



# METASTARS: Guide for Applicants

OPEN CALL FOR PRIZES

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

VERSION 1.3

18-06-2024

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## List of acronyms

**ASD:** Aerospace and defence

**ECA:** Court of Auditors

**ECCP:** European Cluster Collaboration Platform

**EU:** European Union

**FSTP:** Financial Support to Third Parties

**GDP:** Gross domestic product

**GDPR:** General Data Protection Regulation

**ISM:** Innovation Support Mechanism

**METASTARS:** METAcluster Support Towards a more resilient AeRospace and defence ecoSystem

**MISC:** METASTARS Innovation Support Committee

**OLAF:** European Anti-fraud Office

**SME:** Small and Medium-sized Enterprise

**SMP:** Single Market Programme

**TRL:** Technology Readiness Level

# 1 ABOUT METASTARS

METASTARS project is co-funded by the European Union and stands for “METAcluster Support Towards a more resilient AeRospace and defence ecoSystem”. It is co-funded under the Single Market Programme (SMP) within the call for proposals Joint Cluster Initiatives (Euroclusters) for Europe’s recovery.

METASTARS aims to reinforce the growth of the European Aerospace and Defence (ASD) ecosystem by supporting SMEs at recovering fully from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, at becoming more resilient to potential future shocks and at ensuring their sustainability, notably looking at international business opportunities. The success of this economic recovery will strongly depend on the capacity of the companies to accelerate their green and digital transitions and for Europe to gain in sovereignty.

METASTARS financially supports EU SMEs with the development of innovation projects and services, to answer three main objectives:

1. Accelerate the ASD industry’s contribution to the [European Green Deal](#) and world’s climate action mission, in particular to an aviation net-zero emission goal.
2. Ensure the European digital and connectivity independency and sovereignty necessary in the ASD sectors, addressing the security of the information system.
3. Diversify the business markets for traditional and innovative SMEs depending exclusively on aeronautics and space providers, and to develop closer links and relations with European stakeholders acting in other industrial sectors.

## 1.1 Specific objectives towards SMEs’ support

METASTARS project supports the resilience of SMEs in the Aerospace and Defence industry resilience focusing on the following specific objectives:

- **Network for resilience** to improve the resilience of the EU ASD industrial ecosystems by developing value chains interlinkages in the EU Single Market. The aim is to improve the ASD value chains’ ability to cope with challenges and undergo transitions in a sustainable manner through the integration of different actors, competences and solutions.
- **Innovate for strategic autonomy** to build capacity in the most critical inputs and critical technologies in the Aeronautics, Space, Defence and ICT ecosystem. The aim is to reduce the dependency of companies on critical inputs and critical technologies through a development of novel ideas, substitutes, innovative products or services.
- **Adopt processes and technologies** to reinforce transformation into a greener and more digital economy. The aim is to adopt processes and technologies that improve the

Aeronautics, Space, Defence and ICT ecosystem value chains' efficiency in the use of resources, open markets for green technologies and services and uptake of digital solutions.

- **Train to foster up- and reskilling** of the workforce whilst attracting talents in the Aeronautics, Space, Defence and ICT ecosystem.
- **Go international** to facilitate the SMEs' internationalisation with Canada and Japan business markets in the Aeronautics, Space, Defence and ICT ecosystem.

## 1.2 Partners

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	<b>AEROSPACE VALLEY (AV)</b> FRANCE	<a href="https://www.aerospace-valley.com">https://www.aerospace-valley.com</a>
	<b>ATHINA-EREVNITIKO KENTRO KAINOTOMIAS STIS TECHNOLOGIES TIS PLIROFORIAS, TON EPIKOINONION KAI TIS GNOSIS (CORALLIA)</b> GREECE	<a href="https://corallia.org">https://corallia.org</a>
	<b>FUNDACIÓN CORPORACIÓN TECNOLÓGICA DE ANDALUCÍA (CTA)</b> SPAIN	<a href="https://www.corporaciontecnologica.com">https://www.corporaciontecnologica.com</a>
	<b>AVIATION VALLEY (SDL)</b> POLAND	<a href="http://www.dolinalotnicza.pl">www.dolinalotnicza.pl</a>

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## 1.3 METASTARS contact points

For any enquiries regarding the METASTARS project, please contact the project Coordinator:



Anne-Lise STEPHAN | Aerospace Valley | 3 Rue Tarfaya CS 64403, 31400, Toulouse, France | Tel. +33 (0)5 61 14 80 30 | E-mail: [METASTARS-EU@aerospace-valley.com](mailto:METASTARS-EU@aerospace-valley.com)

For any enquiries regarding information and/ or clarification on the Innovation Support Mechanism, please contact:

Christina GAROUFALIA | ATHINA - EREVNITIKO KENTRO KAINOTOMIAS STIS TECHNOLOGIES TIS PLIROFORIAS, TON EPIKOINONION KAI TIS GNOSIS (CORALLIA) | 44, Kifissias Ave., Monumental Plaza Building C, GR-15125, Maroussi, Athens | Greece Tel. +30 210 63 00 770 |E-mail: [metastars@corallia.org](mailto:metastars@corallia.org)

For any other enquiry, please contact the METASTARS contact point [info@metastars-euroclusters.com](mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com).The contact persons and details of all METASTARS partners are listed in Annex 1.

## 1.4 METASTARS facts

<b>Project acronym</b>	METASTARS	
<b>Project title</b>	<b>META</b> cluster Support Towards a more resilient AeRospace and defence ecoSystem	
<b>Industrial Ecosystem Strand</b>	14-Aerospace & Defence	
<b>Project Duration</b>	30 months (01.09.2022 – 28.02.25)	
<b>Overall budget</b>	€1.399.857,50 €1.050.000,00 to directly benefit innovative SMEs (projects, services, prizes)	
<b>web</b>	<a href="http://www.dolinalotnicza.pl/metastars">http://www.dolinalotnicza.pl/metastars</a>	
<b>Results dissemination</b>		<a href="https://clustercollaboration.eu/content/metastars-metacluster-support-towards-more-resilient-aerospace-and-defence">https://clustercollaboration.eu/content/metastars-metacluster-support-towards-more-resilient-aerospace-and-defence</a>
		 @METASTARS22_25
		 <a href="http://www.linkedin.com/company/metastars">www.linkedin.com/company/metastars</a>

## 2 METASTARS Innovation Support Mechanism

METASTARS project is built upon the necessity to accompany the European Industrial Strategy, which aim is to allow companies to be more resilient, more sustainable and globally competitive. Indeed, in 2021, industry remains the most important contributor to the European economy and wealth, consistently accounting for about 20% of the EU GDP in the last decade. The European Commission emphasizes the need to support specifically the economic growth of SMEs, which represent 99% of all enterprises in Europe.

Within its 30-month project duration, METASTARS approach is to mobilise all existing ASD networks to create a strong Alliance. In that respect, METASTARS offers to:

1. Provide support for the implementation of innovation projects at low and high technology readiness.
2. Provide a wide range of services to support innovation, to favour SMEs' resilience and green and digital transition, to increase business opportunities. These services will cover the five (5) objectives of the EUROCLUSTERS call: network, innovate, adopt processes and technologies, train and go international.
3. Award prizes to SMEs that made significant efforts towards greater resilience & green and digital transition.
4. Strengthen and sustain the current European ASD network by involving new stakeholders acting in cross-sectorial domains.
5. Develop joint activities to enhance the ecosystem's training and skills' development.

The total METASTARS budget for Prizes is 9 700 €. In addition, 680.000€ have been attributed to innovative SMEs in the form of Innovation Projects (lump sums) and 360 300 € in the form of Innovation Services (lump sums). More information on the results of the Call for Innovative Projects and the Call for Innovative Services can be found [here](#).

The METASTARS Innovation Support Mechanism is briefly presented below. The current document is the Guide for Applicants for METASTARS Prizes.

1 Call for Innovation Services	1 Call for Innovation Projects	1 Call for Prizes
7 Green Technology Development (up to 4k€)	8 Lump sums « high risk » (TRL 2-5) up to 40k€	3 prizes to ASD SMEs as a reward for project greater resilience and green & digital transformation (2.5k€)
10 Digitalisation (up to 6k€)	9 Lump sums « low risk » (TRL 5-7) up to 40k€	
11 Information system security (up to 15k€)		
17 Internationalisation (up to 5.5k€)		
8 Upskilling and reskilling (up to 3k€)		
Call status: closed	Call status: closed	Call status: open

## 2.1 Target audience - What is the Aerospace & Defence sector?

The Aerospace and Defence ecosystem covers manufacturing companies in aeronautics, space and defence; space operators and data and service providers; research institutes. SMEs and start-ups represent an important part of the Aerospace and Defence ecosystem since they perform many niches, complex and innovative tasks in the manufacturing supply chain<sup>1</sup>.

The target audience of the METASTARS Innovation Support Mechanism are SMEs from the **Aeronautics, Space and Defence sectors** wishing to submit proposals related to Aerospace & Defence.

METASTARS project aims at leveraging interlinkages between ASD and various ecosystems, including Renewable Energy, Tourism, Electronics, Mobility, Transport & Automotive and Digital ones.

To be eligible (see also section 3.3.1 for details on eligibility conditions) for the METASTARS Innovation Support Scheme, an applicant must be an **SME** established or have a branch office in the METASTARS territorial scope described as follows:

- a. EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
- b. non-EU countries:
  - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME part of the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#)).

<sup>1</sup> [Commission Staff Working Document, Annual Single Market Report 2021, Brussels, May 2021](#)



## 3 METASTARS Prizes

### 3.1 Prizes offered

METASTARS will provide financial support to SMEs in the Aerospace and Defence sectors in the form of prizes. 3 prizes will be attributed to reward SMEs who have made the best efforts to become more resilient and to adapt to the challenges of the green and digital transition. Winning SMEs shall demonstrate they have assessed the challenges faced by the company, taking into account current risks and opportunities in the ASD sector, and that they have planned and/or implemented actions to respond to these challenges. SMEs should focus on one or several factors of resilience such as:

- Adaptation to the green and digital transition,
- Internationalisation and access to new markets,
- Upskilling and reskilling of the workforce,
- Cybersecurity,
- Adaptation to disruptions of the supply chain.

The prizes will be awarded during METASTARS final event which will take place on the 5th of December 2024, on the side of Aeromart Toulouse. This will be an opportunity for the winning SMEs to meet representatives from the European ASD ecosystem, while taking part in the Aeromart Toulouse business convention.

METASTARS Prizes	
<b>Application deadline</b>	Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> of August 2024, 23h59 CET
<b>Total budget</b>	9.700,00€
<b>Financial contribution</b>	3 prizes of 2.500,00€ each. In addition, the winning SMEs will receive 733€ to travel and participate in the METASTARS final event. More details about financial support can be found in section 3.2.
<b>Application</b>	Complete applications will be composed of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A filled administrative form;</li> <li>- A video between 3 and 5 minutes; and</li> <li>- A written transcription of the video.</li> </ul> More details about the application process can be found in section 3.3.

<b>Award date</b>	Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> of December 2024
<b>Payment scheme</b>	Prizes will be paid within 60 days after the announcement of the results during the METASTARS final event.

### 3.2 Financial support

Prizes will be awarded to the 3 top ranked applicants. The winners will receive a prize of 2.500,00€ each and 733€ to travel to the METASTARS final event during which the prizes will be awarded.

The following conditions apply to the payment of the prizes:

- All payments will be made in Euro.
- Payments will be made within 60 days of the award of the prizes which will take place during METASTARS final event.
- The amount for travel will be paid upon the effective participation of the winning SME to METASTARS final event.
- Submission of an application does not constitute an entitlement for funding.
- The recipients of the (financial) support from METASTARS (“Beneficiaries”) must ensure that the [European Commission](#), the [European Anti-fraud Office \(OLAF\)](#), the [European Public Prosecutor’s Office \(EPPO\)](#) and the [Court of Auditors \(ECA\)](#) can exercise their powers of control, on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient’s premises.

Applicants are entitled to benefit from more than one type of METASTARS financial support, reaching a total maximum funding from METASTARS of 60.000,00€ per SME. Consequently, laureates of the METASTARS previous Calls for Innovative Projects and Innovative Services can apply to the Call for Prizes if the financial support already attributed does not exceed 56.767,00€.

### 3.3 Application

Applications will be eligible and enter the evaluation phase if all the following conditions are met.

#### 3.3.1 Eligibility conditions

Eligibility criteria	
1	Applicants must be an SME and declare their SME status in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union as part of the application via this <a href="#">link</a> .
2	Applicants must be SMEs from the Aeronautics, Space or Defence sector.
3	Applicants must fall under the territorial scope of METASTARS (Annex 2).
4	Applications and supporting documentation must be written in English.
5	Applications must be submitted by the deadline indicated in section 3.3.2 of the present Guide for Applicants and following the instructions of the Application Pack available on the call webpage.
6	For applicants who are laureates of the METASTARS Calls for Innovation Projects or Services, the total financial support received from METASTARS (including the prizes) should not exceed 60.000,00€.

#### 3.3.2 How to apply

To apply for METASTARS prizes, eligible SMEs must:

- 1) Complete the administrative form in the Application Pack (available on the call webpage);
- 2) Make a short video between 3 and 5 minutes in English following video instructions in the Application Pack. The video should include the following content and consider the evaluation criteria in section 4.1:
  - SME presentation (name, country, size, sector of activity and core business...)
  - Challenges faced by the SME (indicatively, green and digital transition, internationalisation and access to new markets, upskilling and reskilling of the workforce, cybersecurity, disruption of the supply chain),
  - Actions already taken or planned by the SME to be more resilient and respond to these challenges.

*Application videos to METASTARS Call for prizes will be published on the METASTARS webpage. No confidential information should be mentioned.*

3) Send the administrative form to [info@metastars-euroclusters.com](mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com) and upload the video [here](#) before the **23<sup>rd</sup> of August 2024 at 23:59 CET**.

## 4 Evaluation and selection process

A three-step evaluation procedure will be followed safeguarding the principles of transparency and equal treatment as described below.

1. **Eligibility check** of the Application. More information about eligibility criteria can be found in section 3.3.1.
2. **Experts' evaluation:** Each application will be reviewed by a panel composed of experts in the METASTARS sectors and experts from METASTARS consortium following the evaluation criteria described below.
3. **Public vote:** Application videos will be published on the METASTARS webpage and open to public vote. The videos will be distributed by METASTARS consortium members (France, Greece, Spain and Poland) and through METASTARS communication channels to the European ecosystem and ASD network (EACP, ECCP, etc).

### 4.1 Evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-criteria	Max. score
<b>General criteria</b>	Quality of the video: dynamism, the video is pleasant to watch/listen.	5
	Clarity of the content and ease of understanding by a wide audience.	5
	The application mentions challenges and/or actions specific to the aeronautics, space or defence market.	5
	The application mentions challenges and/or actions related to the green or digital transition.	5
<b>Presentation of the SME</b>	The SME's core business is well presented and easy to understand.	10
<b>Challenges</b>	The SME demonstrates it assessed trends and challenges in the market it operates.	10
	The SME demonstrates that it has assessed risks faced by the company.	10
<b>Actions</b>	The actions presented adequately meet the challenges.	10
	Actions presented are innovative.	10
<b>Total experts' evaluation</b>		<b>70</b>
<b>Public vote</b>	Percentage of total public votes received.	30
<b>Total</b>		<b>100</b>

The score related to public vote will be attributed depending on the percentage of total votes received by each application and according to the following rule:

Percentage of votes received	Score
50% or more	30
From 30% to < 50%	25
From 15% to < 30%	20
From 10% to < 15%	15
From 5% to < 10%	10
< 5%	5

## 4.2 Calendar

- **23 August 2024, 23:59 CET** - Deadline for applications, by sending the administrative form to [info@metastars-euroclusters.com](mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com) and uploading the video at <https://cloud.aerospace-valley.com/index.php/s/dyNsTw5N8Zjf926>
- **September 2024** - Vote by a large public and evaluation by METASTARS experts. The link for voting will be available on METASTARS' webpage and social platforms.
- **October 2024** - Notification of the 3 winners selected – The top ranked SMEs will be contacted by METASTARS consortium to organize their participation to METASTARS final event and prizes award.
- **5<sup>th</sup> of December 2024** – Prizes award during the METASTARS final event alongside Aeromart Toulouse.

## 5 Enquiries and complaints

For any complaints against the project selection process, these must be submitted by the applicant [info@metastars-euroclusters.com](mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com) within 5 calendar days after the announcement of the Call results. Your email should include the following information:

- Lead contact name and details.
- Object of your complaint.
- Information and evidence of the alleged breach.

The Review Committee, which consists of all consortium members (Aerospace Valley, Corallia, Fundación Corporación Tecnológica de Andalucía and Aviation Valley) of the METASTARS

Innovation Support Committee (MISC), will examine the complaint on the basis of the information brought forward by the applicant, will assess the case and decide whether the complaint is justified or not and will inform the applicant and the consortium on the decision taken. If the complaint is considered justified, the Review Committee will notify the evaluators to re-evaluate the project application and the related assessment part, subject to the complaint. The evaluators will then provide the Review Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by the Review Committee to the applicant in writing within 20 working days from the date of submitting the complaint. This decision will be final, binding to all parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the programme if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

For technical issues concerning the submission procedure, please contact [info@metastars-euroclusters.com](mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com)

## 6 Confidentiality and data protection

*GDPR compliance:* The [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (2016/679/EU) guarantees that the processing of data is carried out in compliance with the fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the dignity of the data subject with particular reference to confidentiality, personal identity and the right to data protection. METASTARS consortium will process personal data in line with the regulation mentioned above.

By applying, the applicant agrees on the storage and use of its personal data for the execution of the METASTARS objectives and work plan. The METASTARS consortium commits to handling personal data confidentially. The content of the video applications will be made publicly available: applicant(s) name, description of actions presented in the video application and awarded funding to the winning SMEs. Applicants should therefore not include any confidential information in their video.

The processing of data that METASTARS intends to carry out will be based on lawfulness and correctness in the full protection of its rights and its confidentiality pursuant to the general principles of the GDPR and its art.24. Therefore, the competitors are informed of the procedure that the data provided by the applicants will be treated exclusively with reference to the procedure for which they submitted the documentation.

The applicants can exercise their rights towards the data controller, pursuant to article 12 of the GDPR. For any inquiries regarding the processing your personal data, please contact [dpo@athena-innovation.gr](mailto:dpo@athena-innovation.gr)

Applications' selection and evaluation will be performed under the appropriate ethical conduct and will respect the confidentiality of the information received.

## 7 Intellectual Property Rights and Dissemination

For dissemination and use of results generated through the Innovation Support Mechanism from METASTARS, the recipients must credit the METASTARS project through proper citation and appearance of the METASTARS logo, EU emblem and the proper citation “This project has received funding from the METASTARS project that is co-funded by the European Union”.

METASTARS consortium does not obtain ownership of the results produced under the Innovation Support Mechanism. ‘Results’ means any tangible or intangible effect of the action, such as data, know-how or information, whatever its form or nature, whether or not it can be protected, as well as any rights attached to it, including intellectual property rights.

METASTARS consortium has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the Innovation Support Mechanism and materials and documents received from the beneficiaries for policy, information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes — during the implementation of the project or afterwards.

## 8 Gender equality

METASTARS seeks gender balance. Therefore, applicants are invited to take all measures to promote equal opportunities between men and women in the implementation of the action. They must aim for a gender balance at all levels of personnel assigned to the action, including supervisory and managerial levels to the extent possible.

## 9 Disclaimers

*Purpose:* This text is explaining the METASTARS Innovation Support Mechanism for information purposes only. No rights can be claimed based on this document. This document does not reflect the views of the European Commission and EISMEA.

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

*Mistakes or inconsistencies:* The METASTARS consortium is not responsible for any mistakes or misinterpretations that this text may cause. In the case of inconsistencies, the METASTARS Executive Board will determine the steps to be taken, in cooperation with the applicant concerned.

*Consequential damages:* In no event shall either party be liable to the other or any of its affiliates for any consequential, incidental, indirect, special, punitive or exemplary damages (including, without limitation, lost profits, business or goodwill) suffered or incurred by such other party or its affiliates in connection with this projects' scheme, even if advised of the possibility of such damages.



## ANNEX 1: SME contact points

FRANCE		
Aerospace Valley	Anne-Lise STEPHAN	<a href="mailto:metastars-eu@aerospace-valley.com">metastars-eu@aerospace-valley.com</a>
GREECE		
Corallia	Christina GAROUFALIA	<a href="mailto:metastars@corallia.org">metastars@corallia.org</a>
POLAND		
Aviation Valley (SDL)	Andrzej RYBKA	<a href="mailto:info@dolinalotnicza.pl">info@dolinalotnicza.pl</a>
SPAIN		
Fundacion Corporacion Tecnologica de Andalucia (CTA)	Silvia DE LOS SANTOS	<a href="mailto:metastars.cta@corporaciontecnologica.com">metastars.cta@corporaciontecnologica.com</a>
ALL OTHER COUNTRIES		<a href="mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com">info@metastars-euroclusters.com</a>
METASTARS contact point		<a href="mailto:info@metastars-euroclusters.com">info@metastars-euroclusters.com</a>

## ANNEX 2: METASTARS territorial scope

To be eligible for the METASTARS Innovation Support Scheme, an applicant must be an SME established or have a branch office in the METASTARS territorial scope described as follows:

- a. EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
- b. non-EU countries:
  - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME part of the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#)).