



Advanced Materials
for a Sustainable European Future

Advanced Materials Innovation Open Call

Open Call for Proposals
Guide for Applicants

AMENDED VERSION 03/06/2026

Grant Agreement Number: 101236716

Project Acronym: MAT4EU



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| EC | European Commission |
| EU | European Union |
| MAT4EU | Advanced Materials for a Sustainable European Future |
| SSbD | Safe and sustainable by Design |
| OITB | Open Innovation Testbed |

AMENDMENT Section III ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS 1. Type of Beneficiary :

Applicants must also satisfy all the following conditions (AMENDMENT):

1. Be a legal entity **with a least 3 years of audited financial statements (balance sheets) available.**
2. Be a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union. An SME self-assessment tool is available via this link: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/sme/public/organisation-name>
3. Apply as an individual organisation
4. Be located in one of the Single Market Programme (SMP) associated countries
 - EU Member States
 - Or other countries participating in the EU Single Market Programme/COSME Strand (Strand “Competitiveness of SMEs”) : https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf
5. Not having a conflict of interest with the partners in the MAT4EU project
6. Be a **manufacturing** SME working with one of the 4 materials targeted by the MAT4EU project (polymers, ceramics, metals or composites) whose products or applications target at least one of the six strategic industrial sectors: aerospace & defence, agri-food packaging, renewable energy, construction, health, or mobility.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The **Advanced Materials for a Sustainable European Future (MAT4EU)** project runs from **1 October 2025 to 30 September 2028** and is co-funded by the **European Union under the Single Market Programme (SMP) – Euroclusters call**. The project aims to strengthen the European advanced materials ecosystem and support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing innovative and sustainable solutions.

To achieve this goal, the MAT4EU consortium launches its first Open call, targeting manufacturing SMEs working on advanced materials solutions within one of the 4 targeted materials (Metal, Ceramics, Composites and/or Polymers) and across at least one of the 6 sectors covered by the project: Aerospace and Defence, Agri-food including Packaging, Renewable Energy, Construction, Health or Mobility.

The MAT4EU Open Call is a competitive selection process that grants access to a structured programme of support implemented by MAT4EU partners, combining services and direct financial support. This Guide for Applicants provides an overview of this support and instructions for applying to the MAT4EU Open call.

1. Information about the MAT4EU project

MAT4EU aims to structure and connect the European advanced materials ecosystem by bringing together six European clusters representing different regions and industrial specialisations. It supports innovative EU SMEs in the adoption of innovative advanced materials solutions.

Advanced materials are key to Europe's industrial competitiveness and green and digital transitions. They are widely used across sectors such as energy, electronics, construction, mobility, aerospace and healthcare, enabling technological breakthroughs and sustainable innovation.

By leveraging their regional strengths and established networks, the MAT4EU consortium works to foster collaboration, accelerate innovation, and support the internationalisation of European SMEs active in advanced materials.

The MAT4EU consortium includes partners from France, Spain, Poland, Lithuania, Denmark and Germany. More information is available on [MAT4EU project webpage on European Cluster Collaboration Platform](#).



Figure 1: Geographical distribution of project partners

Beyond financial support to SMEs, MAT4EU will provide training and capacity-building activities tailored to the needs of European and regional advanced materials ecosystems. These activities will help SMEs strengthen their innovation capabilities and develop new skills.

The project will also facilitate **access to global supply chains and international markets**, enabling SMEs to expand their business opportunities and strengthen their role in the European industrial value chain. By building strategic partnerships, MAT4EU will identify key collaborations needed to promote the development and adoption of advanced materials across Europe.

2. Information about the MAT4EU Innovation Open Calls

MAT4EU will support **up to 46 European SMEs** by organising two cascade funding open calls to accelerate innovation and strengthen competitiveness.

The first MAT4EU Open call will be open from 6 May to **6 July 2026**, closing at 17.00 CEST. It will be divided into 2 strands:

- Strand 1: Product innovations supporting European autonomy - Development and Innovation
- Strand 2: Mastering green and digital transformation - Industrial Adoption

The total budget for this call is 600.000€ for Strand 1, with the aim of supporting at least 10 SMEs projects, and 607.500€ for Strand 2, with the aim of supporting at least 19 SMEs projects.

A second MAT4EU Open call will be launched in December 2026 on similar topics, aiming to support 6 SMEs projects for Strand 1 and 11 SMEs projects for Strand 2.

II. SCOPE AND EXPECTATION

The supported SME projects should contribute to achieving the objectives of MAT4EU, namely the development of innovative products and services, the identification of new international markets, and the adoption of new-to-firm solutions, including digital ones, to fully embrace the potential of advanced materials.

Innovative SMEs can use this opportunity to request co-financing for their projects aligned with the five MAT4 Innovation roadmap pillars and 2 strands. SMEs will have to choose 1 of the 2 strands described in Section 2.1. and within the strand, the pillar that best fits their project. These pillars have been identified through a comprehensive analysis of innovation and SME support needs in the countries' innovation ecosystems. They reflect the practical needs of companies operating in advanced materials value chains and the strategic objectives defined at the European level, aiming to facilitate European autonomy in raw materials and strengthen the competitiveness of European SMEs in global markets.



Figure 2: Pillars of the innovation Roadmap

The selected SMEs will benefit from a comprehensive support programme that combines direct financial support with a structured portfolio of services to accelerate innovation, strengthen capabilities, and facilitate access to international markets.

The Programme adopts a holistic approach, ensuring that SMEs receive not only funding but also the necessary skills, knowledge, and connections to maximise the impact of their projects.

The support includes:

- Direct financial support for R&D projects
- Mentorship throughout the Programme
- Training and capacity-building activities
- Internationalisation support services
- Networking and ecosystem integration opportunities

Together, these elements aim to support SMEs in developing innovative solutions in advanced materials, enhancing their competitiveness, and positioning them in European and global value chains.

1. Direct Financial support

The Programme offers a range of complementary services structured as follows:

Selected SMEs will receive financial support to implement their innovation projects under the Open Call.

The Open Call is structured into two distinct strands:

- **Strand 1: Product innovations supporting European autonomy - Development and Innovation**, focused on supporting SMEs in the development, testing, and validation of innovative solutions in advanced materials.
- **Strand 2: Mastering green and digital transformation - Industrial Adoption**, aimed at facilitating the uptake, scale-up, and integration of advanced materials solutions into industrial environments and value chains.

The table below provides an overview of the Roadmap pillars and the related thematic priority areas for both strands. It is designed to guide applicants by outlining the focused priority areas across two main strands: **Strand 1, Product innovation supporting European autonomy Development and Innovation**, which supports product innovation and European autonomy; and **Strand 2, Industrial adoption Mastering green and digital transformation**, which focuses on scaling solutions for the green and digital transition. The thematic priority areas highlight example topics to help applicants align their project ideas with the programme’s objectives.

Table 1: Roadmap pillars and the related thematic priority areas for both strands

| MAT4EU innovation Roadmap pillar | Strand 1 Development and Innovation Product innovation supporting European autonomy Examples of thematic priority areas | Strand 2 Industrial adoption Mastering green and digital transformation Examples of thematic priority areas |
|---|---|--|
| Circular and sustainable advanced materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New sustainable and circular materials, • Substitution of critical raw materials • Identification, characterisation, sorting of materials • Advanced recycling technologies (e.g. chemical, de-polymerisation) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling/ re-industrialisation technologies for advanced materials (e.g., re-purpose, re-use, recycling, refurbish) • Circular ecosystem platforms for regional material loops |
| Safe and sustainable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Substitution of hazardous materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process optimisation and industrial scaling (circularity, |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| material design and processing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSbD materials with increased consumer safety | energy&material efficiency, simulation, process stability, component quality) |
| High-performance functional materials | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functionalisation and performance enhancement of materials for high-value applications (e.g, stress tolerance, conductivity, smart textiles, safe and long-life buildings, smart facades, extending lifetime) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smart sensors and real-time monitoring systems • Integration of business intelligence technologies • |
| Digitalisation of material development and processing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI tools for materials design and traceability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI-based materials selection and matching tools • Digital traceability, monitoring and certification of materials and processes • Smart sensors and real-time monitoring systems, integration of business intelligence technologies |
| Industrial scale-up and validation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot testing, validation • Upscaling of industrial advanced recycling technologies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration with Open Innovation Testbeds (OITB) and validation infrastructures |

Applicants will be required to indicate the strand under which they are applying, based on the nature and objectives of their proposed project. Projects should be managed by only one SME applicant. The SME can involve other partners (enterprises, universities, technical centres, etc.) as service providers in its project. An SME can submit only one application to the MAT4EU Open call, thus it has to choose between the 2 available strands. An SME submitting 2 applications, either in the same strand or in the 2 strands, will be considered ineligible.

The duration of the supported projects must last **12 months**, with a start date of **1 September 2026** and an end date on **31 August 2027**.

Financial support is complemented by the services described above to ensure that SMEs can effectively develop, scale, and position their innovations in the market.

Further details on the scope, objectives, and eligibility conditions of each strand are specified in the following sections.

a) Strand 1 Product innovations supporting European autonomy - Development and Innovation

Strand 1 will support development and innovation projects focused on materials development and technological validation. Supported SME activities may include testing innovative materials, developing substitutes, adding new functionalities, surface optimisation, and lightweight applications, as identified in the roadmap. In addition, there will be a strong focus on materials solutions with significant industrial potential.

Emphasis may be placed on:

- Development of sustainable, circular advanced materials, including the substitution of critical and hazardous raw materials (CRM)
- Technologies for the identification, characterisation, and sorting of materials
- Development and scaling of advanced recycling technologies (e.g. chemical recycling, depolymerisation)
- Safe and Sustainable by Design (SSbD) materials to enhance consumer safety
- Functionalisation and performance optimisation of materials for high-value applications (e.g. improved stress tolerance, conductivity/smart textiles, durable buildings, smart façades, extended product lifetime)
- Use of AI tools for materials design, optimisation, and traceability
- Pilot-scale testing, validation, and industrial upscaling

Other relevant ideas linked to product innovation in the advanced material sector will be accepted. Projects may, if relevant, involve collaboration among SMEs, RTOs, and universities as service providers to develop innovative materials solutions with strong industrial potential.

MAT4EU's first Open Call will fund 10 projects with a minimum budget of 80.000€ with a fixed grant of 60.000€ per project, corresponding to a maximum 75% funding of eligible costs. The duration of the projects must be 12 months, with a launch date of 1 September 2026 and an end date of 31 August 2027.

b) Strand 2 Mastering green and digital transformation - Industrial Adoption

Strand 2 targets supporting SMEs in adopting processes and technologies that improve the efficiency of value chains, as well as the uptake of green technologies and digital solutions. Supported activities will contribute to improved sustainability and resilience of companies, increasing productivity, identifying and putting into practice circular solutions and approaches within companies and among partners within value chains.

Emphasis may be placed on:

- Recycling/ re-industrialisation technologies for AM (e.g.re-purpose, re-use, refurbishment) and related enabling platforms
- Process optimisation & industrial scaling (circularity, energy & material efficiency, simulation, process stability, component quality)
- Smart sensors and real-time monitoring systems, integration of business intelligence technologies
- AI-based materials selection and matching tools (Digital traceability, monitoring and certification of materials and processes)
- Industrial upscaling Integration with OITBs and advanced testing and validation infrastructures

MAT4EU will fund 19 projects with a minimum budget of 45.000€ with a fixed grant of 33.750€ per project, corresponding to a maximum 75% funding of eligible costs. The project's duration must last 12 months, with a launch date of 1 September 2026 and an end date of 31 August 2027.

2. Mentorship

Each SME will be assigned a mentor for the full duration of the Programme. The mentor will be from one of the 6 partners involved in the MAT4EU consortium and will be responsible for supporting the SME in implementing its project, reviewing progress, and advising on additional support activities and services described in sections 2.3 and 2.4 below.

3. Training and Capacity Building

Training activities are designed to address skills gaps and strengthen SMEs' capabilities in areas critical to innovation and growth.

These activities include:

- **Webinars:** A series of **online training sessions** will be organised throughout the Programme. These webinars will cover transversal topics such as:
 - Advanced materials innovation
 - Sustainability and circular economy

- Digital transformation
- Industrial applications and emerging technologies
- Market-oriented and internationalisation-related topics
- **Hands-on training sessions:** a number of different sessions will be organised, combining in-person and/or hybrid formats. These sessions will focus on applied learning, real-case scenarios, and direct interaction with experts.

These activities support both technical and business competencies while fostering peer learning among SMEs. **Awarded SMEs will be required to attend at least 2 webinars and 1 hands-on training session during the MAT4EU project's duration.**

4. MAT4EU Internationalisation & Ecosystem Support Services

Internationalisation support is designed to help SMEs explore and access new markets and integrate into international value chains. **The MAT4EU programme provides a comprehensive support framework to enhance SMEs' global competitiveness and foster their integration into international value chains. The following services are available to all beneficiaries:**

- Market intelligence and market entry guidance;
- Participation in matchmaking and networking events;
- Access to international missions, trade fairs, and business events;
- Support in identifying partners and collaboration opportunities abroad.

To ensure the project's impact, beneficiaries must actively engage with the MAT4EU ecosystem and contribute to the internationalisation strategy through the following activities:

a) Mandatory Activities (Workload breakdown):

1. Attendance of MAT4EU International Matchmaking (Approx. 6 hours):

- Activity: Participation in at least one virtual matchmaking session focusing on strategic third-country markets (USA, Japan, India or another third country).
- Workload details: 4 hours for preparing the company's international pitch/profile and 2 hours for active participation in the virtual B2B event.

2. Ecosystem Integration & Networking (Approx. 6 hours):

- Activity: Participation in project-led virtual networking events to foster collaboration within the advanced materials community.
- Workload: Attendance of one targeted 1.5-hour virtual session and 4.5 hours for follow-up communication and partnership screening facilitated by MAT4EU mentors

3. Reporting on Global Potential (Approx. 6 hours):

- Activity: Provision of a "Global Partnership Brief" in the final report.
- Workload details: 6 hours dedicated to documenting international leads, market feedback, and the potential for future collaboration or market entry in target regions.

b) Optional Activities:

- International Outreach & Networking: SMEs are strongly encouraged to identify and engage with at least one potential business or technology partner outside the EU. Due to limited travel support, this engagement can be conducted virtually (via online B2B platforms, the EEN network, or MAT4EU facilitated introductions).
- Additional Support: Access to specialised webinars, hands-on training sessions, and invitations to international business missions as they arise during the project duration.

In conclusion, selected SMEs will be integrated into the MAT4EU innovation ecosystem through this support Programme, benefiting from:

- Participation in project events and collaborative activities
- Interaction with clusters, industry stakeholders, and innovation actors
- Opportunities for knowledge exchange, training and partnerships

These activities will aim to foster collaboration, knowledge exchange, learning, visibility and long-term engagement within the advanced materials community.

5. Expected Impacts of Funded Projects

The proposed projects should clearly contribute to achieving the MAT4EU project's expected impacts.

a) Strand 1 Product innovations supporting European autonomy - Development and Innovation

For Strand 1 “Development & Innovation - Product Innovation Supporting European autonomy” projects should have impacts in terms of:

- Accelerated development, validation, and market uptake of sustainable and high-performance materials
- Reduced dependency on critical and hazardous raw materials, strengthening supply chain resilience
- Improved resource efficiency and circularity through advanced recycling, material recovery, and reuse
- Enhanced safety and sustainability of materials, contributing to better consumer and environmental protection

- Increased industrial competitiveness through the development of innovative, functionalised, and high-value material applications
- Greater integration of digital and AI-driven tools for materials design, optimisation, and traceability
- Faster industrial deployment and scaling of technologies through pilot testing and validation

At least one of the above-mentioned impacts must be targeted.

b) Strand 2 Mastering green and digital transformation - Industrial Adoption

The proposed projects should clearly contribute to achieving the expected impact of the project MAT4EU. For Strand 2 “Industrial Adoption-Mastering green and digital transformation - projects should have an impact in terms of the uptake of digital tools and methods to

- Improve resource efficiency and decrease dependencies on critical raw material input for advanced materials development and manufacturing,
- Optimise and scale industrial processes for safe and sustainable material design and processing,
- Improve materials selection and management with AI-based tools,
- Explore the potential of smart materials through the integration of smart sensors and real-time monitoring systems, with the potential to support business intelligence,
- Shorten the industrial upscaling and experimentation significantly through the use of open Innovation testbeds and relevant validation infrastructures.

At least one of the mentioned impacts must be targeted.

6. Programme-Level Impact of the MAT4EU Programme

The MAT4EU Programme aims to generate impact beyond the individual results of funded SME projects by combining financial support with a structured set of complementary services.

While SME projects are expected to deliver specific technological and business outcomes, the Programme, as a whole, contributes to a broader impact at the European level by:

- Strengthening the innovation capacity of SMEs in advanced materials
- Accelerating the adoption and industrial deployment of innovative solutions
- Enhancing collaboration across regions, sectors, and value chains
- Facilitating SMEs’ access to international markets
- Supporting the green and digital transition of European industry

This Programme-level impact is achieved through the combined effects of funded projects and additional support, ensuring both immediate results and longer-term impact on the European advanced materials ecosystem.

7. Financial support

The financial support provided through the MAT4EU Open call for proposals will be at a maximum funding rate of 75%. The remaining cost will be financed by the SMEs from private co-funding.

Selected SMEs will receive:

- 60.000€ for Strand 1 in FSTP funding, complemented by a mandatory co-financing of at least 25% from SMEs provided by private financial sources (for total eligible costs of minimum 80.000 €)
- 33.750€ for Strand 2 in FSTP funding, complemented by a mandatory co-financing of at least 25% from SMEs provided by private financial sources (for total eligible costs of minimum 45.000 €)

The SME's financial co-funding must come from private financial sources, in the form of debt or own financial resources; it cannot come from in-kind contributions or other public funding sources. The cost covered by the FSTP and by a minimum of 25% of private financial co-funding must be described in Annex – Budget. Please refer to IV. 2. *Budget composition* for a detailed description of the budget composition requirements and eligible costs under the MAT4EU Open Call.

III. ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS

1. Type of beneficiaries

Eligible applicants must be manufacturing SMEs that work with at least one of the four advanced material groups, metals, polymers, ceramics, or composites, and whose products or applications target **at least one** of the six strategic industrial sectors: aerospace & defence, agri-food packaging, renewable energy, construction, health, or mobility.

Applicants must also satisfy all the following conditions (AMENDMENT):

1. Be a legal entity **with a least 3 years of audited financial statements (balance sheets) available**.
2. Be a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union. An SME self-assessment tool is available via this link: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/sme/public/organisation-name>

3. Apply as an individual organisation
4. Be located in one of the Single Market Programme (SMP) associated countries
 - EU Member States
 - Or other countries participating in the EU Single Market Programme/COSME Strand (Strand “Competitiveness of SMEs”) : https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf
5. Not having a conflict of interest with the partners in the MAT4EU project
6. Be a **manufacturing** SME working with one of the 4 materials targeted by the MAT4EU project (polymers, ceramics, metals or composites) whose products or applications target at least one of the six strategic industrial sectors: aerospace & defence, agri-food packaging, renewable energy, construction, health, or mobility.

2. Eligibility assessment

SMEs that are under liquidation, in financial difficulty, or excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority **are not eligible to apply for funding.**

To ensure their eligibility, applicants are required to upload supporting documents on their SME status and financial data that are further described in *IV. 2. Budget composition*. Incomplete applications will be rejected automatically.

An SME cannot receive more than 60,000€ in sub-grants under MAT4EU project.

IV. APPLICATION PROCESS

The MAT4EU Open call Strand 1 & Strand 2 will be **open from the 6 May 2026 to the 6 July 17.00 CEST**. Applications must be written in English and complete in all the parts indicated in application form. Only parts written in **English** will be evaluated.

Each application must be submitted through this link: <https://mat4eu.grantplatform.com/>

1. Additional compulsory documents

Applicants must fill in the application form available on the platform and provide the list of additional documents below to finalise their application:

- Screenshot of the results of the [SME self-assessment](#) to determine whether your organisation qualifies as a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) according to the Commission SME Definition
- Screenshot of the [completed financial capacity self-check simulator form](#)
- Annex Budget filled out

An SME can submit only one application to the MAT4EU Open call. An SME submitting 2 applications, either in the same strand or in the 2 strands, will be considered ineligible. Any proposals submitted outside the above-mentioned deadline will be rejected.

2. Budget composition

Eligible costs must be directly related to the approved project activities and comply with EU funding rules.

Eligible cost categories include:

- Personnel costs of staff directly involved in the project.
- Subcontracting cost: external costs incurred for parties outside the consortium, such as services provided by external professionals.
- Other cost: cost involving minor purchases that are not considered 'services' provided by other professionals. They concern the purchase of consumables, the rental of equipment, training activity fees, etc.
- Travel costs, only when directly linked to approved internationalisation activities, such as participation in international events or meetings related to market access. **Travel costs are capped at €5.000 per SME** and must be justified in the application and validated by the consortium.

Each SME must describe their planned budget in the Annex-Budget, which details the amount to be covered by the MAT4EU sub-grant financial support and the amount covered by the SME's private co-funding. The total cost of the SME's project must be covered by the SME's own private co-funding of at least 25%.

3. Helpdesk

For any enquiries regarding information and/ or clarification about the present call, please contact one of the MAT4EU National Contact points listed:

- Denmark: dwb@plastcenter.dk
- Germany: mat4EU@rkw-sachsen.de

- France (coordinator): europa@polymeris.fr
- Lithuania: karolis.skebas@linpra.lt; info@linpra.lt
- Poland: a.matuszak@klaster.bydgoszcz.pl
- Spain: info@clustermav.com

Applicants located in other countries than those covered by MAT4EU National Contacts are invited to contact PCD for any questions **regarding Strand 1** (dwb@plastcenter.dk) or RKW for any questions **regarding Strand 2** (mat4eu@rkw-sachsen.de).

V. EVALUATION PROCEDURE

1. Evaluation criteria

Each application will be assessed by 2 MAT4EU project partners according to the following criteria.

Table 2: Evaluation criteria

| Criterion | Definition | Weighting of scores |
|-------------------------|--|---------------------|
| 1. Network | Networking events plan for communication, dissemination, and exploitation | 5% |
| 2. Business potential | Gain access to future growth markets - targeting cross-sector transfer | 25% |
| | Acceleration of the SME's time-to-market strategy | |
| | Enable circularity in regional material loops, future-proof sustainable approaches | |
| | Potential for new products or services within the company | |
| 3. Innovation potential | Reduction of dependency on critical raw materials and non-EU technologies | 25% |
| | Level of product and/or process innovation | |
| | Level of sustainability and circularity of the value chain | |
| | Level of cutting-edge digital solutions | |

| | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 4. Scientific and technical quality | Involvement of new research, technologies, process developments and technical solutions | 10% |
| | Participation in relevant training (from the project or external) | |
| 5. Organisational capacity and capability | The company has sufficient managerial power, professional and administrative skills, and <u>financial resources to run the project</u> . This is reflected in the quality of the application. | 10% |
| 6. Scalability and economic impact | The project idea can be scaled up/implemented on the long run in the SME strategy and thus lead to increased economic impact in its activities. | 15% |
| | Consistency of the project with the additional support services mentioned (training and internationalization) | |
| 7. Supporting the European Strategic Plan for European Industrial Competitiveness | Support increased competitiveness of European industry | 10% |
| | Support increased resilience of European industry | |
| | Rise productivity through innovation | |
| | Reduce dependence on external suppliers of Advanced Materials | |

A score from 1 to 6 will be assigned to each criterion. Only full scores will be given for each individual criterion. The meaning of the scores is as follows:

Table 3: Meaning of scores

| | |
|---|----------------------|
| 6 | Superior quality |
| 5 | High quality |
| 4 | Exceeds expectations |
| 3 | Meets expectations |
| 2 | Needs development |
| 1 | Below expectations |

The final score for each application will be calculated as a weighted average of the individual assessments from each evaluator, with a maximum of 42 points per application. In order to be considered for receiving the sub-grant, the minimum threshold for each criterion will be 3 points and the minimum total pass score of 21 points. The applications with the highest scores will be selected within the available budget. Obtaining the pass score does not guarantee that the application will receive funding.

The applicant's work programme should align its project's KPIs with the evaluation criteria listed above.

2. Evaluation and ranking of selected projects

After the external evaluation process, a ranking list will be prepared, with all applications ranked by their final scores.

Successful proposals above the minimum pass score (per criterion and in total) are funded in descending order until the available sum for the call is totally assigned.

A Selection Committee composed of one representative from each MAT4EU partner will reserve the right to modify the ranking of successful proposals (in cases of equal or tied scores) to balance the list of selected projects according to geographical coverage, internationalisation strategy, and the sectors represented, in that order of preference.

The final shortlist will be prepared by the MAT4EU coordinator (Polymeris) and the MAT4EU partner - Plast Center Denmark for Strand 1 and RKW Sachsen for Strand 2. The assessment period will take up to 30 days, starting from the closing date of the open call. A reserve list will be prepared, comprising applicants who obtained a note above the individual and total thresholds but were not among the highest-scoring applicants. Applicants on the reserve list will be contacted in descending order if an applicant from the shortlist withdraws their application or fails to provide the additional requested documents in time.

3. Information to the applicants

Following the evaluation phase, the applicants will be informed of the evaluation outcomes. The evaluation results will be sent to the main applicant's e-mail address associated with the application:

- A rejection letter in the event of the failure of the application, with a detailed explanation.
- A notification letter for successful application. The instructions for the next steps will be described, with a focus on those related to the contractualisation process.
- A notification letter for application on the reserve list.

4. Complaint procedure

If, after receiving the evaluation results, an applicant disagrees with the result, a complaint can be sent (in English) to the project coordinator's email (europa@polymeris.fr) within 3 working days of the official receipt of the evaluation results. The following information must be included:

- contact details and name of the application
- the subject of the complaint
- information and evidence regarding the alleged breach

If such complaints are received, a re-evaluation will be carried out only if there is evidence of a shortcoming affecting the final decision on whether to fund the proposal.

The Review Committee will consist of the project coordinator and the WP2 leader for the Strand 1 project or the WP3 leader for the Strand 2 project. It will examine the complaint based on the information provided by the applicant, decide whether it is justified, and inform the applicant and the consortium of the decision.

If the complaint is considered justified, the Review Committee will notify 2 MAT4EU project partners, different from those who conducted the initial evaluation, and ask them to re-evaluate the application, specifically the assessment part, in light of the complaint. The evaluators will then provide the Review Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated to the applicant in writing by the Review Committee within 15 working days of the complaint's submission.

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BENEFICIARIES

1. Implementation responsibilities

Beneficiaries are responsible for implementing their Innovation Plan as agreed with the MAT4EU consortium. They must ensure that activities are carried out in a timely manner, using adequate resources and in compliance with the approved scope, budget and timeline. SMEs remain fully responsible for the technical, operational and financial execution of their project.

2. Reporting obligations

Beneficiaries must submit progress and final reports in accordance with the reporting schedule, templates and requirements defined by the MAT4EU consortium. Reports must accurately reflect the activities carried out, the use of financial support and the results achieved. The final report will contain supporting documents for the co-financing of 25% of the Innovation project: accounting documents for invoices for services, staff records or personnel payslips (if applicable), other accounting documents that are clearly linked to the project activities.

3. Financial and administrative responsibilities

Beneficiaries are responsible for the proper use of the financial support received and for maintaining adequate records to justify costs, in line with the contractual conditions and applicable EU rules. Supporting documents and evidence of expenditure may be requested by the consortium or competent authorities for audit and control purposes.

The funds awarded must be used solely to implement the Innovation Project for which the beneficiaries were selected, and strictly in accordance with the budget file submitted during the application process. Any use of funds that does not comply with the approved budget or the project's objectives may result in an obligation to fully or partially reimburse the financial support received.

4. Promoting the Action and Give Visibility to the EU Funding

The beneficiary SMEs are obligated to promote their Innovation projects, as well as the MAT4EU project, and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC. Unless the European Commission or the MAT4EU coordinator requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must:

- display the EU emblem
- display the MAT4EU logo
- include the following text: This project is co-funded by the European Union's Single Market Programme under grant agreement No.101236201.

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the Beneficiary is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page (<https://style-guide.europa.eu/en/content/-/isg/topic?identifier=annex-a1-graphics-guide-european-emblem>).

Any publicity made by the beneficiary SME in respect of the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or MAT4EU project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein. The EC and the MAT4EU

consortium shall be authorized to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- the name of the beneficiary SME and the organisation logo
- contact address of the beneficiary SME
- the general purpose of the project
- the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the project; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received
- the geographic location of the activities carried out
- the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground
- the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the sub-project, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication
- the publishable reports submitted to MAT4EU
- any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and MAT4EU in the framework of the project

The beneficiary SME shall ensure that all necessary authorizations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and MAT4EU does not infringe any rights of third parties. Upon a duly substantiated request by the sub-project coordinator, if such permission is provided by the EC, the MAT4EU, may agree to embargo project publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

To ensure coherent, effective, and measurable communication of the supported Innovation Projects, beneficiaries shall implement communication and dissemination activities in line with the following operational requirements. These provisions complement the general obligations regarding the visibility of EU funding and provide practical guidance to beneficiaries. Each beneficiary SME will be supported by its assigned MAT4EU mentor to elaborate a Communication and Dissemination plan for its MAT4EU project during Month 1 of its project. The mentor will support the SME in designing the communication and dissemination material.

a) Social Media Activities

Beneficiaries shall ensure a minimum level of visibility of their project through social media channels, with particular emphasis on LinkedIn. The Communication & Dissemination plan that will be implemented together with its MAT4EU mentor should include:

Minimum requirements:

- At least 3 key posts covering:
 - project launch,
 - mid-term progress,

- final results

Each post shall:

- include a reference to MAT4EU (tagging where applicable);
- include relevant thematic hashtags (e.g. #MAT4EU, #AdvancedMaterials, #EUInnovation);
- acknowledge EU funding in accordance with Section VI.4;
- include a visual element (image, infographic or short video), where technically feasible.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to further amplify content through additional channels (e.g. corporate websites, other social media platforms).

b) Communication Materials and Outputs

Beneficiaries shall produce a minimum set of communication materials to facilitate the dissemination of project objectives and results. The Communication & Dissemination plan that will be implemented together with its MAT4EU mentor should include:

Possible outputs:

- 1 short project description (non-technical, maximum one page);
- 1 visual asset (e.g. infographic, project visual);
- 1 result-oriented content piece (e.g. case study, success story or application example).

Recommended formats (non-mandatory):

- short video (30–60 seconds),
- application or use-case description,
- technology overview, including innovation aspects.

All materials shall be provided to the MAT4EU consortium upon request and may be reused for project-level dissemination activities.

c) Participation in Events and Dissemination Activities

Beneficiaries shall contribute to dissemination activities beyond their own channels. The Communication & Dissemination plan that will be implemented together with its MAT4EU mentor should include:

Possible requirements:

- participation in at least **1 MAT4EU-related dissemination event** (online or onsite);
- contribution to at least **1 dissemination activity**, such as:
 - webinar,

- workshop,
- brokerage event,
- cluster or ecosystem event.

Beneficiaries are encouraged to present their results in external events and ensure appropriate reference to MAT4EU and EU funding.

d) Monitoring and Reporting – Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Beneficiaries shall monitor and report communication and dissemination activities using a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators. The Communication & Dissemination plan that will be implemented together with its MAT4EU mentor should include:

Mandatory KPIs:

- number of social media posts (target: ≥ 3);
- number of communication materials produced (target: ≥ 2);
- number of events participated in (target: ≥ 1);

Recommended KPIs:

- social media impressions and engagement metrics;
- number of stakeholders reached (e.g. companies, clusters, research organisations);
- website traffic related to the project (if applicable);
- number of collaboration opportunities generated;
- media coverage (if applicable).

Qualitative indicators:

- clarity and accessibility of communication (non-technical language);
- relevance of content to target audiences;
- visibility of project results and impacts.

e) Communication Principles

Beneficiaries shall ensure that all communication activities adhere to the following principles:

- clarity and accessibility for non-specialist audiences;
- focus on results and impact rather than solely on activities;
- appropriate use of visual elements to enhance understanding;
- alignment with EU priorities, including sustainability, digitalisation and industrial competitiveness.

f) Support Provided by the MAT4EU Consortium

The MAT4EU consortium will support beneficiaries in fulfilling these requirements through:

- Support in elaboration of a Communication and Dissemination plan
- provision of communication guidelines and templates;
- access to visual identity materials;
- amplification of selected content via MAT4EU communication channels.

VII. AWARDING AND CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

1. Awarding procedure

The calendar of the 1st MAT4EU Open call is as follows:

- Opening of the Open call: 6 May 2026
- Closure of the Open call: 6 July 2026 at 17.00 CET
- Evaluation of the application: 6 July to 22 July 2026
- Notification letters sent to all applicants: 22 July to 29 July 2026. Evaluation results will be communicated to all applicants. The exact dates of communication may vary depending on the number of applications received and the completion of the evaluation process.
- Complementary check on eligibility and signature of Sub-Grant Agreement: 29 July –28 August 2026
- Implementation of the funded Innovation projects: 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027

The winning applicants selected for funding will first have to provide a set of administrative and financial documents. Applicants will have up to 20 working days from the date of their notification letter to provide the requested documentation.

This list of complementary documentation to confirm the financial assessment of the applicant will be required:

- The SME's balance sheets of the last 3 years available between 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025.
- Official document certifying the legal existence of a company
- Bank account details

The MAT4EU consortium reserves the right to request additional administrative documentation at any stage of the evaluation and contractualisation process to verify eligibility. The MAT4EU Consortium will proceed to verify these documents to make sure the selected applications can receive the grant by 28 August 2026.

2. Sub-grant agreement procedure

If all eligibility conditions are met and confirmed, the SMEs selected for funding will be invited to sign a Sub-Grant Agreement with the MAT4EU partner - Plast Center Denmark (PCD) for projects funded by Strand 1 and with the MAT4EU partner – RKW Saschen (RKW) for projects funded by Strand 2. This Sub-Grant Agreement details the rights and duties of the SMEs funded under the MAT4EU Open Call.

3. Payment procedure

Successful applications will receive the requested financial contribution in the form of a lump sum according to the following schedule:

- A pre-financing payment of 40% of the requested financial contribution will be provided within 10 days after the signature of the Sub-Grant Agreement
- A final payment of 60% of the requested contribution will be provided after approval of the final report on the results of the project by the MAT4EU consortium. The final report should not be sent later than 10 September 2026.

The approval process will check the project output and the expected results mentioned in the final report submitted by the SME. Furthermore, a physical or remote meeting between the funded SME and MAT4EU partner(s) may be organised to better qualify the technical results.

4. Implementation and reporting

The awarded applications must start their implementation on the 1 September 2026. Each funded project within the MAT4EU Open Call will be followed by one MAT4EU consortium partner, as detailed in section 2.2 Mentorship.

The granted SMEs will be called upon to deliver two progress reports (mid-term and final) in which they will describe the status of their project and their results. The progress report will be due at month 6 and presented during a one-hour meeting scheduled between the awarded SME and its appointed mentoring MAT4EU partner. The final progress report is due at the end of the MAT4EU project and should be delivered no later than 10 September 2027. The consortium commits to evaluating all reports within one month of delivery and completing payment procedures within three weeks after the acceptance of the report.

The use of the project budget will be controlled by the appointed MAT4EU partner during the project through meetings and may involve checking the invoice(s) and proof(s) of payment of the service(s) delivered and other expenditures (renting of equipment, consumables, etc.).

The following rules must be respected:

- Only costs generated between the date of submission of the application and the end of the lifetime of the subcontract are eligible, exclusive of VAT.
- Expenditures incurred before the submission date of the application are not eligible. Expenditures incurred after the project's end date, as per the SGA, are not eligible.

The projects' performance will be assessed:

1. During the online interim interview at the mid-term of the project
2. During the final online review within the month following the closure of the project implementation, based on the final report provided by the funded project.

In addition to the final report, awarded SMEs must report on the impact achieved by the financial support received by completing a questionnaire to be sent by the MAT4EU consortium one month before the end of their MAT4EU project. The questionnaire must be filled out by 10 September 2027 at the latest.

The final payment (60% of the total sub-grant) will be sent to the beneficiary in a delay of 3 weeks after the approval of the final report by the MAT4EU consortium partners, based on the following criteria:

1. Overall quality and completeness of the final project report
2. Technical performance
3. Deadline Compliance

The beneficiaries must retain the original documents of their expenses for at least 5 years after the end of the MAT4EU project (until the end of September 2033).

5. Confidentiality, GDPR protection & intellectual property rights

A full list of applicants will be prepared, containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will also be shared with the European Commission for transparency.

To process and evaluate proposals, the MAT4EU consortium will need to collect personal and industrial data. The MAT4EU project coordinator will act as a Data Controller for data submitted through the Good Grant's system design and operational procedures, ensuring that data is managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the Good Grant platform terms to ensure coverage.

The final list of awarded projects and beneficiaries will be made public, including the project names, abstracts, legal names of the companies, sectors, and countries/regions of origin, project results, and project durations.

The results and IPR developed during the project implementation will be the exclusive property of the corresponding SME.

A large, light grey, semi-transparent version of the MAT 4EU logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.

VIII. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 : Project Budget

| MAT4EU OPEN CALL - BUDGET FORM STRAND 1 & STRAND 2 | | | |
|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Please only fill in the white cell. You must provide, in addition to MAT4EU sub-grant funded amount, additional private fundings that should covered 25% min of your total project's budget. | | | |
| APPLICANT | [Insert here partner short name] | | Total budget |
| A) Personnel Costs: Personnel involved in the project (one row per resource, include name and role in the project). 25% of the personnel cost should be covered by private co-funding. | Gross cost per hour (EUR) | Estimated hours of work in the project (consider 1720h max per person per year) | Estimated cost (EUR) |
| Insert description (Example: Name Surname - Role in the project) | | | € - |
| | | | € - |
| | | | € - |
| A) Total personnel costs | | | € - |
| B) Subcontracting costs: External costs incurred for parties outside the consortium, such as services provided by external professionals. Please describe the type of services. Add a new row if necessary, but remember to include it in the formulas. 25% of the subcontracting cost should be covered by private co-funding. | | | Estimated cost (EUR) |
| Insert description | | | |
| | | | |
| B) Total subcontracting costs | | | € - |
| C) Other costs: These costs differ from subcontracting because they involve minor purchases and are not considered 'services' provided by other professionals, if any. Equipment purchase is not eligible for these projects, consumables only. Applicants are free to determine the share covered by the MAT4EU sub-grant and the share covered through private co-funding, unlike other cost categories that require a fixed 25% minimum of private co-funding. | | | Estimated cost (EUR) |
| c1) Consumables (Insert description) | | | |
| c2) Training activities (Insert description) | | | |
| c3) Other expenses (Insert description) | | | |
| C) Total other costs = c1) + c2) + c3) + c4) | | | € - |
| D) Travel costs: These costs can be included as eligible project expenses, provided that the travel is directly related to the project activities. However, it is not possible to request EU funding for these costs. They can be recorded as co-funding contributions instead. | | | Estimated cost (EUR) |
| Insert description (Example: Travel to [conference/fair/event], [city/country], [date(s)], [number of participants], purpose related to project activities) | | | |
| | | | |
| D) Total subcontracting costs | | | € - |
| TOTAL BUDGET | | | Total budget: min 45k€ or 60k€ (otherwise not eligible) |
| | | | Requested MAT4EU sub-grant funded amount : 33 750 OR 60 000 depending on the strand |
| | | | Private co-funded amount |
| TOTAL BUDGET =A) + B) + C) + D) | | | € - |
| Share of total budget | | | RI |
| The MAT4EU sub-grant funded amount should cover maximum 75% of your total project's budget. Additional private fundings should covered at least 25% of your total project's budget. | | | Min 45 000€ or 60 000€ Should be min 45 000 or 60 000 depending on the strand |
| | | | #VALEUR! |
| | | | #VALEUR! |