



EUROPEAN CLUSTER
COLLABORATION PLATFORM

Call for Expression of Interest - SMEs

EU – UAE Matchmaking Event in
Dubai, United Arab Emirates, 2025

An initiative of the European Union





Call for Expression of Interest For SMEs



EU – UAE Matchmaking Event

In the context of
[WETEX](#)

1 – 3 October 2025

Dubai, United Arab Emirates



OBJECTIVES

The European Commission (EC), through the European Cluster Collaboration Platform (ECCP), will host the **EU-UAE Matchmaking Event** in **Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 1 – 3 October 2025**. This event will be organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Energy of UAE. It will take place in the context of the [WETEX exhibition](#).

The **EU – UAE Matchmaking Event** will bring together cluster organisations and SMEs from the European Union (EU), non-EU countries participating in the Single Market Programme/COSME Strand¹, and UAE-based institutions and companies. The objective is to stimulate Cluster to Cluster (C2C), Cluster to Business (C2B), and Business to Business (B2B) cooperation across sectors aligned with the green and digital transitions.

The **EU– UAE Matchmaking Event** aims to foster collaboration between **European clusters, SMEs, and UAE partners** in key industries, including:

- **Clean & Renewable Energy** (solar, hydrogen, wind, energy storage, sustainable fuel for maritime and aviation)
- **Energy Efficiency**
- **Water & Waste Management**
- **Green Mobility** (EVs, charging infrastructure, hydrogen transport)
- **Smart Cities & Infrastructure** (IoT, automation, smart grids)
- **Agrifood** (*A dedicated programme tailored to participants from the Agrifood sector is available in the Agenda section under Extended Value for Agrifood Sector Participants.*)

The event will offer:

- A high-level seminar, matchmaking sessions, and site visits to **strengthen EU-UAE cluster cooperation**.
- Opportunities to identify **shared interests, value chain synergies, and market opportunities** for SMEs and businesses.
- A platform to enhance **EU-UAE collaboration in research, development, and innovation (RDI)**, linking academia, research institutions, and industries through clusters.
- **Exclusive guided tour of the exhibition(s)**, providing insights into the most relevant exhibitors aligned with the sectors covered by this call.
- **Curated stand visits**, enabling participants to engage directly with key exhibitors selected based on their industry focus.
- **Opportunity to take part in a pitching session.**
- **Possible participation in the [Word Green Economy Summit](#) (tbc)**

The call for expressions of interest is being launched to identify a European delegation made up of representatives from SMEs ([please see section “Who can participate” below](#)) who are willing and committed to participate in the EU-UAE Matchmaking Event.

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

¹ [list-3rd-country-participation_smp_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)



Further details about the event, the eligibility requirements, and how to submit an expression of interest can be found below.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

This call is published on [the ECCP website](#).

Expressions of interest to participate in this event must be **submitted electronically by:**

- **25 June (Wednesday) 2025, 23:59 Brussels time – first cut-off date**
- **15 July (Tuesday) 2025, 23:59 Brussels time – second cut-off date**
- **3 September (Wednesday) 2025, 23:59 Brussels time - third cut-off date**

through the following link in B2Match: <https://www.b2match.com/e/eu-uae-matchmaking-event-2025/sign-up?invitation=qRRXzu354uiCzugrdenH74oyGFk=>

The second and third cut-off dates will ONLY be available in case places are still available after the evaluations of the previous cut-offs.

The expression of interest should include the following:

- A fully completed SMEs questionnaire on [B2Match](#) on the profile of the SME.

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

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

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

Late applications after 3 September could be accepted if they are submitted through [B2Match](#) before 16 September 2025, 23:59 Brussels time at the latest and the eligibility criteria are fulfilled. The organisers reserve the right to close the application process once the maximum capacity for participants is reached.

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

This call is targeting only SMEs. 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://www.clustercollaboration.eu/content/eu-uae-matchmaking-event-2025-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 Single Market Programme (SMP)/COSME Strand.

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.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

This invitation is addressed to SMEs interested in collaborating with UAE counterparts in the following sectors:

- **Clean & Renewable Energy** (solar, hydrogen, wind, energy storage, sustainable fuel for maritime and aviation)
- **Energy Efficiency**
- **Water & Waste Management**
- **Green Mobility (EVs, charging infrastructure, hydrogen transport)**
- **Smart Cities & Infrastructure (IoT, automation, smart grids)**
- **Agrifood** (*A dedicated programme tailored to participants from the Agrifood sector is available in the Agenda section under Extended Value for Agrifood Sector Participants.*)

PARTICIPATION CRITERIA

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible:

- The applicant must be an SME according to the [SME definition](#) of the EU.
- The SME must be a legal entity established in a European Union Member State or other participating in the Single Market Programme/COSME Strand (see the list of non-EU participants [here](#))

SELECTION CRITERIA

Applications will be evaluated qualitatively using the following selection criterion:

- The SME's activity in the target sectors.

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

Priority will be given to those SMEs that are participating for the first time and those that have not previously **without justification** cancelled the participation to matchmaking events organised by the ECCP.

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 SMP/COSME Strand participating countries will be considered.

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.

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

ACTIVITIES & AGENDA

The EU – UAE Matchmaking Event will include the following activities:

For all participants

Prior to the mission:

- **Preparatory Webinar** – an opportunity to receive information on undertaking business with UAE 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)

During the mission:

- **Visit to WETEX exhibition** - guided exhibition tour, thematic sessions, and exposure to UAE industry leaders. A 1-hour EU pitching session will be explored. **(1 October 2025 (tbc)).**
(Note: Participants from the **Agrifood sector** are **not required to attend on 1 October** and may join the official programme starting on **2 October 2025**.)
- **EU-UAE Business Seminar & Matchmaking Day (2 October 2025 (tbc))**
(Note: All delegates, including those from the Agrifood sector, will participate in this key day.)
 - **Seminar** on knowledge exchange to foster EU-UAE cooperation.
 - **Pitching and Matchmaking meetings** between cluster organisations and SMEs from EU (and non-EU countries participating in SMP/COSME Strand) countries and UAE.
 - **Debriefing session** to collect **feedback and testimonials** from cluster participants.
- **Site Visits (3 October 2025 (tbc))**
(Note: All delegates, including those from the Agrifood sector, will participate in this key day.)
Delegates will participate in field visits to innovation hubs and leading sustainability infrastructure projects. Agrifood sector participants will follow a dedicated track, including tailored site visits to agricultural innovation centres, vertical farming demonstrations, and smart food systems facilities in Dubai and/or Abu Dhabi. Additional B2B or institutional meetings may also be arranged.



Extended Value for Agrifood Sector Participants

In addition to their full participation in the official matchmaking programme (2–3 October), **Agrifood delegates** will have a **unique opportunity** to extend their stay and attend [Agra Middle East 2025](#), the leading agricultural exhibition in the region.

- **Dates:** 6–7 October 2025
- **Venue:** Dubai World Trade Centre
- **Profile:** The region's most prominent agrifood trade show, showcasing innovations in vertical farming, aquaculture, and sustainable agriculture.
- **Scale:** 150+ exhibitors, 6,000+ visitors from 180+ countries
- **Access:** Free for professionals with pre-registration

Please note:

This optional extension falls outside the scope of the official ECCP-funded programme. Participation on **1 October 2025** is **not mandatory** for Agrifood sector participants, who may instead join the mission starting on **2 October 2025**.

Nevertheless, this represents a **rare and strategic opportunity** to combine a high-level international mission with participation in a specialised regional expo—maximising sectoral exposure, strengthening institutional ties, and opening new market channels for European agrifood innovation. ECCP will assist participants with registration and practical information to ensure a smooth transition between events.

Attendance to the seminar, the matchmaking event, the debriefing session, expo and the site visits are compulsory.

COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT OF EXPENSES

All expenses related to the participation of SMEs are at their own charge. No reimbursement of costs is offered.

The organising team will take care to inform duly selected participants on possible agreed discounted rates for accommodation, as well as available airline offers.

SMEs participating in the EU – UAE Matchmaking Event will not have to pay fees to attend the exhibitions at WETEX.

FINAL REMARKS

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.

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.