



RESIST

OPEN CALL FOR SMEs TO RECEIVE
TRAINING FSTP

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. Introduction

This open call for Training 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.

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).

2. Objective and scope

The objective of this call is to support trainings services 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 Training FSTP.

The total amount of financial support for approximately 40 SMEs, start-ups and VSB in this call is up to 15 000 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 training services. Applicants can apply to be funded under the Training FSTP call. Applications can be submitted for one of the following Training actions:

- FSTP for online training: ≤250 €
- FSTP for physical training: ≤750 €

The maximum contribution by the open call for training activities is 750 €.

Place of the training:

We invite participants to partake in training sessions, whether they are held online or in person, regardless of the location. Please be aware that any costs related to travel and accommodation will not be reimbursed under this program.

Expected impact:

Training activities for SME employees are the basis for the industrial green and digital transition as they contribute to raising awareness of linked benefits, opportunities, and needs. Re-upskilling the workforce is also necessary to ensure the best use of these new solutions, in product design as well as on an operational level, and to transport the objectives of the EU Green Deal, the SME Strategy for a sustainable and Digital Europe, EU Circular Economy Action Plan, and other strategies into European SMEs.

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.

1. 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.

2. 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=1sNsNtcy7xcbNo00A83lgtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!881054478?execution=e1s1.

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 Training FSTP, the funding conditions are detailed in the following table:

Training FSTP	
Total funding available:	15 000€
Estimated number of awarded FSTP	Up to a maximum of 40 FSTP schemes will be provided, distributed as follows: Up to 30 schemes for online training Up to 10 schemes for presential training
Maximum funding per SME:	250€ online training 750 € physical training
Type of financial support:	Real costs to be justified
Maximum number of employees per SME and training activity	One person
Payment	To receive the full payment, awarded applicants will be required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To present their real costs (invoice or proof of payment) together with a certification or diploma provided by the organiser of the training activity, confirming that the SME has attended at least 75% of the training hours. - To fill in a survey to know their level of satisfaction with the funded training.
Period of funding of activities	Training activities held in the period from the opening date of the Open Call (20.11.2023; 12:00 CET) and no later than its closing date (30-11-24 at 12:00 (Brussels time)) may be funded

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 refers to all the calls (and their respective cut-off dates) in case an SME applies 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 approximately 40 applicants. The actual number can vary according to the applications received.

6. Eligible costs

Successful proposals shall receive the requested financial contribution based on the real costs of the action, with a limit of 750€ for physical training and 250€ for online training.

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 costs 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: https://clustersubmissionplatform.eu/eurocluster_post/resist-training-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 the cluster submission platform.</p> <p>It consists of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Application form (including company data, relevance of the training activity, 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 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). ▪ Ethics assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. <p>Applications that do not provide ALL the requested documents will not be evaluated.</p>
Language	English is the official language for RESIST open calls. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated.

<p>Links/ platforms where this open call will be published</p>	<p>All the RESIST open calls will also be announced in the following websites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <u>Funding & Tenders portal</u> (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home) 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. ▪ <u>Enterprise Europe Network site</u> (https://een.ec.europa.eu/) It is the world's largest support network for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). ▪ <u>European Cluster Collaboration Platform</u> (https://clustercollaboration.eu/open-calls) It is the European online hub for industry clusters, and it has a special section called "Funding" to announce the available open calls
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8. Timeline

<p>Opening date:</p>	<p>20.11.2023; 12:00 CET</p>
<p>Proposal submission date:</p>	<p>30-11-24 at 12:00 (Brussels time)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>until the maximum available amount of 15 000 EUR has been awarded (whichever occurs first).</p>

9. Evaluation

9.1 Evaluation procedure:

The submitted proposals on the Clusters Submission Platform will be subject to evaluation by the evaluation committee (the "RESIST consortium"), which will:

- Check eligibility and admissibility (See Who can apply – Admissibility and eligibility criteria above) and, if successful.

- Initiate the evaluation of the content of the proposals (Quality check).

RESIST Evaluation Committee will decide and will tell the results at the end of the month after each cut off dates (see award procedure), to the applicant.

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 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.

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.

9.2 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
<p>Motivation and coherence:</p> <p>Clarity of Purpose (5 points): The proposal should clearly state the purpose of the training and why it is necessary.</p> <p>Adequacy of the training activity to cover the employees' needs (5 points): person that will be trained fits the target audience of the training and the topics covered in the course match his/her needs.</p>	10
<p>Alignment with RESIST project objectives:</p> <p>Direct Relevance (5 points): The proposal should directly align with one or more of the RESIST project's objectives.</p> <p>Contribution to Project Goals (5 points): The proposal should explain how the training will contribute to the overall goals of the RESIST project.</p>	10
<p>Impact:</p> <p>Sustainability and Long-Term Benefits (5 points): The proposal should outline how the training's impact will be sustained over time and provide long-term benefits.</p>	10
Total	/30

If the result of each criterion is less than 2 the application will be rejected and the threshold for application selected for funding is 16 points out of 30 maximum.

The criteria will be scored from 0 to 10, where each score means:

- **(0) Not addressed:** The application doesn't address the criteria or can't be evaluated due to the lack of information.
- **(2) Very poor:** The criteria are not properly addresses, as there are inconsistencies or uncompleted information.
- **(4) Poor:** Even though the application addresses the criteria, there are significant weaknesses or inconsistencies in the information provided.
- **(6) Enough:** The application addresses the criteria even though it could be improved significantly.
- **(8) Very good:** The application addresses the criteria very well even though there are slight improvements that could be made.
- **(10) Excellent:** The application addresses all the relevant aspects of the criteria. Any deficiency is minor.

9.3 Awarding procedure:

This open call will have 6 cut offs.

- 8th of December 2023, 12:00 CET
- 16th of February 2024, 12:00 CET
- 12th of April 2024, 12:00 CET
- 7th of June 2024, 12:00 CET
- 30th of August 2024, 12:00 CET
- 30th of November 2024, 12:00 CET

However, all proposals must be submitted by the cut-off date of 30th November 2024 12:00 CET for evaluation.

This means that if an applicant submits their application after the cut-off date, their application will not be evaluated until the next cut-off.

The maximum number of awarded proposals per open call is 40 applications.

The latest submission of additional document for reimbursement is **20th of December 2024 12:00 CET.**

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 between proposals, priority will be given to highest scores for the criterion: “Impact”. If applicants receive the same score for this criterion, priority will be given to the “Alignment with RESIST project objectives”.

9.4 Redress procedure:

Applicants can contest the decision within 30 days after the evaluation Committee’s decision has been notified. All contests must be sent by email to Adam Priechodský a.priechodsky@autoklastr.cz 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

Invoice

If the application is approved, the beneficiary must submit to the RESIST consortium the invoice of the trainer 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, 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.

Payment scheme:

- Applicants need to send the invoice and the proof of expenditure (financial report and financial declaration), as well as the survey within 30 days from the realisation of the activity financed by the FSTP. Payment will be made within 30 days from the approval of the invoice, the financial report and declaration and the survey.
- 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 Training 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 Training 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 Training 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 Training 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 Training Open Call 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:

info@resisteurocluster.eu

13. Definitions

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

Evaluation Committee (EC): 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.

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/smeg.do;SME_SESSION_ID=1sN-sNtcy7xcbNo00A83lqtG34f2ngqWbepvXWPuV41icaCTTOW9!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.

