

Accreditation of expertise centres for the Innovation Vouchers Terms and Conditions 2025

Introduction

Innovation vouchers are designed to enable Brussels-based SMEs to call on the expertise of research centres for one-off services in support of innovative projects. Through the Innovation Vouchers, SMEs can obtain a subsidy of 75% of the services budget (excluding VAT), up to a limit of €10,000 per year per company.

The programme was renewed this year to enable the number of service centres to be increased. A call for applications will be launched each year and the list of approved centres will thus be able to grow, to the benefit of Brussels SMEs, which will be able to take advantage of a broader range of services.

Innoviris is responsible for managing the approval procedure, as well as formalising the automatic approval granted to certain centres. The purpose of this document is to set out the rules for these various procedures.

Expertise centres without an automatic approval must submit the application form to Innoviris by **28 March 2025**. The form must comply with both the guidelines in these regulations and the information on the forms. If your application does not comply with the regulations, it will not be considered for assessment.

From 2024, research centres with automatic approval can submit their form with additional information or application for exemption from approval at any time of the year, under the following condition: the form must be submitted together with the centre's first joint application for an innovation voucher with a Brussels SME.

Conditions of eligibility and approval

Application for approval

Expertise centres are eligible, regardless of their legal status (ASBL, SPRL, SA, etc.), if they meet the approval conditions set out in Article 30 of the Non-Economic Purpose Ordinance and focus on three areas:

1. best practice for approved centres, which must:
 - have cost accounting and internal control procedures to ensure that the accounts are properly kept;

- publish an annual activity report;
 - meet the essential quality standards in the field. This includes, for example, ISO certifications or approvals required to ensure the quality of services in a specific field.
2. the skills of approved centres, which must:
- carry out, possibly in the near future, research, development and innovation work of a sufficiently general nature to be of interest to companies facing the same needs in the areas of activity concerned;
 - keep abreast of scientific progress and disseminate it to companies, in addition to the results of their research work;
 - have the human and material resources to carry out technological guidance activities, such as technological audits of problems linked to processes or products, or advice on where to turn for technological skills.
3. the long-term future of approved centres, which must:
- have sufficient funding;
 - demonstrate their willingness to provide the services referred to in point 2° on a long-term and recurring basis.

Application for exemption from the approval procedure

Centres that believe they can be exempted from the accreditation procedure on the grounds that they have equivalent recognition to that of the research units of universities and colleges recognised by the Federal State, the French Community, the Flemish Community and the German-speaking Community may submit a request for exemption from the accreditation procedure, accompanied by proof of such recognition. This applies in particular to foreign universities and other higher education and research institutions. It must be demonstrated that the establishment to which they are attached **either** has the prerogative to award higher education diplomas recognised by the competent national authority, **or** has equivalent recognition in the field of scientific research, issued by the competent national or regional authority.

Formalisation of automatic approval

Research units at universities and colleges of higher education recognised by the Federal State, the French Community, the Flemish Community and the German-speaking Community, as well as Groote centres, are approved in their own right. In order to formalise this approval, the centres approved in their own right must provide proof of their recognition and/or their organic links with the recognised institutions (e.g. research centre of a university with its own legal personality).

Eligible services

As a reminder, this programme enables the following services to be provided:

Exploration phase

- Preliminary tests, calculations and analyses

Design phase

- IP: analysis of Freedom to Operate or eligibility for patenting
- Carrying out all or part of a specification with a view to designing and/or adapting innovative products, processes and services.
- Validation of an innovative process, product or service (development of specific control methods, optimisation and validation of test protocols, carrying out analyses and assessments, etc.).
- Proof of concept

Pre-industrialisation phase

- Selection of the state of the art best suited to the specifications (product component level, production and manufacturing level)
- Creation of basic prototypes for demonstration purposes
- Carrying out studies to assess the life cycle of new products and the impact of innovative processes, products and services
- Support in preparing for industrialisation: drawing up technical specifications with a view, in particular, to designing production flow-sheets and technical layout diagrams
- Validation of production costs and estimated margins for an innovative product

Terms of the 2025 call

Calendar

For expertise centres without automatic approval:

- **Deadline for submitting forms: 28 March 2025**
- **Evaluation by Innoviris:** from February to April 2025. Applications will be evaluated as soon as they are submitted.
- **Decision on approval by Innoviris:** from May to June 2025. Applications will be assessed as soon as they are submitted, and Innoviris may grant approval in one or more phases.

For research centres with automatic approval:

- Call open all year. The form must be submitted together with the centre's first joint application for an innovation cheque with a Brussels SME.
- Evaluation by Innoviris within two weeks.
- Granting approval within one month.

Forms

The application forms, as well as the forms for requesting a waiver of approval and additional information intended for fully approved research centres, are available on the Innoviris website. To be considered admissible, an application, whatever its type, must be received by Innoviris before the closing date of the call, be drawn up on the standard form made available by Innoviris, and be accompanied by all the required supporting documents.

The following conditions must also be met for an application to be accepted.

- The centre must have fulfilled its obligations under any previous aid granted by the Region.
- The centre must have cost accounting and internal control procedures to ensure that the accounts are kept correctly.
- The centre must meet the essential quality standards in the field.
- The centre must publish an annual activity report.

Eligible applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- the centre's capacity to carry out, possibly in the near future, research, development and innovation work of a sufficiently general nature to be of interest to companies facing the same needs in the fields of activity concerned;
- the centre's ability to keep abreast of scientific advances and disseminate them to companies, in addition to the results of its research work;
- whether the human and material resources available to the centre are sufficient to carry out technological guidance activities, such as technological audits of problems relating to processes or products, or advice on technological skills;
- the adequacy of the centre's funding;
- the centre's willingness to provide services as part of this programme on a sustainable and recurring basis.

This assessment will initially be based on the dossier submitted. If the number of applications permits, site visits or an interview at Innoviris' premises may also be organised.

Requests for exemption from the accreditation procedure will be assessed to determine whether the centre has satisfactorily demonstrated that the recognition it has is equivalent (examination of the nature and effects of the recognition the centre is claiming).

The additional information provided by the centres approved in their own right will not be evaluated. However, the information provided will be used to determine the scope of the services offered by these centres and their pricing conditions.

Granting of approval

At the end of the assessment procedure, centres that meet the conditions for approval will be granted approval.

Centres exempt from the approval procedure will also obtain approval.

Automatically approved centres that have indicated that they wish to provide services as part of this programme will also have their approval formalised.

All approved centres will be included in a list published on the Innoviris website for companies. This list will include the services offered by the centres.

Loss of approval

Approval may be withdrawn in the following cases:

- the expertise centre no longer complies with the conditions for approval set out in the Ordinance;
- the expertise centre does not comply with the conditions attached to the services set out in Article 30 of the Economic Purpose Ordinance;
- the expertise centre does not provide any of the services set out in article 30 of the Economic Purpose Ordinance for 3 consecutive years.

Automatically approved centres may also be removed from the list available on the Innoviris website if they fail to comply with the conditions or fail to provide services.

Forms and information

The application form and guidelines are available on the Innoviris [website](#).

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