



RESIST

OPEN CALL TO RECEIVE CASCADE FUNDING FOR
**INTERNATIONALISATION
ACTIONS**

Guide for Applicants



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History of changes		
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V02	13/01/2025	CORRIGENDUM – extension of the deadline for submission

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1. Introduction

This open call for international travel Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP) is part of the RESIST project.

The RESIST project aims at supporting SMEs in their adaptation to extreme crisis situations as well as to the overall challenges due to beforehand existing and ongoing transformation processes of the Mobility, Transport, Automotive ecosystem. Through different funding schemes and support services, the project helps SMEs identify partners and initiate projects to make processes and production more sustainable and flexible through green engineering and digitalisation but also opening alternative markets.

RESIST, short for “RESilience through Sustainable processes and production for the European automotive InduSTry”, is an initiative co-financed by the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME), through the "Joint Cluster Initiatives (EUROCLUSTERS) for Europe's recovery" call of the European Commission.

RESIST's activities focus on the Mobility, Transport, Automotive ecosystem, a crucial ecosystem for Europe's industry.

The automotive sector provides direct and indirect jobs to 13.8 million Europeans, representing 6.1% of total EU employment. 2.6 million people work in direct manufacturing of motor vehicles, representing 8.5 % of EU employment in manufacturing. The EU is among the world's biggest producers of motor vehicles and the sector represents the largest private investor in research and development (R&D). However, the EU Mobility, Transport, Automotive industry is currently in an unprecedented upheaval: the electrification of vehicles, their digitisation, or the modernisation of vehicle production must be rapidly implemented in a relatively short period of few years. Significant adjustments to products, business models or production are necessary. Another challenge that SMEs are facing lies in internationalisation and finding business partners in other countries.

SMEs in the Mobility, Transport, Automotive ecosystem include companies from the vehicle production, from manufacturing, and from the digital sector. Vehicle production includes passenger cars, vans, HGV, buses, shuttles, tractors, construction machines, but also trams, trains, or forklifts. Cooperations can be found with manufacturing and digital SMEs.

This open call is published by the RESIST consortium. It gathers the following five partners: Cluster Pôle Véhicule du Futur - PVF (FR); CEAGA - Galician Automotive Cluster (ES); AUTOKLASTR (CZ); Cluster IDiA - Asociacion Investigacion, Desarrollo E Innovacion En Aragon (ES); and Business Upper Austria - The Upper Austrian government's location agency (Biz-Up) (AT).

In addition to the following call text, please also refer to the Appendixes and the Frequently Asked Questions, which are part of the Open Call documents.

2. Objective and scope

The objective of this call is to support internationalisation actions undertaken by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups and very-small businesses (VSBs) from EU Member States and SMP (Single Market Programme) countries. Therefore, RESIST provides financial support to SMEs, start-ups and VSB through international travel FSTP.

The total amount of financial support for approximately 15 SMEs, start-ups and VSB in this call is up to 34,000 EUR.

3. Eligible activities and expected impact

RESIST will provide financial support to European small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups and very-small businesses (VSBs) for internationalisation acceleration activities. Applicants can apply to be funded under the international travel FSTP call. Applications can be submitted for **one of the** following internationalisation actions.

Eligible activities for International Travel FSTP:

- Attend conferences in a target market
- Attend trade fairs in a target market
- Attend exhibitions in a target market
- Attend in-person trainings or events on internationalisation
- Participate in an in-person matchmaking events
- Bilateral meetings with potential customers or suppliers (B2B, B2C, C2C)

Please note that funded activities under the international travel FSTP call do not include booth fees at conferences or exhibitions. In addition, internal events organised in the framework of the RESIST Eurocluster initiative will be out of the scope of this cascade funding.

Beneficiaries should use the international travel FSTP maximum 6 months after they obtain it. The activities to be supported by the open call cannot exceed one week (5 days).

Target markets:

The international travel FSTP can be used to finance upcoming internationalisation activities organised in any third countries. Eligible applicants must be established in one of the countries associated with the Single Market Programme, which can be retrieved from the following link” https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf.

Activities taking place in the following target countries: Mexico, the United States of America, Canada, China, North Africa (especially Morocco), and the United Kingdom will be encouraged based on previous connections of the Partners in the project. Those countries are of importance to the MTA, manufacturing, and ICT sectors. Applicants who want to use the international travel FSTP for activities taking place in those countries will be awarded 2 bonus points during the evaluation process.

Bonus points will be awarded irrespective of the type of internationalisation activity only if applicants choose to go to one target country. However, the bonus points will only be applicable when the chosen target country aligns with the stated objectives of the applicants' internationalisation plan.

Expected impact:

The financed internationalisation actions should facilitate the participation in different types of events, trainings, and meetings to support the beneficiaries in the implementation of their internationalisation strategies. They should help facilitate contacts with clients, suppliers, or potential collaborators from target countries to strengthen the beneficiaries' networks.

4. Applicants, admissibility, and eligibility criteria

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.

Applicants from third countries are not eligible for funding under RESIST project.

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-Wizard/smeq.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtCy7xcbNo00A83lqtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1.

The ownership structure:

- Types of enterprise taken into consideration in calculating staff numbers and financial amount, including any partnership or linkage. The current limit shown in Recommendation 96/280/EC, of a 25 % holding below which an enterprise is considered autonomous.
- Types of enterprises (autonomous, partner, linked) correspond to relationships that enterprises could have with one another, and which may impact on the overall headcount and financial criteria of an enterprise.

Eligibility criteria:

The 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 applicant 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.

Resilience check criteria:

Applicants need to have undergone the “Resilience Check” offered by the RESIST project. 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 downloaded by the beneficiary once they applied for this Open call on the Clusters Submission Platform.

5. Financial support and funding conditions

Regarding the International Travel FSTP, the funding conditions are detailed in the following table:

Financial support to international travel	
Total funding available	€ 34,000
Maximum funding per SME/travel	€ 2,000

Type of financial support	Real costs to be justified
Maximum number of employees per SME and travel	One person

The RESIST consortium may request evidence/documents to assess the SME status, including independence/ownership.

Applicants have the possibility to participate in different RESIST open calls during the RESIST project.

The **maximum amount to be granted per SME 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 SME during the lifetime of the project.

This applies for all the calls (and their respective cut-off dates) in case a SME would apply to the subsequent calls as well. It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to check that the requested funding sums do not exceed this limit.

We expect to fund 15 applicants. The actual number can vary according to the applications received. However, RESIST might not fund this desired numbers of applicant if the quality of applications does not allow for funding.

6. Eligible costs

Successful proposals shall receive the requested financial contribution based on the real costs of the action, with a limit of 2,000 € per travel.

Eligible costs:

- Conference fees
- Transportation costs (airplanes, trains, buses, etc.)
- Fees for attending a training, matchmaking or other events related to the above and the spirit of the call
- Accommodation and subsistence costs

All eligible costs shall meet the following criteria:

- Be actually incurred by the participant (no estimated/imputed/budgeted costs)
- Be incurred during the open call period
- Be identifiable, verifiable and recorded in the beneficiary's accounts in accordance with the applicable accounting standards and usual cost accounting practices
- Comply with the applicable national laws on taxes, and be reasonable and justified and comply with the principle of sound financial management (in particular regarding economy and efficiency)

- Only costs incurred **from the date of submission of the proposal** will be eligible for funding. 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

7. Application and mandatory documents

Type of application	Single-stage application
How to apply	<p>The formal application will be made through an application form available on the Clusters Submission Platform, a dedicated platform to find and apply to the different RESIST open calls, as well as to those launched by other Eurocluster initiatives which have already agreed on the use of this portal. All the relevant information of the open call will be published on this page, including the Guide for Applicants.</p> <p>Apply through this link: RESIST Internationalisation actions Open Call</p>
Application fees	Participation in this call for proposals (under all FSTP) is entirely <u>free</u> of charge for the applicant.
Documents to be submitted	<p>Full application package will be available on RESIST Internationalisation actions Open Call.</p> <p>It consist of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application form (including company data, activity they want to participate in, relevance of the event, etc.) ▪ The RESIST Resilience check: mandatory to access all RESIST Open Calls. All applicants must complete this document to assess their status and level of resilience to crises. ▪ Commitment declaration ▪ Ethics assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoid any conflict of interest and comply with the principles of transparency, nondiscrimination, 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

	<p>particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity and the right to data protection.</p> <p>Applications that do not provide ALL the requested documents will not be evaluated.</p>
Language	<p>English is the official language of all RESIST open calls. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated.</p>
Links/ platforms where this open call will be published	<p>All the RESIST open calls will also be announced in the following websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding & Tenders portal (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home). <p>This portal is the entry point for participants and experts in funding programmes and tenders managed by the European Commission and other EU bodies. It provides for the electronic management of EU programmes and tenders and facilitates the related interactions with the EU Institutions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Enterprise Europe Network site (https://een.ec.europa.eu/) <p>It is the world's largest support network for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with international ambitions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ European Cluster Collaboration Platform (https://clustercollaboration.eu/open-calls) <p>It is the European online hub for industry clusters and it has a special section called "Funding" to announce the available open calls</p>

8. Timeline

Opening date	10-07-2023; 12:00 CET
Proposal submission deadline	<p>19-02-2025; at 12:00 CET</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Until the maximum available amount of 34,000 EUR has been awarded (whichever occurs first).</p>

9. Evaluation

1. Evaluation procedure:

- The submitted proposals on the Clusters Submission Platform will be subject to evaluation by the evaluation committee (the “RESIST consortium”), which will:
 - a. Check eligibility and admissibility (See Who can apply – Admissibility and eligibility criteria above) and, if successful.
 - b. Initiate the evaluation of the content of the proposals (Quality check).

RESIST Evaluation Committee will decide and publish the results between the 25th and the end of the month after each cut-off (see award procedure), which projects (up to 8 selected) will receive funding. Additionally, applicants will receive feedback on the evaluation of their proposal (both selected and non-selected applicants) by e-mail including a description of the third-party actions, the date of the award, duration, and final recipient legal names and countries.

The outcome of the call will be published on the submission platform.

The RESIST consortium publishes its open call, respecting transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality. In particular, the call will be carried out by respecting the following principles:

- **Excellence.** The proposals selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call.
- **Transparency.** Funding decisions will be based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants will receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals.
- **Fairness and impartiality.** All proposals submitted to the call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants.
- **Confidentiality.** All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence.

Personal data will be processed in compliance with applicable EU and national law on data protection.

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 particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity and the right to data protection. By applying, the applicant agrees on the storage and use of its personal data for the execution of the RESIST objectives and work plan.

- **Efficiency and speed.** Evaluation of proposals and award of the financial support will be as rapid as possible, commensurate with maintaining the quality of the evaluation, and respecting the legal framework.

The RESIST financial support to applicants will be based on the following principles:

- **Equal treatment:** The general principle of equal treatment and non-discrimination requires that comparable situations are not treated differently unless differentiation is objectively justified.
- **Transparency:** FSTP shall be awarded following a publication of Calls for proposals and evaluated by the established Evaluation Committee.
- **Non-cumulative award and no double financing:** Each action may give rise to the award of only one FSTP.
The SME 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.

2. Evaluation criteria:

Proposals will be evaluated based on three main evaluation criteria:

1. Motivation and coherence (10 points).
2. Alignment with RESIST project objectives (10 points).
3. Impact (10 points).

Criteria	Points
Motivation and coherence Justification of why the proposal submitted for funding can help the internationalisation of the SME beneficiary: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity of explanation and motivation - Relevant criteria 	10 5 5
Alignment with RESIST project objectives RESIST project aims at supporting SMEs, Start-ups and VSB in launching and succeeding this transition via the <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helps with the development of greener and more digital production tools - Helps with the lockup of new markets in other industrial sectors (e.g., manufacturing) or regions outside the European Union. - Improve the applicant's resilience 	10 4 3 3
Impact Description of how the internationalisation activity will have impact on the SME beneficiary. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clarity of explanation - Relevance of the impact 	10 5 5
Total	/30

If the result of each criterion is less than 5/10 the application will be rejected.

3. Awarding procedure

There will be 7 cut-off dates for the evaluation of proposals:

- 8th of September 2023
- 8th of December 2023
- 8th of March 2024
- 8th of May 2024
- 8th of September 2024
- 8th of November 2024
- 20th of December 2024
- 9th of January 2025
- 23rd of January 2025
- 6th of February 2025
- 20th of February 2025

This means that if an applicant submits their application after the cut-off date, their application will be evaluated for the second cut-off date.

Maximum number of awarded proposals per cut-off: up to 8 applications maximum will be selected after each cut-off.

Consortium evaluation: the applications will be assessed by the RESIST consortium from the date of the cut-off until the 25th of the month of the cut-off.

Awarded proposals announcement: the RESIST consortium will decide the successful applications and applicants will receive the awarding decision between the 25th and the end of the month.

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.

Note that: applications with activities taken place in the following countries Mexico, the United States of America, Canada, China, North Africa (especially Morocco), and the United Kingdom will be awarded 2 bonus points during the evaluation process.

Bonus points will be awarded irrespective of the type of internationalisation activity only if the applicant choose to go to one target country. However, the bonus points will only be applicable when the chosen target country aligns with the stated objectives of the applicant's internationalisation plan.

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 will be provided to applicants focusing in one of the target countries (Mexico, the United States of America, Canada, China, North Africa (especially Morocco), and the United Kingdom. However, if the ex-aequo persisted, the Consortium will prioritise based on the score of “Alignment with RESIST project objectives”, “Impact” and “Motivation and Coherence” 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 alvaro.lombardo@idia.es 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.

10. Payment conditions

Invoices

If the application is approved, the beneficiary must submit to the RESIST consortium the invoices/receipts and proofs of expenditure by filling in the financial report and declaration of financial statement that acknowledges that the financial statement is true and accurate provided by RESIST consortium once the application has been approved related to the eligible costs detailed in section 6, within 30 days from the realisation of the activity financed by the FSTP in order to get their expenses reimbursed.

Make sure these documents are legible and clearly indicate the nature, date, and amount of each expense incurred.

Reporting

To receive the FSTP, each project must complete and submit a report. The assessment report and any related/attached documents will be submitted in English.

The report must include:

- Summary of results of the funded activity.
- Comparison of what was planned in the proposal with achieved results/ objectives.
- Impact of the internationalisation activity for the beneficiary.

Payment scheme:

- Applicants need to send the invoices/receipts and the proof of expenditure (financial report and financial declaration), as well as the report, within 30 days from the

realisation of the activity financed by the FSTP. Payment will be made within 15 days from the approval of the invoices, the financial report and declaration and the report.

- Only costs incurred **from the date of submission of the proposal** will be eligible for funding.

11. Additional obligations

Conflict of interest

The beneficiary must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the funded internationalisation action is compromised by reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

Confidentiality

The EC and the RESIST consortium will be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- the name of the beneficiary SME
- contact address of the beneficiary SME
- the amount of the financial contribution
- the internationalisation action and its purpose
- the geographic location of the activities carried out
- any publishable material to inform about the outcomes of this RESIST open call; the beneficiary SME will ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and RESIST does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Promoting the action and giving visibility to the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the internationalisation action, any results, and the RESIST project by providing targeted information to their audiences in a strategic and effective manner and highlight the financial support of the EC, if the funding of the international action is known before its implementation.

≥1 public communication (e.g. on Social Media such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram...) mentioning the RESIST Hashtag.

For dissemination and use of results generated through the financial support from RESIST, the beneficiaries must acknowledge the EU support, displaying the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (also include the disclaimer) as indicated below. As well must credit the RESIST project through proper citation and visibility of the RESIST logo:



Funded by the
European Union

This project has received funding from the European Union's Single Market Programme, via the Open Call International travel FSTP 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)"

All visibility requirements will be communicated to the SME beneficiary after the signing of the Sub-Grant Agreement with the RESIST Consortium.

12. Contact

For any enquires regarding this RESIST Open Call, please contact:

Resilience through sustainable processes and production

info@resisteurocluster.eu |   | [Find us on the ECCP](#)



13. Definitions

Beneficiaries: if awarded, the applicant will become a beneficiary of this Call for Proposals.

Evaluation Committee: the RESIST Evaluation Committee will be in charge of evaluating and awarding the applicant's proposals. It is composed by at least one representative of each RESIST partner, combining automobile and business expertise.

FSTP Agreement: the beneficiaries and RESIST consortium (funding entity) will sign a bilateral specific agreement; signing this agreement, the beneficiaries agree and accept the financial support and will implement its activities under its own responsibility, in accordance with the agreement's conditions and obligations.

NACE list: Mobility, Transport, Automotive list.

SMEs: Small and Medium-sized Enterprises. 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-Wizard/smeq.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lgtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1.

Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP): redeemable transaction bond corresponding to a certain monetary value, and which may be spent only for specific reasons or on specific goods, as listed in this call document.