RENEW-BOOSTER Eurocluster

-

Financial Support to Innovation projects



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Call text

Background and policy context

The European Union is facing increasing challenges related to the resilience and competitiveness of its clean energy supply chains. Recent disruptions and geopolitical developments have shown that Europe is highly exposed to critical material dependencies and supply chain bottlenecks, particularly in technologies essential for the green transition such as wind and solar, photovoltaics, grids and energy storage. The RENEW-BOOSTER project aims to address these challenges by supporting European SMEs in developing and deploying innovations that contribute to:

- Reducing dependency on critical materials and key supply chain vulnerabilities
- Accelerating the green and digital transition
- Supporting the objectives of the Net-Zero Industry Act (NZIA) and the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA)

The initiative provides financial support to SMEs working on innovations linked to renewable energy supply chain resilience and diversification

Scope and objectives of the call

This call supports SMEs that develop innovations contributing to resilient and diversified clean energy supply chains. Funded projects should be at a technology readiness level (TRL) of 6-7, lead to tangible results within a short implementation period and contribute to the following areas:



OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY, IN PARTICULAR FLOATING OFFSHORE WIND ENERGY

Eligible projects include:

- Development of offshore wind technologies and components, including generators, blades, floating platforms and related systems, with improved sustainability, circularity and reduced use of critical raw materials.
- Electrical, transmission and power system solutions for offshore wind, including cables, substations and offshore grid technologies, that reduce dependency on critical raw materials or contribute to the green and digital transition.

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- Innovations in materials, design, manufacturing or processes for offshore wind technologies that reduce dependency on critical or strategic raw materials through substitution, material efficiency, reuse or recycling.
- Integrated offshore wind solutions enabling deployment, operation and maintenance of offshore wind installations, particularly in deep-water and floating offshore wind applications.

PHOTOVOLTAICS

Eligible projects include:

- Development of new high-efficiency PV cells, modules, and materials (e.g. replacement of aluminium with composite materials; reduction of tin and lead in interconnections; substitution of glass).
- Advancements in PV power plant architectures and hybrid electricity/heat technologies.
- Improvement of PV module recyclability and innovation in power electronics for PV systems.
- Cross-sectoral synergies with other industries (e.g. microelectronics), where EU manufacturing capacities and processes can be leveraged for the PV sector.

ENERGY NETWORKS

Eligible projects include:

- Development of SF6-free equipment, advanced power cables made from recycled materials, and tools for optimizing energy infrastructure.
- Deployment of systems to model, monitor, and forecast the health of cables, increasing lifespan and reducing maintenance costs.
- Smart grid solutions such as dynamic line rating and predictive maintenance.

CROSS-SECTORAL INNOVATIONS, APPLICABLE TO EACH ABOVEMENTIONED SECTOR

Eligible projects include:

- Advanced digital solutions like artificial intelligence (AI), quantum computing, blockchain, and digital twins to optimize energy and environmental performance including biodiversity considerations.
- Development of technologies that can improve business processes, such as energy management systems, predictive analytics, and tools for assessing environmental impacts.

Examples of eligible innovations include:

- New or improved products/services enabling substitution of critical materials
- New suppliers and diversified supply chains validated through pilot testing
- Process innovations improving manufacturing efficiency, quality, and resilience
- Digital solutions enabling supply chain monitoring, optimisation, traceability, and performance
- Technologies reducing environmental impacts in production and sourcing

Projects should be clearly linked to the call's objectives and demonstrate relevance to EU priorities on competitiveness, resilience, green transition, and digitalisation.

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The **Critical Raw Materials Act** (CRMA) and the **Net Zero Industry Act** (NZIA) are foundational to the RENEW-BOOSTER strategy. These two European frameworks will be of peak importance for each project evaluation. Each project must prove their contribution to these two pillars which are directly related to the Green Deal and European competitiveness.

The CRMA, Regulation (EU) 2024/1252 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 establishing a framework for ensuring a secure and sustainable supply of critical raw materials and amending Regulations (EU). **Innovation projects related to extraction, processing and recycling within the EU territory will be carefully considered.**

- Among the three RENEW-BOOSTER value chains, for instance, improving the supply chain of materials like silica, neodymium (LREE) or copper would be very relevant. Innovation projects applying for a grant in RENEW-BOOSTER **must build their application by taking into account the European strategy regarding Critical Raw materials.**

The NZIA, Regulation (EU) 2024/1735 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 establishing a framework of measures for strengthening Europe's net-zero technology manufacturing ecosystem and amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1724. The EU aims for at least 40% of net-zero technology manufacturing—such as photovoltaics (PV), offshore wind, electricity grid technologies (including digital grid solutions), and electric charging infrastructure for transport—to take place within its territory. These key technologies are essential for achieving the 2050 Net-Zero objectives while also strengthening the development of the EU industry.

- Among the three RENEW-BOOSTER value chains, an example could be relocating part of the manufacturing process or **technological** components within the EU will be highly considered in the evaluation. Innovation projects applying for a grant in RENEW-BOOSTER **must build their application by taking into account the European strategy regarding Net Zero Industry.**

Project proposals must explicitly reference their alignment with CRMA and/or NZIA objectives and provide relevant information (potential reduction of CO2 and resources, relocation of a part of the value chain…)

Eligibility criteria

- To be considered eligible, applicants must meet **all** of the following criteria:
- **Applicant type and SME status**
  - Applicants must comply with the **EU definition of SMEs** (EU recommendation 2003/361) and demonstrate sufficient operational capacity to implement the project:
    - Staff headcount: fewer than 250 persons
    - Annual turnover: ≤ EUR 50 million OR Annual balance sheet total: ≤ EUR 43 million *Note:* These ceilings apply to the figures for individual firms only. A firm that is part of a larger group may need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from the group (partner and/or linked enterprises), in accordance with EU SME rules.
    - Applicants must be established in one of the following eligible countries: EU-27 + all countries participating in the SMP.

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- **Scope and value chain relevance**
  - The proposed activities must fall under the value chain of:
    - **Photovoltaics (PV)**
    - **Offshore wind**
    - **Energy grids**
- **Applications**
  - An SME may submit a maximum of one application per strand, whether applying individually or as part of a consortium. Consequently, an SME may submit one application under Strand A and one application under Strand B, provided that the proposed activities are distinct and no double funding occurs.

- **Compliance with EU fundamental values**
  - Proposals must respect **EU fundamental values**, notably with regard to:
    - Racism and incitement to violence
    - Discrimination based on religion, gender, or sexual orientation

- **Eligibility requirements and deadline**
  - Applicants must comply with all submission requirements, deadlines, and any RENEW - BOOSTER call requirements.
  - The project proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline (30 November 2026 at 17:00 CET)** via the dedicated platform:
    - **EU SURVEY**

General EU funding principles

Applicants must also comply with general EU funding principles, including:

- **No double funding** from other EU or public sources
- **Transparency and accuracy** of declarations and submitted information
- Ability to sign and comply with a **third-party funding agreement**

Ineligible proposals

Ineligible proposals include those that:

- fall outside the scope of the call (PV, offshore wind, energy grids),
- do not match the objectives of **Strand A / Strand B**, or
- breach environmental and compliance principles, including DNSH (see below).

Consortia

- Consortia of SMEs are eligible to apply **under Strand B** of this call. A consortium can include a maximum of three SMEs.
- Consortia are not eligible under Strand A.
- Each SME, applying either individually or as a partner in a consortium, may be eligible for a maximum of **EUR 60,000** funding overall (intended as FSTP cumulative budget from any of the RENEW-BOOSTER Eurocluster calls).
- When applying as a consortium, candidates are **jointly responsible** for ensuring the proper use of funds. Consortium members may be considered jointly liable with respect to obligations under the funding agreement.

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Co-funding requirements & budget allocation

RENEW-BOOSTER is part of the Euroclusters initiative. The purpose of the RENEW-BOOSTER is to provide funding to SMEs that are close to market uptake, while also encouraging them to invest in their own projects and share part of the financial risk. This approach distinguishes RENEW-BOOSTER from many national and international funding schemes. As a result, SME applicants are subject to co-funding requirements. Please refer to Graph 2 for further details.

Eligible Costs
As part of this funding round, applicants must complete **two separate budget tables**:

1. RENEW-BOOSTER Grant Budget
This budget forecast is intended to show how the SME intends to use the funding received from RENEW-BOOSTER. Eligible costs may include, among others:

- Equipment and materials
- Software and licenses
- Personnel costs
- External services and subcontracting
- Subcontracting must be justified, necessary for implementation of the project and consistent with the proposed work plan and budget.
- Other project-related expenses
- VAT is eligible only to the extent that it is non-deductible and non-recoverable under applicable national VAT legislation. Deductible or recoverable VAT is not eligible. This follows the general EU grant rules applicable to the RENEW-BOOSTER programme.

2. Co-funding Budget
This budget must clearly demonstrate the SME's own financial contribution to the project. The purpose is to show that, on top of the financial support provided by RENEW-BOOSTER, the SME is investing its own resources and sharing the project risk. Please note that:

- Co-funding must consist of the SME's **own financial contribution**.
- **In-kind contributions are not eligible** as co-funding.
- Therefore, **personnel costs, salaries, and staff effort/time are not eligible** as co-funding.
- Applications that do not adequately complete the co-funding budget table **will not be considered for funding**.

Private co-funding is assessed both at application stage and at project reporting stage.

Application stage: Applicants must demonstrate that they can provide the required private co-funding corresponding to the selected funding strand and grant level. Depending on the funding scheme, minimum co-funding rates apply.

Reporting stage: Private co-funding must be documented. Co-funding must originate from private financial resources and cannot consist of in-kind contributions.

Ineligible Costs
The following costs are **not eligible under either budget table**:

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- Depreciation costs (Both; existing equipment, and newly purchased equipment)
- Recoverable VAT
- Costs unrelated to the approved project activities
- Costs that are already financed through other public funding sources (double funding)

Applicants are encouraged to carefully review the eligibility rules before submitting their application.

Call structure and funding strands

To ensure clarity for applicants, this call is implemented through two distinct support strands reflecting different innovation pathways and implementation logics. Applicants should select the most suitable strand when applying.

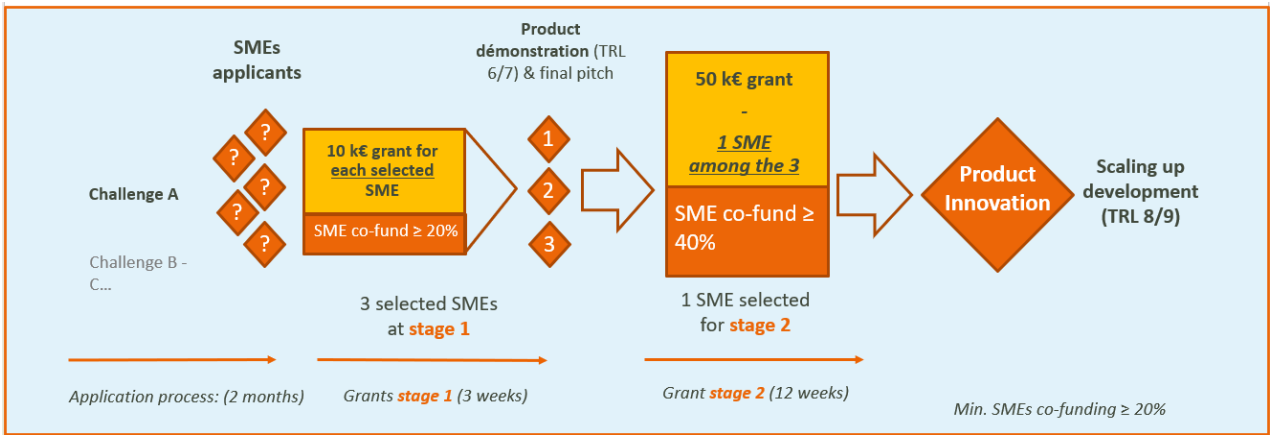
Strand A – Challenge-driven projects

Strand A supports SMEs responding to specific "challenges" defined by relevant energy or industrial leaders (challenge owners). These challenges are linked to product innovation and supply chain diversification and are implemented through a two-stage process:

- Stage 1 (Feasibility / Proof-of-concept): rapid development and validation of the proposed approach. In **Stage 1**, several SMEs apply to a specific challenge (A, B, C, etc.). **Three SMEs are selected for each challenge,** and each receives a **€10k grant** with at least **20% of private co-funding** to carry out a **product demonstration (TRL 6–7)** over about **3 weeks**.

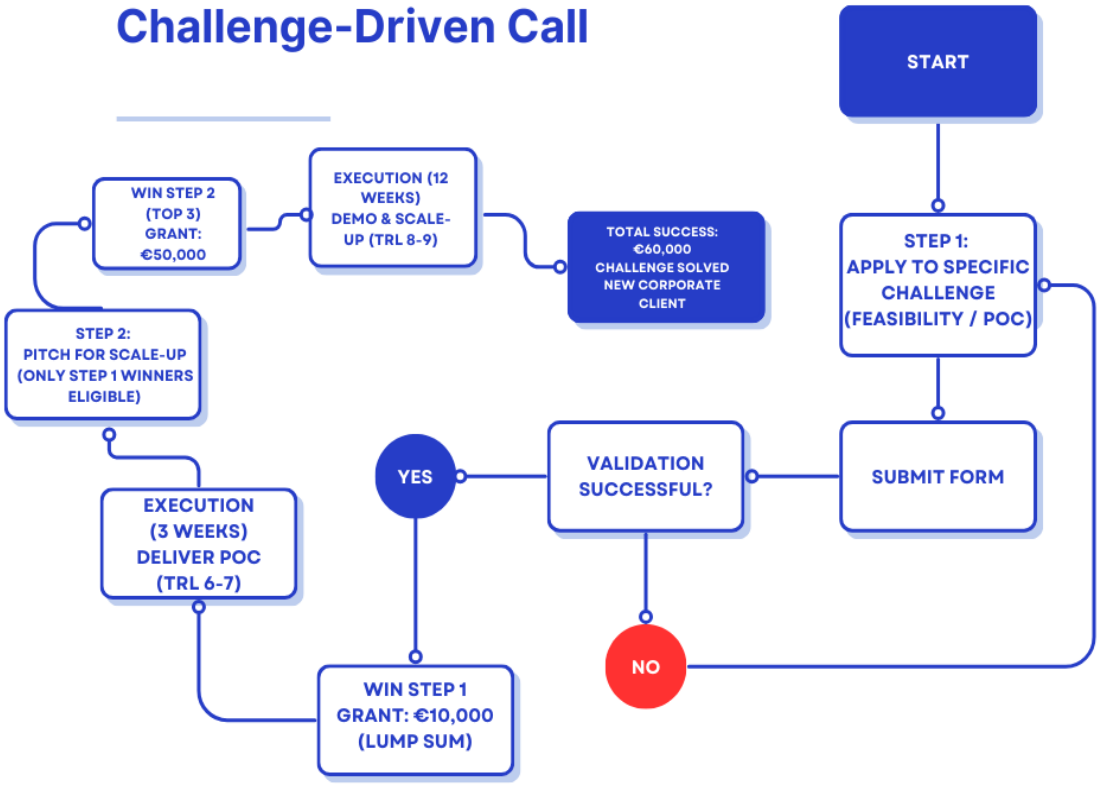
- Stage 2 (Demonstration / Scale-up): further development and implementation of the solution to reach demonstrator's readiness. Based on a final pitch and results, From the **three SMEs which passed Stage 1, only one is selected for Stage 2** and receives a **€50k grant** with **≥40% private co-funding** to further develop its solution over **12 weeks**, leading to **product innovation and scaling up (TRL 8–9)**.

Challenge owners may be involved in the assessment of applications and in monitoring progress, ensuring strong market relevance and uptake potential.



Graph 1. RENEW-BOOSTER funding set up for Challenges - Strand A.

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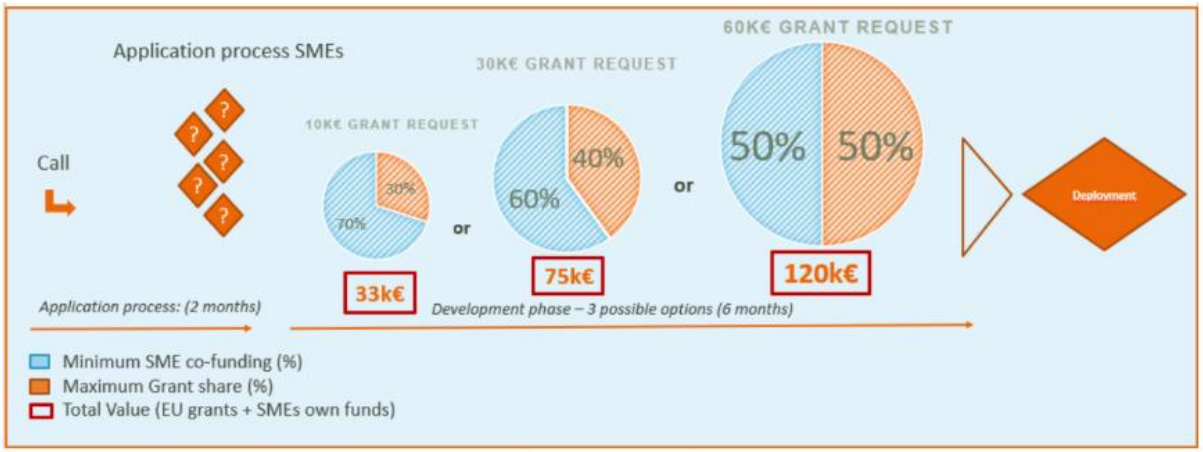
Strand B – Open calls

Strand B supports SMEs applying through a single-stage open call mechanism. It includes an open call (bottom-up) for product innovation and supply chain diversification. The call is set up as a **cascade funding grant where between 12 and 72 projects are selected**. During a **2-month application process**, SMEs can request **grant amounts**—up to **€10k, €30k, and €60k**—corresponding to increasing levels of project maturity during a **development phase of up to 6 months**. Each funding level requires **minimum SME co-funding** (from about **30% to 50%** proportionalized as the grant size increases), ensuring strong private commitment. These funding options can be **combined sequentially** (e.g. prototype → demonstration → deployment), leading ultimately to a **POC (Proof of Concept) or deployment phase**, with a total mobilised budget per POC from around **14 000 euros to 120 000 euros**.

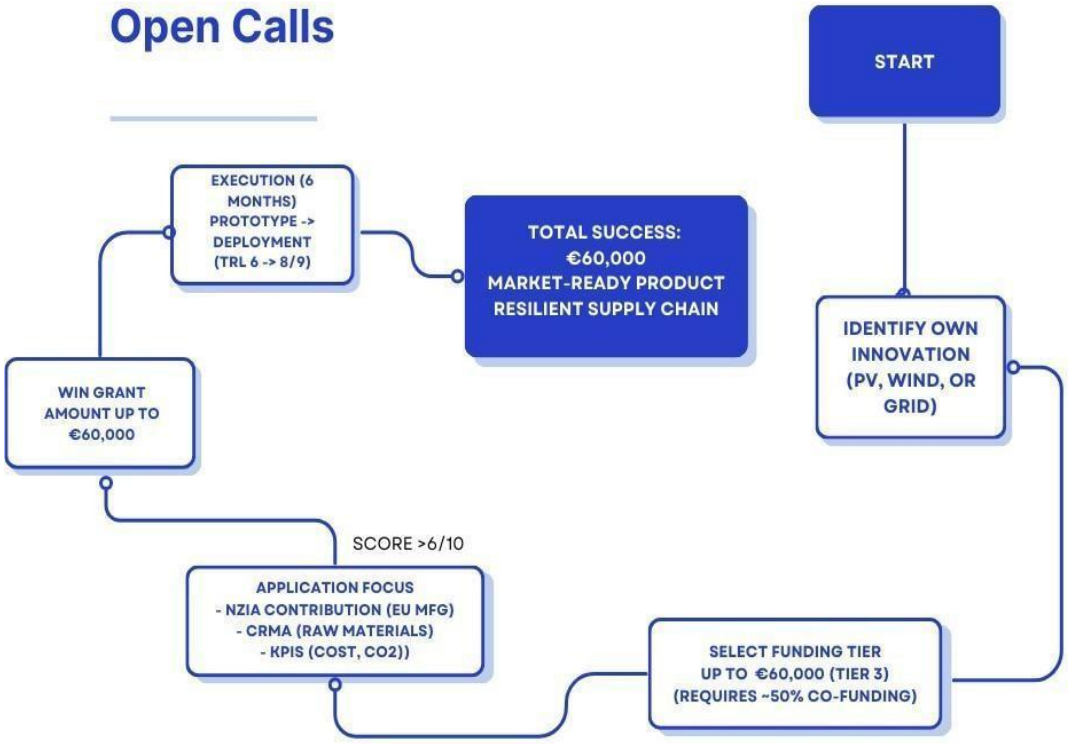
It is reminded that the cumulative maximum FSTP support per SME under the whole set of RENEW-BOOSTER calls is EUR 60,000. An SME may submit a maximum of one application per strand, whether applying individually or as part of a consortium. Consequently, an SME may submit one application under Strand A and one application under Strand B, provided that the proposed activities are distinct and no double funding occurs.

Strand B uses a one-stage selection process and applies co-funding requirements depending on the requested grant amount.

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Graph 2. RENEW-BOOSTER funding set up for Open Calls - Strand B



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Timetable and deadlines

Projects must have a duration between **3 and 6 months**, starting from the date of signature of the sub-grant agreement with the RENEW-BOOSTER consortium.

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call publication	28 September 2026
Deadline	30 November 2026 (17:00 CET)
Evaluation process	December 2026
Communication of results	Mid-January 2027
Contract signature	End-January 2027

Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) – mandatory principle

All funded actions must respect the "Do No Significant Harm" (DNSH) principle. Proposals that involve activities which cause significant harm to environmental objectives may be excluded. Applicants must confirm DNSH compliance through self-check and must not propose actions that contradict EU environmental protection objectives.

Examples of activities that may be considered non-compliant include:

- Activities leading to significant greenhouse gas emissions without adequate mitigation measures.
- Activities causing substantial pollution, environmental degradation, or damage to biodiversity and ecosystems.
- Activities that clearly conflict with applicable EU environmental legislation or environmental protection objectives.

At application stage, a self-declaration of DNSH compliance is generally sufficient. Applicants may be requested to provide additional information or supporting evidence during evaluation or project implementation if deemed necessary.

Funding conditions and grant allocation

Funding approach

Funding is provided as financial support to third parties. The funding logic depends on the strand:

- Strand A (Challenges): **two-stage approach**, potentially with staged funding aligned to stage 1 (feasibility/proof-of-concept) and stage 2 (demonstration/scale-up) implementation.
- Strand B (Open calls): **single-stage approach** with co-funding requirements based on the requested amount.

Co-funding and grant amounts (indicative)

Applicants should plan budgets in line with the **co-funding rate** applicable to the requested grant amount.

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The financial support that the RENEW-BOOSTER grant beneficiaries of this call will obtain **must be matched** by the recipient SMEs with a certain percentage of **other private financial sources** (in form of debt or own financial resources, and not as in-kind contributions/staff costs/etc), thus crowding in private capital into the projects.

For consortium applications, the financial support may be transferred to the lead SME acting on behalf of the consortium. The lead SME is responsible for distributing the funds among consortium members in accordance with the consortium agreement and any applicable funding agreement. The co-funding requirement applies individually to each SME receiving financial support. Each funded SME must provide and, upon request, demonstrate the required percentage of private financial resources corresponding to the financial support allocated to that SME. Compliance with the applicable co-funding requirements must be evidenced in accordance with the rules of this call and the relevant funding agreement(s).

The call text and the sub-grant agreement remain the authoritative sources for grant ceilings, co- funding rates, and eligible cost rules.

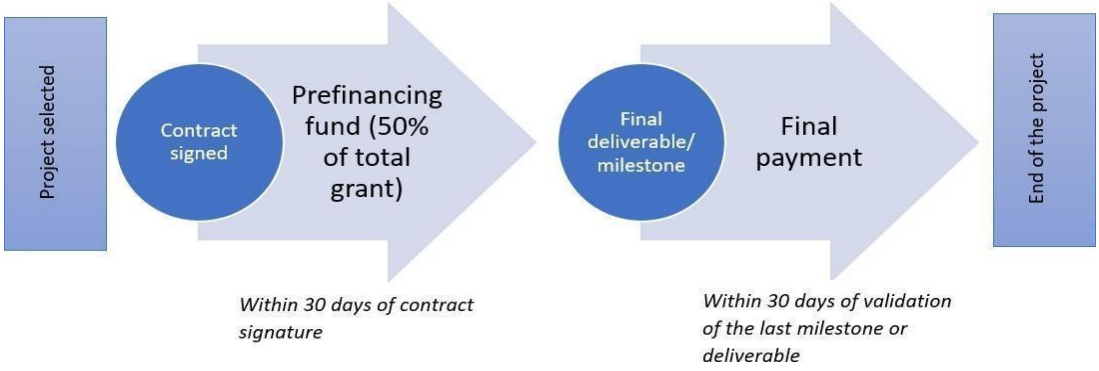
Payment schedule (when will the grant be paid to SMEs?)

Strand A:

Stage	Beneficiaries	Payment	Trigger
Stage 1	3 selected SMEs	€10,000 each	Upon signature of the Stage 1 Sub-grant Agreement
Stage 2	1 SME selected among the 3 Stage 1 beneficiaries	€50,000	Upon signature of the Stage 2 Sub-grant Agreement

Table 1. RENEW-BOOSTER funding schedule for selected projects - ONLY for challenges

Strand B:



Graph 3. RENEW-BOOSTER funding schedule for selected projects - ONLY for Open Calls

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Final deliverable requirements

Each SME must submit a final deliverable (e.g., slides, technical report, KPI summary). The **final deliverable** must include an **impact assessment**.

As a minimum, it must include:

- **First results:** measured results and/or well-justified estimated results
- **Earnings and/or savings** related to the targeted KPIs (e.g., cost reduction, efficiency gains, reduced dependency, time-to-market improvements)

This final deliverable template will be provided to SMEs by the RENEW-BOOSTER project partners. SMEs contribution through this deliverable is mandatory and will be one of the conditions to be fulfilled by SMEs to receive the final payment. The final deliverable must also contain the duly completed feedback questionnaire on satisfaction with the project support, mandatory for the beneficiary SMEs: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/Single_Market_Programme_Feedback_Survey (to be printed in pdf and annexed to the final report).

Suspension of payments

Please note that **payment suspension may occur** in case of **non-compliance with contractual obligations**, including failure to deliver agreed milestones, insufficient reporting, or breach of eligibility/compliance conditions.

Evaluation criteria and selection process

Evaluation criteria

All eligible proposals will be evaluated based on three criteria: **Excellence**, **Impact**, and **Quality & efficiency of the implementation**. Each criterion is scored on a scale from **0 to 10**. To be considered for funding, proposals must reach the **minimum threshold of 6/10 for each criterion**. Further, at least 10% of the supported SMEs will come from EU regions different from the countries of individual Euroclusters' partners. Specific attention will be paid to EU-13 countries in the calls and those EU regions with which the Euroclusters' partners had no previous cooperation and shall focus on engaging actors from regions with different levels of economic development.

Section evaluated within the application form	Highest score	Threshold	Evaluation criteria
Excellence	10	6	• **Level of innovation and ambition**, including the novelty and added value of the proposed solution • **Soundness and feasibility of the technical approach**, including evidence that the project can be delivered within the planned timeframe • **Relevance to the call scope and the selected strand objectives** (Strand A or Strand B) • **Clarity and credibility of the proposed solution and expected outputs**

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Impact	10	6	• **Expected contribution to supply chain resilience and/or diversification** within the PV, offshore wind, and/or energy grids value chains • **Contribution to the green and/or digital transition**, with clear expected benefits • **Market relevance and uptake potential**, including a credible plan for commercialisation or deployment • **Expected measurable outcomes**, supported by clear KPIs/indicators and how they will be assessed
Quality & efficiency of the implementation	10	6	• **Quality and realism of the workplan and timeline**, including clear tasks and deliverables • **Capacity and expertise of the team**, including appropriate allocation of roles and resources, where applicable • **Budget adequacy and cost-effectiveness**, demonstrating alignment between activities and requested resources • **Quality of risk identification and mitigation measures**, ensuring robust project delivery

Maximum total score: 30 points
Funding decision basis: ranking by total score, subject to thresholds and available budget.

Tie-breaking procedure

In case of equal total scores, the ranking will be determined according to the following priority order:

1. **Higher score on Impact**
2. **Higher score on Excellence**
3. **Higher score on Quality & efficiency of the implementation**
4. **Geographical balance:** If proposals are still tied after applying points 1–3, priority may be given to proposals that contribute to a broader geographical coverage of funded SMEs across eligible countries and regions, in line with the objective of ensuring balanced participation.
5. **Final decision by the Evaluation Committee:** If proposals remain tied after applying all the above criteria, the final decision will be taken by **consensus of the Evaluation Committee**, based on the overall programme objectives and portfolio coherence.

Evaluation workflow

The evaluation follows a structured and transparent process to ensure fairness and consistency:

1. **Eligibility check** (administrative completeness, SME status, country eligibility, scope fit) according to what stated under the “Eligibility criteria” section.

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2. **Quality evaluation by two independent evaluators according to the criteria listed above.**
3. **If needed, a third evaluator is involved** in resolving divergent scoring.
4. **For Strand A - Challenge-driven proposals, challenge owners may contribute input on relevance and feasibility.** Evaluations are carried out by a panel consisting of the relevant Challenge Owner and two independent external evaluators appointed by the RENEW-BOOSTER consortium.
5. **All evaluators and challenge owners participating in the evaluation are subject to confidentiality and conflict-of-interest requirements.**
6. Final ranking is established based on the evaluation scores, in accordance with the evaluation and tie-breaking rules set out in this Guide, and subject to the available call budget.

How to apply

Applicants are required to complete the online application form (Here) and provide all requested information and supporting documents. Incomplete applications may be rejected.
The application form includes, at minimum, the following elements:

- Project details
- Company information
- Signed declarations (if applicable)
- Budget and work plan
- Additional annexes/templates (if applicable)
- Financial Identification Form

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. In addition to the information provided in the application form, applicants will be required to fill-in and upload supporting documents via the submission platform. Templates for such supporting documents, when available, are provided directly within the application form.

Support, helpdesk and FAQs

A helpdesk will be available to support applicants during the call period, including questions on eligibility and submission procedures.

Support channels include:

- **Helpdesk email**
  - **If you have any general questions about RENEW-BOOSTER, or any financial/eligibility specific questions, please contact: bes@energycluster.dk**
  - **For any specific questions about Strand A – Challenge-driven projects, please contact: ge@norwegianoffshorewind.no**
  - **For specific questions about Strand B - Open Calls, please contact: nicolas.lemonnier@capenergies.fr**

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- **Applicant webinar(s) and Q&A sessions**
  - A webinar on “How to Apply? Support and FAQ” took place on March 23, 2026. You can find the recording here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJiKlH0Hy0E&t=1225s
  - In order to be informed about future webinars or events, please follow RENEW-BOOSTER on Linkedin.

- **FAQ document:** https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/files/bed90ddf-a7eb-4a85-84aa-7667a1173add/1c0ff11e-a007-4102-a52d-2e6bc8504a48

Complaints procedure

For any complaints regarding the evaluation results, please submit your complaint to the email address bes@energycluster.dk within 14 days after communication of the results.

Complaints may only concern:

- Procedural errors in the evaluation process;
- Manifest errors in the assessment, including factual inaccuracies or omissions that may have affected the evaluation outcome.

Complaints may not concern the independent professional judgement of the evaluators or seek a re-evaluation solely because the applicant disagrees with the evaluators' conclusions.

Your email should include the following information:

- SME name / application name
- Applicants contact name and details
- Object of your complaint
- Information and evidence of the alleged breach

The evaluation committee will examine the complaint based on the information brought forward by the applicant, will assess the case and decide whether the complaint is justified or not. The applicant will be informed on the decision taken. If the complaint is considered justified, the evaluation committee will notify the evaluators that the application should be re-evaluated based on their assessment.

The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by the evaluation committee to the applicant in writing within 14 working days from the date of submitting the complaint. This decision will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

Useful links

- **Call announcement on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal:** EU Funding & Tenders Portal
- **ECCP:** profile.clustercollaboration.eu/profile/cluster-partnership-initiative/587afc8c-51fd-4c98-a88f-630ddd5161c5
- **Application form and supporting documents templates**: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/RENEW_BOOSTER_2nd

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