



# CLUSTER BOOSTER ACADEMY

## CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

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# Call for Expression of Interest

## Cluster Booster Academy 2024

### Context

To effectively manage a cluster, a diverse set of skills is necessary to provide efficient support to all members, address the needs of various stakeholders, and contribute to the digital and green transition while increasing resilience, and ensure the cluster own sustainability.

In response to the growing demand for comprehensive cluster management training, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) offers a specialized 4-day intensive program. This programme aims to equip participants with the necessary expertise and knowledge, focusing on the following objectives:

1. Provide cluster managers with practical skills, knowledge, and coaching sessions to enable them to implement their own cluster action plans.
2. Address the needs of European cluster management teams in their daily work by enabling them to offer innovative, highly professional and diversified services to SMEs.
3. Improve the skills of cluster staff through a "train the trainers" approach that enables them to disseminate their knowledge more widely, thereby strengthening the cluster ecosystem as a whole.
4. Develop skills for effective community building and networking by providing opportunities for participants to connect and collaborate with one another throughout the Cluster Booster Academy.
5. Enhance participants' ability to identify and address structural challenges within their clusters by providing tools and resources for clarifying mission, vision, and aims.
6. Enhance participants' ability to address real-world challenges by providing case studies and practical examples related to cluster strategy and action plan development.
7. Support cluster managers in implementing advanced strategies, growing their clusters and building sustainable business models.
8. Foster an understanding of the role of clusters in promoting regional development and economic growth by providing examples and case studies of successful cluster initiatives.

During these interactive and hybrid training events, participants will immerse themselves in a dynamic learning experience facilitated by cluster experts. This includes a variety of training methods, speeches, and interactive sessions such as:

1. Engaging "frontal" lessons that encourage interaction between trainers and participants.
2. Teamwork sessions involving case studies and practical exercises, fostering peer-learning through small group discussions.
3. Individual "homework" assignments to apply the learned concepts in practice, followed by feedback sessions for collaborative problem-solving and the development of personalized roadmaps. This ensures that the training has a significant impact and drives real changes in cluster management.
4. Inspirational presentations and guest talks that offer insights from experts and enable participants to anticipate trends and innovations in their industrial

ecosystem. Whenever possible, these sessions may be conducted in a unique format or setting to facilitate interactive discussions and illustrate the guest speakers' presentations.

Through this comprehensive approach, participants will gain valuable knowledge, strengthen their strategic vision, and effectively lead their cluster members towards future success.

### **Format**

The Academy is an annual event that hosts between 30 to 40 participants. In its third edition, it will once again adopt a hybrid format, spanning four days:

1. 2 days online events (which can be split into several sessions at different dates)
2. 2 days physical events (approximately two months after the virtual sessions, participants will have ample opportunity to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills into practice)

## **Objective of the call**

**The objective of this call for expression of interest is to provide universities, education institutions, research centers, regional agencies/authorities, and clusters themselves with the opportunity to express their commitment to host the two-day in-person event of the Cluster Booster Academy, scheduled for March 2024 (ideally during the week of 11-15 or 18-22 March 2024).**

In collaboration with the European Commission, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform team will carefully select the locations and dates for these workshops. The final decisions will be made in consultation with the chosen venue host, considering the criteria outlined below and ensuring opportunities for networking between regional stakeholders and the participants.

## **How can the host benefit from providing the venue?**

Although the host is not financially compensated for providing the venue, hosting the Cluster Booster Academy offers a range of compelling opportunities for the venue provider. By hosting up to 40 Cluster managers from across Europe, along with certified and experienced coaches, the venue provider can not only establish valuable new contacts but also engage in highly stimulating discussions. Furthermore, we anticipate the emergence of fruitful synergies among the venue provider, its network, the workshop participants, the ECCP, and enhanced visibility through collaborative promotion activities before, during, and after the workshops. Participating as a venue provider offers an incredibly exciting chance to be at the forefront of cluster management excellence and innovation.

## **Who can apply (eligibility criteria)**

Applications are open to any individual stakeholder or to a consortium of more than one stakeholder involved or interested in bringing together cluster managers from across Europe. Thus, this includes regional development centres, research centres, universities or else.

## What is expected from the host?

The host is expected to undertake or finance the following aspects of the event:

1. **Venue:** The host should provide or cover the cost of a suitable venue capable of accommodating a 2-day training course for up to 50 persons (40 participants plus trainers and speakers). This includes three rooms, with two rooms accommodating up to 25 people each, equipped with individual desks. The third room should have a capacity of at least 50 people to accommodate participants, trainers, and speakers (without the need for individual desks). The European Cluster Collaboration Platform team will cover the costs of catering and other potential expenses such as transportation to the venue or a reception for the speakers, moderators, and organizers.
2. **Invitations and Speakers:** The host should proactively engage regional authorities, clusters, research institutions, and other relevant speakers who possess expertise in cluster organization and management. The involvement of these speakers will not be compensated.

Additionally, the host's input and ideas are highly valued. The organizing team welcomes and encourages a collaborative approach, where the host can contribute their own ideas and suggestions. These ideas can be mutually discussed and incorporated into the planning and execution of the Cluster Booster Academy, ensuring a comprehensive and enriching experience for all participants.

### Venue Requirements

The host has the flexibility to choose a venue that suits the needs of the event, including options such as conference hotels, universities, technology parks, and other appropriate venues. It is essential to ensure that the venue provides accessibility for disabled attendees, with facilities and measures in place to accommodate their needs. The rooms within the venue should be adaptable to allow for flexible setups, as the room arrangement may need to be adjusted during the course of the event. The host is responsible for providing the ECCP organizing team with a map of the venue and comprehensive information about the available facilities. Additionally, accommodation should be either provided within the venue itself (such as hotel rooms) or conveniently located within walking distance or easily accessible by public transportation.

### Technical Equipment

All three rooms within the venue must be equipped with the necessary technology to facilitate remote connection, streaming, and presentations. This includes monitors/screens, projectors, speakers, and microphones suitable for conference calls and audiovisual presentations. It is crucial that this equipment is already available at the venue, as the cost of acquiring or renting it will not be covered. Having well-functioning technical equipment is essential for the smooth operation of the event and ensuring that participants can engage effectively with the content and activities.

### Onsite Support

The host provider has the responsibility of providing sufficient onsite support both before and during the event. This includes conducting technical checks and rehearsals on the day

prior to the event to identify and address any potential issues. On the day of the event, it is important for the host to ensure an appropriate number of technicians, as well as stewards/hostesses, who can manage the event seamlessly. This onsite support team plays a vital role in attending to the needs of participants and speakers, ensuring that technical aspects run smoothly and providing overall assistance to create a positive and engaging experience for everyone involved.

### Hotel/Accommodation

While the participants are responsible for covering their own accommodation costs, it is essential that the chosen venue is conveniently located, with easy accessibility to at least one hotel within walking distance or a short public transportation ride. The provision of support before the workshops, such as offering hotel recommendations and, if possible, negotiating special rates, would be highly appreciated. This assistance will contribute to ensuring that participants have convenient and suitable accommodation options in close proximity to the venue.

What is expected from the host	
Before the event	During the event
<b>Covering of all the costs</b>	
Engagement with the regional authorities	Event steward/hostess
Engagement with local clusters and other organisations	On-site technical support for the streaming of potential remote speakers
Engagement with local speakers/experts on, e.g.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- relevance of sustainability, digitalisation and resilience for clusters</li> <li>- Cluster organisations' business models</li> <li>- Cluster organisations' member recruitment</li> </ul>	On-site support for short-notice printing/technical activities
Identification, contact and arrangement of the venue	Support for participants regarding informing them about potentially interesting local events (before or after the workshops), directions, transport, etc.
Contribute identifying the best quality/price accommodations for participants and negotiate promotional rates	
Support by sharing a curated list of reputable catering organizations	

**Table 1** What is expected from the host

## Support from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform will support in facilitating the organisation of the event, its content and structure. The ECCP will elaborate the material for the promotion (before, during and after) to be used in the communication channels of the platform itself, by the European Commission and by any other relevant national or local stakeholder.

Support provided by the ECCP	
Before the event	During the event
Revision, consistency, and management of all the working documents	Coordination of all the relevant tasks
Promotion via the ECCP, the European Commission and other relevant channels	Support with speakers' presentations and documents they might want to provide (this includes the speakers provided by the venue host)
Proposing and contacting speakers/experts/moderators (outside of the venue host's network)	Promotion via the ECCP, the European Commission and other relevant channels
Registration of the participants (form, data collection...)	Teams account for the potential streaming of speakers. Setting the link
ECCP mailbox to send information for the people registered	Catering for participants, trainers, speakers incl. coffee breaks
Costs of travel and accommodation of speakers	
Information about previous experience	
Contact and feedback from the European Commission	
Distribution of information prior the event (agenda, participants booklet and input paper)	
Contacting with stakeholders, institutions...	

**Table 2 Support provided by the ECCP**

## Assessment process

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform, with the approval of the European Commission and the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), will select the host according to the following criteria:

Criteria	Criteria description	Assigned weighting
1	Quality of the proposal and level of details	20%
2	Capacity to host the physical event	30%
3	Proposition of suitable regional stakeholders to invite as speakers	20%
4	Support offered by the host organisation (i.e. venue, technical equipment), including support going beyond the minimum requested.	10%
5	Accessibility and availability of appropriate accommodations	10%
6	Other aspects, offers and/or suggestion that the region would like to highlight to strengthen its application	10%

## Procedure for submission of expression of interest

Expressions of interest must be submitted duly completed, following the instructions given on the ECCP website until **September 22, 2023 18:00 CEST**.

Applications must be completed in English.

Only fully filled in and timely submitted applications will be assessed.

This Call is an invitation for an Expression of Interest only. It is not an offer, and the submission of an Expression of Interest does not create a contract or agreement of any kind between the European Commission nor the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the entity expressing the interest to host 2 days of the Cluster Booster Academy event.

Contact: In case of any questions on this Call for Expression of Interest, please refer to [events@clustercollaboration.eu](mailto:events@clustercollaboration.eu)

## **ANNEX I: APPLICATION FORM**

You are requested to fill this application online [here](#)

This form must be filled in all sections.

All the information must be provided in English, including the additional documentation.