



RESIST

OPEN CALL TO RECEIVE CASCADE FUNDING FOR
INNOVATION PROJECTS

2nd Cut-off

Guide for Applicants



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Table of acronyms and abbreviations

MTA	Mobility, Transport, Automotive
SME	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
VSB	Very-Small Business
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties

1. Objective of the Open Call

The objective of this call is to provide financial support to European SMEs, start-ups very-small businesses (VSBs) companies working in the Mobility, Transport, Automotive ecosystem (MTA), so they can develop more sustainable production tools leading to economic success and resilience improvement in the face of future market changes and crisis. The outlined tools could be applied to enhance, for example, energy consumption, water consumption, or waste avoidance during the design (and production) of their machines. To do this, the RESIST Eurocluster will provide cascade fundings to distribute public funds and generate opportunities for SMEs, start-ups, and very-small businesses (VSBs), in the adoption or development of digital technologies.

RESIST project aims to implement innovation projects. Innovation meaning improved technologies and processes in production for higher resilience with the aim of reducing ecological impacts in MTA ecosystem. We are implementing two Open Calls cut-off in order to enable beneficiaries that want to submit a proposal but are not ready for the first cut-off to apply to the second cut-off without building a new proposal. The first cut-off was opened from the 19th of April 2023 until 21st of June 2023 at 12:00 CET (Central European Time).

A total of about 15 – 20 projects and 25– 30 SMEs start-ups and very-small businesses (VSBs), are funded under the two OpenCall cut-offs. 10 projects have been selected for funding for the first cut-off and up to 15 will be funded for the second. Out of the 800 000€ available for funding, 320 000€ are remaining for the 2nd Cut-off.

2. Who can apply?

1. Company activity:

This call is open to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups and very-small businesses (VSBs) from the Mobility, Transport, Automotive ecosystem.

As a non-exhaustive list, these sectors embrace vehicle production, from manufacturing to digital. Vehicle production includes passenger cars, vans, HGV, buses, shuttles, tractors, construction machines, but also trams, trains, or even forklifts.

2. Eligible countries

Companies established in EU Member States and SMP countries

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf.

3. SMEs criteria

An SME will be considered as such if it complies with the European Commission's Recommendation 2003/361/EC. As a summary, the criteria defining an SME 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 the EU recommendation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal->

<content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>.

The SME self-assessment questionnaire can be accessed in the following link:

[https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeg.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lqtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1)

[Wizard/smeg.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeg.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lqtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1)

[sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lqtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeg.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lqtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1).

3. Conditions and specifications of the Open Call

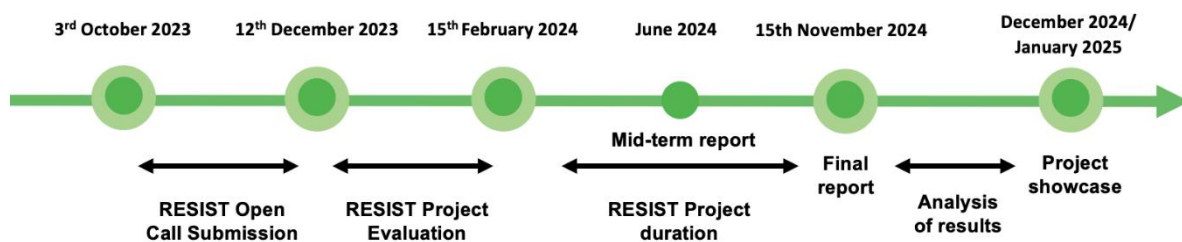
- Beneficiaries can apply for this OpenCall as a consortium or individually:
 - For projects with a consortium of several eligible applicants, a Project Manager will be assigned and will mentor and guide the team throughout the whole project
- Projects will last a maximum of 9 months, indicatively, from **February 2024 to November 2024** for the 2nd OpenCall cut-off
- Partners in the project will accompany beneficiaries throughout project implementation
- The OpenCall beneficiaries conduct the project with one mid-term report and a final report at the end of the project about the project advancement following given follow-up document templates. Those reports are essential to obtain financing (see part 11 Payment conditions)
- At least one OpenCall project partner must participate in the Project Showcase event. The showcase event aims at matching OpenCall beneficiaries with potential further funding institutions (banks, risk capital, public funding institutions...). The Showcase is open to all beneficiaries and other stakeholders interested in discovering innovative solutions for greening and digitalising industrial production. Funding institutions (banks, venture capital...) will be invited to join the event and to discuss further funding with OpenCall project partners. The Showcase includes an exhibition of all OpenCall projects, OpenCall project pitches, presentation of complementary RESIST project results (market analysis, return of experiences from trainings...) as well as a hybrid physical-virtual Matchmaking session where OpenCall project partner can discuss and exchange, e.g., with funding institutions and other SMEs about financing, further steps, or other actions to mitigate impacts identified during their resilience check. The Showcase events will be open to other interested companies and stakeholders allowing them to learn from the OpenCall project experiences and to discuss with OpenCall project partners about potential proper use for them. The Showcase will take place in Mulhouse in France in December 2024 or January 2025 and will be organised as a hybrid event.

4. RESIST Open Call 2nd cut-off

4.1 Description

RESIST 2nd Open Call cut-off for **innovative** projects on green and digital transition will remain open from the 3rd of October until the 12th of December 2023 at 12:00 CET (Central European Time).

4.2 OpenCall 2nd cut-off timeline



5. Financial support

By applying to this Open Call, teams will compete to get engaged in **the RESIST innovation projects**, where more than **15 projects will obtain support worth up to 30,000€** (per SME partner in the project, limited to max 800,000€ distributed among the two open Call cut-offs).

Individual eligible applicants will receive financial support of a total of 20.000 € per applicant and applicants in a consortium of 2 to maximum 3 eligible applicants from at least 2 different regions will receive 30 000 € per applicant. Applicants from different regions are encouraged to work together to enhance collaboration and regional development. That is why the funding is more significant.

The budget is distributed through lumpsums as follows: (see section 11 of this document: payment conditions)

- **20% of agreed lump sum** at Innovation Project start (as pre-financing)
- **40% of agreed lump sum** after evaluation of the mid-term project report and the mid-term financial report regarding Invoices and proof of payment for the 60% of the project with the condition that the company either incurs the initial 60% of expenditures or provides a detailed plan outlining how they will utilize the budget for the project before receiving any financing.
- **40% of agreed lump sum (2nd cut-off)** after the evaluation of the final project report, the financial report regarding Invoices and proof of payment for the whole project with the condition that the company incurs the remaining 40% of expenditures before receiving any financing.

The **maximum amount to be granted per applicant in the framework of the RESIST project shall not exceed €60.000,00 in total** even in the case of multiple granted financial support scheme types (lump sums) to the applicant during the lifetime of the project.

This applies for all the calls (and their respective cut-off dates).

If the applicant stops a project in progress, it will have to reimburse the budget provided by the RESIST grant to the project coordinator by IBAN transfer.

6. Open Call Topic

This Open Call is open to implement innovation projects in the Mobility-Transport-Automotive (MTA) ecosystem.

These innovation solutions should help meet the needs of MTA SMEs, start-ups, and very-small businesses (VSBs) in Europe in their green and digital transition and having a more intelligent production.

Based on the results of interviews with SMEs, start-ups and VSBs about trends in mobility and discussion, in this open Call, three key challenges are emphasised:

- **Optimised digitalisation in my company through the incorporation of advanced technologies in the MTA:** the challenge is looking for more digital solutions in the company to cope with the accelerating transition in the ecosystem and to improve the quality of their work. The aim is to reduce the mental load through technological means and production system (e.g Human machine Interface HMI).
- **Provide innovative solutions to obtain greener production systems or greener products:** The challenge is to help beneficiaries accessing new business opportunities in order to have greener production. The aim is to have a better impact in the MTA production and to develop circular economy to help SMEs, start-ups and very-small businesses (VSBs), companies achieving long-term societal, environmental and competitive objectives.
- **Turning to renewable energy innovations in my production line:** the challenge is looking for solutions to face the issues related to the increase of energy prices and the need companies have of modifying their consumption.

Applicants must select one of the three above challenges as a topic for their innovation project proposal.

7. Eligibility criteria

The following **eligibility criteria** must be complied in order to get through the evaluation process:

- Be a European SME, start-up, or very-small business (VSB) from the MTA ecosystem (see section 2 of this document).

- Beneficiary must come from Eurocluster partners' country (France, Spain, Austria, Czech Republic) or from EU regions different from the countries of individual Euroclusters' partners.
- Beneficiaries are encouraged to associate with universities, large enterprises etc. in innovation projects but those associate partners cannot obtain financing from RESIST project.
- The resilience check must be completed. This document enables beneficiaries to audit their market situation, production, and processes towards potential risks and future market evolutions, and to set-up an action plan for mitigation of the main risks. This document will be sent once the beneficiary expressed its desire to apply for this Open call.
- Beneficiaries applying in a consortium with other beneficiaries must come from at least two different regions and maximum three to enhance collaboration and regional development.
- Two beneficiaries from a same region in a consortium will not be eligible.
- The projects must be led by an SME, start-up, or VSB.
- English is the official language for the Open Calls. Submissions done in any other languages will not be evaluated.
- Submission after the deadline cannot be accepted.
- Beneficiaries can re-apply to this cut off if the application for the 1st Cut-off was not successful.

8. Award criteria

- The project proposals should suggest solutions contributing to the mitigation of at least one impact identified in the resilience check and action plan set-up. The expected mitigation effect must be clearly demonstrated in the proposal that can cover, for instance: projects allowing the analysis of real time energy consumption, new machines/ processes to reduce energy dependencies or using renewable energies, optimisation of production and processes or others.
- It is a requirement that applicants demonstrate the implementation of ideas and solutions from green and digital transition.
- Innovation projects should develop Innovative solutions. Innovative solutions refer to an original and inventive approach or concept designed to tackle specific challenges or seize opportunities in the MTA ecosystem.
- Other partner(s) in the consortium may be associate partners: large enterprises, universities etc... but cannot receive any financial support from the RESIST project.

- Collaboration Requirement: The project proposal should demonstrate a collaborative partnership between partners. All entities must actively participate in the project and leverage their respective expertise to contribute significantly to its success.
- Already existing products without a clear advance or innovation beyond the state-of-art will be rejected.
- The applicant cannot apply for and/or receive funding outside of RESIST for a similar project that could lead to a potential double funding of the same action. The RESIST Consortium may carry out the necessary control actions with other SMP Eurocluster Consortia and other EU-funded projects to verify that there is no double funding ongoing. Applicants need to declare that their application is not subject of double funding from any other Eurocluster project or any other EU funded project.
- Beneficiaries can be part of both cut-offs application but can only be funded for one project.
- Has no convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practices.
- Consultant Fees and materials and Supplies costs (costs associated with purchasing materials, equipment, or supplies from external suppliers to support the project's activities) are not eligible for funding.
- **Financial capacity:** The SME applicant must have the financial capacity to carry out the actions described in their proposals and to properly manage the financial support granted to them.

Each SME must be in alignment with the following situations:

- Is no bankrupt or being wound up, is not having affairs administrated by the courts, has not entered into an arrangement with creditors, has not suspended business activities, is not the subject of proceedings concerning those matters or is not in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- Is in compliance with its obligation relating to the payment of social security contributions and the payment of taxes, in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established;
- Is not subject to a conflict of interest in connection with the grant.

9. Application

9.1 Platform

Register of the application will be made through the [Clusters Submission Platform website](#).

Complete the application electronically in English before the 12th of December. 12:00 **CET (Central European Time)**.

9.2 Mandatory documents

This application process involves the submission of:

- The application form presenting the project concept, according to the evaluation criteria that will be made available for download on the platform, the Consortium if any, the planned activities and the expected results.
- The Commitment Declaration: The commitment declaration ensures the truthfulness of information provided in the application, stating that there is no double funding for the same project, and the privacy policy will be adhered to. It also confirms that the applicant falls under the correct category of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs).
- The resilience check completed. This document enables beneficiaries to audit their market situation, production, and processes towards potential risks and future market evolutions, and to set-up an action plan for mitigation of the main risks. This document will be sent once the beneficiary expressed its desire to apply for this Open call.

9.3 Conditions for the application

The following condition must be respected for application:

- Applicants will have **to provide**, to both the Euroclusters Consortium and EISMEA, (non-confidential) **information on the projects** financed, for communication and dissemination purposes;
- The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest;
- The action must be carried out in line with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles:
 - Avoid any conflict of interest and comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination, equal treatment, sound financial management, proportionality, and competition rules.
 - Allow for all communications to be made in English.
 - Ensure that the part of the activities that is subject to the place of performance obligation is performed in the eligible countries or target countries set out in the call conditions.
 - Respect the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU) guarantees that the processing of data is carried out in compliance with the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the dignity of the data subject with reference to confidentiality, personal identity and the right to data protection.
- Confidential information must be kept by the beneficiary during the implementation of the action and until 5 years after the final payment of the project;

- Communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must acknowledge the beneficiaries must credit the RESIST project through proper citation and visibility of the RESIST logo, as well as acknowledge EU support, displaying the European flag (emblem) and funding statement as indicated below:



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European Union

This project has received funding from the European Union's Single Market Programme, via the Open Call Innovation projects within the framework of the "[Joint Cluster Initiatives \(EUROCLUSTERS\) for Europe's recovery](#)" via an Open Call issued and executed under project RESIST (Grant Agreement No 101074204)".

INFORMATION

The beneficiaries must provide — during the action or afterwards— any information requested in order to verify eligibility of the costs or contributions declared, proper implementation of the action and compliance with the other obligations under the Agreement.

The information provided must be accurate, precise and complete.

RECORD KEEPING

The beneficiaries must keep records and other supporting documents to prove the proper implementation of the action.

In addition, the beneficiaries must keep the following to justify the amounts declared.

- Adequate records and supporting documents to prove the costs declared (such as contracts, invoices and accounting records).
- The records and supporting documents must be made available upon request.

Consortia must ensure that their contractual obligations mentioned above also apply to the third parties receiving the support under their calls.

10. Evaluation

10.1 Evaluation procedure

The **Open Call evaluation process** is structured as follows:

1) Eligibility Check.

A first review will be performed by the Project coordinator. Applicants which do not comply with the eligibility check will be rejected at this stage and will be informed by e-mail of their rejection.

2) External Experts Evaluation.

Evaluation is conducted by to at least three independent evaluators that audit the proposal:

- Successful and non-successful applicants will be informed that their proposal is accepted or rejected. Non-successful applicants are allowed to complain (cf Redress procedure).
- The goal of this evaluation is to select among the submitted proposals the winning projects who will benefit from the RESIST funding.
- The experts will evaluate and mark each of the submitted proposals by filling in the Evaluation Template.
- The Evaluators are not allowed to contact the applicants at any stage of the evaluation or disclose to them the fact that they are evaluating their proposal.
- The Applicants will have an insight into their evaluation result, comprising the obtained score the threshold score enabling selection.

3) RESIST Evaluation during Steering Committee.

The Evaluation Committee's role is to oversee the proper execution of the evaluation process, and guarantee its coherence, fairness, and transparency.

Once the evaluation by external experts is completed, the Evaluation Committee will perform the final screening of the proposals to prepare a final ranking.

In particular, the role of the Evaluation Committee will be to:

- Ensure that no conflict of interest during the evaluation process has taken place.
- Ensure that each Applicant will be funded only once.
- Ensure that the maximum amount that a SME receives is limited to €30.000 per beneficiary in a consortium and €20 000 per individual beneficiary.

Selected projects will also be subject to an ethics assessment and will be rejected if the beneficiaries do not respect the conditions mentioned in 9.3.

Confidentiality of the applicant and project will be respected.

However, please be aware that while applications will be treated with confidentiality, the consortium will have to publish the results including a description of the third-party actions, the date of the award, duration, and final recipient legal names and countries.

In case of successful application, the beneficiary must sign an agreement with the RESIST consortium.

10.2 Evaluation criteria

EVALUATION GRID

Proposals will be evaluated based on five main evaluation criteria:

- Innovation of the idea
- Potential impact of the solution
- Growth plan during and beyond the RESIST support period
- Short-term implementation plan for the RESIST support period (the upcoming 9 months)
- Fit with RESIST priorities

Applications will be evaluated and rated based on the following criteria:

	Criteria	Evaluation Marks
		(0 – 5)
1	<i>Innovation of the Idea</i>	
1.1	Soundness and feasibility of concept and methodology	1 2 3 4 5
1.2	Progress beyond state-of-art;	1 2 3 4 5
1.3	The Applicants have a good understanding of the competitive environment they will realise their idea in	1 2 3 4 5
1.4	The Applicants plan to set-up one of their solutions to mitigate the risks mentioned in the action plan	1 2 3 4 5
2	<i>Potential impact of the solution</i>	
2.1	Positive impact on targeted audience	1 2 3 4 5
2.2	Respect of the social sustainability, environmental sustainability, data ethics and privacy	1 2 3 4 5
2.3	Effectiveness of the exploitation measures proposed	1 2 3 4 5
2.4	Market opportunity	1 2 3 4 5
3	<i>Growth plan during and BEYOND the RESIST support period</i>	
3.1	Marketing strategy fitting to business plan	1 2 3 4 5
3.2	Revenue model is solid enough	1 2 3 4 5
3.3	Development barriers (legal/market/users' acceptance, etc.) well identified and mitigation measures proposed	1 2 3 4 5

3.4	Investment potential	1	2	3	4	5
4	Short-term implementation plan for the RESIST support period (the upcoming 9 months)					
4.1	Clear and realistic objectives	1	2	3	4	5
4.2	Soundness of milestones	1	2	3	4	5
4.3	Feasibility of the work plan	1	2	3	4	5
4.4	Added value from RESIST support is clearly explained and is adequate to the situation	1	2	3	4	5
5	Fit with RESIST priorities					
5.1	Proposal in line with the RESIST priorities and call challenges	1	2	3	4	5
5.2	Cross sectoral approach to the benefit of green transition	1	2	3	4	5
	FINAL MARK	/90				

AWARDING PROCESS

To be eligible, an SME must obtain a minimum of 54 point out of 90. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3.

Maximum number of awarded proposals: up to 14 projects maximum will be selected after the evaluation period.

Awarded proposals announcement: the RESIST consortium will decide the successful applications and applicants will receive the awarding decision between the 7th of February 2024 and the 15th of February 2024.

The RESIST consortium will publish the outcome of the open call, including a description of the actions, the date of the award, duration, and final recipient legal names and countries. This publication will be made through the ECCP profile. In addition, information on the awarded proposals will be communicated through the RESIST communication channels.

No retroactivity of costs is accepted, meaning that a grant cannot be used to cover costs of an action/activities that took place before the date of submission of the proposal.

In case of ex-aequo priority the Consortium will prioritise application with a better grading for the criteria "Innovation of the idea". If the ex-aequo persisted, the Consortium will prioritise based on the score of "Impact", "Fit with RESIST priorities", "Short-term implementation plan for the RESIST support period (the upcoming 9 months)" and "Growth plan during and BEYOND the RESIST support period" in this order.

REDRESS PROCEDURE

Applicants can contest the decision within 30 days after the evaluation Committee's decision has been notified. All contestations must be sent by email to aa@vehiculedefutur.com and must contain, formulated in a clear manner, the grounds on which the decision is contested.

The evaluation committee will address the raised complaints by e-mail within 30 days upon receipt of the applicant's contestation, providing applicants with comprehensive and sufficiently detailed answers.

11. Payment conditions

- **20% of agreed lump sum** at Innovation Project start
- **40% of agreed lump sum** after evaluation of the mid-term project report
- **40% of agreed lump sum (2nd cut-off)** after the evaluation of the final project report and Project Showcase participation

GRANT AGREEMENT

To receive the 20% FSTP, each successful applicant must sign a grant agreement that will be provided by RESIST consortium.

MID-TERM REPORT

To receive the 40% FSTP, each applicant must complete and submit a mid-term report that will be provided by RESIST consortium at the beginning of the project. This report must be sent by e-mail to: aa@vehiculedefutur.com at mid-project, the date of the deadline will be given to the applicant at the start of the project.

FINAL REPORT AND PROJECT SHOWCASE

To receive the last 40% of FSTP, each applicant must complete and submit a final report that will be provided by RESIST consortium at the beginning of the project. This report must be sent by e-mail to: aa@vehiculedefutur.com at the end of the project, the date of the deadline will be given to the applicant at the start of the project.

At least one person from the applicant's team must attend the project showcase event. This event will serve as an opportunity for the applicant to present the outcomes, achievements, and key highlights of the innovation project. This event will take place in December 2024 or in January 2025 in Mulhouse as a hybrid event.

Note that the beneficiary is required to fill in the provided financial report template at the end of the project. The template will include specific sections for capturing financial data related to the innovation project along with a declaration statement confirming the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. This template will be provided by RESIST Consortium at the start of the project.