical and design requirements.
- Development of prototypes or demonstration versions of products or services. This may also include pilot work, testing and validation.
- Planning and carrying out studies/testing to verify an innovation.
- Investigation of market conditions, such as identifying customers, customer needs, potential partners, and competitors.

Non-eligible activities include:

- Small or recurrent changes to existing products, services, manufacturing methods or processes.
- Training, courses, marketing, sales, ongoing operations, investment in equipment and tools.
- Intellectual property policies and protection.

2.6   Ideal Project

The ideal project should be an advanced technology solution demonstrating a use case in a less digitalised industry, that is a technology solution to a challenge that has been identified in said industry. The technology solution should include a prototype (demonstrator) of a microelectronics system (embedded software running on an actual hardware platform based on Raspberry Pi, Arduino or similar). Solutions could include new technologies such as Edge AI and 5G.

The demonstrators that will be implemented should be tested in operational or near to operational environments. The demonstrations can be considered very near to market exploitation.

Proposed projects with a TRL of 4 and higher at the start of the project will be favoured.

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[3] 1 Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia.

The expected TRL (Technology Readiness Level) of the demonstrated solution is a minimum of 6.

2.7   Funding conditions

The awarded project consortium will be able to receive up to EUR 80 000, but contributions received by each individual SME taking part in the call for application cannot be higher than EUR 60 000. Please note that only 30% of the contribution can be used for subcontracting.

Successful proposals shall receive the requested financial contribution in the form of a lump sum. The payments are made against deliverables; there is no financial report to deliver from the third parties.

- "What the third parties are doing" (output) prevails over the "how the third parties are doing".

 The payments are made according to the following timeline:

- A pre-funding payment of 20% of the requested financial contribution will be provided at the beginning of the project.
- A final payment of 80% of the requested contribution will be provided after the approval of the final report by the Silicon Eurocluster consortium. The consortium will check that the project has followed and implemented the project plan which the project received funding for.

3. Eligibility conditions and application process

3.1   Eligibility conditions

Proposals will be eligible if and only if all of the following conditions are met:

- You are applying as a consortium of at least 2 SMEs and are legal entities from **eligible countries.** At least 1 of the consortium members is a technology provider.

- Your proposal must be written in **English** in all mandatory parts. Only parts written in English will be evaluated.

- You are using the online application form and submit your application before the deadline.

- You and your consortium member(s) are not under liquidation or in financial difficulty. Before applying you need to check your financial situation by filling out this questionnaire: **https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do.** It is mandatory to attach the results to your application form. Please note that none of the criteria should be "weak".

- You and your consortium member(s) are not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding.

- You and your consortium member(s) do not have a conflict of interest with any of Silicon Eurocluster consortium partners.

- Only one proposal will be accepted per SME. In case a SME is part of more than one project consortium proposals submitted under this call for projects, only the application submitted first will be considered. Later applications will be deemed ineligible.

- You submit your proposal through the online form before the **deadline** (Deadline: 31 May 2023, 17:00 CET).

3.2   How to apply?

We will be using Good Grants, which is an online tool used for the submission of applications. Good Grants is a tool created especially for publishing, managing and evaluation of projects calls.

Proposals shall be submitted to the following web address:

https://siliconeurocluster.grantplatform.com/

All information and application conditions with respect to the call including the Guide for applicants can be downloaded from the Silicon Eurocluster open call webpage

Applicants must create an account on the mentioned website above. Then, after registration, a dedicated form will appear where all the required information for the application has to be entered as text box or dropped down menu or similar. Some additional documents in pdf have to be attached (results of self-financial viability check and SME self-assessment).

The last step in the application process is clicking on the final submission button. Once applicants have finally submitted their proposal, they receive an automated e-mail stating that the submission has been entered successfully. Applicants can return to their application to make any changes themselves until the application deadline by visiting the Silicon Eurocluster application website.

4. How will we evaluate your proposal?

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair, and equal to all our participants. Applications will be sorted and selected by a panel of experts.

We expect a high number of applications so if you want to stand out, quality is the way to go. It would be great if you can provide as many details as possible while being extremely clear and structured. This will help us to properly identify the key points of your application and see how it fits within the overall Silicon Eurocluster scope.

4.1 Proposal Evaluation criteria

For those who have passed the eligibility criteria, each project will be evaluated by three experts who will independently evaluate each proposal according to the following criteria:

I. EXCELLENCE will evaluate:

- **Ambition.** The applicants must demonstrate to what extent their proposed project is beyond the State of the Art, and describe the innovative approach behind it (e.g., ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models).
- **Innovation:** Applicants should provide information about the level of innovation within their market and the degree of differentiation that this project will bring.

II. IMPACT will analyse:

- **Market opportunity:** The applicants must demonstrate a clear idea of what they want to do and whether the new/improved product/service has market potential (e.g., because it solves a problem for a specific target customer).
- **Competition:** The applicants must provide information about the degree of competition for their product/service and if the idea is disruptive and breaks the market (i.e., the products/services to be brought to market can be clearly differentiated from the competition).
- **Commercial strategy and scalability:** The applicants must demonstrate the level of scalability of the new/improved product/service, meaning that it doesn't address the solution of a specific problem but is able to be commercialised to solve a structural problem in a specific sector/process/etc.
- **Transversal criteria** such as 'Environment and low carbon economy contribution', 'Equal Opportunities including Gender Balance' and 'Social Impact' will be also considered by evaluators when scoring the proposals.

III.   IMPLEMENTATION will consider:

- **Soundness of the workplan:** including relevance of the tasks described, and the timing of the activities
- **Team:** The applicants must demonstrate their management and leadership qualities, their ability to take a concept from ideas to market, their capacity to carry through their ideas and understand the dynamics of the market they are trying to tap into, as well as their technical capabilities to reach the defined objectives. The team should be a balanced and cross-functional team, with a strong background and skill base.
- **Cost-effectiveness of the workplan**: quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned to the project to get the proposed objectives/deliverables

4.2   Proposal Evaluation score

The evaluators will score each criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:

0 = The proposal fails to address the criteria, or it cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
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 there are a certain number of shortcomings.
4 = Very good − There is a small number of shortcomings but overall, the proposal addresses the criterion very well.
5 = Excellent − The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion with minor or no shortcomings.

The final mark given to each criterion will be the average of the scores given by the three evaluators. Each criterion will be scored out of 5 points. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3 points. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10 points. In the case of ties, the following rules will be used to rank the projects, in order:

1. The Applications will be ranked based on their overall score (sum of all the criterion scores).
2. In case following rule 1 there are applications in the same position, priority will be given to applications that have higher scores in the criterion Impact.
3. In case following rule 2 there are applications in the same position, priority will be given to applications that have a higher score in the criterion Excellence.
4. In case following rule 3 there are applications in the same position, priority will be given to the applications that have a higher score in the criterion Implementation.

In addition, applications submitted by **SME applicants registered in 2 different eligible countries will be given 1 extra point** to the overall score.

At least 10% of the supported SMEs will come from EU regions different from the countries of individual Silicon Euroclusters' partners.

The total number of the selected projects will be 12 proposals in total.

5. Service Agreement Invitation

After the Open Call final selection, the cascade funding manager will start the contract preparation in collaboration with selected projects. The Contract preparation will go via administrative and financial checking (and potentially into technical or ethical/security negotiations). On a case-by-case approach, a phone call or teleconference may be needed for clarification.

The objective of the contract preparation is fulfilling the legal requirements between the Silicon Eurocluster consortium and every beneficiary of the call. The items covered will be:

- Contract number
- Legal name of the beneficiary
- Name of the primary contact
- Position of the primary contact
- Postal address, phone number
- E-mail
- VAT number

It should be emphasized that each SME should provide a valid VAT number at contract preparation time. Failure to provide the VAT number will automatically result in proposal rejection.

In general, the sub-project negotiation must be concluded within two weeks. In case an SME fails to provide all information within the above period, the application is automatically rejected and the next application on the reserve list is invited.

If all eligibility conditions are indeed met and confirmed, participating entities from the successful applications selected for funding (Silicon Eurocluster beneficiaries) will be invited to sign a sub-grant agreement with Mobile Heights. This sub-grant agreement contains the obligations of the SMEs funded in the framework of Silicon Eurocluster Open Call (including conflict of interest, confidentiality and security, ethics, visibility, record-keeping) and payment process to be proceeded by Mobile Heights.

6. Redress Process

If, after receiving the results of the evaluation phase, you consider that a mistake has been made, resulting in the rejection of your application, you have the right to send us a complaint. You can email us in English to: eurocluster@mobileheights.org, and include the following information:

- Your contact details (including email address)
- The subject of the complaint
- Information and evidence regarding the alleged mistake

You have 3 calendar days to submit your complaint starting from the day after the communication was sent. On our side, we will review them within no more than 7 calendar days from its reception. If we need more time to assess your complaint, we will inform you by email about the extension.

We will not review anonymous complaints or complaints with incomplete information.

7. Confidentiality and GDPR Data protection

7.1 Application stage

A full list of applicants will be prepared containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will be also shared with the European Commission for transparency. The applicants' list will not be public but will serve as statistics in project communication materials.

7.2 Evaluation stage

To process and evaluate proposals, the Silicon Eurocluster consortium will need to collect personal and industrial data. Mobile Heights will act as a Data Controller for data submitted through the GoodGrants platform. The GoodGrants platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data are managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

Each applicant will accept the GoodGrants terms to ensure coverage. Silicon Eurocluster may share the proposals with selected external independent evaluators, with whom Non-Disclosure Agreements are signed to protect the confidential information given by the applicants. The final list of the awarded projects and SME applicants/beneficiaries will be made public, including name of the projects, abstract, legal name of the companies, sector, country/region of origins, results of the project, duration of the projects and project budget.

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