![European Cluster Collaboration Platform]

Guidance document for applicants

'Towards Green Transition' Facility:
call for applications

15 February 2021

TOWARDS GREEN TRANSITION

An initiative of the European Union

Introduction

The 'Towards Green Transition' Technical Assistance Facility is a unique support service provided by the European Commission related to the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP). The key objectives of the Facility are to:

- Enable clusters that are registered at the ECCP to promote the Green Transition practices and approaches amongst their members, particularly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs);
- Provide technical advisory support by utilising resource efficiency providers, to train and enable cluster managers to advise their cluster members (i.e. SMEs to become more resource efficient).

The benefits of the support to clusters include:

- Optimising resource efficiency of European SMEs within ECCP clusters;
- Support for green entrepreneurship through hands-on technical advice and support;
- Best use of opportunities of greener and more efficient value (supply) chains;
- Facilitated market access for green SMEs within clusters.

Why apply?

Selected clusters will receive tailored and in-depth consulting and support services on green transition and resource efficiency. Beneficiaries will profit from the best-suited mix of technical advisors and business support experts, who will help clusters to take their green transition one-step further, effectively tackling challenges and overcoming obstacles. No direct financial support is provided by this action.

Technical assistance services consist of general and specific technical advisory support. Depending on the specific needs and challenges of each selected cluster, such services will be tailor-made and focused on the specific sector or challenge at hand. They may consist of a selection of the components specified in Table 1 and Table 2 below.

Key elements of our approach

- Build a stronger community of clusters with a focus on green transition practices;
- Direct advisory support by a pool of world-class Green Transition experts;
- Encourage knowledge transfer and expand green transition practices amongst cluster members, particularly SMEs;
- Continuous Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration

Table 1: Field of advisory support to greening efforts

Field of advisory support	Specification
Resilient business models	- Business Model Resilience (BMR) Framework - Embedding risk mitigation and adaption measures within business models - Resource efficiency principles for resilience - Resilient business operations - Future thinking and strategic foresight - Adapting strategy to changing contexts
Tapping into sustainable investments	- Investment strategies and plans - Investing in green technologies, products and activities - Minimising and offsetting the carbon footprint of investments - Sustainable investment linkages
Greening business processes	- Incorporating sustainability as an integral consideration in decision-making processes - Enhancing staff consciousness to green issues and actions
Developing environmentally friendly products and services	- Sustainable innovation of the product and service offer of the cluster - Green product development
Optimising your water consumption	- Reducing water usage - Reusing water - Water treatment - Water consumption in value chains
Maximising your energy efficiency	- Business strategies on energy efficiency principles - In buildings, machinery, transportation, etc.
Improving waste management, reducing waste	- Efficient use of resources in productions and value chains - Recycling principles - Investment value of recycling
Lowering your carbon footprint	- Understanding and measuring your footprint as part of operation - Creating plans to lower the footprint - Tracking carbon footprints within value chains

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration

EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Adopting circular economy solutions for materials	• Better informing choices on material usage • Broadening options on what materials to use
Reducing harmful emissions	• Measuring emissions • Capturing emissions
Advancing sustainable innovation	• Business innovation principles • Sustainable innovation in value chains • Enabling and encouraging green ideas

Table 2: Specific advisory services

Advisory product	Specification
One-on-one teaching	The technical expert will provide one-to-one teaching and coaching to the cluster management, tailored towards the challenges and needs of the specific cluster.
Direct consultancy	Advisory support to help in the implementation of specific projects with SMEs.
Workshops together with clusters facing similar issues/problems	Together with other clusters and guided by technical experts, jointly discuss common challenges and issues in order to learn from each other, find solutions and develop roadmaps towards green transition of the cluster.
Online webinars	Virtual presentations by technical experts on green transition for clusters, tailored towards specific sectors or needs.
Exchange and learning sessions between clusters	Learn from other clusters and peer cluster managers that have undergone a similar path towards green transition; sessions to be coordinated by technical experts.
Guidance documents	Theoretical approaches, guidance and roadmaps for cluster managers and dissemination materials for cluster members.

Who can apply? Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for support, the applicant must comply with the following requirements:
- Applying clusters should be registered as part of the ECCP;
- The applicants can consist of 1 or multiple clusters;
- The clusters should demonstrate that the requested knowledge/training will be applicable/transferrable to SMEs;
- The project should demonstrate how the cluster will ensure knowledge transfer to at least 10 SMEs during the implementation of the support;
- The clusters should provide a clear outline for added value and business case for obtaining the support (for example, step up towards a resource efficiency strategy more sustainable practices, and commitment to adaptation).

How to apply?

Applicants are asked to fill in all sections of this application form on EU Survey and upload a signed Declaration of Honour.

The application form consists of the following sections.
- Part 1 – Identification: this part is a quick checklist to make sure that your application is eligible;
- Part 2 – Your cluster and the green transition practices: this part asks for information about the applicants;
- Part 3 – Advisory support needed: this part addresses the project needs and justification for support through the 'Towards Green Transition' Facility;
- Declaration of honour: this form needs to be signed to declare honesty, eligibility, absence of conflict of interest, and consent for the use of data and information.

On 22 February 2021, a webinar will be organised to answer questions on the application process (click here to sign up). After that date, if you have any further questions during your application preparation process, please contact clustersgogreen@ecorys.com. All questions and answers will be collected and published on the ECCP website.

How will applicants be selected?

The following table presents the selection criteria based on which the applications will be evaluated:

Table 3: Selection criteria

Criteria	Definition	Weight
Eligibility	This criterion assesses the eligibility of the application	Y/N
Needs assessment	This criterion assesses the relevance and consistency of the needs and challenges to be addressed by the Facility.	30%
Feasibility	This criterion assesses to what extent the needs of the cluster can be addressed by the type of support offered by the Facility.	30%
Impact	Potential to leverage the results of the support and generate impact on its members, in particular SMEs.	40%

Evaluation process and final selection

Each application will be evaluated against the criteria presented above. The final scoring will be on a scale from 0 to 5 for each criterion, as in the table below. Each aspect needs to score at least 2 to be considered for the selection. The judgement will be conducted by an independent selection committee. The 25 applications with the highest overall score will be awarded support from the Facility.

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration
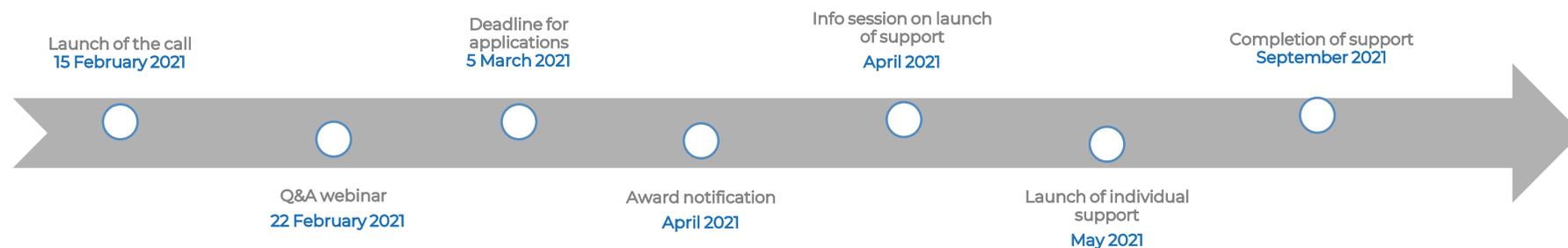
Table 4: Evaluation criteria

Score	Description
0 - Fail	The application fully fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1 - Poor	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, showing substantial shortcomings.
2 - Fair	The application addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements/more clarity is needed, and some particular details are missing (in most areas).
3 - Good	The application addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements/more clarity is needed, and some particular details are missing (in limited areas).
4 - Very good	The application addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question with minor shortcomings.
5 - Excellent	The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question.

Once the evaluation is completed, all applicants will receive a written notification on the evaluation outcome. Individual feedback will be provided.

Timeline

The application and support process will follow the timeline below:

Launch of the call
15 February 2021

Deadline for
applications
5 March 2021

Info session on launch
of support
April 2021

Completion of support
September 2021

Q&A webinar
22 February 2021

Award notification
April 2021

Launch of individual
support
May 2021

Contact

The questions in the application form are self-explanatory. Where needed, a clarification or additional information has been added to the questions (click on the ?-button). For any remaining queries, please do not hesitate to contact clustersgogreen@ecorys.com

Strengthening the European economy through collaboration

**EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM**