EaP PLUS Cluster Grant Scheme

to finance cluster-to-cluster EAP and EU countries collaboration (for existing clusters and emerging cluster-like organisations/initiatives)

Call for Applications

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Presentation of the EaP PLUS project and overview of the Grant Scheme Activity

The EaP PLUS project aims to encourage the research and innovation cooperation between the European Union (EU) and Eastern Partnership (EAP) countries and to address effectively current opportunities and remaining obstacles in this cooperation.

The EaP PLUS Grant Scheme (2017) is designed to enhance EU-EaP research and innovation partnerships through cluster and cluster-like organisation cooperation. The activity aims at strengthening clusters in EaP countries, transferring the EU's – and, when relevant, the EaP countries' - good practices, and facilitating sustainable inter-cluster cooperation between the EU and EaP countries' existing or emerging clusters.

EaP PLUS offers six grants of up to 10.000€ to EaP clusters or cluster-like legal entities or organisations. The grant covers the expenses of the cooperative activity of the EaP and EU clusters. The grants will be allocated on a competitive basis following an evaluation by the EaP project representatives.

Information on the application for the Grant Scheme

Call timing

The call opens on **15 June 2017** and closes on **30 September 2017**.

Within 8 weeks after the deadline, all applications will be checked for eligibility and evaluated by the EaP project representatives.

The earliest starting date for positively evaluated projects is 4 weeks after the communication of the evaluation result (November 2017). The end of the activities should be at the latest **ten months** after the start date of the activity, and **no later than December 2018**.

Eligible participants

The call is targeted to cluster and cluster-like initiatives in EaP and EU countries **only**. The candidate cluster or cluster-like organisation should meet the European definition of a cluster as closely as possible[1]. This is an important criterion for selection of the grant scheme beneficiary.

Eligible applicants include: clusters; emerging clusters and cluster-like initiatives; business networks focused on Research and Innovation (R&I); industry associations and regional organisations focused on R&I; chambers of commerce.

The joint application should involve at least **one** EaP cluster and **one** EU cluster. **The joint application should be submitted by the EaP cluster on behalf of both organisations**.

Registration of the candidate EU and EaP clusters on the ECCP (European Cluster Collaboration Platform) is strongly encouraged for EaP candidates and mandatory for EU candidates. To sign up, please follow this link.

The candidate cluster and cluster-like organisations **must be legal entities**. No funding will be given to individual persons.

Evaluation criteria and selection committee

The evaluators of the EaP PLUS grant scheme activity are the partners of the EaP PLUS project. Task leader inno TSD and project coordinator CeRISS are in charge of supervising the whole activity. For more information on the partners, please visit the EaP PLUS website[2].

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[1] http://www.clustercollaboration.eu/cluster-definitions

[2] https://www.eap-plus.eu/

The evaluation of the selection committee is based on three main criteria:

- **Closeness of the EaP and EU cluster or emerging cluster-like organisation in meeting the European definition of a cluster**. *The EaP applicant must be close to meeting the definition of a European cluster, or at least with a well-documented plan/program in becoming a cluster organisation in the European sense. The EU cluster applicant must have a registered profile on the ECCP.*

- **Soundness of the research and innovation activities of the EU and EaP cluster and cluster-like organisations**. *The organisations must have proven activities in a given field with a research and innovation dimension. Example: an agricultural cluster active in seed production, whose agricultural members cooperate with a laboratory in producing new seed varieties.*

- **Potential of the EaP cluster or cluster-like organisation in creating a sustainable long-term cooperation with a European cluster, and expected impact of the grant scheme activity in sustaining and/or developing this cooperation**. *The clusters must clearly define their interest in establishing co-operation and the added-value to be acquired as a result of the co-operation. The applicants might wish to demonstrate past cooperation activities between the two clusters.*

Activities eligible for funding

Eligible funding opportunities include, amongst others: management team missions from a EU country to an EaP country and vice versa, with clearly defined objectives; exchange of staff to learn about R&I cluster strategy and practices; preparation of a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between the two cluster organisations; organization of a common event; communication activities to inform the cluster members about opportunities of R&I collaboration; etc.

The selected applicants will sign an Agreement with the EaP PLUS partner responsible for allocating the grant scheme to the EaP country cluster beneficiary. The EaP partner, Inno and CeRISS will define the activities that are funded, the maximum costs that can be reimbursed,

and the reimbursement process. A prepayment of 40% will be transferred to the EaP cluster beneficiary after signature of the Agreement. The remaining 60% will be transferred after the grant implementation and acceptance of the grant scheme report.

Reimbursement of the activities is based on **documented real costs** (e.g. travel, visa, per diem, catering, event costs etc. excluding labour and other remuneration), meaning up to 6000 € before the start of the activities, and up to 4000 € after the termination of the activities.

The report should include:

- A report on the activity and its outcomes (5-10 pages), including:
  - Description of the activities implemented under the grant, including quantitative data wherever available
  - Summary of the main outcomes
  - Title and content of proposals or project that emerged from the activity and/or of future planned activities, if any
  - One or several pictures if possible (with photo consent)
  - Eventually, feedback after the implemented activity, recommendations, other impact of the grant, etc.
  - Detailed break-down of costs

The funded activities should in any case be oriented towards industry and academia RDI cooperation or cluster cooperation, excluding any trade activities.

How to apply

One application must be submitted by the EaP country cluster or cluster like organisation on behalf of his organisation and the EU partner organisation. The grant scheme rewards one "couple" application received (EaP+EU cluster organisations).

The application consists of:

- One application form
- One **signed and dated** letter of consent from the European cluster organisation,
- A short presentation (PDF, PPT) of the EU and EaP clusters.
- The link/screenshot to the clusters ECCP profiles is mandatory for EU applicant and strongly encouraged for the EaP country applicant.

Applications must be submitted electronically and in the English language to **Morgane Veillet Lavallée** (m.veilletlavallee@inno-group.com), with **Svetlana Klessova** in copy (s.klessova@inno-group.com).

Applicants will be informed about the outcome of their application by email (address they have used to apply).

Contact point per country

European clusters: **Morgane Veillet Lavallée** (m.veilletlavallee@inno-group.com)
Moldovan clusters: **Diana Grozav** (d.grozav@gmail.com)
Belarusian clusters: **Olga Meerovskaya** (meerovskaya@fp7-nip.org.by)
Georgian clusters: **Givi Kochoradze** (givi.kochoradze@yahoo.com)
Armenian clusters: **Tigran Arzumanyan** (tarznip@sci.am)
Ukrainian clusters: **Karina Shakhbazian** (karina@nas.gov.ua)
Azerbaijan clusters: **Elchin Babayev** (elchin.babayev@elmfondu.az)