



D3.3 Open Call for GREEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

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Silicon Eurocluster

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

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GREEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

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).

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 Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and The Netherlands. The Silicon Eurocluster project is coordinated by Minalogic and involves 10 partners from 9 EU countries.

2. Scope and expectations - Open Call for Green Financial Support

Aiming to support the sustainable transformation of SMEs operating in electronics towards a greener and more sustainable economy, the Silicon Eurocluster project will award SMEs with financial support for contracting external consultancy services to advance in their green transformation.

Within the framework of this Open Call, the Silicon Eurocluster project will award financial support to 25 SMEs for a value of 3600€ each.

The Green Financial Support - Open Call

This document summarises the main points of the Open Call for Applicants for Green Financial Support, under the Silicon Eurocluster project.

- **Opening date:** 28/02/2024 at 08:00 CET
- **Deadline for applications:** 30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET

- **Decision date:** 20/05/24
- **Latest service start date:** 31/10/2024
- **Latest service end date:** 30/11/2024
- **Service duration:** minimum 3 half days (12 hours)
- **Green Financial Support Value per SMEs:** 3600€

2.1 Applicants, admissibility, and eligibility criteria:

2.1.1 Who can apply?

- SMEs (Legal entity) as considered as such according to the European Commission's criteria. As a summary, the criteria defining SMEs are:
 - Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250.
 - Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million.

For detailed information check here: https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

- SMEs operating in the electronics ecosystem in areas such as: Radio communications, Cyber security, Artificial intelligence, Energy harvesting, Photonics, Sensors. The mentioned areas are only examples, and additional areas within the electronics ecosystem are equally relevant in the framework of this call.
- SMEs headquartered in EU member states, 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](#)).
- Has not been declared bankrupt or has initiated bankruptcy procedures.
- Has no conviction for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practices.
- The applicant must have the financial capacity to carry out the actions described in their application and to properly manage the financial support granted to them.
- SMEs-Applicants should be independent to the selected services provider (without ownership, capital, or personal links).
- Both the company and its legal representative do not have any conflict of interest with the Silicon Eurocluster partners.
- The Silicon Eurocluster partners or their employees, are NOT considered as eligible applicants or services providers and can NOT apply for funding.

- SME applicants have not received and will not receive funding for identical activities through other Euroclusters calls.
- The SMEs awarded in the framework of Silicon Eurocluster open call for demonstration projects, can be considered as eligible applicants for the open call for green financial support, if they were awarded with less than 56.400 euros in the mentioned project.
- The SME applicant acknowledges that the data collected under this call may be shared with Silicon EuroCluster project partners, the European Commission and its bodies for the management and evaluation of the applications and for statistical analysis.

2.1.2 Who can be selected as Service Provider?

- SME applicants can explore potential service providers in the [Silicon Eurocluster Green Expert Catalogue](#). The service providers listed in the catalogue have already been evaluated and comply to be selected as **Green Expert** in the framework of this call.
- If the preferred service provider isn't yet listed in the referred catalogue when you apply, they must apply to become [Green Experts](#) before the application deadline (30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET), for your application to be considered eligible. Consultancy companies can apply to become qualified service providers [here](#) by following the [Guide For Applicants for Green Experts](#).

2.1.3 What type of consultancy services can be funded?

- The green consultancy services should have as main objective to support the SMEs-applicant to undertake substantive actions to transition its business operations towards environmental sustainability and to better embrace green transitions.
- SMEs cannot apply for services that have previously been financed with EU-funding.

The green Financial Support can be utilised in various areas and type of services, including but not limited to the following:

Areas in which services could be provided.

- Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy
- Waste Management and Recycling
- Supply Chain Sustainability
- Product Design and Life Cycle Analysis
- Environmental Compliance
- Circular Economy Practices

- Sustainable Packaging
- Green Certifications
- Carbon Footprint Reduction
- Green Transition Training
- Water Management

Type of Services to be Supported with Green Financial Support

- Environment-related services, auditing, and assessment.
- Sustainability roadmap/long-term vision to guide the organisations to achieve its sustainability objectives.
- Integrated development services, including planning sustainable solutions.
- Life cycle analysis
- Support services for eco-design
- Employee Training

Please refer to Annex 1 for more information about potential areas and services

2.2 Funding conditions

- The selected SMEs will be granted a fixed sum of EUR 3,600.
- The selected SMEs bear the responsibility for paying the total costs associated with the consultancy service to the service provider. Awarded SMEs will receive the fixed sum of EUR 3,600 from Silicon Eurocluster against:
 - One-page report detailing the enhancements observed as a result of the consultancy service.
 - Proof of payment by the SMEs to the service provider (including the invoice from the service provider to the SME)
- SME applicants have the option to choose multiple service providers to utilise the fixed sum of EUR 3,600. However, **only one proposal per SME will be accepted**. Therefore, ensure that all selected services are included in the same application and attach all corresponding service offers.
- In case the cost for the consultancy services are higher than 3.600 euros, the Green Financial Support can be utilised by the selected SMEs to cover a portion of the overall expenses incurred for consultancy services. The selected SMEs bear the responsibility for paying the total costs associated with the consultancy service to the service provider. In any case, Silicon Eurocluster will not be responsible for covering any remaining difference.

2.3 How the process will work for SMEs-applicants?

Before sending your application

SME applicants should select a service provider from the [Silicon Eurocluster Green Expert Catalogue](#). Read clause 2.1.2 for more information about who can be selected to become a service provider. For consultancy companies that are not yet listed as Green Experts in the [Silicon Eurocluster Green Expert Catalogue](#), they should apply before the application deadline 30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET.

We encourage applicants to take a 1-hour meeting with the potential Service Provider to discuss an offer that could solve specific needs linked to the applicant's sustainability strategy.

The potential service provider will send a **Service Offer** to SMEs which should comprehensively detail the services to be contracted, the proposed approach, start and end date for delivery, and include CVs of the professionals who will be involved in delivering the service and years of experience working with the referred areas and type of services.

Send your application using the online form and attach the referred **Service Offer** by the deadline 30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET.

After the application process

Selected SMEs-applicants should undertake the consultancy service by 30/11/2024.

Selected SMES should pay directly to the service provider according to the Service Offer.

Selected SMEs will send a proof of payment to the service provider to eurocluster@mobileheights.org and a one -page report by 10/01/25. Silicon Eurocluster will transfer a fixed lump sum of 3.600€ as green Financial Support by 10/02/25.

2.4 How to apply?

- [Application website](#)
- [Silicon Europe Alliance](#) website for general information about the project
- If you have any technical problems or doubts when filling in the online application form, tell us directly by contacting mitxelena@gaia.es.
- Questions regarding the Open Call and the Guide for Applicants should be submitted via eurocluster@mobileheights.org. Questions should be received no later than ten (10) days before the Open Call's deadline and will be responded no later than six (6) days before the Open Call's deadline.

3. Evaluation and selection process

Silicon Eurocluster Team will start the evaluation process after the deadline for applications (30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET) and will follow the following process:

3.1 STEP 1: Admissibility and Eligibility Check Procedure

A total of 25 SMEs will be selected in the framework of this call.

The applications will be evaluated according to the principle `first-submitted, first-evaluated`.

Eligible proposals will enter the evaluation phase (STEP 2) if all the following quality and technical conditions are met:

Quality Conditions

- Applicants must comply with the admissibility and eligibility criteria described in clause 2.1.1 of this Guide for Applicants.
- Selected service providers must have applied to become **Green Experts** according to the clause 2.1.2 second paragraph of this Guide for Applicants. If the services provider failed to send an application by 30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET or if they don't comply with the requirements described in the [Guide For Applicants for Green Experts](#), the application for the financial support will be considered ineligible.

In the framework of this call, the `order of submission` applies for SMEs-applicants. The submission date for service providers to become Green Experts will not be taken into consideration in the evaluation process as long as they apply by 30/04/2024 at 17:00 CET.

Technical Conditions

- Your proposal shall include all the documentation required in the application process. If documents/information is missing, the application will be deemed ineligible.
- Your proposal must be written in **English** and the value should be expressed in **euros**, including the Service Offer. Only parts written in English will be evaluated.
 - You use the online application form and submit your application before the deadline.
 - **Only one proposal will be accepted per SME.** In case an SME sends 2 or more applications, only the application submitted first will be considered. Later applications will be deemed ineligible.
 - The services should be planned to be executed according to the `latest services start- and end- deadlines` and the minimum `service duration` as described in clause 2 of this Guide for Applicants.

Following the order of submission, the SILICON EUROCLUSTER TEAM will check the eligibility of the applications according to the procedure described in STEP 1. If the applicant fails to comply with the quality and technical conditions, it will be excluded and marked as ineligible. The evaluators will then proceed to evaluate the next company in the queue.

3.2 STEP 2: Technical Evaluation

Our evaluation process is transparent, fair, and equal to all our participants. Applications that enter the evaluation phase (STEP 2), will be evaluated by a panel of 3 experts from the SILICON EUROCLUSTER project partners. The experts will not evaluate proposals coming from the same country as their cluster's country and shall not have conflict of interest with the SMEs-applicants.

The Applications will be evaluated based on their overall score (sum of all the criterion scores). The ranking will follow the principle of "first-submitted, first-evaluated," with priority given to applications in the order of their submission date. A total of 25 SMEs will be selected in the framework of this call, provided that the applicants achieve a **minimum overall score of 10**. If an applicant fails to meet the minimum criteria, the evaluators will proceed to evaluate the next company in the queue until a total of 25 SMEs are selected.

The applicant should demonstrate that the services that are intended to be contracted will contribute to the green transition of the involved SMEs and demonstrate how the consultancy service will address sustainability improvements for the company. The Panel of experts will evaluate the application according to the following criterion:

Criterion

- I. **RELEVANCE:** The applicant should clearly describe the sustainability challenges the company is facing and why the selected consultancy service can help the company to cope with those challenges.
- II. **QUALITY:** The applicant should clearly explain the viability and excellence of the consultancy plan/offer. Describing how the plan/offer exhibits a high standard of quality, demonstrating a thorough and effective approach to address the sustainability challenges outlined by the applicant.
- III. **IMPACT:** The applicant should clearly explain the main expected outcomes (short, mid and long-term) of the consultancy service and detail how they are aligned with the Green Transition strategy of the company. To which extent the consultancy services will support the company's development and progress toward green transitions.

The evaluation will consider the Service Offer presented with the application.

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 are 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 total number of the selected applications will be 25 in total.

3.3 Special criteria

In the framework of this call, 10% of the selected SMEs shall come from:

- EU regions distinct from the countries represented by the individual partners of Euroclusters.
- Or countries under-represented in the EU programmes – the so called EU13 countries. The referred countries are: Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia (Bulgaria being excluded here because not compliant with the above mentioned criterion).

Therefore, in the framework of this call the following special criteria will apply:

- During the evaluation and selection process, if the initial 22 selected companies do not include representatives from the specified referred countries, the evaluations will prioritise SME applicants from those countries to fill in the 3 remaining spots, even if they are not next in line.
- To fill in the 3 remaining spots, the evaluators will proceed to evaluate only SMEs applicants from the referred countries following the order of submission.

4. Selected SMEs' obligations

- After the Open Call final selection, the Silicon Eurocluster project will inform applicants about the results. Selected SMEs and service providers will be

informed, so they can start the implementation of the service. SMEs will be required to send bank information details.

- In compliance with Art. 9.4 the Silicon Eurocluster Grant Agreement, selected SMEs shall comply with contractual obligations under Articles 12 (conflict of interest), 13 (confidentiality and security), 14 (ethics), 17.2 (visibility), 18 (specific rules for carrying out action), 19 (information) and 20 (record-keeping) of the Silicon Eurocluster Grant Agreement: These obligations encompass, among others, the following requirements
 - Selected SMEs must carry out the action in the framework of this call in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles as well as ensure the respect of basic EU values. If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced.
 - Selected SMEs must acknowledge the EU support in all communication and dissemination activities of the related to the activities in the framework of this call (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.). Selected SMEs will be informed on how to comply with this obligation after the selection process is closed.
 - Selected SMEs must provide information requested by Silicon Eurocluster in order to verify eligibility of the costs declared, proper implementation of the action and compliance with the other obligations under this call. The information provided must be accurate, precise and complete and in the format requested, including electronic format.
 - Any personal data collected under the Framework of this call will be processed in accordance with applicable EU and national data protection law. Such data will be processed by Silicon Eurocluster for purposes of implementing, managing and monitoring the action.

5. 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.

ANNEX 1: Detailed description of eligible potential Services

The green Financial Support can be utilised in various areas and type of services, including but not limited to the following

1) Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy:

- Energy audits and assessments to identify energy-saving opportunities.
- Development of an energy management plan and strategy.
- Implementation of energy-efficient technologies and systems.
- Renewable energy feasibility studies and integration.
- Assistance in applying for renewable energy incentives and grants.

2) Waste Management and Recycling:

- Waste audits to evaluate current waste generation and disposal methods.
- Design and implementation of waste reduction and recycling programs.
- Compliance with e-waste regulations and responsible disposal practices.
- Recommendations for reducing, reusing, and recycling materials.
- Training and education on proper waste management.

3) Supply Chain Sustainability:

- Supply chain assessments to identify inefficiencies and environmental impact.
- Recommendations for sustainable sourcing, logistics, and transportation.
- Vendor and supplier audits to ensure environmental and ethical practices.
- Integration of sustainable procurement and supply chain strategies.
- Development of supply chain sustainability policies and guidelines.

4) Product Design and Life Cycle Analysis:

- Product life cycle assessments to identify environmental impacts.
- Recommendations for eco-friendly product design and materials.
- Prototyping and testing of environmentally responsible product concepts.
- Guidance on eco-labeling and certifications for products.
- Design for disassembly and recycling strategies.

5) Environmental Compliance:

- Regulatory compliance assessments to ensure adherence to environmental laws.
- Development of environmental management systems and procedures.
- Periodic reporting and documentation to meet compliance requirements.
- Implementation of best practices for maintaining compliance.
- Training on environmental regulations and responsibilities.

6) Circular Economy Practices:

- Design and implementation of product take-back and recycling programs.
- Development of refurbishment and remanufacturing processes.
- Circular economy business model consultation and strategy development.
- Identification of potential revenue streams from circular practices.

- Monitoring and reporting on circular economy impact and progress.

7) Sustainable Packaging:

- Packaging material assessments and recommendations.
- Sustainable packaging design and materials sourcing.
- Packaging waste reduction strategies.
- Supplier evaluations for eco-friendly packaging options.
- Life cycle analysis of packaging materials to optimize sustainability.

8) Green Certifications:

- Certification readiness assessments and gap analysis.
- Guidance and documentation support for certification applications.
- Assistance in meeting specific certification standards and requirements.
- Ongoing support for maintaining certifications and addressing updates.
- Assistance with marketing and branding to leverage certifications.

9) Carbon Footprint Reduction:

- Carbon footprint assessments and calculations.
- Development of carbon reduction strategies and action plans.
- Carbon offset project identification and implementation.
- Monitoring and reporting on carbon reduction progress and achievements.
- Publicizing carbon reduction efforts to stakeholders and customers.

10) Green Transition Training:

- Sustainability awareness and training programs for employees.
- Employee engagement strategies for environmental initiatives.
- Communication of corporate sustainability goals and values.
- Training on eco-friendly behaviors and practices in the workplace.
- Environmental responsibility workshops and courses for staff.

11) Water Management:

- Water usage assessments and audits to optimize consumption.
- Recommendations for water conservation measures and technologies.
- Development of water management plans and practices.
- Wastewater treatment and recycling system design and implementation