

Call for the expression of interest by eco-innovative regions to showcase their eco-innovation capacity

The ECOLINK+ project of the European Eco-Innovation Platform (Eco-IP) under the Europe INNOVA initiative organises a call for the expression of interest for regional partners to identify eco-innovators in their regions to join the ECOLINK+ Business Club for emerging and promising eco-innovators.

Objective

The objective of this call for expression of interest is to promote eco-innovation in regions by identifying suitable members of the ECOLINK+ Business Club for emerging and promising eco-innovators.

What is the ECOLINK+ Business Club?

ECOLINK+ will create and animate a Club (ECOLINK+ BC) gathering around 100 emerging and promising eco-innovation companies with international ambitions. The members will have the opportunity to network with other members, access services, find partners and will be promoted to a community of international investors. More generally, club member's gain increased market visibility from their membership.

The participation of regions in the identification of club members serves to showcase the eco-innovation capacity of regions in the European context.

Regions may identify suitable members of the ECOLINK+ Business Club for emerging and promising eco-innovators by organising an event with the assistance of the project ECOLINK+. By showcasing a number of local eco-innovation companies that are successful with the provision of "green" products and/or services, the regions will get the support of ECOLINK+ to illustrate what they are doing in support of the emergence and growth of eco-innovation companies (for example through cluster management or other regional eco-innovation support measures).

Regions that already can establish a list of suitable candidates without organising such an event may apply directly for considering their eco-innovators as potential club members. This may be

the case for regions which already were able to identify suitable candidates through an event, a competition, a survey, a study or whatever other way.

Description of the activities

The regions will have the following tasks:

1. All applying regions are expected to
 - a. identify at least 15 emerging or best-promising eco-innovation businesses. The companies to be part of the ECOLINK+ Business will be selected by a committee composed by one representative from each Region, two ECOLINK+ experts and one representative from the responsible service in the Industry and Entrepreneurship Directorate-General of the European Commission.
 - b. describe briefly – in English - their strategic interest in eco-innovation (see below under “How to submit an application”).

Those regions that wish to organise an event:

2. **Collaborating with ECOLINK+ in drawing up a programme for the event:** suitable hosts are regions which are already planning or willing to organise events at local level with the purpose to identify suitable members for the club or to showcase them. ECOLINK+, with the support of the responsible service in DG Industry and Entrepreneurship of the European Commission, will assist to define the agenda and to finalise the content and focus of any speeches and panel discussions in order to reflect the needs of both the hosting regions and of ECOLINK+. The co-operation with ECOLINK+ will give the event a visibility on the European level.
3. **Marketing the event locally:** The local hosts will be responsible for marketing the event locally and in the participating regions and for identifying suitable promotional partnerships. Local marketing could take place electronically, at local events, using local media, as well as via the websites of the local hosts and other local partner organizations.
4. **Ensuring regional press coverage:** The local hosts will be responsible for negotiating partnerships with the local press and arranging press coverage of the event.

5. **Developing marketing material:** The local hosts are expected to make available information material about regional strategies in support of eco-innovative companies in their regions and to support the public presentation of the identified 10 – 15 eco-innovation business.
6. **Engaging partners and sponsors from the participating regions:** The local hosts will mobilize their contacts in order to identify local partners that could lend the event the visibility it requires to be a great success.
7. **Making a suitable venue available and arranging onsite logistics:** The local hosts will be expected to make a suitable venue available for the event and to cover all event-related catering costs. The hosts will be responsible for ensuring that the venue meets all necessary requirements in terms of capacity, IT infrastructure, accessibility, etc.
8. **The language at the regional events as well as all the video-presentation of the companies will be English**

The identified companies for the Club will be asked to prepare video presentations in English about their experience in the area of eco-innovation. The video will be collected in a video repository for the Club.

Eligibility and Selection

In order to be eligible for selection applicants must be at least two regions – preferably, but not necessarily, from different CIP countries. The regional organiser can be local or regional authorities, innovation, environmental or development agencies, chambers of commerce and other public or private innovation support providers like cluster organisations, research organisations, entities representing industrial districts, incubators and all other actors who are engaged with supporting eco-innovative companies in their regions to grow and internationalise.

Based on the applications the winning regions will be selected by the ECOLINK+ together with the responsible service in DG Industry and Entrepreneurship, the co-founder of the Eco-Innovation Platform of Europe INNOVA. All applicants will receive a response from the ECOLINK+ project.

Evaluation criteria

Applications of the regions will be selected taking into account both their technical and financial aspects.

In particular, applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

1. Relevance of the interest with respect to eco-innovation
2. Presence in the region of experiences and policies in the eco-innovation theme. This can mean eco-industries or cases of eco-innovative policies in sectoral industries in the region, through clusters or more generally cooperation among local public authorities, academia and enterprises districts.

In addition, for **those regions which want to organise an event:**

3. Capability to attract a large audience
4. Capability to give a trans-national dimension to the event, both in terms of involving regions from different countries and involving regions with industries in sectors which are relevant and present elsewhere in Europe
5. Attractiveness of the event's agenda for the eco-innovation companies
6. Value for money

Criteria under points from 3 to 6 do not refer to regions which are applying just to present candidate companies to join the ECOLINK+ Business Club.

How to submit an application

Please send your expression of interest to be a regional partner to showcase eco-innovation capacity by e-mail to ECOLINK+@meta-group.com.

To submit their application, regions shall send, by electronic mail, a 4 page proposal covering the following points:

- **Short Description of the applicants:** This should cover the nature of the applying organisation(s), their experience in eco-innovation support and demonstrate the applicants' connections and experience of working with local companies in the domain of eco-innovation.
- **Motivation:** This section should elaborate on the contribution that applicants can provide for the ECOLINK+ Business Club: the applicants should describe how the eco-innovation business actors are identified and in which sector(s). In case of request of assistance for an event, the applicants should elaborate on why they would like to host the event and what strategic benefits it is going to deliver to their regions.

In addition for those regions that want to organise an event:

- **Resources:** This section should elaborate on the resources that the applicants can reasonably be expected to mobilise for working on the organisation of the event. This section should include both resources to be covered by the project's contribution and resources made available by the applicant free of charge (if appropriate). The type of resources to be discussed in this section would include: personnel, equipment, know-how etc.
- **Dates:** This section should identify dates on which the proposers are prepared to host the event.
- **Venue:** This section should specify what venue the proposers intend to organise the event at. The description should cover details on venue location, capacity, audiovisual equipment etc.
- **Mobilization of local partners:** This section should elaborate on the proposer's contacts with the local community and what partners the proposers intend to make contact with to ensure that the event has maximum impact. This section should also consider how the proposers intend to ensure coverage of the event in the local press.

E-mails must be clearly marked:

"Name of the potential participant organisation, address, title: "Expression of interest by eco-innovative regions to showcase their eco-innovation capacity".

Only applications by e-mail will be accepted.

The call is open from the day of publication until the **30th of June 2011**. In case of a request for organising an event, applications should be received by the ECOLINK+ Consortium not later than 3 months prior to the date the applicant is proposing to hold the event.

Applications will be evaluated in the same order they will be received.

Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt of their application by e-mail.

Financial contribution and costs

The ECOLINK+ consortium will provide financial contribution up to EUR 20,000 for each event (to a maximum of 7 events: each application can be for one event only) to the local partner consortium as a contribution towards the costs of performing the tasks listed above.

Eligible Costs for Regions organising the event (up to EUR 20,000) will include:

1. Costs of organising the events
2. Catering costs
3. Printing Costs
4. Contribution to travel costs for companies travelling from abroad to the events
5. Creation and production of videos for participating companies

Eligible Costs for Regions only presenting companies (up to EUR 10,000) will include:

1. Creation and production of videos for applying companies (

Non Eligible Costs

1. Travel Costs (to and from the meeting) for the host organisations
2. Travel Costs for companies from the host region
3. Speaker Fees
4. Venue costs

Who are potential candidates for the Club?

ECOLINK+ Club 100 members are all established private companies active in the eco-innovation domain displaying the following characteristics:

- Eco-innovation as strategy in either products, processes or organisation
- Public recognition of eco-innovativeness by, e.g., awards, media coverage
- Links to European/global dimension (founders, investors, expansion plans)
- Strategic partnerships
- Number/quality of customers
- Innovation management
- Intellectual property strategy
- Rapid growth (sales and no of employees)

Information

For further information related to this call, please contact:

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