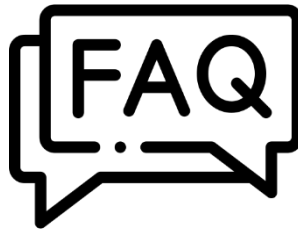*Supporting recovery and business transformation of lighting & furniture SMEs
for the Europe Industry of Tomorrow*

SILEO

OPEN CALL FOR TRAVEL VOUCHERS - ITALY

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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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.

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

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.

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

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Business Digital Transformation Projects	- 1° Open Call opened from 17.04.2023 to 20.04.2023
	- 2° Open Call opened from 22.01.2024 to 25.03.2024
Hack Day travel vouchers	1° Open Call opened from 20.02.2024 to 19.04.2024 (Hack Day in Romania, Cluj-Napoca on 13-14 June 2024)
	2° Open Call was published on 29.04.2024 and will close on 28.06.2024 (Hack Day in Italy, Padua on 16 October 2024)!
Advanced Technology Uptake Projects	- 1° Open Call opened from 12.01.2024 to 12.04.2024
	- 2° Open Call is planned to be published in September 2024
Talent Placement Projects	Open Call opened from 27.11.2023 to 06.02.2024
Best Company Story-telling Video Contest	Open Call is planned to be published in late Spring 2024

2. What is the Open Call for Hack Day Travel Vouchers?

Financial support (**up to 500 EUR**) through the SILEO Open Call for Travel Vouchers - Italy to support the participation of lighting and furniture SMEs and tech-savvy SMEs in the SILEO Hack Day event entitled "IMPACT - Development of innovative business ideas for SMEs in the Furniture & Lighting industry."

The Hack-Day in Italy will provide a platform for both tech-savvy SMEs and lighting and furniture SMEs to connect, learn and discover innovative solutions and services, gather insights, and expertise on emerging technologies and sustainable growth opportunities and debate specific SILEO challenges, such as:

I. **DATA INTEGRATION**: The impact of data integration in the manufacturing process in the lighting and furniture industry.
II. **IOT DEVICES AND MOBILE APP**: The impact of IOT and new communication technologies in the creation of new products and services in the lighting and furniture industry.
III. **VIRTUAL AND AUGMENTED REALITY IN FURNITURE & LIGHTING**: The impact of virtual and augmented reality in the design, manufacturing and customer experience improvement of new lighting and furniture products.
IV. **NEW MATERIALS AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN FURNITURE & LIGHTING**: The impact of new materials in the design and manufacturing of new lighting and furniture products.

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 1.*

How long do the Travel Vouchers last?

The awarded travel voucher is meant to provide the financial support needed to attend the Hack-Day in Padua (Italy) on 16.10.2024. It will be awarded to the SME as an organization, not to individual persons. Thus, a travel voucher can support the costs of multiple persons travelling for the benefiting SME.

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 1.*

Why should I apply for SILEO Open Call for Travel Vouchers in Italy?

The Hack-Day in Italy will provide a platform to **connect SMEs** by:

✓ **Encouraging innovation**: inspiring participants to develop creative and innovative solutions, services or products to the challenges presented during the event.

✓ **Cultivating collaboration among** participants with diverse backgrounds.

✓ **Providing a unique opportunity for European SMEs in the lighting and furniture sectors** to explore new technologies, gather ideas and knowledge, and personally engage with technology providers offering solutions tailored to their industry's specific manufacturing, logistics, and trade processes.

✓ Offering a platform for **European tech-savvy SMEs** to showcase their solutions, products, or services addressing real-life business problems and advancements in the lighting and furniture ecosystem, and to engage in discussions with lighting and furniture SMEs regarding the identified SILEO Challenges

3. Who can apply for the Open Call?

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 by a single tech-savvy SME.**

SMEs must be located in the European Union Member States (EU27) or countries associated with 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.*

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 countries? They confirmed interest in joining 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).

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 <u>OR</u> 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.

- ➢ <u>SME definition</u>: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en.
- ➢ <u>SME user guide</u>: https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/79c0ce87-f4dc-11e6-8a35-01aa75ed71a1
- ➢ <u>SME self-assessment questionnaire</u>: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeq.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNoO0A83lgtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1

What are the target applicant SMEs?

The target applicants of the SILEO Open Call are SMEs active in the lighting and furniture manufacturing key industries:

- → <u>Lighting industry:</u> 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.).
- → <u>Furniture Industry:</u> 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).
- → <u>Tech-savvy SMEs</u> are EU companies with innovative business models that develop, produce and commercialise advanced technology products and applications. Their business solutions inject high-tech power and smart, evidence-based business management to more traditional SMEs (in particular from the lighting and furniture sector) thus providing them significant competitive advantages

4. Where should I apply? What documents should I fill out?

Lighting and furniture SME applicants have to fill out the application in the <u>SILEO Submission Platform</u>: https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster_post/sileo-open-call-travel-vouchers-italy/

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.

As applicants, you shall register yourself on the platform, by creating a profile: https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/registration/

Then you will be able to prepare the application online:

→ https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster_post/sileo-open-call-travel-vouchers-italy/

1. **SME applicant administrative data**

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

2. **TRAVEL VOUCHER APPLICATION:** According to the applicants (lighting and furniture SMEs or tech-savvy SMEs), you should download the related application form (Word template), fill it out and upload it as a PDF in this STEP. All parts are mandatory.

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

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 3.*

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 from third parties provided by the 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

5. What should I do before applying?

It's crucial for European SMEs who are interested in applying for the Hack Day Travel Vouchers Italy 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. 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**

   Once you confirm your eligibility, begin preparing the required application materials. This includes completing the *Word template* with information on your company.

   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.

6. How to submit a project proposal on the SILEO Application Portal?

1. **Log in to the SILEO Application Portal**
2. **Read the description of the Call**, where you can also download the following documents:
   a. Guide for Applicants
   b. Application form for lighting/furniture SMEs (Word template)
   c. Application form for tech-savvy SMEs (Word template)
   d. Declaration of Honour
   e. FAQ
   f. Hack-Day in Italy AGENDA
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 – Travel Voucher Application Form* (to be completed by uploading the Application form Word template according to the applicants)
   c. *STEP 3 – Requirements to participate in this Call* (to be completed by uploading the duly signed Declaration of Honour in PDF format and any other relevant documentation)
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 the *@Cluster Submission Platform.*
5. **Wait for our feedback!**

Can I submit two project ideas?

No, an SME can submit one application. 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.

7. Can I apply for the Travel Vouchers in Italy, even if I apply for the SILEO Travel Vouchers in Romania?

Yes, an SME supported under the Open Call for Travel Vouchers in Romania can apply for the SILEO Open Call for Travel Vouchers in Italy.

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 voucher awarded, the payment of the lump sum, and beneficiary and partners' obligations.

→ *See Guide for Applicants chapter 5.*

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.

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.

10. Which are the SILEO Challenges?

The Hack-Day in Italy will provide a platform for both tech-savvy SMEs and lighting and furniture SMEs to connect, learn and discover innovative solutions and services, gather insights, expertise on emerging technologies and sustainable growth opportunities and to debate on specific SILEO challenges, such as:

I.   **DATA INTEGRATION**: The impact of data integration in the manufacturing process in the lighting and furniture industry.
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IV. **NEW MATERIALS AND CIRCULAR ECONOMY IN FURNITURE & LIGHTING**: The impact of new materials in the design and manufacturing of new lighting and furniture products.

11. What is the agenda for the Hackathon in Italy?

The Hack-Day is organized by Rete di Imprese Luce in Veneto in Padua, Italy on 16.10.2024, beside the Italian fair "IMPACT – La Fiera dei Servizi e dell'Innovazione per l'impresa" (taking place on 16-17 October 2024) in Padua (Italy).

The Hack-Day in Italy will create the context for furniture and lighting SMEs and tech-savvy SMEs to debate and discuss on specific SILEO challenges, to find solutions to real problems that companies are facing in their industry and activity. The participant SMEs will have the occasion to connect, explore and learn about new

technologies, innovative ideas and solutions, and directly meet potential business partners, offering services to the specific manufacturing – logistics - commercialisation processes of the lighting and furniture industry.

AGENDA:

09:00-09:30	Participants registration
09:30-10:00	Presentation of the SILEO Eurocluster project and its business support actions
10:00-12:30	Introduction of SILEO challenges & Pitch presentation of tech-savvy SMEs solutions and services answering them
12:30-13:30	*Lunch break*
13:30-16:30	B2B meetings between tech-savvy SMEs and lighting-furniture SMEs and other technology providers
16:30-18:00	SILEO Networking session with all participants

12. Is there a possibility to have a booth to showcase our solutions during the Hack Day?

Yes, tech-savvy SMEs will have the possibility to have a booth to present their products, services, technology solutions, promotional materials and other relevant documentation. Please note that this opportunity is reserved for the top fifteen classified technological SMEs - based on scores obtained according to the quality criteria defined in subchapter 4.2 of this Candidate Guide.

13. 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	marta.krakowiak@elcacluster.eu
FRANCE	Cluster Lumière	Mary Hadidi	m.hadidi@cluster-lumiere.com
SPAIN	CICAT Lighting Cluster	Andrea Padré	apadre@secartys.org
ITALY	Rete di Imprese Luce in veneto	Antonella Venza	antonella.venza@luceinveneto.com
AUSTRIA	Business Upper Austria - OÖ. Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH (BIZUP) - Building Innovation Cluster (BIC)	Isabella Mantello	isabella.mantello@biz-up.at

ROMANIA	TFC Transylvanian Furniture Cluster	Andreea Toma	andreea.toma@hygia.ro
ITALY	Cluster Legno, Arredo e Sistema Casa FVG	Caterina Pezzicar	caterina.pezzicar@clusterarredo.com

14. 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.