



EUCLUSTERS  TALKS ★

# State Aid: From Policy to Practice

**18 December 2024**

08:30-09:45 CET

**Online**

# Agenda

1. News from the European Cluster Collaboration Platform

**Ángela Negrete Benedí**, Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform

2. Introduction to the GBER - General Block Exemption

**Rodrigo Peduzzi**, DG COMP, European Commission

3. Panel debate

**Annie Renders**, Head of Unit Cluster Policy & Strategic Relations, Government of Flanders, VLAIO

**David Fernández**, Head of Clusters Development, SPRI, Basque Business Development Agency

**Donato Pulacchini**, Area Manager of "Structural Funds Unit" and State Aid expert, ART-ER

4. Funding opportunities

**Ángela Negrete Benedí**, Team Member European Cluster Collaboration Platform

# Housekeeping rules

Chris Burns, presenter

- We will use **slido** to launch polls. Please scan the QR code to answer.
- Please use the **Zoom Q&A function to ask questions**, and the **chat function** to comment or share links.
- If you want to speak: Please **raise your hand** and we will give you the floor.
- Please note that the session is being **recorded** and that the recording will be **published** on the European Cluster Collaboration Platform.

# NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN CLUSTER COLLABORATION PLATFORM

# Where clusters meet IA: Be part of C2Lab in Zaragoza!



**We invite you to an interactive workshop to create your next project proposal!**

The European Cluster Collaboration Platform, in collaboration with the Government of Aragón, organises the next edition of the [Cluster Collaboration Labs in Zaragoza, Spain, on 19-20 March 2025](#).

The C2Lab is a **workshop-style event** with a special focus on **Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions** and projects, providing an excellent opportunity to meet new partners, discuss project ideas, and initiate collaborations. The event is open to any project idea, whether directly linked to AI or other innovative fields.

# Where clusters meet IA: Be part of C2Lab in Zaragoza!

## Proposed project topics

- **AI for Net Zero Technologies**
- **AI for Industrial Transformation and Competitiveness**
- **AI for Healthcare Innovation**
- **AI for Dual Use Technologies**
- **AI for Smart Cities**
- **Collaborative AI Infrastructure**
- **AI for Crisis Management**
- **Your own project idea**



# Call for Expression of Interest: Clusters meet Regions



The European Cluster Collaboration Platform, on behalf of the European Commission, will be coordinating a further **10 European 'Clusters meet Regions'** workshops throughout 2025.

The **objective** of this [Call for Expression of Interest](#) is organising a European workshop 'Clusters Meet Regions' with the aim to strengthen EU industrial ecosystems and regional economies by **fostering collaboration** between **clusters** and **regional authorities**.

## Who can apply?

This call for applications is addressed to **any cluster stakeholder** who is either actively participating in, or interested in, the economic development of their region. It is open to institutions such as clusters, regional agencies for economic development, and business network groups. Please note that a **letter of support** from your regional authority is needed if you want to apply. Proposals from national and/or regional authorities are also welcomed.

**The application must be filled out in English.**

**⚠️ DEADLINE 20 December 2024 – 18:00 CET**



# Connecting EU companies with Japan and the Republic of Korea



## THE BUSINESS MISSION CYCLE



The [EU Business Hub](#) is an EU-funded programme which supports EU companies active in **the green and low-carbon technologies, digital solutions, and healthcare and medical equipment** sectors to enter the two Asian markets by organising 10 business missions to **Japan** and 10 business missions to the **Republic of Korea** over the next four years. 50 EU SMEs and startups will be selected for each business mission. The objective of this programme is to **assist EU SMEs and start-ups in their expansion to these Asian countries.**

[Upcoming business missions:](#)

[EU Business Hub @ Smart Energy Week Spring 2025](#), Green & Low-Carbon, Tokyo, 17-21 Feb 2025

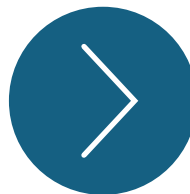
[Healthcare and Medical Equipment Korea 2025](#), Healthcare - Seoul, 17 – 21 Mar 2025

Participants also benefit from logistical assistance, a € 1,000 EU contribution for accommodation, and optional co-financed services like legal, translation, and printing support.

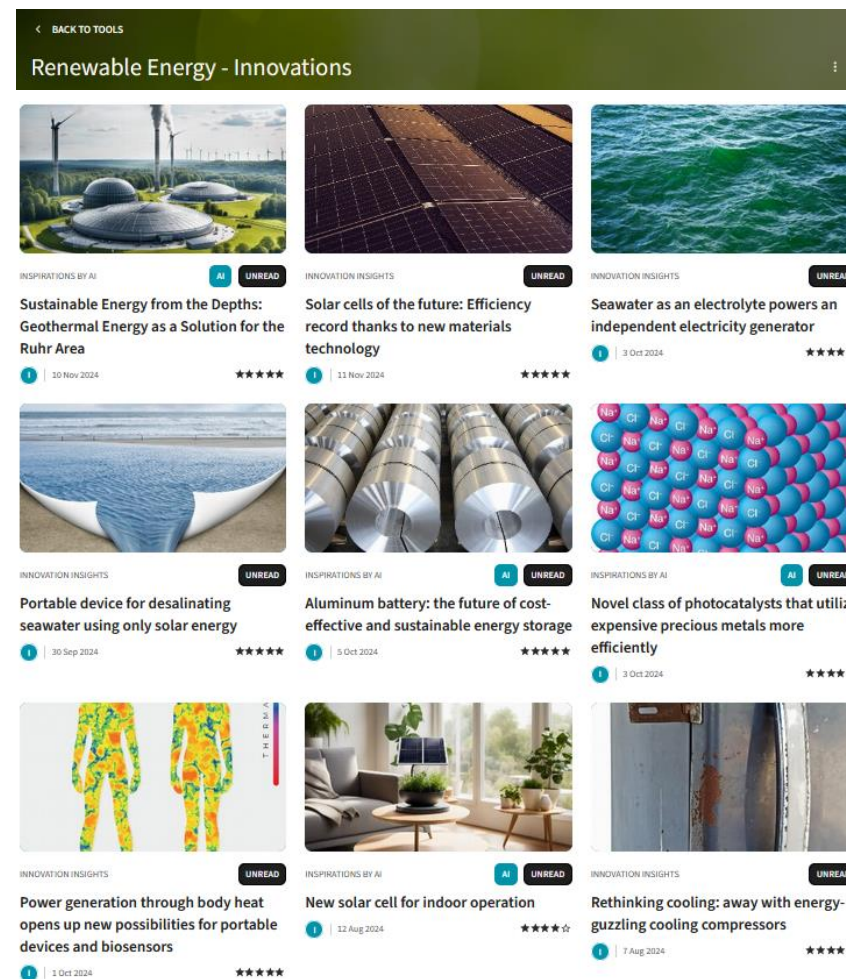


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# Introduction to the GBER - General Block Exemption Regulation

**Rodrigo Peduzzi**

*DG COMP, European Commission*



# EU Clusters Talks

Rodrigo Peduzzi, Deputy Head of Unit

DG Competition – State aid for IPCEI, innovation and environment

*18 December 2024*

The views expressed are purely those of the authors and cannot under any circumstances be considered as an expression of an official position of the European Commission.

# EU State aid control in a nutshell

- **Article 107 (1) TFEU**

State aid is “incompatible with the internal market” → general prohibition of State aid

- **Article 107 (2) and (3) TFEU**

Bases for the Commission to find State aid compatible

- **Article 108**

Procedure: general principle of *ex ante* notification of aid to the Commission but possibility for the Commission to adopt regulations exempting categories of aid from the notification obligation

# The GBER: Background (1)

- **General Block Exemption Regulation** (Commission Regulation 651/2014, see [consolidated version](#))
- State aid meeting GBER conditions is deemed compatible with the internal market
  - **no notification** and approval by the Commission
  - the **Member States are in control** of the process:
    - They design the State aid measure
    - They decide on the timeline and can implement the State aid measure quickly
- Two types of **GBER conditions**:
  - General conditions (for all types of measures) and
  - Specific conditions (for each category of measure, e.g. for R&D&I, for energy and environment, for regional aid, for SMEs, for employment...)
- **Interpretation questions** to the Commission: See [eState aid Wiki](#)

# The GBER: Background (2)

## General conditions

- Aid instruments (art. 5), incentive effect (art. 6) and eligible costs (art. 7)
- Cumulation with other sources of funding (art. 8)
  - Aid under GBER + other State aid
    - For different eligible costs: no limitations
    - For same eligible costs: possible up to GBER thresholds and maximum aid amount
  - Aid under GBER + support from Union funds: possible to co-finance same eligible costs up to GBER thresholds and maximum aid amount
- Publication (art. 9)
- Reporting obligations (art. 11)
- Monitoring by the Commission (art. 12)

## Specific conditions

- Specific provisions in “general” articles, e.g.:
  - Definitions (art. 2)
  - Notification thresholds (art. 4)
- **and** any special conditions in the dedicated Chapter (Chapter III) and Articles (13 to 56f), including specific eligible costs, aid intensities, etc.

# The GBER: Section on R&D&I

- Section 4 of the GBER deals with **aid for research and development and innovation**
- It comprises **12 articles**, including:
  - Article 25 - Aid for **R&D Projects**
  - Article 25a - Aid for projects awarded a Seal of Excellence quality label
  - Article 26 – Investment aid for **research infrastructure**
  - Article 26a – Investment aid for testing and experimentation infrastructure
  - **Article 27 – Aid for innovation clusters**
  - Article 28 – **Innovation aid** for SMEs
- The large majority (approx. 90%) of aid for R&DI in the EU is granted by Member States under this section of the GBER, EUR 11 billion in 2022
- *Measures that do not meet the GBER requirements may be notified*

# Article 27 GBER – Aid for innovation clusters

## Scope

- **Innovation clusters**, defined in Article 2(92) of the GBER:

structures or organised **groups of independent parties** (e.g., SMEs, research infrastructure, Digital Innovation Hubs, non-profits, etc.), designed to stimulate **innovative activity** and **new ways of collaboration** (e.g. by digital means) through **promotion, sharing of facilities** and **exchange of knowledge** and expertise and by contributing effectively to **knowledge transfer, networking, information dissemination and collaboration** among the parties in the cluster

- Beneficiary: investment aid (owner), operating aid (owner or operator), subject to separate accounting
- Open, transparent and non-discriminatory access on market terms
- Operating aid  $\leq 10$  years
- Notification threshold: EUR 10 million per cluster

## Eligible costs

- Investment aid: costs of intangible and tangible assets; aid intensity 50% with possible regional 'bonuses'
- Operating aid: personnel and administrative costs (including overhead costs) relating to the animation, marketing and management of the cluster; aid intensity 50%



# Thank you



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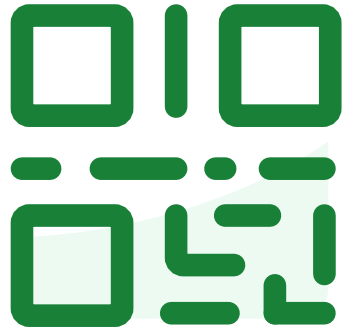
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**What do you see as the biggest challenge in applying State aid for innovation clusters?**

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**In your view, what role will State aid play in shaping Europe's innovation ecosystems in the next 5 years?**

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**What changes would you like to see in State aid policies to better support organisations like yours?**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

# Panel debate

**Annie Renders**, Head of Unit Cluster Policy & Strategic Relations, Government of Flanders, VLAIO

**Donato Pulacchini**, Area Manager of "Structural Funds Unit" and State Aid expert, ART-ER

**David Fernández**, Head of Clusters Development, SPRI, Basque Business Development Agency

# FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

# Innovative, Community-Integrated PV systems

- The call focuses on the rapid growth of **photovoltaic (PV) systems**, from domestic to utility-scale applications, and their critical role in the energy transition. PV systems will contribute significantly to distributed generation, energy communities, and integration with advanced grid controls.
- The expected outcomes of the project are:
  - **Increased PV profitability and adoption:** enhance profitability and penetration of PV systems in renewable energy communities.
  - **Citizen engagement:** Actively involve citizens and communities in the clean energy transition through energy cooperatives and decentralised platforms.
- Proposals should demonstrate **solutions** for:
  - Community-aggregated systems addressing energy poverty and expanding cooperative energy solutions.
  - Peer-to-peer trading and emerging decentralised solutions.
  - Integration of PV with storage, electric mobility, and grid flexibility.
  - Cyber-secure communication and advanced smart power electronics.
- Topic ID: HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-06
- Deadline: 04 February 2025
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)



# Innovation Fund 2024 - Batteries - Manufacturing of electric vehicles battery cells

- This call supports projects focused on the **manufacturing of electric vehicle** (EV) battery cells, aiming to:
  - Strengthen Europe's industrial capacity and leadership in net-zero technologies.
  - Ensure sufficient battery production capacity in the EU/EEA to meet growing EV demand.
  - Align with EU CO2 emission performance standards for light- and heavy-duty vehicles.
- Projects funded under this call are expected to:
  - **Enhance European leadership:** boost Europe's global competitiveness in battery cell manufacturing for electric vehicles.
  - **Expand capacity:** ensure sufficient production to meet the growing EV market demand and comply with EU CO2 emission targets.
  - **Support climate goals:** contribute to the transition to net-zero technologies and GHG emission reductions.
  - **Promote recycling:** incorporate sustainable recycling processes to close the materials loop.
  - **Foster innovation:** generate new patents and technological advancements within the EU/EEA, aligning with strategic autonomy objectives.
- Topic ID: INNOVFUND-2024-BATT-EV-CELLS
- Deadline: 24 April 2025
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

# Market uptake measures of renewable energy systems

- The aim of the call is to develop solutions that facilitate the wider uptake of **renewable energy systems (RES)** across various sectors, improve the social acceptability of RES technologies, and contribute to the creation of open-source tools and financial frameworks that support the integration of renewable energies.
- Projects should aim to achieve at least two of the following outcomes:
  - **Increased renewable energy uptake:** Facilitate the broader use of renewable energy systems (RES) across energy, industrial, and residential sectors, contributing to higher renewable energy shares in final consumption by 2030 and beyond.
  - **Development of open-source tools and methodologies:** Provide validated tools for policymakers and stakeholders to develop better RES policies and analyse market dynamics, considering all renewable energies.
  - **Development of markets and financial frameworks:** Create market conditions and financial systems that support large-scale renewable energy integration in an efficient and incentive-compatible way.
  - **Social acceptability:** Improve the public acceptance of renewable energy facilities and installations.
- Topic ID: HORIZON-CL5-2024-D3-02-10
- Deadline: 04 February 2025
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

# Joint EUROCLUSTERS for Europe's recovery

- This call focuses on reinforcing innovation and adoption of new technologies for **strategic autonomy**. In particular, the emphasis is on **value chains** within or across one or more of the 14 industrial ecosystems identified in the European Industrial Strategy.
- The call is divided **into two strands**:
  - Strand 1 focuses on **net-zero technologies and critical raw materials**:
  - Strand 2 covers **value chains not covered in Strand 1**.
- Number of projects to be funded: **16** (with at least **8 projects for Strand 1**)
- Maximum project duration: **36 months**
- Budget: **42 million EUR**
- Topic ID: SMP-COSME-2024-CLUSTER-01
- Deadline: **05 February 2025**
- Functional Mailbox for applicants: [EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu](mailto:EISMEA-SMP-COSME-ENQUIRIES@ec.europa.eu)
- Published on [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

# Opportunities for SMEs: Calls from Euroclusters

- FRIEND CCI: Call for **providers** in the areas of digitalization and/or green transition and/or services for internationalization; deadline 01 August 2025
- GEMSTONE: Financial support for **training** related to **Green Manufacturing**; deadline 31 December 2024.
- INGENIOUS: **Training** grants to help SMEs improve their digital skills, green transition, resilience preparedness and reskilling and upskilling of the workforce; deadline 14 February 2025.
- RESIST: **Networking and marketing** FSTP for SMEs from the **Automotive – Mobility – Transport** ecosystem; deadline 20 December 2024
- RESIST: **Internationalisation** FSTP for activities in target markets; deadline 20 December 2024.

All calls here: <https://clustercollaboration.eu/open-calls>

# Register for the next Talks

## Upcoming dates and topics!

- 15 January** Empowering Clusters and Driving Innovation: ECCP 2024 Insights and Next Steps
- 29 January** New collaboration opportunities in the Republic of Korea and Japan

# Continue the discussion



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THANK YOU

