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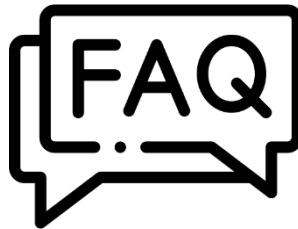
Supporting recovery and business transformation of lighting & furniture SMEs  
for the Europe Industry of Tomorrow

SILEO

# OPEN CALL FOR TALENT PLACEMENT PROJECTS

## *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*

V01



**Grant Agreement n° 101074564 —  
SILEO — SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER**

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## SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement Projects - FAQ

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## SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement Projects - FAQ

### 1. What is the SILEO project?

**SILEO** - *Supporting recovery and business transformation of lighting & furniture SMEs for the Europe Industry of Tomorrow* - is a project co-financed by the Single Market Programme (SMP/COSME Pillar) of the European Union. **SILEO supports European Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) of lighting and furniture ecosystems** to fully recover from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis and build resilience for the future. The project proposes a direct financial funding scheme through financial support to third parties (FSTP) - cascade funding, joint talent placement services and internationalization actions to accelerate the recovery, support SMEs in becoming more resilient to future shocks, better prepared for disruptions in supply and value chains, greener in business operations and stronger connected to technology ecosystems through strategic collaboration.

<b>Project Acronym</b>	<b>SILEO</b>
<b>Project Title</b>	<i>Supporting recovery and business transformation of lighting &amp; furniture SMEs for the Europe Industry of Tomorrow</i>
<b>Project Reference</b>	Grant Agreement n° 101074564
<b>Call Identifier</b>	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER
<b>Project duration</b>	36 months (01.09.2022 – 31.08.2025)
<b>ECCP profile</b>	<a href="https://clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/euroclusters/sileo">https://clustercollaboration.eu/eu-cluster-partnerships/euroclusters/sileo</a>

### **Which organisations take part in the SILEO project?**

The Consortium is composed of **seven key clusters** from Austria, France, Italy, Romania and Spain, representing jointly more than 3,000 SMEs in the lighting and furniture sectors.

<b>Project Coordinator</b>	1. <a href="#">ELCA – European Lighting Cluster Alliance</a> (Italy)
<b>Project Partners</b>	2. <a href="#">Cluster Lumière</a> (France) 3. <a href="#">CICAT Lighting Cluster</a> (Spain) 4. <a href="#">Rete di Imprese Luce in Veneto</a> (Italy) 5. Business Upper Austria - OÖ. Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH (BIZUP) - <a href="#">BIC Building Innovation Cluster</a> (Austria) 6. <a href="#">TFC Transylvanian Furniture Cluster</a> (Romania) 7. <a href="#">Cluster Legno, Arredo e Sistema Casa FVG</a> (Italy)

### **What does Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) mean?**

Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP) - cascade funding – refers to a European Commission funding mechanism, where a co-funded European project provides financial support to external entities (such as start-ups, scale-ups, SMEs) that are not directly involved in the project, in the uptake or development of digital innovation. Financial support to third parties can be of two natures: grants or prizes.

The SILEO Consortium envisaged **5 typologies of Financial Support to Third Parties** to be activated through open calls during the project course and directly addressed to SMEs working in the lighting and furniture ecosystems in Europe:

## SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement Projects - FAQ

<b>Business Digital Transformation Projects</b>	- 1° Open Call opened from 17.04.2023 to 20.04.2023 - 2° Open Call is planned to be published on 31.01.2024
<b>Hack Day travel vouchers</b>	1° Open Call is planned to be published in mid-February 2024 (Hack Day in Romania, Cluj-Napoca in June 2024) 2° Open Call is planned to be published by the end of April 2024 (Hack Day in Italy, Padua in October 2024)
<b>Advanced Technology Uptake Projects</b>	- 1° Open Call is planned to be published on 31.01.2024 - 2° Open Call is planned to be published in September 2024
<b>Talent Placement Projects</b>	Open Call was published on 27.11.2023 and will close on 30.01.2024
<b>Best Company Story-telling Video Contest</b>	- Open Call is planned to be published in late Spring 2024

## 2. What is the Open Call for Talent Placement Projects?

Financial support (**up to 4.000 EUR**) through the SILEO talent placement projects aims to **support lighting and furniture SMEs attract talent** - professional individuals - to reinforce company digitalisation and circular economy transition.

The Open Call was published on 27.11.2023 and will close on 30.01.2024.

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 1.*

### ***What is an “SILEO Talent Placement Project”?***

The SILEO Talent Placement project is the **successful recruitment and introduction of skilled professionals in the lighting and furniture SME business environments** that shall be confirmed with a working contract. Talent Placement aims at creating mutually valuable relationships between companies and professional figures in a time when digitalization and circular approaches are the main factors for moving employees, and companies, ahead.

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 1.*

### ***How long does the Talent Placement Project last?***

The Talent Placement Project will last from 2 to 6 months. However, it can last longer, but the financial support provided by SILEO will cover only the duration as indicated in the Sub-Grant Agreement.

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 1.*

### ***Why should I apply for SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement Projects?***

- ✓ **Financial Support:** lighting and furniture SMEs can receive financial support from the SILEO Consortium in the form of a lump sum grant of up to 4,000 EUR. This funding can help support their talent placement projects.

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- ✓ **Professional Inclusion:** The talent placement project offers the opportunity to include professionals in the workforce through well-defined training internships and collaboration contracts. This can help lighting and furniture SMEs access new talent and skills.
- ✓ **Process Improvement:** lighting and furniture SMEs can improve their key business processes by including skilled talent, especially in areas related to digitalization and circular economy. This can lead to increased efficiency and sustainability.
- ✓ **Cultural Reinforcement:** talent placement projects can help reinforce the management and industrial culture of SMEs. This includes embracing innovative and creative perspectives, which can be especially valuable in industries that may be considered resistant to change.

### 3. Who are the “talents”?

The goal of the SILEO Talent Placement Project is to support SMEs in searching for and recruiting **talents** through a well-defined training contract.

→ **Talents** addressed by the SILEO Talent Placement Projects are individuals who have obtained Diplomas of Higher Education (EQF5), Bachelor's degree (EQF6), Master's degree (EQF7), and PhD (EQF8) – according to the [European Qualification Framework](#) (EQF).

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 1. (1.2)*

### 4. Who can apply for the Open Call for Talent Placement Projects?

We are looking for project applications submitted by a **single SME** (Small and Medium-sized Enterprise) legally registered - including start-ups registered for at least 6 months from the date of submission of application - **operating in the lighting and furniture industry and located in the European Union Member States (EU27) or countries associated to 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 in the Single Market Programme](#)).

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 2. (2.1)*

#### ***Are Ukrainian SMEs eligible?***

Yes, Ukrainian SMEs are eligible, together with EU-27 and EFTA countries. Ukraine participates in the SMP Programme (*agreement signed in February 2023 — entry into force retroactive on 01 January 2021*).

#### ***Are Albania, Georgia and Armenia eligible counties? As they confirmed interest to join SMP, but there is no information about signing an agreement.***

Eligible non-EU countries are only third countries associated with the Single Market Programme (SMP) or third countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an SMP association agreement, as long as this association agreement enters into force before the grant signature.

In this context, "*ongoing negotiations*" means that negotiations for an association with the SMP have been formally initiated by both sides (the non-EU country and the European Commission) and a first negotiating meeting was held (virtually or physically).

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Applicants from non-EU countries with ongoing negotiations may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before the grant signature (with retroactive effect if provided in the agreement).

At this moment (24/10/2023), Albania, Georgia and Armenia expressed an interest in joining the SMP programme and already had a first negotiating meeting and are therefore now considered under "ongoing negotiations". Therefore, SMEs from Albania, Georgia and Armenia can be considered eligible provided that the "SMP Association Agreement" between the EU and Albania, or Georgia or Armenia will enter into force before the grant signature.

### ***What is a Small and medium-sized enterprise (SME)?***

An SME will be considered as such if it complies with the European Commission's Recommendation 2003/361/EC. In summary, the criteria defining an SME are:

- ✓ Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250;
- ✓ Annual turnover is less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million.

Note that the figures of partners and linked enterprises should also be considered as stated in the SME user guide.

- **SME definition:** [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en).
- **SME user guide:** <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/79c0ce87-f4dc-11e6-8a35-01aa75ed71a1>
- **SME self-assessment questionnaire:** [https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeq.do;SME\\_SESSION\\_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lgtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeq.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lgtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1)

### ***What are the target industrial sectors of the applicant SMEs?***

The target applicants of the SILEO Open Call for Business Digital Transformation Projects are SMEs active in the lighting and furniture manufacturing key industries:

- **Lighting industry:** the lighting industry covers a complex range of products and services for the manufacturing of luminaires, lamps and related components. It includes various industrial segments divided per lighting type (LEDs, CFLs, etc.), application (general lighting, automotive lighting, backlighting, emergency lighting, others), electronics and other components (lighting controls, etc.).
- **Furniture Industry:** the furniture industry covers various products and services markets segmented by material (wood, metal, plastic, and other), and by application (home furniture, office furniture, hospitality furniture, upholstered furniture, and others).

## **5. Where should I apply? What documents should I fill out?**

Lighting and furniture SME applicants have to fill out the application in the **SILEO Submission Platform**: [https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster\\_post/sileo-talent-placement-open-call/](https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster_post/sileo-talent-placement-open-call/)

The application procedure consists of two parts, with the first part completed online on the SILEO Submission Platform and the second part involving the uploading of specific documents in PDF format.

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### 1. SME applicant administrative data

SME applicants start the application process by accessing the SILEO Submission Platform and entering their administrative data.

### 2. TALENT PLACEMENT PROJECT: to be completed by filling in the ***Talent Placement Project - technical part (Word template)*** and uploading it to the SILEO submission platform. The template is available on the SILEO Submission platform.

SME applicants are required to upload the Talent Placement Project application form – technical part in PDF format, which contains:

- A. Talent Placement Project information
- B. Requested Lump Sum
- C. Talent Profile
- D. Talent Collaboration Programme
- E. Talent Placement Project Impact

### 3. DECLARATION OF HONOUR: In the last sections, SME applicants are required to upload the Declaration of Honour (in PDF format) and other documents (optional).

→ See Guide for Applicants chapter 2 (2.2)

#### ***What is a Declaration of Honour (DoH)?***

A Declaration of Honour is a document to ensure that all beneficiaries under the SILEO Open Calls comply with the rules and are not in a situation that would exclude them from receiving financial support to third parties provided by SILEO Consortium.

The legal representative of the applicant SME has to duly sign it (handwriting or digital), and bearing the date of the signature.

Then, the signed DoH must be uploaded during the application process at STEP 3. REQUIREMENTS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS CALL

## 6. What should I do before applying?

It's crucial for European SMEs from the lighting and furniture sector who are interested in applying for the Talent Placement Projects to thoroughly review the SILEO guidelines and eligibility criteria. Here are the key steps they should follow:

#### a) Read the SILEO Guide for Applicants

Carefully read the SILEO Guide for Applicants for the Talent Placement Projects. These guidelines contain detailed information about the application process, eligibility requirements, project objectives, evaluation criteria, and deadlines.

#### b) Check the Eligibility Criteria

Pay close attention to the eligibility criteria specified in the guidelines. These criteria will outline who is eligible to apply (type and size of the business, geographical location, and specific sector requirements). Ensure that your business in the lighting and furniture sector aligns with the defined requirements.

### 4. Prepare SILEO application materials

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Once you confirm your eligibility, begin preparing the required application materials. This includes completing the *Word template* with information on your Talent Placement Project, the Talent Profile & Collaboration Programme and the requested lump sum.

Moreover, download the Declaration of Honour and duly sign it.

### 5. Submit your application within the deadline

Follow the instructions in the guidelines for submitting your application on the SILEO Submission Platform. This involves completing an online application form and uploading the documents in PDF format.

If there are any doubts or questions regarding the guidelines or the application process, don't hesitate to contact the SILEO project partners - contact points for country of reference.

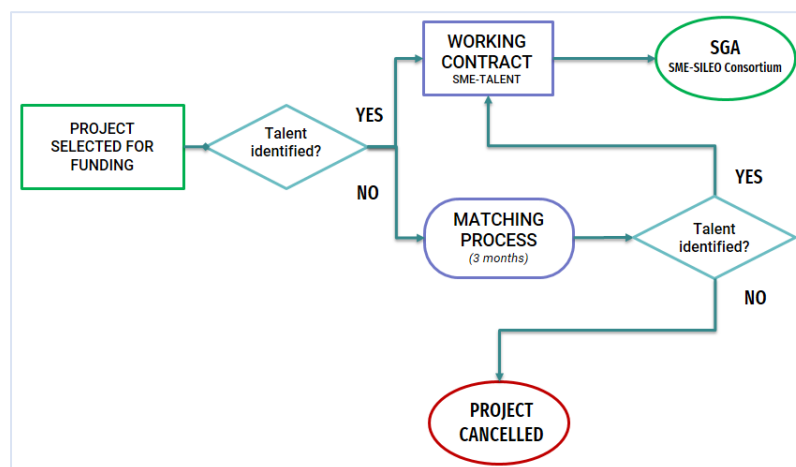
### ***Can I apply if I don't have already identified a candidate for my talent placement project?***

Yes, lighting and furniture SMEs can apply for the SILEO Talent Placement Projects even if they do not have already identified a candidate. In this case, the applicants should complete the *C. Talent Profile* with information about the talent profile sought and the *D. Talent Placement Collaboration Programme* with information regarding the proposed activities.

If the project proposal is selected for funding, the SME can be assisted by the SILEO Partner of reference in searching the profile as indicated in the submitted application; and/or can act independently from the SILEO partners, and search for the best candidate through its networks and HR services.

This **matching process** between the received application from the applicant SMEs and the availability of individuals shall last up to 3 months.

- After this period, if the SME does not find any suitable candidates, the talent placement project will be cancelled.
- On the other hand, if the SME successfully identifies a suitable talent, they should proceed to engage the chosen talent in compliance with national labour laws and legal regulations. Then the awarded SME will sign the Sub-Grant Agreement with the SILEO Consortium regulating the implementation of the "Talent placement project" and the payment of the requested lump sum.





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### ***What should I do if I have already identified a talent for my project?***

Lighting and furniture SMEs that have already identified talent for their projects, should complete the *C. Talent Profile* with information on the candidate and the *D. Talent Placement Collaboration Programme* with information regarding the proposed activities.

If the project proposal is selected for funding, the SME should initiate the contractual process with the proposed talent in adherence to national labour laws and legal requirements.

Then the awarded SME will sign the Sub-Grant Agreement with the SILEO Consortium regulating the implementation of the “Talent placement project” and the payment of the requested lump sum.

## **7. Which types of admissible collaborations (working contracts) between SME and Talent are admissible?**

Before signing the Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA) with the SILEO Consortium, lighting and furniture SMEs selected for funding who have identified the talent for their projects should proceed with concluding the working contract with him/her in line with national labour laws and legal regulations.

**Only collaboration assimilated to the employment contract (or equivalent appointing act)** is considered admissible for the SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement, for example (not exhaustive list): • Temporary or permanent employment contracts • Part-time employment contracts • Fixed term contracts • Apprenticeship • Temporary agencies contracts • Internship contracts • Probationary employment contracts • *Other staff assimilated contracts.*

*Please note* that the professional collaboration contract shall start after the signature of the Sub-Grant Agreement with the SILEO Consortium. The duration shall last between 2-6 months. However, it can last longer, but the financial support provided by SILEO will cover only the duration as indicated in the Agreement.

→ See Guide for Applicants chapter 1 (1.3).

## **8. What is the Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA)?**

The Sub-Grant Agreement is the specific contract stipulated between the SILEO Consortium (Coordinator and Partner(s) of Reference) and the awarded SME. The SGA regulates the implementation of the Talent Placement Project, the payment of the lump sum, and beneficiary and partners' obligations.

The SGA is conditional to the finalization of the professional collaboration contract between the SME and the candidate selected.

→ See Guide for Applicants chapter 5.

## **9. How to submit a project proposal on the SILEO Application Portal?**

### **1. Log in to the SILEO Application Portal:**

[https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster\\_post/sileo-talent-placement-open-call/](https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster_post/sileo-talent-placement-open-call/)

### **2. Read the description of the Call**, where you can also download the following documents:

- a. Guide for Applicants
- b. SILEO Talent Placement Project – technical part
- c. Declaration of Honour
- d. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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3. **Start the application process.** Remember that all the fields marked\* are mandatory for submission. You will find 3 STEPs:
  - a. *STEP 1 – SME Applicant administrative data* (to be completed online by filling in the sections)
  - b. *STEP 2 – Talent Placement Project* (to be completed by uploading the Talent Placement Project application form – technical part in PDF format)
  - c. *STEP 3 – Requirements to participate in this Call* (to be completed by uploading the duly signed Declaration of Honour in PDF format)
4. **Submit your project proposal!** Please remember that the application can be submitted only if all required fields are filled out. If your proposal has been successfully sent, you will receive a confirmation email from @Cluster Submission Platform.
5. **Wait for our feedback!**

### ***Can I submit two project ideas?***

No. For the SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement Projects, an SME can submit one project idea.

If more than one proposal submitted by the same applicant is identified, only the last proposal, which has been submitted, will be evaluated.

### ***What happens if I do not submit my application within the deadline?***

We do not accept applications after the deadline. We strongly encourage you not to wait until the last minute to submit your proposal. Failure to meet the submission deadline for any reason, including extenuating circumstances, will result in the rejection of the proposal.

**Remember: the deadline to submit the Talent Placement Project is on 30 January 2024 at 17:00 CET.**

## **9. Can I apply if I have received FSTP grants from other projects before?**

Yes, it is possible to apply. The only point that you should pay attention to if you are selected (funded) for multiple EU projects is the double funding rule. That means that you have to be able to confirm that funding received from one EU project will not cover the same costs/tasks, which were already funded by other EU projects. Please note that SMEs engaged in other EU-funded support programmes will have to prove that they have enough resources to be able to implement and complete the SILEO Talent Placement Project (in case of being selected).

## **10. How many talent placement projects will be selected under the SILEO Open Call for Talent Placement Projects?**

Fifty (50) projects (/SMEs) will be selected from the SILEO Consortium. The selected SMEs will be invited to participate in a job induction meeting hosted by the SILEO Partner of Reference to discuss the proposal submitted, giving them the necessary information and support to seek valuable talent as required in the application. However, the final number of projects selected under this Open Call will depend on the overall quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget.

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### 11. What are the selection procedures?

Applications will be evaluated by 7 internal reviewers from the SILEO Open Calls Quality Board (consisting of representatives of SILEO partners). Each proposal will go through to:

1. **Eligibility check** (based on the criteria identified in the section 3.1 of the Guide for Applicants)

The results of the eligibility check will be communicated to all applicants via email, both those who will pass and those who will fail.

Only applications that pass the eligibility check will proceed to the:

2. **Quality evaluation** (based on the criteria identified in the section 3.2 of the Guide for Applicants)

After the quality evaluation, evaluated proposals will be ranked according to the final score. The final score of one project proposal will be calculated as an arithmetic average of the individual assessments provided by SILEO evaluators. Only proposals that pass the overall threshold of 12 points will be considered for funding. The results of the quality evaluation process will be communicated to all applicants (qualified for this 2nd evaluation step) through an email including the respective evaluation report summary.

→ Detail description in the Guide for Applicants, section 3. Evaluation criteria.

#### ***What happens if my project proposal is placed on the SILEO Reserve List?***

Applications that exceeded the minimum threshold (12 points) but did not make it onto the list of 50 awarded projects are put on the **SILEO reserve list** and may be selected if one (or more) of the awarded SMEs drops out for various reasons (withdrawal/no match with talent profile).

SMEs will be informed accordingly by the SILEO Consortium.

An SME will be placed on the Reserve List until the end of the selection process (31.10.2024).

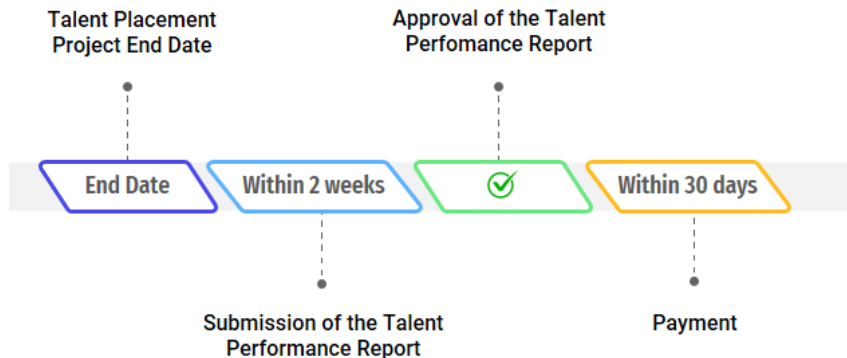
### 12. What are the payment conditions? Should I complete some report?

Awarded SMEs will be reimbursed within 30 days after the approval of the SILEO Talent Performance Report.

The **SILEO Talent Performance Report** is the report where SME Beneficiary and Talent must track the activities done in line with the proposal collaboration programme submitted in the application process.

It will be submitted within 2 weeks of the project end date via email to the SILEO Coordinator (ELCA European Lighting Cluster Alliance) and the SILEO Partner(s) of Reference, as scheduled in the SGA.

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→ See Guide for Applicants Chapter 6 (Reporting) and 7 (Payment).

### What is a lump sum?

According to European provisions, the lump sum is a simplified method of settling expenses in projects financed by European programmes. It means that you are not required to present strictly defined accounting documents to prove the cost incurred (e.g. invoices), but you are obliged to demonstrate the implementation of the project. Simply speaking, it means that we will assess your progress and the quality of your work, during the Reports, not your accountancy. The lump sum does not release you from the obligation to collect documentation to confirm the costs under fiscal regulation.

### 13 How to write a proposal that convinces evaluators?

Make sure you do not leave any information out of your proposal. Be specific and provide precise answers to the questions in the application form. You can find all the information you need in the Guide for Applicants.

### 14. What type of support is available for preparing the proposal?

The “SILEO Guide for Applicants” is the main reference document. It provides detailed information about the requirements of the evaluation and selection process. If you encounter any technical problems while filling in the application form, contact the SILEO partners of reference based on your country/region (see table below). We will do our best to help you.

SILEO SME HELPDESK			
Country	SILEO Partner of reference	Representatives	E-mail
EU & SMP Associated countries	ELCA European Lighting Cluster Alliance	Marta Krakowiak	<a href="mailto:marta.krakowiak@elcacluster.eu">marta.krakowiak@elcacluster.eu</a>
FRANCE	Cluster Lumière	Mary Hadidi	<a href="mailto:m.hadidi@cluster-lumiere.com">m.hadidi@cluster-lumiere.com</a>
SPAIN	CICAT Lighting Cluster	Andrea Padré	<a href="mailto:apadre@secartys.org">apadre@secartys.org</a>
ITALY	Rete di Imprese Luce in veneto	Antonella Venza	<a href="mailto:antonella.venza@luceinveneto.com">antonella.venza@luceinveneto.com</a>
AUSTRIA	Business Upper Austria - OÖ. Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH	Isabella Mantello	<a href="mailto:isabella.mantello@biz-up.at">isabella.mantello@biz-up.at</a>

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	(BIZUP) - Building Innovation Cluster (BIC)		
<b>ROMANIA</b>	TFC Transylvanian Furniture Cluster	Andreea Toma	<a href="mailto:andreea.toma@hygia.ro">andreea.toma@hygia.ro</a>
<b>ITALY</b>	Cluster Legno, Arredo e Sistema Casa FVG	Caterina Pezzicar	<a href="mailto:caterina.pezzicar@clusterarredo.com">caterina.pezzicar@clusterarredo.com</a>

### 15. What is a conflict of interest?

A conflict of interest may occur, if there are capital or personal connections between two or more entities (Applicant, Consortium partner or any person involved in the selection process), in particular, it should be understood as:

- Any ownership relations - ownership of shares, financial links and economic connections – like joint venture, holding, joint participation, silent partner. As an economic connection, we can understand exclusive licenses, and sale agreements if they concern products or solutions covered by your application etc.;
- Family and personal relationships, in particular: marriage, kinship, a relationship of affinity to the second degree in a straight line or lateral line, adoption, custody or guardianship or actual life and other close personal ties binding the Applicant and Consortium partner or any person involved in the selection process (it refers also to employees, shareholders, members of the management body, members of the board, managers, subcontractors etc.).
- The existence of material, especially financial relationships (such as the receipt by a person involved in the selection process from Applicant any significant gifts, donations, future contracts or employment, etc.);
- Relationships based on employment, cooperation or existing civil contract between the Consortium partners and people involved in the Applicant's structure, including managerial or supervisory functions, position in managing or supervising bodies.
- Remaining in a legal or factual relationship that may give rise to justified doubts as to the impartiality of the people involved in the selection process (expert/evaluator/employee/member of the management bodies of any of the Consortium partners etc.).

Remember that the concept of conflict of interest should be understood widely, so if you have any doubts about the conflict of interest please consult with our team. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.