3° CALL FOR *EXPRESSION OF INTEREST* FOR SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators

Guidelines for Technology Providers

Please note that this applicant guide may be used for information purposes only.

Applications will have to be submitted using the online application form provided at: https://elcacluster.eu/our-projects/sileo/#ExpressionOfInterest

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About the SILEO project

SILEO Eurocluster project is co-financed by the Single Market Programme (SMP/COSME Pillar) of the European Union. SILEO gathers seven key lighting and furniture clusters:

	1. ELCA European Lighting Cluster Alliance (Italy)
	2. Cluster Lumière (France)
	3. CICAT Lighting Cluster (Spain)
	4. Rete di Imprese Luce in Veneto (Italy)
	5. Business Upper Austria - OÖ. Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH Building Innovation Cluster (Austria)
	6. TFC Transylvanian Furniture Cluster (Romania)
	7. Cluster Legno, Arredo e Sistema Casa FVG (Italy)

COVID-19 has shown that resilience matters and laid bare the 'resilience divide' between small and large firms. SILEO Consortium will support the European Small and Medium-sized Enterprises - SMEs of the lighting-furniture sector to recover fully from the crisis, become more resilient and better prepared for the digital and circular transition needs and challenges. **SILEO Eurocluster project will help the European lighting & furniture SMEs to be proactive actors in this transition**.

SILEO Consortium aspires to capture all the digitalisation potential for the furniture and lighting SMEs with a concerted effort channelled through an open and inclusive ecosystem for innovation and technology business upgrading with accompanying business support measures including expert consultancy, business resilience building guidance, reinforced by direct financial support schemes and talent placement service to help companies attract talents.

The project proposes a **direct financial funding scheme through financial support to third parties** (cascade funding), joint talent placement services and internationalization actions to accelerate the recovery of lighting and furniture SMEs, support them in becoming more resilient to future shocks, better prepared for disruptions in supply and value chains, greener in business operations and stronger connected to technology ecosystems through strategic partnering.

SILEO project invites technology providers and digitalization experts to express their interest in becoming accredited by the SILEO Consortium and integrate into a list of experts to support EU lighting and furniture SMEs in their pathway to sustainability and digitization.

1. Third Call for Expression of Interest for Technology Providers

Under the SILEO financial support schemes - 2nd Call for Advanced Technology Uptake Projects - lighting and furniture SMEs (beneficiaries of the SILEO Call) must collaborate with an expert(s) selected from the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators. These collaborations aim to address significant digitalization and circular economy challenges within their industries.

To facilitate this process, the SILEO Consortium is launching a specific **3° CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST** to identify and select technology providers and digitalization experts interested in supporting SMEs with their advanced technology uptake projects.

→ **This Call will be open from 26.06.2024 until 11.10.2024 (two weeks before the closure of the SILEO 2nd Call for Advanced Technology Uptake Projects).** The objective is to keep the SILEO Pool constantly updated with new technology providers and experts, and close it only temporarily for two weeks before the submission deadline of the 2nd Call for Advanced Technology Uptake Projects.

This anticipated closure aims to provide SME applicants (of the open calls) the opportunity to choose their experts from the updated list and ensure their validation in time.

3° CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR TECHNOLOGY PROVIDERS	
Deadline for submission	11.10.2024 at 16:00 CEST.
Recipients	All public or private legal entities, with at least 3 years of experience and technology transfer capacity in the target domain of advanced technologies uptake and digitalisation processes, located in the EU Member States or countries associated with the Single Market Programme *(see section 2 of this Guidelines)*
Link	https://elcacluster.eu/our-projects/sileo/#ExpressionOfInterest

Approved organizations will be added to the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators. The document is available on SILEO Submission Platform and already includes 80 technology providers who have submitted their applications within the 1st and 2nd Calls for Expression of Interest.

Under the SILEO advanced technology uptake projects a lighting/furniture SME applicant can:

✓ **Choose one (or more) technology providers included in the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators**.

   OR

✓ **Suggest its own collaborator(s) by submitting the *application for technology provider* before the deadline**. Upon validation of the application by the SILEO Consortium, the technology provider applicant will be included in the SILEO Pool of Technology Facilitators. Subsequently, the SME applicant will have the option to choose and collaborate with them for their project.

⚠️ In the case the technology provider does not submit the application form by the above date and, therefore, is not included in the SILEO Pool, the applicant SME will still have the opportunity to select another validated technology provider from the official list published by the SILEO project.

2. Who can apply as a SILEO technology provider?

Technology providers are **public or private legal entities**, with **at least 3 years of experience** and **technology transfer capacity** in the target domain of advanced technologies uptake and green transition processes. These providers can be part of the following typologies:

→ Knowledge and Technology providers;

→ Circular economy facilitators and green transition experts;

→ Tech-savvy companies (technology companies);

→ Digital Innovation Hubs;

→ Competence Centers;

→ Academia, Universities, specialized research groups, etc;

→ Research Centers and Up-scaling entities;

→ Freelance professionals registered as legal persons;

→ Other bodies.

2.1 Eligibility criteria

✓ Any **public or private legal entity established in one of the EU Member States and Single Market Programme-associated countries[1] can** apply to be part of the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators.

✓ Applicants must **exercise activities directly related to the services requested**, which have to be issued to the beneficiary SMEs and must provide the necessary organization, personnel and materials for the implementation of such services.

✓ Applicants **must be current and up to date with their legal and tax obligations** as established by their national legislations.

✓ Applicants **must have professional experience of at least 3 years** in relation to expert consultancy and/or knowledge and technology transfer services for SMEs in the domains covered by the SILEO financial support scheme.

✓ Applicants **shall be fluent in English**.

2.2 Domains

The legal entities must provide solutions, services and consultancy in fields of **advanced technologies/digital and green solutions** to support the SMEs within the project's scope of Advanced Technology Uptake Projects.

Thanks to bottom-up exchanges, SILEO partners have identified the following advanced technologies and digital solutions (*not an exhaustive list*) as of paramount importance for lighting and furniture SMEs:

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[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/smp/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf

	Additive Manufacturing (3D printing) The technology will improve resource efficiency in both production and use phases as manufacturing processes and products can be redesigned for AM, as well as extend product life achieved through technical approaches such as repair, remanufacture and refurbishment, more sustainable socio-economic patterns like stronger person-product affinities, closer relations producers - consumers.
	Augmented and Virtual Reality Support implementation of smart products, enhance focus on delivering customer experience and hyper customization for designers and end-users. Customization through VR allows lower product errors, and diminishes waste, impacting positively the shift towards a low-carbon-based economy.
	Big Data & Analytics Data-based analysis tools are used to visualize bottlenecks and risks in real-time and present them in a comprehensible way.
	Cybersecurity Most of the new building facilities are equipped with grid-connected products including lighting, electricity, heating etc. The lighting fixtures are used for the IoT sensors. Unfortunately, this makes them attractive for cyber-attacks. Thus, cyber security technologies should be included in smart lighting products.
	Industrial IoT (IIoT) & sensors IIoT increases safety and efficiency at production sites, reduce human errors, improve logistics and distribution and thus increases the resilience of companies to crises related to suppliers. The integration of sensors or the development of printable codes to the wood logs for raw material tracking and data acquisition. Available functionalities allow for very precise management of light sources so that the lighting is perfectly suited to the function of the ambient, and the energy consumption is maximally rationalised.
	Robotics Efficiently implemented robotics, such as material handling, welding, MIG, spot and arc welding, etc., will enable SMEs to improve their safety standards, the quality of their products and their resource usage.
	Artificial Intelligence Useful for product proposals via apps and for product development. AI has the potential to impact the whole product design, increasing customisation. Lower errors and higher creativity in production.
	Digitalisation of marketing and online trading Digitalisation in marketing refers to the gradual movement of marketing onto digital platforms, such as the Internet, using video, audio and other digital channels to reach their target audience. Digitalization of marketing involves the transformation of traditional marketing strategies (commerce, customer management, sales e-commerce, B2B commerces) and activities into digital formats. It encompasses all the efforts made by businesses to leverage digital channels, tools, and platforms to promote their products or services to a wider audience.
	Image scripting technologies This technology can be used to produce photorealistic images of each furniture or lighting product, enabling it to be showcased online in detail. Thus, consumers can view these products online, zoom in and out without any loss of quality or clarity, or rotate images at any angle. Besides that, portions of the image can even be dissolved in order to reveal hidden components and features.

	WebAR This technology can help businesses get products to market in time and effectively communicate the worth and utility of a complicated and expensive product in B2B. It is also a sales tool that allows a customer to easily visualize how a product will fit within their own home. This is achieved with digital models of products that can be placed within real environments using AR technology.
	Machine learning Using artificial intelligence allows one to create a personalized buying experience for every individual customer.

Other technologies and digital solutions that can be relevant for the lighting and furniture business operations support the green and digital transition of SMEs.

2.3 Absence of Conflict of Interest

Technology applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the selection process and during the project implementation. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case-by-case by the SILEO Consortium.

The SME Applicant and the selected technology provider(s) and/or digitalisation expert(s) must be two independent legal entities.

Moreover, there should be no conflict of interest between the technology provider/digitalisation expert and the SILEO project partners. In particular, technology provider applicants cannot be staff members of SILEO Consortium partners.

3. Role of the Technology providers in the SILEO Call for Advanced Technology Uptake Projects

The technology providers and experts will support lighting and furniture SMEs in implementing defined measures to support their digitalisation and sustainability projects. The facilitators will supply their services and solutions to the SMEs under the 2nd Call for Advanced Technology Uptake Projects.

Within the **SILEO Advanced Technology Uptake Projects,** the objective is to support lighting and furniture SMEs in implementing/developing/integrating the new advanced technologies into their business operations in collaboration with digital technology providers and facilitators to support company resilience and digital and green transformation.

Through the advanced technology uptake projects, technology providers will support SME beneficiaries in accessing the following expert services:

A)	**Prototyping of new products or services**

Support lighting and furniture SMEs in the prototyping of new product(s) or service(s) using advanced technology(ies) or digital solution(s) considered strategic for business development. The technology provider(s) shall support the SME to bridge the gap between the concept and reality, as Prototyping is a vital step in transforming the idea into a functional product or service design.

The following aspects must be respected:

✓ The prototyping process must be executed using advanced technology(ies) and/or digital innovations (i.e. 3D printing-enabled rapid prototyping, the Internet of Things, generative design, augmented and virtual reality platforms, interactive prototyping, other) AND/OR must be focused on development/design of a new product/service prototype with embedded advanced technologies or digital solutions not present in the company current product portfolio.

✓ The prototyping processes shall include the development of the proof of concept to test the idea and then creating a model of the product/service to test functionality and desirability.

✓ The background qualitative and quantitative research should have already been executed, in order to have an idea of consumer desirability, manufacturability, marketability, competition, pricing sweet spots, margin opportunities, etc.

✓ The prototyping project can start both from the development of initial specifications and drawings or from detailed designs if the preliminary activities have already been executed.

✓ It shall include specific evaluation phases to gather feedback and assess the prototype product or service functionality, appearance and other features and the subsequent improvement phase.

✓ The prototyping project shall end with the final phase of the prototype product or service. It shall include the specifications for its pilot testing, application or demonstration, i.e. for setting a pilot production line or pilot service activities (test bed).

B)	**Pilot application**

The pilot application project shall be aimed at testing whether the new prototyped product/service AND/OR selected advanced technology/digital solution for business operations is working as it was designed and can meet a given set of business requirements in terms of advanced technology uptake. The pilot application project shall identify whether the prototype or technology to be integrated is a viable option for the SME path forward towards more digital and green business growth.

The pilot application project can consider the following activities:

✓ Testing, validation and demonstration of the new prototyped product(s) or service(s), developed with the use of advanced technologies or digital solutions, in an industry-relevant (operational) environment, including test beds and small pilot production lines;

and/or

✓ Integration, testing and validation of the selected advanced technology(ies) and/or digital solution(s) application within a specific production, manufacturing, commercial, or operations management process/phases in order to significantly renew, upgrade and /or make them more sustainable and circular.

C)	Prototyping + Pilot application

This type of project combines prototyping and pilot application phases (A + B, as described above) in one project. All the specifications and requirements described in the above-listed project typologies (A and B) must be observed.

Note that if you choose this type of combined project, you must respect the maximum project duration of 6 months.

The SME applicants for the Open Call for Advanced Technology Uptake Projects will select the technology provider from the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators to implement the above-mentioned expert services.

Why apply?

Applying to be part of SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators, the international expert database, offers several benefits and opportunities:

✓ To gain visibility and recognition in Europe. This exposure can be valuable for professionals and organizations seeking to expand their reach and engage with European SMEs, businesses and projects.

✓ To be included in the referenced SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators used by applicant SMEs - beneficiaries of SILEO Open Calls - for the selection of experts and/or technology providers for their projects.

✓ To be chosen by an SME beneficiary as a "technology uptake facilitator" for its Advanced Technology Uptake Projects. It provides a platform for you to offer your expertise and services to businesses looking to enhance their operations and technology adoption.

✓ To improve the quality of services by working with diverse European SMEs, and contribute to the development of the European Lighting Value Chain and Furniture manufacturing sectors. Your expertise can play a role in advancing technology adoption, innovation, and competitiveness within these industries, benefiting both businesses and the broader European economy.

4. How to apply?

Technology providers, who are interested in supporting lighting and furniture SMEs, **must submit -** within the deadline - **the Application FORM** (Word file available to download), duly completed in English, together with the mandatory Annex (*Organisation registration official document*) **to the email address of one of the SILEO project partners** – contact points for the specific country of reference.

- *For example, the interested technology provider from Spain shall submit its duly completed EOI form + mandatory annex to the SILEO partner – CICAT Lighting Cluster, Spain's reference partner.*

Country	SILEO Partners	Representatives	E-mail
EU & SMP associated countries	ELCA European Lighting Cluster Alliance	Marta Krakowiak	marta.krakowiak@elcacluster.eu
FRANCE	Cluster Lumière	Mary Hadidi	m.hadidi@cluster-lumiere.com
SPAIN	CICAT Lighting Cluster	Andrea Padre	apadre@secartys.org
ITALY	Rete di Imprese Luce in Veneto	Antonella Venza	antonella.venza@luceinveneto.com
	Cluster Legno, Arredo e Sistema Casa FVG	Stefania Silvestri	stefania.silvestri@clusterarredo.com
AUSTRIA	Business Upper Austria - OÖ. Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH (BIZUP) Building Innovation Cluster (BIC)	Isabella Mantello	isabella.mantello@biz-up.at
ROMANIA	TFC Transylvanian Furniture Cluster	Andreea Toma	andreea.toma@hygia.ro

The information provided in the Expression of Interest will be published on the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators.

The application must be completed in all the sections with the following information:

STEP 1. Organisation identity
General information about the organisation applicant (legal name, typology, address, contact details etc.) and a brief presentation.
STEP 2. Organisation expertise
STEP 2.1 - knowledge and expertise related to advanced technologies and/or digital solutions
Technology applicants must prove to have a high level of expertise and professional experience in <u>at least one</u> of the advanced technologies mentioned. In this section, the candidate has to choose the digital

solution/technology in which they possess expertise and offer a short description of their skills and competencies in that particular area. Other technologies and digital solutions not mentioned may be included.

STEP 2.2 - knowledge and expertise related to the lighting and furniture sector

As the SILEO technology provider will support lighting and/or furniture SMEs in implementing their projects in the frame of the SILEO Open call, in this section (2.2) the candidates should provide a short description of their expertise and knowledge regarding the two industrial sectors (lighting & furniture).

STEP 3. Organisation Team

In this section, the technology provider candidates should describe their internal team that will be engaged in supporting lighting and/or furniture SMEs.

STEP 4. Mandatory annexes

The mandatory Annex is the official documentation confirming the registration of the organisation (i.e. Chamber of Commerce register, organisation statute, etc.).

Candidates must submit the EOI + Mandatory Annex in PDF format to the email of SILEO Contact points.

5. Evaluation

Once the Expression of Interest has been submitted, the SILEO Consortium will evaluate the application to assess the expertise, competence, knowledge and technology transfer capacity in the target domain of advanced technologies and digitalization processes for SMEs. Applicant organizations will be selected, validated by the SILEO Consortium, and included in the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators on the basis of:

- ✓ **Professional experience of at least 3 years** in relation to expert consultancy and/or knowledge and technology transfer services for SMEs in the framework of business green and digital transformations with particular focus on the advanced technologies uptake and digitalisation of company operations in the lighting and furniture sectors;

- ✓ **Very good skills in English** (written and spoken).

- ✓ Knowledge of partner countries' languages (Italian, Spanish, German, French and Romanian) and other EU languages is an added value.

The SILEO partners reserve the right to request any additional documentary evidence if it seems necessary to verify applicants' skills and knowledge and any potential conflict of interest. The SILEO Consortium reserves the right to reject any application that fails to comply with the specifications of this Call. Applicants rejected will be notified by the SILEO Consortium.

The validated Applicants will receive the notification email confirming their selection as SILEO technology providers and will be asked to provide the visual materials (organisation's official logos) to be displayed beside their name on the list of experts.

→ *Please, get in touch with us if you don't receive any notification email!*

The validation process will take *up to 7 days* from receiving the completed EOI application form.

The validated organisations are included in the **SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators** published on the SILEO Application Portal, the SILEO European Cluster Collaboration profile page and SILEO Partners institutional websites.

6. Confidentiality and data protection

In the performance of their tasks, the experts selected by the SMEs shall demonstrate appropriate ethical conduct and must respect the confidentiality of the information and documents to which they will have access.

The personal data collected will be processed in accordance with Regulation (EC) N° 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by Community institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data.

The administrative data of the Applicant selected for the SILEO Business Digital Transformation Project, which will be granted financial support under the current Call, will be included in the related Sub-Grant Agreement signed between the SILEO Coordinator, Partner of Reference and the SME Beneficiary.

7. Disclaimer

The selection and publication in the SILEO Pool of Technology Uptake Facilitators will not constitute a binding element towards any of the SILEO project partners and SME beneficiaries generating any kind of obligations towards the experts and technology providers. The issue of the aforementioned services will be contracted by the SILEO financial support designated SME beneficiaries, who decide from the list of accredited service providers with whom they would like to formalize a collaboration.

SILEO will not be responsible to any legal person in relation to any inaccuracy, error, omission or misleading statements contained in the EoI form.

SILEO shall not be liable to any legal person for any damages, losses, costs, liabilities or expenses of any kind, that it may suffer as a consequence of relying upon such information.

It is the responsibility of the technology provider(s) and/or digitalisation expert(s) to inform of any changes to their details, which would result in a change to their original EoI application. SILEO Consortium will not be responsible to any legal person in relation to any failure to inform any person of inaccuracy, error, omission or misleading statement contained in such information of which it becomes aware after the date of release of that information.