



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Call for Expression of Interest

EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event 2023

An initiative of the European Union





Call for Expression of Interest Clusters



EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event

In the context of Manufacturing Indaba

24 October to 26 October 2023

Johannesburg, South Africa



Corrigendum (26 June 2023): Tourism sector has been added to section “Who can participate” below.

Corrigendum (11.07.2023): The first cut-off date has been extended until 2 August 2023, 23:59 Brussels time

Corrigendum (21.08.2023): The event will support funded participation of up to 30 representatives.

OBJECTIVES

The European Commission (EC) will organise the **EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event** in the context of [Manufacturing Indaba](#) which will be held on 24 October – 26 October 2023.

The **EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event** itself will take place on-site in **Johannesburg, South Africa** on 24 October – 26 October 2023.

The event will be jointly organised by the European Commission and The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) of South Africa - with the support of the EU Delegation to South Africa and facilitated by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

The **EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event** will bring together cluster organisations, SMEs, Start-ups and European Industry Associations from the European Union (EU), non-EU COSME countries, and South Africa. It will provide participants an excellent chance to promote Cluster to Cluster (C2C), Cluster to Business (C2B), and Business to Business (B2B) collaborations. The overall objective of the event is to promote the exchange of information and provide networking opportunities for European cluster organisations and their members with counterparts from South Africa, particularly in the fields Agri-food, Green Industries, Chemicals and Metals, Transport (Maritime and Automotive), Digital Tech, Textile and Leather, **and Tourism.**

The objectives for the participants include:

- Strengthening EU-South Africa cluster cooperation for the benefit of their members, including a seminar, a cluster matchmaking event, and site visits.
- Identifying potential areas of common interest for cooperation and synergies, in terms of the sectoral, value chain, and market focus of their SMEs and other companies.
- Improving, through clusters, the EU-South Africa industry and academia-industry collaboration in research, development, and innovation. For its members, the clusters will identify possible areas of RDI collaboration (academia, research organisations, industries...).

The call for expressions of interest is being launched to identify an European delegation made up of representatives from cluster organisations ([please see section “Who can participate” below](#)) who are willing and committed to participate in the EU-South Africa Matchmaking Event.

By submitting an expression of interest in response to this call, you are indicating your acceptance of the call's terms.

Further details about the event, the eligibility requirements, selection process and how to submit an expression of interest can be found below. Applicants that are selected will receive an official confirmation and additional information. Applicants that are not selected may participate at their own cost if they fulfil the eligibility criteria of this call.



This call is published on the ECCP website. Expressions of interest to participate in this event must be submitted electronically by 2 August (Wednesday) 2023, 23:59 Brussels time – first cut-off date and 7 September (Thursday) 2023, 23:59 Brussels time – second cut-off date (the second cut-off date will be available in case of still available places after the first round of evaluation after the first cut-off date – see more details in section *Selection process* below) through:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ClustersCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

Late applications could be accepted for participation, if eligibility criteria are fulfilled and that costs are borne by the participants. Late applications are accepted until 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest through:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ClustersCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

The organisers reserve the right to close the application process once the maximum capacity for participants is reached.

This call is targeting only cluster organisations and business network organisations. A separate call exists for SMEs, Start-Ups and European Industry Associations. So, if you are an SME, Start-Up or European Industry Association you should respond to the call that is available at

<https://clustercollaboration.eu/content/eu-south-africa-matchmaking-event-2023-call-expression-interest-smes-start-ups>

CONTEXT OF THE INITIATIVE

The Event will take place in the context of the ECCP activities. The European Commission facilitates international cluster cooperation through the ECCP including the organisation of specific cluster matchmaking events and policy development actions. The objective is to support cluster organisations to develop partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members, especially of SMEs. The events are currently funded under the EU Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs Programme (COSME). As the cornerstone of the European strategy in support of SMEs' internationalisation through clusters, the ECCP provides a wide range of information and services to facilitate the interaction between clusters not only within Europe, but also with international partners.



ACTIVITIES & AGENDA

The EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event will include the following activities:

- **Preparatory Webinar** – an opportunity to receive information on undertaking business in South Africa and guidance on how to participate successfully in the planned event. *(date tbc)*
- **Technical Webinar** – a session helping future participants of the matchmaking event to make the most of their profiling in the B2Match tool and explain the procedures to optimise the booking of meetings. *(date tbc)*
- **Site visits:** *(date tbc)*
- **Seminar** on knowledge exchange to foster EU-South Africa cooperation. *(date tbc)*
- **Matchmaking meetings** between Cluster Organisations, SMEs, Start-ups and European Industry Associations from EU (and non-EU COSME) countries and South Africa. *(date tbc)*
- Debriefing session to collect **feedback and testimonials** from cluster participants.
- **Participation at the [Manufacturing Indaba](#)** – *(date tbc)*

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

This invitation is addressed to cluster and business network organisations interested in collaborating with South African counterparts in the following sectors:

- Agri-food
- Green industries
- Chemicals and metals
- **Tourism**
- Transport (Maritime and automotive)
- Digital tech
- Textile and leather

The event will support funded participation of **up to 30 representatives**. More participants can be accepted upon confirmation and at their own cost. Late applications could be accepted for participation, provided that the eligibility criteria are fulfilled and that costs are borne by the participants. Late applications are accepted until 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest.

The organisers reserve the right to close the application process once the maximum capacity for participants is reached.

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible:

- The cluster or business network organisation must be registered in the **European Cluster Collaboration Platform** (ECCP) (www.clustercollaboration.eu) **with a complete profile** (a link to the complete cluster profile of each applicant (registered) on the ECCP should be provided through the application: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ClustersCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>)



- The cluster or business network organisation must be engaged in providing or channelling cluster or network support services to SMEs and certify that they meet the description of 'innovation clusters' in Annex I of the "EU Framework for State Aid for Research, Development, and Innovation"; for more information, please follow the link: [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627\(01\)&from=EN](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52014XC0627(01)&from=EN). and
- The cluster or business network organisation must be a legal entity established in a European Union Member State or other COSME country. See the list of non-EU participants in the COSME programme here: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579>

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated qualitatively using the following selection criteria:

- Cluster activity in the target sectors.
- The potential to maximise matchmaking and collaboration prospects via participation in this mission, as shown by a detailed explanation of the sort of partnership sought by the applicant and the likelihood of developing practical cooperation as a result of the event. This declaration of interest in cooperating must be concisely stated in the questions in the application form.
- The desire and capacity to collaborate more closely with other South African cluster and network organisations in order to better support SMEs, larger firms, and research actors in their global competitiveness via collaborative efforts, as well as, to assist them in initiating new projects.
- Clusters operating beyond the stated sectors should extensively motivate the argument for their application to be added in a reserve list that will be determined in due time.

Organisations that have not participated before in the ECCP matchmaking events are encouraged to apply.

The selection of applications will be based on the afore mentioned criteria and information provided in the application form; in cases of equal merit, the balanced geographical and sector coverage of the EU and COSME participating countries will be considered. Furthermore, in cases of equal merit, organisations participating for the first time at the ECCP matchmaking event will have priority.

The organisers reserve the right to ask for additional information from the applicants, if necessary.

Attendance at the seminar, the matchmaking event, the debriefing session, and the site visits are all compulsory.

Cluster and Business Network Organisations selected to participate in the Event must send a commitment e-mail agreeing to attend the preparation webinar, the on-site seminar, conduct at least four meetings, attend the on-site visits and engage in the final 30-minute debriefing session.

SELECTION PROCESS

This Call for Expression of Interest has two cut-off dates (deadlines):

1. **2 August 2023, 23:59 Brussels** time and
2. 7 September 2023, 23:59 Brussels time (the second cut-off date will be available in case of still available places after the first round of evaluation after the first cut-off date).

First cut-off

Applicants will receive a notification whether their application is selected, put on the reserve list or rejected within two weeks after the first cut-off date. Applications on the reserve list may be edited



and resubmitted until the second cut-off date – the last submitted application will be considered in the evaluation.

Second cut-off

Applicants will receive a notification whether their application is selected or rejected within two weeks after the second cut-off date.

Applicants that are not selected may participate at their own cost if they fulfil the eligibility criteria of this call.

Applications on the reserve list of the first cut-off will be evaluated together with the applications received by the second cut-off date.

Late applications could be accepted for participation, provided eligibility criteria are fulfilled and costs are borne by the participants. Late applications are accepted until 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest.

COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

- **Return flight to South Africa** (without local transport), will be compensated based on actual costs but **up to the limit of 950€/participant** and up to the cost of the economy fare for the selected EU participants. Any upgrade on the fare will be at the cost of the participant.
- **A maximum 3-night stay in a hotel** will be funded as 100% of the actual costs but up to the limit of 125€/night for the selected EU participants.

Note that if more than one person from the same organisation participates and requests reimbursement of expenses, only one person per organisation can be reimbursed.

The organising team will take care to inform duly selected participants on agreed discounted rates for accommodation, as well as available airline offers.

Essential requirements to qualify for reimbursement of expenses:

- Attendance throughout the whole agenda (24 October – 26 October 2023)
- Completing at least four bilateral matchmaking meetings
- Attending local on-site visits
- Submitting a debriefing questionnaire at the event's debriefing session and/or completing an online survey immediately after the event, and a follow-up questionnaire provided as an online survey to assess follow-up activities four months following the event, with all areas filled in a sufficient amount of detail.

Covid-19: It is the responsibility of the participants to follow the latest entry regulations to South Africa. Uncompleted travels due to Covid-19 will not be compensated.



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest should be submitted by **2 August (Wednesday) 2023, 23:59 Brussels time – first cut-off date** and **7 September (Thursday) 2023, 23:59 Brussels time – second cut-off date** (the second cut-off date will be available in case of still available places after the first round of evaluation after the first cut-off date.); through the following link: <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ClustersCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

The expression of interest should include the following:

- A fully completed Cluster questionnaire on the profile of the cluster.
- Proof/evidence of the completed cluster profile and registration in the ECCP (link to your cluster profile)

Please ensure that you submit full, accurate, and up-to-date information and contact information.

Please note that this event is completely free.

Late applications could be accepted for participation, provided eligibility criteria are fulfilled and costs are borne by the participants. Late applications are accepted until 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest through:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ClustersCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

To take the maximum of your participation and benefit from all planned pre-event activities and meetings available during the EU-South Africa Matchmaking Event, we encourage you to send your Expression of Interest at your earliest possible and avoid last minute registrations.

Should you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the ECCP team at eumatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu.

For further information about cluster cooperation and assistance, please visit the [ECCP Website](#).

Your personal data is processed in accordance with **Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725** on the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.