

Innovation vouchers

Programme guide

OBJECTIVE

This financial aid is part of the measures put in place to stimulate the economy in the Brussels-Capital Region.

Innovation vouchers are intended to finance one-off studies in support of innovative projects, to be carried out in approved research centres for the benefit of small and medium-sized businesses in Brussels.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Innovation vouchers are granted on the basis of European Commission **Regulation 1407/2013** of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to **de minimis** aid.

This regulation stipulates that the total amount of de minimis aid granted to any one beneficiary must not exceed €200,000 over any period of 3 years.

This ceiling applies regardless of the form and purpose of the de minimis aid or the subsidising bodies (regional or national).

The Beneficiary's attention is drawn to the fact that it is their **responsibility to provide** (to the Region) **full information on any other de minimis aid they may have received over the previous 3 years**. To do this, the Beneficiary must complete the declaration on honour attached to the application form.

For more information on de minimis aid, click here:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32013R1407&from=FR>

Traditional RDI grants awarded by Innoviris are not affected by this ceiling.

The rules governing the granting of Innovation vouchers are set out in the Ordinance of 27 July 2017 aimed at promoting research, development and innovation through the granting of aid earmarked for economic purposes in favour of businesses and research bodies treated as businesses.

ELIGIBLE COMPANIES

The initiative is aimed at **small and medium-sized businesses** that would like financial assistance for a one-off study but do not necessarily have the staff or facilities to carry it out.

In all, 3 parties are involved in the Innovation Cheques initiative:

- 1) Innoviris: Brussels Institute for Research and Innovation, which acts as a subsidising body under the authority of the Minister for Scientific Research of the Brussels-Capital Region.
- 2) The sponsor: the small or medium-sized enterprise which has at least one place of business in the Brussels-Capital Region and which submits the application for aid. The size of the company is calculated in accordance with [Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises](#).
- 3) The service provider: the approved research centre.

These 3 parts must be identified when the application is submitted.

AMOUNT OF FUNDING

This financial support, capped at €10,000 per calendar year per company, covers a maximum of 75% of the costs excluding VAT relating to the study as described in the application. The balance and VAT are the responsibility of the Sponsor. The eligible costs will be as follows:

- Staff costs expressed in ½ working days for an engineer (or equivalent) or a technician, this amount including staff salaries, running costs specific to their activity and general operating costs. These costs are fixed on a flat-rate basis by mutual agreement between Innoviris and the service provider.
- Exceptional operating costs, provided they have been accepted by Innoviris. Flat-rate costs for the use and operation of certain infrastructures or equipment are included in this category.
- The costs of instruments and equipment, insofar as and for as long as they are used for the project and provided that they have been accepted by Innoviris. Where these instruments and equipment are not used for their entire lifetime as part of the project, only the depreciation costs corresponding to the duration of the project, calculated in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, are deemed eligible.
- Any sub-contracting costs, provided they have been approved by Innoviris.

Subcontracting costs and any exceptional expenses must be supported by estimates.

The financial support that can be obtained covers a variable period of up to 15 months. All services must be provided during the period covered by the service provider's approval.

ELIGIBLE SERVICES

The list of eligible services is given below:

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.
 - Eco-design guidance
 - Drawing up a security strategy for an innovative platform, service or product
- 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.).
 - Audit of the legal framework and other standards in force, as well as compliance (studies and trials on humans, embryos, animals, processing of personal data, dual-use goods, etc.)
 - Assessment of discriminatory nature (disability, gender, origin, etc.)
- Production of a 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
 - Including analysis of the carbon footprint of the product, process or service
 - The environmental impact of packaging
- 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
 - Including more sustainable alternatives

PROCEDURE

To be admissible, the request must be submitted before the start of the service.

The application form, supplied by Innoviris, is completed jointly by the client and the service provider. The request is submitted to Innoviris electronically (Irisbox platform or funding-request@innoviris.brussels address). If the request is sent by email, in order to ensure optimum processing of the request, the subject of the message should follow this model:

E.g.: "[INNOVATION VOUCHERS] [Name of service provider] Application form - COMPANY NAME".
Ex: "[INNOVATION VOUCHERS] [Centre XYZ] Application form - Company SPRL".

A copy of the collaboration agreement between the client and the service provider will also be enclosed. This agreement governs issues such as the intellectual property of the results. If a copy of the standard agreement has already been sent when the application for approval was submitted, it is not necessary to send it again, unless it has been amended.

The application will only be considered eligible if the form is submitted duly completed, accompanied by the required *de minimis* declaration and a copy of the collaboration agreement. It will be assessed on the basis of various criteria, such as whether the service is in line with the budget, the innovative nature of the project, the prospects for commercial exploitation and the potential impact of this commercial exploitation on the Region. This analysis is carried out by Innoviris within 8 working days of receipt of the application.

At the end of the study, the service provider must send Innoviris the control sheet containing a summary of the results obtained, their critical analysis and the report which will be sent to the company.

Sponsors may also be asked to provide Innoviris with the results of the studies they have commissioned.

PAYMENT OF THE SUBSIDY

The subsidy is paid in a single instalment, following receipt and validation by Innoviris of the inspection form, the report sent to the company, a copy of the invoice issued by the service provider to the sponsor, and a credit note issued by the sponsor.

INFORMATION AND FORMS

Further information can be obtained from

Innoviris, the Brussels Institute for Research and Innovation.
Vincent Martzloff
Chaussée de Charleroi 112
1060 Brussels
Tel: +32 2 600 50 41 - E-mail: vmartzloff@innoviris.brussels

The form and rules are available on the www.innoviris.brussels website.