



EUROPEAN CLUSTER  
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

# Call for Expression of Interest - SMEs

EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event 2023

*An initiative of the European Union*





# Call for Expression of Interest SMEs, Start-Ups, and European Industry Associations



## EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event

In the context of Manufacturing Indaba

24 October to 26 October 2023

Johannesburg, South Africa



**Corrigendum (26 June 2023): Tourism sector has been added to section “Who can participate” below.**

**Corrigendum (11.07.2023): The first cut-off date has been extended until 2 August 2023, 23:59 Brussels time.**

## OBJECTIVES

The European Commission (EC) will organise the **EU – South Afrika Matchmaking Event** in the context of [Manufacturing Indaba](#) which will be held on 24 October – 26 October 2023.

The **EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event** itself will take place on-site in **Johannesburg, South Africa** on 24 October – 26 October 2023.

The event will be jointly organised by the European Commission and The Department of Small Business Development (DSBD) of South Africa - with the support of the EU Delegation to South Africa and facilitated by the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP) and the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN).

The **EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event** will bring together cluster organisations, SMEs, Start-Ups and European Industry Associations from the European Union (EU), non-EU COSME countries, and South Africa. It will provide participants an excellent chance to promote Cluster to Cluster (C2C), Cluster to Business (C2B), and Business to Business (B2B) collaborations.

The overall objective of the event is to promote the exchange of information and provide networking opportunities for European cluster organisations and their members with counterparts from South Africa, particularly in the fields Agri-food, Green Industries, Chemicals and Metals, Transport (Maritime and Automotive), Digital Tech, Textile and Leather, **and Tourism.**

The objectives for the participants include:

- Strengthening EU-South Africa cluster cooperation for the benefit of their members, including a seminar, a cluster matchmaking event, and site visits.
- Identifying potential areas of common interest for cooperation and synergies, in terms of the sectoral, value chain, and market focus of their SMEs and other companies.
- Improving, through clusters, the EU-South Africa industry and academia-industry collaboration in research, development, and innovation. For its members, the clusters will identify possible areas of RDI collaboration (academia, research organisations, industries...).

This call for Expression of Interest is launched to identify small and medium-sized enterprises (including Start-ups) and European Industry Associations from EU (and non-EU COSME) countries (please see section “Who can participate” below) who are willing and committed to participate in the EU-South Africa Matchmaking Event.

**By submitting an expression of interest in response to this call, you are indicating your acceptance of the call's terms.**



This call is published on the ECCP website. Expressions of interest to participate in this event must be **submitted electronically by 2 August (Wednesday) 2023, 23:59 Brussels time – first cut-off date and 7 September (Thursday) 2023, 23:59 Brussels time – second cut-off date (the second cut-off date will be available in case of still available places after the first round of evaluation after the first cut-off date – see more details in section *Selection process* below) through:**

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/SMEsCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

Late applications could be accepted for participation, if eligibility criteria are fulfilled and that costs are borne by the participants. Late applications are accepted until 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest through:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/SMEsCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

The organisers reserve the right to close the application process once the maximum capacity for participants is reached.

This call is targeting only SMEs, Start-Ups, and European Industry Associations. A separate call exists for cluster organisations and business network organisations. So if you are a cluster organisation or a business network organisation you should respond to the call that is available at:

<https://clustercollaboration.eu/content/eu-south-africa-matchmaking-event-2023-call-expression-interest-clusters>

## CONTEXT OF THE INITIATIVE

The Event will take place in the context of the ECCP activities. The European Commission facilitates international cluster cooperation through the ECCP including the organisation of specific cluster matchmaking events and policy development actions. The objective is to support cluster organisations to develop partnerships and business cooperation in European and global markets, for the benefit of their members, especially of SMEs. The events are currently funded under the EU Competitiveness of Enterprises and SMEs Programme (COSME).

The ECCP provides a visible framework for this matchmaking event and for subsequent events. As the cornerstone of the European strategy in support of SMEs' internationalisation through clusters, the ECCP provides a wide range of information and services to facilitate the interaction between clusters not only within Europe, but also with international partners.



## ACTIVITIES & AGENDA

The EU – South Africa Matchmaking Event will include the following activities:

- **Preparatory Webinar** – an opportunity to receive information on undertaking business in South Africa and guidance on how to participate successfully in the planned event. *(date tbc)*
- **Technical Webinar** – a session helping future participants of the matchmaking event to make the most of their profiling in the B2Match tool and explain the procedures to optimise the booking of meetings. *(date tbc)*
- **Site visits:** *(date tbc)*
- **Seminar** on knowledge exchange to foster EU-South Africa cooperation. *(date tbc)*
- **Matchmaking meetings** between cluster organisations and SMEs from EU (and non-EU COSME) countries and South Africa. *(date tbc)*
- Debriefing session to collect **feedback and testimonials** from cluster participants.
- **Participation at the [Manufacturing Indaba](#)** – *(date tbc)*

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

This invitation is addressed to SMEs, Start-Ups, European Industry Associations and interested in collaborating with South African counterparts in the following sectors:

- Agri-food
- Green industries
- Chemicals and metals
- **Tourism**
- Transport (Maritime and automotive)
- Digital tech
- Textile and leather

The organisers reserve the right to close the application process once the maximum capacity for participants is reached.

## PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

### ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible:

- The applicant must be an SME according to the [SME definition](#) of the EU (including a Start-Up) or European Industry Association.
- The applicant must be a legal entity established in a European Union Member State or other COSME country. See list of non-EU participants in the COSME programme here: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/39579>



## SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated qualitatively using the following selection criteria:

- Willingness and capacity to maximise matchmaking opportunities via participation in this event, based on a detailed description of the sort of partnership sought by the applicant and the likelihood of developing practical collaboration because of the Event. This indication of interest in cooperating must be clearly articulated as responses to the questions in the application form.
- Activities in the target sectors.
- Operating beyond the stated fields should extensively motivate the argument for their application to a reserve list that will be determined in due time.
- The desire and capacity to collaborate more closely with South African SMEs (including Start-Ups), Industry Associations and Network Organisations in order to better global competitiveness via collaborative efforts.

Organisations that have not participated before in the ECCP matchmaking events are encouraged to apply.

The selection of applications will be based on the afore mentioned criteria and information provided in the application form; in cases of equal merit, the balanced geographical and sector coverage of the EU and COSME participating countries will be considered. Furthermore, in cases of equal merit, organisations participating for the first time at the ECCP matchmaking event will have priority.

The organisers reserve the right to ask for additional information from the applicants, if necessary.

**Attendance at the seminar, the matchmaking event, the debriefing session, and the site visits are all compulsory.**

**Organisations selected to participate in the Event must send a commitment e-mail agreeing to attend the on-site seminar, conduct at least four matching meetings, and engage in the final 30-minute debriefing session.**

## SELECTION PROCESS

This Call for Expression of Interest has two cut-off dates (deadlines):

1. **2 August 2023, 23:59 Brussels time** and
2. 7 September 2023, 23:59 Brussels time (the second cut-off date will be available in case of still available places after the first round of evaluation after the first cut-off date).

### First cut-off

Applicants will receive a notification whether their application is selected, put on the reserve list or rejected within two weeks after the first cut-off date. Applications on the reserve list may be edited and resubmitted until the second cut-off date – the last submitted application will be considered in the evaluation.

### Second cut-off

Applicants will receive a notification whether their application is selected or rejected within two weeks after the second cut-off date.



Applications on the reserve list of the first cut-off will be evaluated together with the applications received by the second cut-off date.

In case of available places, applications are accepted until 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest.

## COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

SMEs, Start-ups and European Industry Association may participate at their own costs as part of the delegation and benefit from all planned activities if they fulfil the eligibility criteria.

## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Expressions of interest should be submitted by 17 October 2023, 23:59 Brussels time through the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/SMEsCallforExpressionofinterestEUSouthAfricaMatchmakingEvent>

**The expression of interest should include the following:**

- A fully completed questionnaire on the profile of the organisation.

Please ensure that you submit full, accurate, and up-to-date information and contact information.

Please note that no fee will be charged to participate in this event.

However, no funding is offered for SMEs (including Start-Ups) and European Industry Associations to cover any travel and accommodation costs related to participation at the event.

**To take the maximum of your participation and benefit from all planned pre-event activities and meetings available during the EU-South Africa Matchmaking Event, we encourage you to send your Expression of Interest at your earliest possible and avoid last minute registrations.**

For further information about cluster cooperation and assistance, please visit the [ECCP Website](#).

Should you have any queries, do not hesitate to contact the ECCP team at [eumatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu](mailto:eumatchmaking@clustercollaboration.eu).

**Your personal data** is processed in accordance with **Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725** on the protection of individuals regarding the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data.