



CALL FOR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

SUBMISSION TOOLKIT



Funded by
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Table of contents

1. About ELBE Eurocluster	3
1.1. THE ELBE ALLIANCE: EUROPEAN LEADERS OF BLUE ENERGY	3
1.2. ELBE EUROCLUSTER: SUPPORTING THE OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY (ORE) SECTOR.....	3
1.3. CONTACT POINTS.....	4
2. General information.....	4
2.1. TARGET	4
2.2. TYPES OF SERVICES ELIGIBLE	5
3. Application	5
3.1. ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION	5
3.2. CALL PLANNING	6
3.3. APPLICATION FORM & PROCESS.....	6
4. Evaluation and selection process.....	8
4.1. SCORING SYSTEM	8
4.2. EVALUATION PROCEDURE	8
4.3. ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS.....	9
5. Monitoring and reporting process.....	9
5.1. ELBE TECHNICAL FOLLOW-UP: THE ELBE SHERPA	9
5.2. MONITORING AND PAYMENTS.....	9
6. Legal aspects.....	10
6.1. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION	10
6.2. GENDER EQUALITY	10
7. Disclaimer.....	10

Tables

Table 1 - ELBE Eurocluster partnership..... 3

Table 2 - Contact points..... 4

Table 3 - Types of services offered. 5

Table 4 - Selection criteria 6

Table 5 - Call planning..... 6

Table 6 - ELBE Eurocluster types of support and how to combine them 7

Table 7 - Scoring system 8

1. About ELBE Eurocluster

1.1. THE ELBE ALLIANCE: EUROPEAN LEADERS OF BLUE ENERGY

The ELBE Alliance aims at positioning Europe as the world technological and industrial leader in Blue Energy. It gathers seven European clusters with top expert companies and R&D organizations in Blue Energy to tackle the expansion of this sector beyond Europe.

This Alliance offers new opportunities to SMEs in offshore energy to share technology, establish alliances and create new business models across different sectors.

1.2. ELBE EUROCLUSTER: SUPPORTING THE OFFSHORE RENEWABLE ENERGY (ORE) SECTOR

This project is the continuation of the ELBE and ELBE+ projects led by the ELBE Alliance and is funded by SMP COSME under the Joint Cluster Initiative (JCI). This European Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Joint Cluster Initiative will intensify collaboration across seven key EU regions in this field. This partnership – which is built on the ELBE Alliance – will support European offshore renewable energy SMEs in the development of their resilience capacity and boost their ecological and digital transition.

The ELBE Eurocluster partnership gathers the following organisations:








<p style="text-align: center;">Cluster Energía del País Vasco</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">CEPV Spain www.clusterenergia.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Energy Cluster Denmark</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">ECD Denmark www.energycluster.dk</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Pôle Mer Méditerranée</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">PMM France www.polemermediterranee.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">De Blauwe Cluster, Belgium</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">DBC Belgium www.blauwecluster.be/</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Research Institutes of Sweden</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">RISE Sweden https://www.ri.se/en</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Pomeranian Platform for OW</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">The Pomeranian Platform for the Development of Offshore Wind Energy in the Baltic Sea Poland</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">GCE NODE, Norway</p>  <p style="text-align: right;">GCE NODE Norway https://gcenode.no/</p>	

Table 1 - ELBE Eurocluster partnership

1.3. CONTACT POINTS

For any enquiries about the ELBE Eurocluster project, please contact the Project Coordinator, Cluster Energía del País Vasco at Marcos Suarez msuarez@clusterenergia.com. For any enquiries regarding information and/ or clarification on the Innovation Support Scheme (whether it be about vouchers or services), please contact your national contact point:

Country	Partner	Contact	E-mail address
Spain	CEPV	Marcos Suarez Ander González	msuarez@clusterenergia.com agonzalez@clusterenergia.com
Belgium	DBC	Hanne Deprez Ann Overmeire	hanne.deprez@blauwecluster.be ann.overmeire@blauwecluster.be
France	PMM	Colin Ruel	ruel@polemermediterranee.com
Sweden	RISE	Nermina Saracevic	nermina.saracevic@ri.se
Norway	GCE NODE	Tom Fidjeland	tom@gcenode.no
Poland	PV	Dąbrowski Łukasz	L.Dabrowski@pomorskie.eu
Denmark	ECD	Peter Lundberg	plu@energycluster.dk

Table 2 - Contact points

Shall you be from another country, please choose one of the partners listed above as your contact point.

2. General information

2.1. TARGET

The target audience of the ELBE Eurocluster call for individual services is European innovative SMEs from the Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) sectors and **intending to bring solutions that will address and match with one of the thematic priorities of ELBE Eurocluster**. Applicants shall **apply together with their service provider** or describe the type of service they expect to get and **be established in one of the following eligible countries: EU-27, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Norway**.

ELBE Eurocluster project tackles 3 horizontal dimensions corresponding to EU priorities:

- Digital transition: digitalisation transforms the economy and provides many new opportunities to enhance the productivity, efficiency and sustainability of the ORE domains. The development of modern information technologies makes it easier for stakeholders to work together and promote the efficiency of the overall system. Digital transition includes the use of cloud-based services, mobile devices and apps, sensors and other IoT technologies, Augmented Reality (AR), 5G network, digital twins, autonomous transportation, artificial intelligence, cyber security, block-chain technology and big data driven innovation, robotics, ...
- Ecological transition: regarding the EU2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, which focuses on climate change and energy sustainability, the ORE sector is focused on preserving biodiversity and reducing its ecological footprint.
- Resiliency: resiliency, as the ability not only to withstand and cope with challenges but also to undergo transitions, in sustainable, fair and democratic manner, has become a new compass for EU policies. ORE domains are fully integrated in the objective of a resilient Europe, and more particularly towards an energy independence and carbon neutral.

2.2. TYPES OF SERVICES ELIGIBLE

Services may be provided in various forms (individual meetings, webinars, matchmaking events...):

Individual services	Objective	Financial contribution
1 - Access to test facilities	Provide easier access to existing labs or test-sites which are necessary for the completion of tests.	Up to €10,000 per service - Approximately 22 services supported
2 - International development	Support on building tailored identity shaping, implementing business agreements and joint collaborative projects.	
3 - Market & business intelligence	Support can be (but is not limited to): reducing regulatory burden, providing access to market information, bottom-up analysis to identify vulnerable products/services, identification of the reasons for dependency on critical inputs, technologies, or infrastructures.	
4 - Development and technology transfer	Support on assessing the transferability potential of some technology to another sector or solve a technical problem to enable technology transfer.	
5 - Green and IT Technology expertise	Support from DIH and other providers to SMEs in their green and digital transition to improve their energy resource efficiency, progress in the IT transition and in IT based smart manufacturing.	

Table 3 - Types of services offered.

The budget of this call is €220 000, which will be spent in two windows, each of €110 000. For each window, a minimum of 11 individual services will be supported (up to €10 000 each). Applications will be funded until the budget is completed.

3. Application

3.1. ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION

3.1.1. Eligibility conditions

Proposals will be eligible only if all the following conditions are met:

- Applicants must be established in one of the following eligible countries: EU-27, Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein;
- Applicants must be a SME and declare that their SME status is in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union available via this [link](#);
- Applicants must be SMEs developing innovative products or technologies that are or can be positioned on the ORE value chains;
- Applications must be written in English (applications partially / fully written in another language are not eligible) and must not exceed maximum number of characters stated in each text box of the predefined template found at <https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ELBEIndividualservices2023>
- Applications must be submitted through the web-based system by **March 8th 2024, 5 pm CET**;

- The application must be submitted with the concrete name of a service provider or a service provider profile description.

3.1.2. Evaluation criteria

The evaluation of eligible applications will be based on a set of criteria:

Evaluation criteria	Details
1 – Business strategy and scale-up potential	How the requested service will help the SME in its scale-up potential as well as in the development of its resilience capacity and/or in boosting its ecological and digital transition.
2 – Relevance to ELBE Eurocluster domains	How the SME develops innovative products or technologies that are positioned or can be positioned on the ORE value chains
3 – Pertinence of the service provider	Coherency of the service provider or service provider profile description (skills, experience, knowledge) with the requested service and price. The principle “Best value for money” will be applied.

Table 4 - Selection criteria

3.2. CALL PLANNING

The ELBE Eurocluster Call for Individual Services will be launched on March 8th 2024, 12.00 CET.

More information about the call cut-off dates is summarised in the following table:

Individual services	Call cut-off dates	Evaluation – Contract dates (indicative)
1 - Access to test facilities	First call: 08/01/2024 - 12.00 to 08/03/2024 - 5 pm CET Second call: 15/04/24 - 12.00 to 15/06/2024 - 5 pm CET	Evaluation: 1 month Contracts: to be signed within 1 month after the results have been announced
2 - International development		
3 - Market & business intelligence		
4 - Development and technology transfer		
5 - Green and IT Technology expertise		

Table 5 - Call planning

3.3. APPLICATION FORM & PROCESS

3.3.1. Application process

Interested SMEs will apply via the following link

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/ELBEIndividualservices2023> by 08/03/2024, 5:00 pm CET.

Only proposals submitted via this link will be evaluated and only if they have been submitted within the deadline. Upon receipt of each proposal, the applicant will receive a confirmation of submission. Applications may be modified before the deadline and the applicants have not fully validated the application: applicants will be able to save the draft application and work on it later.

3.3.2. Financial support conditions

It is possible to apply to one or several types of support provided by ELBE Eurocluster. However, the maximum amount to be awarded as part of ELBE Eurocluster opportunities is **€60 000 per SME**.

The following table details the ELBE Eurocluster types of support available and the approximate value for each service:

Financial support	16 SMEs supported	Up to €60 000 per project (2 SMEs)
Individual services	22 SMEs supported	Up to €10 000 per service
Training	20 SMEs supported	Up to €13 500 per SME
Internationalisation	45 SMEs supported	Up to €2 000 per SME

Table 6 - ELBE Eurocluster types of support and how to combine them

For example, one SME can benefit from an innovation voucher (€30 000), an individual service (€10 000), one training session (€13 500) and participate to 3 missions (total €6 000). As the total financial support received by an SME in such case remains below € 60 000.

However, if one SME benefits from €50 000 as part of the innovation voucher, it can only apply for one individual service or participate to the missions but will not be able to benefit from the training, as otherwise the total financial support received by an SME would go beyond the maximum of EUR 60 000 allowed.

Shall you have any doubt on these provisions, please reach your contact point.

3.3.3. Service providers

It is the SME's responsibility to select its service provider prior to the submission. If the SME cannot find a service provider before submission, it should at least describe the profile of the service provider they are expecting to choose. This should be mentioned in the application (Section 2). Several service providers can be selected if the SME is applying for several services. The service provider cannot apply on behalf of the SME. A service provider can be a consultant or a company, research center, etc...

By submitting their application, SMEs consent to use the total amount of the financial support received to pay the service provider mentioned in their application. Should this not be the case, the SME will reimburse the **total** amount of the financial support received.

4. Evaluation and selection process

4.1. SCORING SYSTEM

Evaluation criteria	Details	Maximum Score
1 – Business strategy and scale-up potential	How the requested service will help the SME in its scale-up potential as well as in the development of its resilience capacity and/or in boosting its ecological and digital transition.	10
2 – Relevance to ELBE Eurocluster domains	How are the SME’s activities related to the ELBE project.	10
3 – Service provider profile	Coherency of the service provider profile with the requested service.	10
Total		30

Table 7 - Scoring system

Evaluation scores will be awarded based on the criteria mentioned in section 3.1.2. The maximum score for each criterion will be 10 points. Each criterion is rated between 1 and 10 points; no half-points are allowed. The threshold for each individual criterion will be 6 points. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores will be 18 points. The total score is comprised by adding the scores of the three criteria and will be maximum 30 points.

The meaning of the scores with respect to the evaluation criteria is as follows:

- **1 to 2 - Poor.** The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **3 to 4 - Fair.** While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.
- **5 to 6 - Good.** The proposal addresses the criterion well, but with at least one moderate weakness.
- **7 to 8 - Very good.** The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although with minor weaknesses.
- **9 to 10 - Excellent.** The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Shortcomings are minor.

4.2. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

A two-step assessment procedure will be followed safeguarding the principles of transparency and equal treatment as described below:

- **Eligibility check** of the Application Form
- **Evaluation** of the Application Form by the ELBE Eurocluster partner (SME contact points in charge) as presented in section 1.3.

Each cluster will evaluate the applications from his country. Applications coming from a country not covered in the ELBE Clusters project partnership will be divided among partners. The assessment period shall take maximum 30 days, starting from the closing date of the call. The applicants will receive an e-mail about the outcome of the assessment directly after the assessment is finalised along with instructions for the next steps if awarded. The successful applicants will be requested to sign a formal Contract within 30 days from the notification of the project approval.

4.3. ENQUIRIES AND COMPLAINTS

Any complaints against the project selection process must be submitted by the applicant to Marcos Suarez (msuarez@clusterenergia.com) or your local contact point (cf. section 1.3) within 5 calendar days after the announcement of the Open Call results. Your email should include the following information:

- Application name
- Lead contact name and details
- Object of your complaint
- Information and evidence of the alleged breach

The Evaluation Committee (CEPV with the support of PMM-TVT and the ELBE Eurocluster partner in charge) 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 and will inform the applicant and the consortium on the decision taken. If the complaint is considered justified, the Evaluation Committee will notify the evaluators to re-evaluate the Service application. The evaluators will then provide the Evaluation Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by the Evaluation Committee to the applicant in writing within 20 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 within the programme if the complaint is based on the same grounds. For technical issues concerning the submission procedure, please contact Nerea Guinea at nguinea@clusterenergia.com.

5. Monitoring and reporting process

5.1. ELBE TECHNICAL FOLLOW-UP: THE ELBE SHERPA

One ELBE Sherpa will be assigned to each beneficiary. The Sherpa will be a member of the consortium and will ensure the implementation of the service is going as planned. Beneficiaries will be assigned to their Sherpa after they have been awarded a service. When possible, the Sherpa will be the contact point of the SME to facilitate follow-up.

5.2. MONITORING AND PAYMENTS

The SMEs selected for ELBE Eurocluster individual services will be monitored throughout the service implementation period. Payments will depend on the results of the monitoring.

The **first payment (50% of the total amount)** will be sent to the beneficiary after the contract has been signed.

The **final payment (50% of the total amount)** will be made at the end of the service implementation period and after the validation of the result of the service (e.g., report designed) and the Service provider invoice to guarantee that the payment made to the service provider is consistent with the grant. The balance payment will be in coherence with the amount reported in the invoice and the SME will receive as a grant the value of the invoice. Shall the result of the service contain confidential information, the final document will be replaced by a summary. The ELBE Eurocluster beneficiary shall provide the above-mentioned documents maximum 1 (one) month after the end of the reporting period (that is one month after the end of the service implementation), as it will be defined in the contract.

If needed, a mid-term monitoring meeting will be organised.

The selected SME will have maximum one year after the signature of the subgrant agreement to implement the service(s).

6. Legal aspects

6.1. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

GDPR compliance: 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.

By applying, the applicant agrees on the storage and use of its personal data for the execution of the ELBE Eurocluster objectives and work plan. The ELBE Eurocluster consortium commits to handling personal data and company data confidentially except for the call results, which may contain information about successful ELBE Eurocluster Services' applications (service title, names of project partners and scope description (as provided by the project partner)).

The processing of data that ELBE Eurocluster intends to carry out will be based on lawfulness and correctness in the full protection of its rights and its confidentiality pursuant to the general principles of the GDPR and its art. 24. Therefore, the competitors are informed of the procedure that the data provided by the applicants will be treated exclusively with reference to the procedure for which they submitted the documentation.

The applicants can exercise their rights towards the data controller, pursuant to article 12 of the GDPR. For any inquiries regarding the processing your personal data, please contact Marcos Suarez: msuarez@clusterenergia.com. Application, selection and evaluation will be performed under the appropriate ethical conduct and will respect the confidentiality of the information received.

6.2. GENDER EQUALITY

ELBE Eurocluster seeks gender balance. Therefore, applicants are invited to take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including supervisory and managerial levels to the extent possible.

7. Disclaimer

Purpose: This text is explaining the ELBE Eurocluster Innovation Support Scheme for information purposes only. No rights can be claimed based on this document.

Funded by the European Union, views and opinions expressed are however those of the author only and does not necessarily reflect those of the European Commission or the European Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency (EISMEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Mistakes or inconsistencies: The ELBE Eurocluster consortium is not responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations that this text may cause. In the case of inconsistencies, the ELBE Eurocluster partnership will determine the steps to be taken, in cooperation with the applicant concerned.

Consequential damages: In no event shall either party be liable to the other or any of its affiliates for any consequential, incidental, indirect, special, punitive, or exemplary damages (including, without limitation, lost profits, business, or goodwill) suffered or incurred by such other party or its affiliates in connection with this innovation support mechanism, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.