

PROJECT

POLREC



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Guide for Applicants

POLREC Award 2025



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1. Glossary of terms, abbreviations, and acronyms

Table 1 – List of participants

Partner short name	Partner	Country
POL	Polymeris	FR
CEN	Centro Tecnológico da Indústria de Moldes, Ferramentas Especiais e Plásticos	PT
MAV	Clúster de Materials Avançats de Catalunya	ES
PDC	Plast Center Danmark	DK
WFG	Wirtschaftsförderung Raum Heilbronn GmbH	DE

2. Introduction of POLREC project

The POLREC project is a collaborative project between the 4 European clusters and a technological centre: [Polymeris](#) (coordinator), [CENTIMFE](#), [Cluster Mav](#), [PCD/DMN](#) and [WFG](#). It started on the 1st of September 2022 and will end on the 31st of October 2025. It is funded by the European Commission Joint Cluster initiatives for Europe's recovery (Euroclusters) under the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) Grant Agreement 101074434. It focuses on sustainable development and recycling of high and low value polymers as a contribution to the objectives of the European Green Deal aiming at zero CO₂ emissions in 2050 and to increase the European strategic autonomy on raw materials for polymer production.

POLREC supports companies on the following topics:

1. Network to improve the resilience of the EU industrial ecosystems by developing value chain interlinkages in the EU Single Market.
2. Innovate for strategic autonomy to build capacity in the most critical supplies of their ecosystems.
3. Adopt processes and technologies to reinforce transformation into a greener and more digital economy.
4. Train to foster up- and re-skilling of the workforce whilst attracting talents.
5. Go international to boost access to global supply and value chains.

One of the means to provide this support is an open calls mechanism aiming to support European SMEs in developing solutions related to polymer & elastomer recycling, training on recycling technologies, networking and matchmaking in Europe and beyond.

3. Presentation of the POLREC Awards 2025

POLREC will provide financial support to SMEs active in the polymer industry in the form of prizes to award the best-practices in advancing polymer recycling solutions.

The prizes will be awarded to the 3 winners on the 10th of October 2025, during the POLREC project's final event organised during the [K show](#), in Dusseldorf, in Germany. Registration to participate to the final event are open and can be done [via this link](#).

The POLREC Awards will recognise excellence that significantly contribute to **advancing polymer recycling in Europe and beyond** in three key categories: Innovation, Training & Upskilling, and Internationalisation. One winner will be selected in each category by the POLREC consortium and awarded a €6,000 prize.

All three winners will be invited to present their solution publicly during the POLREC Final Event on October 10th, held at the K Show, the world's leading trade fair for plastics and rubber. Following the presentations, the audience will vote for the most impactful pitch. The pitch receiving the highest number of public votes will be awarded an additional €2,000 prize. This participation to POLREC Final event that will gather European SMEs, stakeholders and international partners will ensure for the awarded SMEs visibility, networking opportunities, and potential EU-level or international-level collaborations.

The call for application to the POLREC Awards 2025 **will open on 21st of July 2025 at 9.00 CET and close on 25th of September 2025 at 17.00 CET**. Applicants must send their application to europe@polymeris.fr (INZIRILLO Anaïs from Polymeris) using the templates provided for each category of Award (templates can be found in section 3.1, 3.2 or 3.3 of this Guide)

3.1 Innovation Award – Pioneering solutions in polymer recycling

This award recognises outstanding innovations that significantly contribute to advancing polymer recycling. It is aimed at European SMEs that have developed breakthrough technologies, processes, or products addressing key challenges in polymer waste recovery and reuse.

Each applicant must fill out their application through the [template available here](#) and send it in PDF format to europa@polymeris.fr (INZIRILLO Anaïs from Polymeris) before 25th September 2025 17.00 CET.

Content of the application	Guidance
Challenge Statement	Briefly describe the specific challenge linked to polymer waste that your innovation addresses and the barriers it overcomes.
Description of the Innovation	Summarise your innovation, its technical foundation, and how it improves polymer recycling.
Impact on the Polymer Industry	Outline the current and expected effects of your innovation on the European polymer industry and on the environment (e.g. increased recycling rates, valorisation of previously non-recyclable waste, CO ₂ reduction, job creation or new competencies developed, improved economic or environmental performance of recycling operations etc.)
New Business Opportunities	Describe how the innovation creates or is expected to create new markets, services, or scalable business models.

3.2 Training & Upskilling Award – Building competence for recycling Readiness

This award recognises outstanding training and upskilling activities that significantly contribute to advancing polymer recycling. It is aimed at European SMEs that have developed training content in polymer waste recovery and reuse.

Each applicant must fill out their application through the [template available here](#) and send it in PDF format to europa@polymeris.fr (INZIRILLO Anaïs from Polymeris) before 25th September 2025 17.00 CET.

Content of the application	Guidance
Challenge Statement	Summarise the recycling-related challenges or skills gaps the training aimed to address.
Type of Training Provided	Specify the nature of the training (e.g. innovative recycling processes, digitalisation, regulatory or technical skills for polymer recycling).
Impact on SME Operations	Describe how the training has improved recycling practices, process control, regulatory compliance, or overall performance on the European SMEs.
Long-Term Benefits	Explain how the training will open new technical capabilities, staff competencies, or strategic opportunities for the SMEs from the European polymer industry.

3.3 Internationalisation Award – Expanding recycling solutions beyond Europe:

This award recognises a European SME that has successfully implemented a strategy to expand its polymer recycling-related activities beyond the EU. Whether through exports, partnerships, mutual learning, technology transfer, or market entry, this award highlights impactful international initiatives that support the global deployment and co-development of recycling solutions, acknowledging the value of both exporting European expertise and integrating innovations and practices from international partners.

Each applicant must fill out their application through the [template available here](#) and send it in PDF format to europa@polymeris.fr (INZIRILLO Anaïs from Polymeris) before 25th September 2025 17.00 CET.

Content of the application	Guidance
Challenge Statement	Briefly describe the motivation for entering the non-EU market and the recycling challenge or opportunity targeted by the internationalisation strategy.
Approach and implementation	Summarise how the internationalisation strategy was developed and executed. Include the key activities that helped you identify and engage with the target non-EU market such as participation in trade fairs, international missions, market studies, support received from

	business development organisations etc. Describe the implementation of the strategy by highlighting strategic partnerships, technology transfer initiatives, or regulatory steps taken to enter and operate in the selected market.
Impact on recycling activities	Explain how the strategy contributed to deploying or scaling up polymer recycling in the target country (e.g. new processes, volumes treated, local impact).
Business Outcomes for the SME	Highlight the business benefits achieved, such as revenue growth, access to new markets, increased visibility, or strategic positioning. Present the next steps and doors that were opened thanks to this successful strategy.

4. Evaluation and selection

Each application will be evaluated independently by two members of the POLREC consortium.

The maximum score is 100 points, with a minimum threshold of 50 points required for eligibility.

The final score will be calculated as the average of the two individual evaluations, based on the following criteria:

4.1 Innovation Award – Pioneering solutions in polymer recycling

Selection Criteria	Number of points
Relevance and originality of the innovation	40 pts
Technical soundness and maturity	10 pts
Demonstrated or expected impact on polymer recycling performance	30 pts
Market potential and business viability	20 pts
TOTAL	100 pts

4.2 Training & Upskilling Award – Building competence for recycling Readiness

Selection Criteria	Number of points
Clarity and Relevance of Training Objectives	30 pts
Tangible Improvements in SME Operations	20 pts
Potential for Broader Implementation/replication to other companies	20 pts
Strategic and long-term benefits for the SME (eg : development of in-house skills, improved compliance, or new business opportunities related to recycling)	30 pts
TOTAL	100 pts

4.3 Internationalisation Award – Expanding recycling solutions beyond Europe

Selection Criteria	Number of points
Relevance of the internationalisation strategy to the challenge statement	30
Business and market impact for the SME	30 pts
Positive technical and environmental impact on the non-EU partner's and on the targeted country's recycling strategy	20 pts
Mutual knowledge transfer and innovation – Demonstrated learning or integration of non-EU partner innovations into the SME's strategy	20 pts
TOTAL	100 pts

4.4 Public vote Award

Alongside the jury's evaluation and notation, the audience – meaning all registered participants—attending the POLREC final event on October 10, 2025, will vote for their favourite pitch.

The 3 awards winners will be invited to pitch their success story based during the POLREC final event with the freedom to present their solution in a creative format of their choice—ranging from video and animation to other innovative storytelling methods. The 3 pitches will also be disseminated through POLREC social media and website.

The public voting will take place after the 3 winners have pitched their success story via a QR code provided during the event. Each attendee will be invited to vote for the pitch that best demonstrates quality and creativity, based on its presentation of results, good practices, and the use of effective and imaginative storytelling.

The pitch receiving the highest number of audience votes will be awarded an additional prize of €2,000.

Please note that POLREC Awards winners and project partners will not be eligible to vote.

5. Eligibility conditions

To be eligible, applicants must satisfy all the following conditions:

1. Be a legal entity.
2. Be a small or medium sized enterprise (SME) in accordance with the SME definition of the European Union. An SME self-assessment tool is available [via this link](#).
3. To not be under liquidation or in financial difficulty or excluded from EU funding by national or EU law or non-compliant with tax or social security obligations in the country of establishment or involved in insolvency proceedings or similar legal situations.
4. Submit only one application for a single POLREC Awards category. If an SME submits applications in multiple categories, the POLREC consortium will contact the applicant and request that they select one category only for consideration.
5. Award winners must attend the K Fair 2025 in Düsseldorf in person on October 10th, 2025, to receive their award during the POLREC Final Event. Please note that travel and accommodation costs must be covered by the winners themselves. However, the award prize is designed to cover these expenses, including participation in the K Fair.
6. Applicants are entitled to benefit from more than one type of POLREC financial support, reaching a total maximum funding from POLREC of 60 000€ per SME. Consequently, laureates of the POLREC previous Open Calls can apply to the POLREC Awards call if the financial support already attributed does not exceed 52 000€.

The SMEs targeted by this call can cover various sectors, such as transport and mobility, construction, renewable energy, digital and electronics, health, consumer goods, industrial and food packaging. All SMEs are eligible to this call and welcome to apply, not only the previous POLREC Open Call beneficiaries.

Applications must be written in English and complete in all the parts indicated in application form. Only parts written in English will be evaluated.

6. Financial support

Prizes will be awarded to the top ranked participant for each category, in total 3 SME will be awarded.

By accepting the funding, awarded SMEs commit to participate to the POLREC final event held on the 10th of October on the K show and must register to the event [via this link](#).

The winners will receive a prize of 6000€ each upon participation to [POLREC final event](#) and pitch of their solution at the final event organised on the K show on the 10th of October 2025. Payment of the prizes will be made within 10 days of the awarding of the prizes during POLREC final event upon effective participation of the SME to the final event.

7. POLREC Reward 2025 Open Call calendar for evaluation and implementation of activities

Step	Dates
Period open for submissions of proposals	21 st July 9.00 CET – 25 th September 2025 at 17.00 CET
Evaluation & Selection of winners	26 th September – 2 nd October 2025
Notification letters sent out to candidates – invitation to pitch	3 rd October 2025
Awarding ceremony and pitch of the winners on their solution during the POLREC Awards 2025 (K show)	10 th October 2025 at the K show, in Dusseldorf

8. Helpdesk

For any enquiries regarding information and/ or clarification about the present call, please contact one of the POLREC National Contact point listed:

- Spain: info@clustermav.com
- France (coordinator): roxane.girard@polymeris.fr
- Germany: polrec@wfgheilbronn.de
- Portugal: liliana.ramos@centimfe.com
- Denmark: dwb@plastcenter.dk

Applicants located in other EU countries are invited to contact POLREC's coordinator should they have any question on the application process.

9. Confidentiality, GDPR protection & intellectual property rights

A full list of applicants will be prepared containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will be also shared with the European Commission for transparency.

The applicants' list will not be public but will serve as statistics in project communication materials.

To process and evaluate applications to the Awards, the POLREC consortium will need to collect personal and industrial data. The POLREC project coordinator will act as a Data Controller for data submitted through europa@polymeris.fr to ensure that data are managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR).

The final list of the 3 awarded SMEs will be made public, including legal name of the companies, sector, country/region of origins, content of the best-practices.

For dissemination concerning the financial support and awarding process from POLREC, the SMEs must credit the POLREC project through proper citation and appearance of the POLREC logo and EU Logo, including the proper citation: "This award is funded by the European Commission Joint Cluster initiatives for Europe's recovery (Euroclusters) under the Single Market Programme (SMP COSME) grant agreement number 101074434".

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PROJECT INFO

Grant Agreement	Project 101074434 — POLREC
Programme	Single Market Programme (SMP COSME)
Call	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER
Topic	SMP-COSME-2021-CLUSTER-01
Type of action	SMP Grants for Financial Support
Project Title	Supporting a green and resilient Europe through POLYmer RECycling
Project starting date	1 st September 2022
Project end date	31 st August 2025
Project duration	36 months

PROJECT CONSORTIUM



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POLYMERIS

Competitiveness cluster for rubbers, plastics and composites

