

PROJECT

POLREC



Guide for Applicants

**- Training Open Call -
Innovative recycling methods, Digital processes and
Specific technical profiles related to polymer recycling**





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2. Abbreviations, acronyms, and European Commission disclaimer

Partner short name	Partner	Country
POL	Polymeris	FR
CEN	Centro Tecnológico da Indústria de Moldes, Ferramentas Especiais e Plásticos	PT
MAV	Clúster de Materials Avançats de Catalunya	ES
PCD	Plast Center Danmark	DK
WFG	Wirtschaftsförderung Raum Heilbronn GmbH	DE



**Funded by
the European Union**

The POLREC project is funded by the European Commission Joint Cluster initiatives for Europe's recovery (Euroclusters) under the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) Grant Agreement number 101074434. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EISMEA. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.





3. Introduction on POLREC project

The POLREC project is a collaborative project between the 4 European clusters and a technological centre: [Polymeris](#) (coordinator), [CENTIMFE](#), [Cluster MAV](#), [PCD/DMN](#) and [WFG](#). It started on the 1st of September 2022 and will end on the 31st of August 2025. POLREC is funded by the European Commission Joint Cluster initiatives for Europe's recovery (Euroclusters) under the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) Grant Agreement 101074434.

It focuses on sustainable development and recycling of high and low value polymers as a contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal aiming at zero CO₂ emissions in 2050 and to increase the European strategic autonomy on raw materials for polymer production.

During the project period of 3 years the consortium will explore how an intensified cluster and business network collaboration across borders and across sectors can meet this challenge and exploit the international business opportunities related to this topic.

3.1 Basic information about POLREC activities

POLREC will support companies on the following topics:

1. Network to improve the resilience of the EU industrial ecosystems by developing value chain interlinkages in the EU Single Market.
2. Innovate for strategic autonomy to build capacity in the most critical supplies of their ecosystems.
3. Adopt processes and technologies to reinforce transformation into a greener and more digital economy.
4. Train to foster up- and re-skilling of the workforce whilst attracting talents.
5. Go international to boost access to global supply and value chains.
6. Outreach to attract economic actors, mainly SMEs, beyond Euroclusters' locations.

One of the means to provide this support is an open calls mechanism aiming to support European SMEs in developing solutions related to polymer recycling, training on recycling technologies, networking and matchmaking in Europe and beyond.

3.2 Basic information about the POLREC Training Open Call

POLREC Training Open Call will provide financial support to SMEs working in the field of polymers and elastomers industries to foster the implementation of recycling solutions upon them.

Under this Training Open Call, the POLREC consortium will select **up to 72 SMEs that will obtain support on training in one or maximum 2 of the 3 different sub-topics** (Training on adopting innovative recycling methods, Training on adopting digital processes and Training on specific technical profiles related to polymer recycling) **from a training service provider**. The total budget for the POLREC Training Open Call is **105,000 €** and will be distributed on sub-grants of maximum **1,460 € per SME**.





The Training Open Call will be open from **21/05/2024 at 12:00 CET** to **31/08/2024 at 12:00 CET**. The link to the application documents and to submit your proposition can be found on the [Cluster Submission Platform](#).

The table below presents the three types of sub-grant financing opportunities. An SME can apply to **one or two of the sub-topics of the POLREC Training Open Call** or **submit maximum two applications on the same sub-topic under the condition that each application concern a different staff member**. **The SMEs applying to this call can apply to other POLREC Open Calls**, provided that the total amount granted under the different applications does not exceed 60,000 €.

POLREC Open Call	Sub-topics	Max. budget per SME	Max. number of funded SMEs	Opening & closing dates	Max amount available for sub-grants in €
Training	Training on adopting innovative recycling methods	1,460 €	72	21 May 2024 - 31 August 2024	105,000 €
	Training on adopting digital processes	1,460 €			
	Training on specific technical profiles related to polymer recycling	1,460 €			

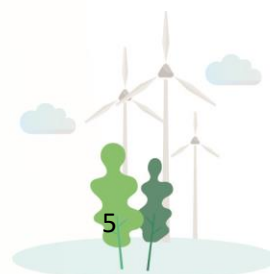
4. Scope and Expectations

The POLREC Training Open call focuses on SMEs from plastic, rubbers and composites industries to improve the skills of the companies’ staffs through the implementation of trainings related to polymer recycling, with the overall aim to foster the adoption by SMEs of polymer recycling methods to reduce their CO₂ emissions and increase their collaboration with other European SMEs.

The applications shall be submitted by individual SMEs for a training focusing on training on adopting innovative recycling methods, training on adopting digital processes or/and training on specific technical profiles related to polymer recycling.

The SMEs targeted by this call can cover various sectors, such as: transport and mobility, construction, renewable energy, digital and electronics, health, consumer goods, industrial and food packaging.

In brief, the POLREC Training Open Call targets SMEs aiming to recycle on a long-term strategy any plastic or rubber waste stream causing an environmental issue due to either volume or severance.





4.1 Type of actions supported

The types of actions described below are within scope of obtaining a sub-grant. The types of actions listed are also referred to as sub-topics in this Guide for Applicants:

- **Training on adopting innovative recycling methods:**
An SME can apply for a sub-grant to have access to a training course for its staff targeting the testing of a recycling process for chemical, biotechnological or mechanical recycling of plastic and rubber waste, which the applicant presently does not recycle or apply currently.
- **Training on adopting digital processes:**
An SME can apply for a sub-grant to have access to a training course for its staff targeting digital processes that will contribute to improved quality control and tracking of the applicant's recycled materials and/or recycling processes.
- **Training on specific technical profiles related to polymer recycling:**
An SME can apply for a sub-grant to have access to a training course for its staff to improve the technical skills on a specific topic regarding recycled polymer regulations and certifications, polymer recycling methods and techniques (quality control or traceability).

The format, language and the duration of the trainings are not limited. The trainings accepted can be on-line, in person or hybrid.

An SME can apply for one sub-grant to have access to a training course for one or more employees of its staff organisation.

The proposed training-provider and the related cost must be indicated in the application form, the type of service-provider is not limited and different types of organisations like e.g. universities, RTOs, consultancy agencies, academies, can be included. Only one training service-provider will be accepted per application. Applicants struggling to identify a service-provider are encouraged to contact one of the POLREC partners contact point (listed in section 11) to obtain support in identifying the relevant service-provider in accordance with their needs or to check a list suggested training service-providers through [this link](#).

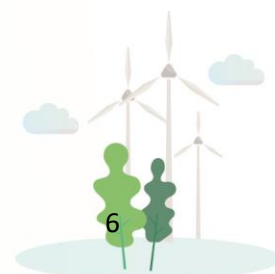
The sub-grant allocated shall cover part of or the total cost of the service-provider excluding VAT. No other expenditures can be covered by the sub-grant.

For the awarded projects the period to implement the trainings is **from the date of submission of the application on the platform until the 16th of May 2025**.

4.2 Expected impacts

The main impact of the training shall be to increase the skills that ultimately lead to a reduction in incineration and/or landfill of the SMEs plastic and/or rubber waste fractions approaching the overall goal of a reduction in CO₂-emissions.

Applicants should demonstrate how the new knowledge and learnings acquired on the trainings, will contribute to improve the processes or technologies related to polymer recycling on the company.





5. Eligibility conditions

To be eligible, applicants must satisfy all the following conditions:

1. Be a legal entity.
2. Be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) in accordance with the [SME definition of the European Union](#). An SME self-assessment tool is available [via this link](#).
3. Apply as an individual organization.
4. Be located in one of the Single Market Programme (SMP) associated countries.
 - EU Member States
 - Other countries which participate in SMP Work Programme/COSME Strand (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf) Implement or plan to implement the recycling of polymer/elastomer wastes or digital solutions for recycling processes.

Applications must be written in English and complete in all the parts indicated in application form. Only parts written in English will be evaluated.

SMEs that are under liquidation, in financial difficulty, or excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority are not eligible to apply for funding.

6. Funding conditions

Successful applications will receive the requested financial contribution in the form of a lump sum according to the following conditions:

A payment of 100% of the requested contribution will be provided maximum 1 month after the approval of the final activity report on the training activities. The approval will be made by the POLREC consortium.

The approval process will check the training outputs and the expected results mentioned in the final report submitted by the SME. Furthermore, a physical or remote meeting between the funded SME and POLREC partners may be organised to better qualify the technical results.





7. Training Open Call calendar for evaluation and implementation of activities

Training Open Call Calendar	
Step	Dates
POLREC Training Open Call for submissions of proposals	21 May 2024 (12:00 CET) – 31 August 2024 (12:00 CET)
Evaluation and selection of winners	31 August 2024 – 16 September 2024
Notification letters sent out to candidates	17 September 2024
Request of administrative documentation by the SMEs	17 September 2024 – 1 October 2024
Signature of the Sub-Grant Agreements (SGA)	Maximum 17 October 2024
Implementation of the trainings by the SMEs	Submission date of the application – 16 May 2025
Delivery of the final activity report on the training implemented by the SMEs	1 month upon the reception of the report (starting from the SGA signature)
Payment of the sub-grant to the SMEs	1 month upon the reception of the report (starting from SGA signature)

8. Application process

Applicants must submit their proposal for POLREC Training Open Call on the [Cluster Submission Platform](#) by logging into the platform and filling-in the required fields. If the applicant does not already have an account on this platform, it must create one to access to the application form. Once logged in, the applicant must follow the 4 steps submission:

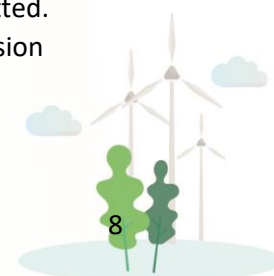
SECTION 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION. Please complete the fields with your business information.

SECTION 2: TRAINING DESCRIPTION. Please complete the fields with the training information.

SECTION 3: ANNEX. The quotation from your service-provider on which is based the amount requested for POLREC sub-grant. Please upload the requested document.

SECTION 4: VALIDATE AND SUBMIT. Validate and submit your application after completing all mandatory fields.

Applicants will receive an e-mail confirming that their application has been successfully submitted. Applications to the POLREC Training Open Call can be submitted exclusively on Cluster Submission Platform. No other documents are needed at this stage of the application process.





9. Evaluation and selection

Each application will be assessed by one evaluator from the POLREC project partners according to the following criteria.

9.1 Evaluation Criteria

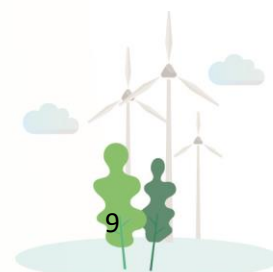
Criteria	Weighting score	Maximum note	Description
1. Network	10%	4 points	The application will obtain 4 points if either one of both conditions below are met: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant is a member of one of the following networks if located in Denmark, France, Germany, Spain or Portugal: Centimfe, DMN, MAV, Polymeris or WFG • Applicant is in an EU or SMP COSME participating country other than the POLREC's partners countries (Denmark, France, Germany, Portugal, Spain)
2. Relevance of the training for POLREC	10%	4 points	The training selected meets the POLREC objectives and benefit the project.
3. Relevance of the training for the SME	40%	4 points	The SME demonstrates that the training will benefit the company and its relevance for its strategic lines. The training selected will help to promote the polymer recycling on the company.
4. Relevance of the training for the SME staff	40%	4 points	The SME demonstrates that the training will improve the skills and knowledge of its employees. The motivations and objectives from the training programme ...

A score from 1 to 4 will be assigned to each of the criteria. Only full scores will be given for each individual criterion. The meaning of the scores is as follows:

- 4 Exceeds expectations
- 3 Meets expectations
- 2 Needs development
- 1 Below expectations

The final number of points of each application will be calculated as an average of the individual assessment provided by each evaluator.

To be considered for receiving the sub-grant, the minimum total pass note of 8 points out of the 16 total maximum points. Each criterion has a specific weighting score as described in the table above. The applications with the highest weighting total score will be selected within the limit of the available budget, in descending order. Obtaining the minimum pass note does not guarantee that the application will receive funding.





9.2 Evaluation and ranking for selected projects

After the external evaluation process, a ranking list will be defined where all the applications will be ranked according to their final scores. In case of equal scores, priority will be given to applications from SMEs located outside the POLREC's partners' countries.

Successful proposals above the minimum pass score (per criterion and in total) are funded in descending order until the available sum for the call is totally assigned. The proposals that scored above the threshold but did not manage to obtain funding will be placed on a reserve list. In the event of the withdrawal or eviction of an awarded applicant due to its failure to provide requested document to confirm its SME status or to follow the payment procedure, an applicant from the reserve list (in descending order) will be awarded instead and invited to sign a sub-grant agreement.

The final shortlist will be prepared by the POLREC coordinator (Polymeris) and POLREC partner - Clúster MAV.

9.3 Information to the applicants

Following the evaluation phase, the applicants will be informed about the outcome of the evaluations. The evaluation results will be sent to the main applicant's e-mail address associated with the application:

- A rejection letter in the event of the failure of the application with the detailed explanation.
- Or a notification letter for successful application. The instructions for the next steps will be described, with a focus on those related to the contractualization process.

9.4 Complaint procedure

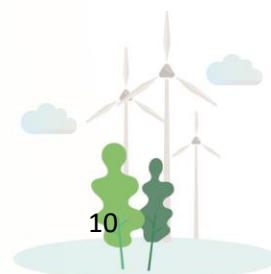
If after receiving the evaluation results an applicant disagrees with the result, a complaint can be sent (in English) to the project coordinator's e-mail (roxane.girard@polymeris.fr) within 3 working days following the official receipt of the evaluation result. The following information must be included:

- contact details and name of the application.
- the sub-grant that was applied to.
- the subject of the complaint.
- information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

In case a complaint is received, a re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming affecting the final decision on whether to fund the proposal.

The Review Committee will consist of the project coordinator Polymeris and Cluster MAV. It will examine the complaint based on the information brought forward by the applicant and decide whether the complaint is justified or not and will inform the applicant and the consortium on the decision taken.

If the complaint is considered justified, the Review Committee will notify 2 POLREC project partners, different to those which have done the initial evaluation, and ask them to re-evaluate the application and specifically the assessment part, subject to the complaint. The evaluators will then provide the Review Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by the Review Committee to the applicant in writing within 14 working days from the date of submitting the complaint.





10. Signature of sub-grant agreement and payment of the sub-grant

The winning applicants selected for funding will firstly have to provide an administrative document to prove their SME status to confirm their eligibility as well as the details of the bank account on which the funding will be transferred. Applicants will have a maximum delay of 10 working days after receiving their notification letter to provide the requested documentation.

The POLREC Consortium will proceed to verification of these documents to make sure the selected applications are eligible in a delay of 15 working days.

10.1 Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA) signature

If all eligibility conditions are met and confirmed, the SMEs selected for funding will be invited to sign a Sub-Grant Agreement with the POLREC partner – Clúster MAV.

This Sub-Grant Agreement details all rights and duties of the SMEs funded in the framework of the POLREC Training Open Call.

10.2 Payment procedure

The funding of 100% will be provided to the applicant no later than 1 month after the approval of the final activity report on the training implemented. Further details will be found in the Sub-Grant Agreement.

10.3 Implementation and reporting

The period to implement the trainings are from the date of submission of the application on the platform until the 16th of May 2025.

The use of the training budget will be controlled by the appointed POLREC partner at the beginning of the implementation of the action with the quotation from the service-provider and during the training with the invoice(s) and proof(s) of payment of the service(s) delivered.

The following rules must be respected:

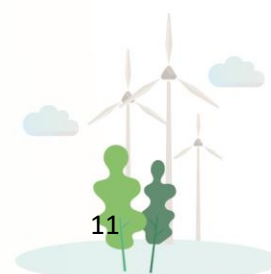
- Only costs generated between the date of submission of the application and the end of 16 May 2025 are eligible, exclusive of VAT.

The beneficiaries must keep the original documents of their expenses in case of an audit for a period of at least 5 years after the end of the POLREC project (at least until end of August 2030).

11. Helpdesk

For any enquiries regarding information and/or clarification about the present call, please contact one of the POLREC National Contact point listed:

- Spain: info@clustermav.com
- France (coordinator): roxane.girard@polymeris.fr
- Germany: wolf@wfgheilbronn.de
- Portugal: tania.mendes@centimfe.com
- Denmark: dwb@plastcenter.dk





Applicants located in other EU countries are invited to contact POLREC's coordinator should they have any question on the application process. Support in finding a service-provider located outside the partner's countries cannot be guaranteed.

12. Confidentiality, GDPR protection & intellectual property rights

A full list of applicants will be prepared containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will be also shared with the European Commission for transparency.

The applicants' list will not be public but will serve as statistics in project communication materials.

To process and evaluate proposals, the POLREC consortium will need to collect personal and industrial data. The POLREC project coordinator will act as a Data Controller for data submitted through the Cluster Submission platform. The Cluster Submission platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data are managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the Cluster Submission platform terms to ensure coverage.

The final list of the awarded beneficiaries will be made public, including name of the trainings, abstract, legal name of the companies, sector, country/region of origins, results of the project and duration of the trainings.

The results and IPR developed during the training implementation will be the exclusive property of the corresponding SME. For dissemination and use of results generated through the financial support from POLREC, the SMEs must credit the POLREC project through proper citation and appearance of the POLREC logo and EU Logo, including the proper citation: "This project is funded by the European Commission Joint Cluster initiatives for Europe's recovery (Euroclusters) under the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) grant agreement number 101074434".

13. Double funding

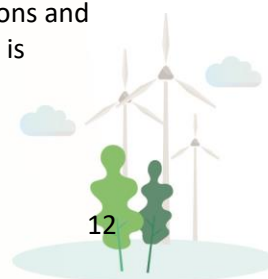
The SME applicant cannot apply for and/or receive funding outside of POLREC EUROCLUSTER for a similar training that could lead to a potential double funding of the same action. The POLREC EUROCLUSTER Consortium may carry out the necessary control actions with other SMP Eurocluster Consortia and other EU-funded projects to verify that there is no double funding ongoing.

14. 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 in 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.

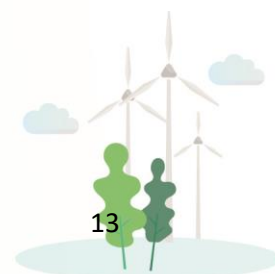




PROJECT INFO

Grant Agreement	Project 101074434 — POLREC
Programme	Single Market Programme (SMP COSME)
Call	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER
Topic	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01
Type of action	SMP Grants for Financial Support
Project Title	Supporting a green and resilient Europe through POLymer RECycling
Project starting date	1 st September 2022
Project end date	31 st August 2025
Project duration	36 months

PROJECT CONSORTIUM



PROJECT

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