

DELIVERABLE D1.3.2

IEC24: Three regional funding schemes are synchronized

Description

The report describes at least 3 funding programmes that can be synchronised and related actions to be undertaken for synchronisation. The report contains a description of the regions and their funding programmes, actions for funding synchronisations as well as the synchronised IEC call document.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	Business to Business
BizUP	Business Upper Austria
CBE	Circular Bioeconomy
IEC24	Innovation Express Call 2024
IECS	Innovation Express Call Scheme
LGCA	Lombardy Green Chemistry Association
PLA	Polylactic Acid
SAT	Sustainability Assessment Tool
S3	Smart Specialization Strategy
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
VCG	Value Chain Generator
VCG.AI	Value Chain Generator AI



1 INTRODUCTION

Innovation Express Call 2024 is a joint call for proposals implemented within the frame of the INNOBIOVC project by synchronizing existing regional funding schemes in the Alpine Space and beyond. It represents a joint approach for supporting companies, especially SMEs, at international matchmaking and joint research, development and innovation projects in the fields of trans-regional circular bioeconomy value chains, key resources and sectors in agriculture, food and beverages, chemistry, polymers and energy.

Synchronizing of existing regional funding programmes under the IEC24 means:

- Regions participate with their own, existing regional funding programmes.
- No new or additional funding schemes have to be established.
- No new or additional funding budget is needed.
- Participating regions remain in full control of their administrative procedures, financial management of the call as well as the decision-making process.
- Funding and eligibility rules apply according to the regional funding programme.
- Applications will be evaluated based on their potential to create benefits for participating applicants, to contribute to the competitiveness of the regional economy and in accordance with the criteria from the respective regional/national funding programmes.
- New cooperations with partners/regions which have competences one needs and others can offer.
- Innovative collaboration offers are supported financially.

2 PARTICIPATING REGIONS AND THEIR FUNDING PROGRAMMES

Overall, 20 regions showed interest in the Innovation Express scheme and/or participated the IEC24 webinars. Finally, five regions (three project partner regions, one additional Alpine Space region and one region from beyond the Alpine Space, see Fig 1) participated with six funding programmes. Letters of Intent were received from each participating region. The intention of this Letter of Intent is to gain a certain kind of commitment from interested regional funding partners as well as an indication of the funding programme they are willing to contribute with.

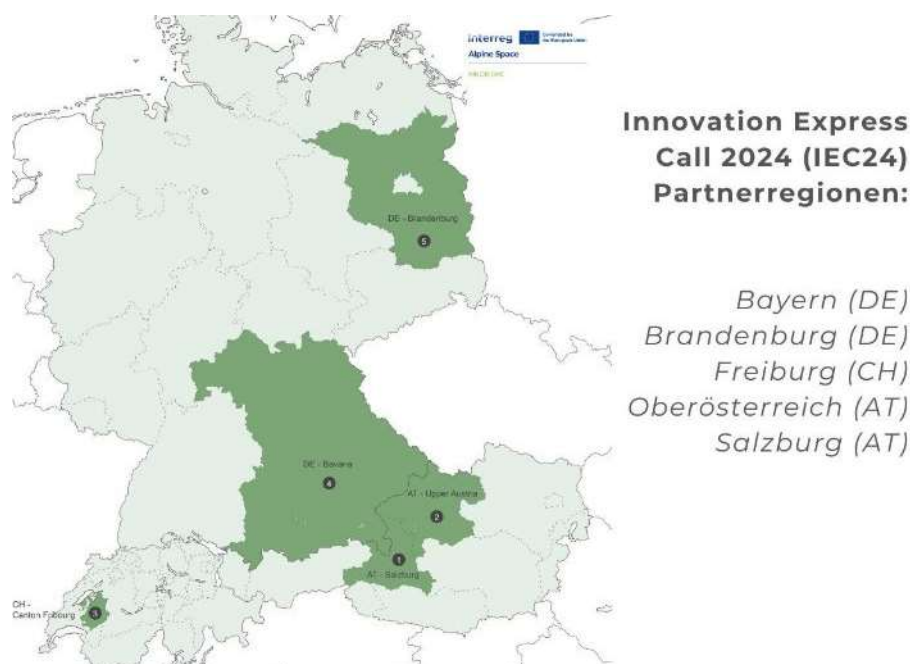


Figure 1: Participating IEC24 regions



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In Table 1, an overview of the participating regions for the IEC call is given. Further, the regions and funding programmes are explained in detail in the subsequent subchapters.

Table 1: Overview of participating IEC24 regions

PARNTER REGION	FUNDING PARNTER	PARTICIPATING NATIONAL / REGIONAL FUNDING PROGRAMME	TYPE OF APPLICANTS	TYPE OF ACTIVITIES
AT / Salzburg	Regional Government Office of Land Salzburg, Department Economy, Tourism and Municipalities	WISS FTI-Förderprogramme www.salzburg.gv.at/wirtschaft_/Seiten/fti-foerderung.aspx	SME, companies & Research Institutions	Applied R&D
AT / Upper Austria	Regional Government Office of Upper Austria, Directorate for Regional Planning, Economic and Rural Development Department of Economics and Research	Unternehmens- und Forschungskoooperationsförderung 2024 - 2026 (Business and research cooperation funding 2024-2026) www.land-oberoesterreich.gv.at/526010.htm	SME, big companies, R&D organisations (only in combination with an SME in Upper Austria)	Applied R&D, industrial research, experimental development; Technology projects & technology based organisational innovation projects
CH / Canton Fribourg	School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg	Fund for application-oriented research and development	School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg (HES-SO) researchers and institutes	Research and Development
	Confederation and Canton of Fribourg	New Regional Policy - Collaboration projects	Research institutes, companies	Applied R&D. Focus on pre-competitive collaborations.
DE / Bavaria	Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy	BayBioökonomie Scale-up (Bioeconomy-Scale-Up) www.stmwi.bayern.de/foerderungen/biooekonomie-scale-up/	Start-Ups; SMEs and big companies	Production facilities for the utilisation of biogenic resources
DE / Brandenburg	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy State of Brandenburg (MWAE)	ProFIT Brandenburg 2023 - Programm zur Förderung von Forschung, Innovationen und Technologien Programme to support research, innovation and technologies www.ilb.de/de/wirtschaft/zuschuesse/profit-brandenburg-2023/	SME. Big companies and R&D organizations only in combination with an SME in Brandenburg	Applied R&D, industrial research, experimental development; projects should develop a new or improved product, process or service

2.1 Salzburg (AT)



Salzburg, a federal state in Austria, is continuously growing and evolving as a location for research and innovation. With its science and innovation strategy – WISS2030 – the state follows clear guidelines in this regard. One of five main focuses in the strategy is Tech4Green. Several high specialized companies and research institutions in Salzburg are dealing with wood technologies, smart circular buildings, smart materials, smart settlement systems and green engineering, and circular design.

Innovation Salzburg GmbH

As Salzburg’s provincial development agency, Innovation Salzburg GmbH (Inno Sbg) coordinates and implements the technology-, innovation-related policies of the regional government, especially through SME and Start-Up support, Cluster Networks and knowledge/ technology transfer into SMEs. Inno Sbg’s focus is to raise awareness for promising future-oriented business topics and bring these to businesses in Salzburg. Innovation Salzburg advances Salzburg’s existing economic strengths in cooperation with other



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institutions and is therefore an important partner for implementing the Province of Salzburg's economic model.

It is our mission to establish a creative and dynamic environment for innovation and cooperation in Salzburg as a business location – between individual businesses and business sectors, educational institutions, and scientific and research facilities. Therefore, international exchange, learning from and working together with similar partners from other regions or other countries is vital for our work.

Innovation Salzburg provides know-how in the realization of innovative projects and business creation, fosters collaboration, activates regional hubs, and provides pre-consulting services. Businesses are accompanied throughout their entire innovation processes; innovation methods and trends are introduced via workshops or one-to-one meetings.

Forschung, Technologie und Innovation (FTI - Research, technology and innovation)

a) What is funded?

Research and transfer projects of Salzburg research institutions in co-operation with companies.

- Personnel costs (e.g. third-party funded personnel)
- Overheads/overhead costs as a lump sum amounting to 25% of personnel costs
- Material and equipment costs as well as third-party costs/external services
- Structural and technical adaptations of laboratory space or research infrastructure

b) Why is funding provided?

The aim of this funding campaign is to increase research expertise both in Salzburg's research institutions and in Salzburg companies and to optimize the transfer of knowledge. Research potential is to be utilized for companies and thus innovations and innovative processes are to be initiated, expanded and accelerated. This funding campaign is intended to help strengthen cooperation between regional research institutions and companies, improve the opportunities for Salzburg companies to participate in national or European projects and programmes and strengthen their market opportunities and competitiveness.

The funding share for the funding applicant/research institution is at least 10% of the eligible project costs. The business partners must contribute 25% in the form of a cash payment.

c) Who is eligible for funding?

Research institutions in the province of Salzburg that wish to realize a joint project in areas ranging from application-oriented basic research to industrial research in cooperation with at least one Salzburg company. Funding for projects in experimental development is only possible within the framework of a co-operation project funded at national or European level and must be submitted to the relevant funding bodies at federal level (e.g. FFG, ...).

d) How is funding provided?

Funding is provided in the form of non-repayable grants from funds of the Province of Salzburg and in accordance with the available budget funds. Funding from state funds generally only covers part of the total eligible costs. Projects with eligible costs between 50,000 and approx. 500,000 euros are eligible for



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funding. The grant amounts to a maximum of 50% and can be increased to a maximum of 65% of the eligible costs if the conditions for the award of bonus points are met.

Work on the project to be subsidised may not begin before the application is submitted.



2.2 Upper Austria (AT)



Upper Austria is a federal state in the north of Austria and an economic hotspot with different types of industries. The most important sectors are automotive, environmental engineering, chemistry, material processing such as metals, plastics, paper, wood, energy, and the food industry, which is a key economic factor in Upper Austria and encompasses a wide range of activities. Upper Austria is on TOP10 in the fDI ranking “Small European Regions of the Future 2022/2023”, it generates almost a quarter of Austria’s total production, and more than a quarter of the Austrian exports come from Upper Austria. INNOVATION THROUGH COOPERATION is practised in the Upper Austrian cluster networks.

Business Upper Austria – OÖ Wirtschaftsagentur GmbH

Business Upper Austria is the Upper Austrian government’s location agency: an innovation driver and the first contact partner for companies in Austria and abroad to whom customised solutions for their investment and innovation projects are offered. Within Business Upper Austria, nine cluster networks, who offer a regional network for the respective sector, are managed.

The clusters promote and coordinate successful cooperation between companies, research institutes and decision-makers to developed and implemented innovative, ecologically and economically viable solutions for now and the future. Business Upper Austria is home of several cluster initiatives: Food Cluster, Building Innovation Cluster, Cleantech Cluster, Automotive Cluster, IT Cluster, Plastics Cluster, Mechatronics Cluster and the Logistics Network.

Unternehmens- und Forschungskooperationsförderung 2024 - 2026

(Business and research co-operation funding 2024 -2026)

Scope: Initiation and implementation of cooperative research and development projects or implementation of cooperative organisational projects involving at least 3 cooperation partners.

a) Who is supported?

Companies,

- that are members of a cluster and network initiative of the province of Upper Austria,
- and which have their registered office in Upper Austria or at least have a physical centre of gravity in Upper Austria to which the project-relevant activity can be fully and demonstrably assigned.
- Applicants for funding must also be members of the Upper Austrian Chamber of Commerce (with the exception of leading companies in the Upper Austrian healthcare sector) or members of the Chamber of Architects and Engineering Consultants for Upper Austria and Salzburg.

b) What is funded?

The object of the funding is the initiation and implementation of cooperative research and development projects or the implementation of cooperative organisational projects in which at least 3 cooperation partners are involved and whose implementation has a lasting positive impact on the competitiveness of the Upper Austrian economy.



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c) How is funding provided?

Funding is granted in the form of non-repayable grants. However, there may be a claw-back if the applicable regulations (e.g. EU state aid law, national regulations, guidelines, programme documents) stipulate that the grant is subject to claw-back.

2.3 Canton of Fribourg (CH)



Haute école d'ingénierie et d'architecture Fribourg
Hochschule für Technik und Architektur Freiburg

The canton of Fribourg, the eighth largest of the 26 Swiss cantons, is idyllically situated between the Swiss Plateau and the foothills of the Alps. As an important center of research and education between French-speaking Romandy and German-speaking Switzerland, around two thirds of the population speak French and just under a third German. Fribourg's economic development strategy builds on the dynamism and diversity of the local economy and focuses on two key areas: Bioeconomy and Industry 4.0. The canton of Fribourg has decided to place innovation and activities with high added value at the heart of its development strategy. Knowledge and technology transfer is an essential part of the Fribourg ecosystem and makes it possible to strengthen the competitiveness of companies and develop collaborative projects.

Applied Research and Development at the School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg

The School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg is the first point of contact for innovative projects at the interface between research and business. In ten research institutes, the university offers expertise in application-oriented research and development:

- ChemTech – Institute of Chemical Technology
- ENERGY – Institute of Applied Research in Energy Systems
- HumanTech – Technology for Human Wellbeing
- iCoSys – Institute of Artificial Intelligence and Complex Systems
- iPrint – Institute for Printing
- iRAP – Institute for Applied Plastics Research
- iSIS – Institute of Smart and Secured Systems
- iTEC – Institute of Construction and Environmental Technologies
- SeSi – Sustainable Engineering Systems Institute
- TRANSFORM – Institute of Architecture: Heritage, Construction and Users

The institutes receive subsidiary support for the implementation of innovative projects via the university's internal fund for application-oriented research and development.

INNOSQUARE – Platform for collaborative projects

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With INNOSQUARE, the university has an innovation platform with access to a broad network of local companies. INNOSQUARE coordinates the promotion of cooperation projects between companies and research institutes as part of the new regional policy on behalf of the cantonal economic development agency.



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It works closely with the regional clusters:

- Cluster Food & Nutrition
- Swiss Plastics Cluster
- Building Innovation Cluster

2.4 Bavaria (DE)

The Free State of Bavaria, the largest federal state in Germany, is one of the leading innovation locations in the country with collaboration and markets all around Europe and the world. Its innovation strategy Innovationsland.Bayern highlights Bavaria's commitment, goals and measures to strengthening and expanding its leading position with a specific focus on five specialization fields: mobility, life sciences, energy, materials and digitalisation. The Free State's innovation policy focuses on supporting innovations that offer holistic solutions to economic, scientific, social and ecological challenges. Towards this goal, an emphasis is laid on sustainable innovation that enable economy and society to transform towards a resource efficient and climate neutral future.

Bioeconomy in Bavaria

The (circular) bioeconomy offers Bavaria many advantages: by promoting resource-efficient agricultural practices and the use of renewable raw materials, Bavaria can not only minimize its environmental impact, but also create new economic opportunities. Sustainability in companies not only creates new jobs, but also room for innovation.

The state's rich agricultural and forestry base provides an ideal platform for sustainable developments. Through political support and the integration of these concepts into existing initiatives, Bavaria can take a leading role in promoting sustainable practices while encouraging economic growth and improved quality of life for the population.

Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy

The Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy, responsible party and publisher of the regional bioeconomic strategy, focusses on maintaining and promoting Bavaria's competitiveness as a business location, strengthening Bavaria's economic performance, supporting start-ups and creating attractive employment opportunities. Therefore, the Ministry is offering a variety of funding opportunities for established and young companies. Additionally, a broad network of partners and business support organisations is affiliated with and supported by the ministry offering day-to-day support and hands-on experiences in fostering collaboration and innovation:

Chemie-Cluster Bayern GmbH

In 2006, Chemie-Cluster Bayern was founded within the Cluster Initiative Bavaria aiming at increasing Bavaria's competitiveness in strategic sectors. On behalf of the Ministry, Chemie-Cluster Bayern supports networking between companies in the chemical sector and cooperation between industry and science. The network supports companies in their innovation and market development and the creation of value chains from research and development to the final product.



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Additionally, it advises the Ministry on strategic issues and support it in its activities, e.g., in the area of internationalization by establishing contacts and initializing cooperation. As a cluster it is our mission to contribute to the strengthening of the knowledge base of Bavarian institutions, to accelerate the introduction of new technologies and to facilitate the development of new markets. Furthermore, hidden markets for existing products, technologies and services are to be found worldwide.

Bioökonomie-Scale-Up

With the 'BayBioökonomie-Scale-Up' funding programme, the Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs is supporting the transition to a carbon-based circular economy. The programme supports production facilities that use renewable raw materials or biogenic residual and waste materials and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The fourth call for funding is aimed at companies investing in production facilities in Bavaria for the material utilisation of renewable raw materials. Expressions of interest must be submitted by 20 March 2024. The deadline for the submission of draft applications is 31 May 2024. The selected draft applications will be invited to submit formal funding applications at a later date. Funding is provided by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The amended 'BayBioökonomie-Scale-Up' guideline came into force on 15 February 2024.

a) What can be funded?

Funding is available for expenditure incurred by companies for the construction of industrial bioeconomy production facilities that process renewable raw materials or predominantly biogenic residual and waste materials and have a high climate protection effect.

b) What requirements must be met?

- Production plants for the at least partial material utilisation of biogenic raw materials (e.g. biorefineries, bioproduct plants, biogas plants that also serve material utilisation, plants for the pyrolysis of plant material) can be considered if they
- use at least 51% renewable raw materials or predominantly biogenic residual and waste materials (technically necessary auxiliary materials of non-biogenic origin are permitted),
- are built in Bavaria,
- have already been tested on a larger scale (from technology readiness level TRL 8) (for preparatory activities for the construction of company-owned demonstration plants for projects from TRL 7, please refer to the funding under the Federal Industrial Bioeconomy Programme),
- have a demonstrable climate and environmental benefit compared to the operation of conventional technology (the relevant emissions must be reduced overall and not merely shifted from one economic sector to another). The climate protection effect must be demonstrated from a holistic perspective, i.e. also taking into account the raw materials/pre-products (including their production and transport) (e.g. through greenhouse gas certification in accordance with ISO 14064). The plant must enable a predicted quantitative reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to conventional plants for the same end products or substitute products with the same intended use (the GHG reduction potential should be at least 40 %),



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- generate new value chains and jobs and strengthen value creation in rural areas,
- use sustainable renewable raw materials, whereby the sustainability of the raw materials must be proven by appropriate certification (e.g. ISCC-PLUS or REDcert2 for agricultural products and PEFC/FSC or an equivalent certificate for wood) throughout the entire service life of the installation, with the exception of residual materials and waste products.

Plants that combine material and energy utilisation are eligible for funding if the focus of value creation (over 50%) for projects outside so-called areas with a special need for action (RmbH areas) is on material utilisation. In RmbH areas, there is no need for the focus of value creation to be on material utilisation.

Plants that are used exclusively for energy production (e.g. biogas plants, biomass combustion, CHP plants, etc. without coupled material utilisation) are not eligible for funding. The processing of rapeseed oil into conventional bio-diesel fuel or rapeseed methyl ester, the production of wood chips, logs, wood briquettes, wood pellets or similar are also not eligible for funding.

Projects that were started before the government of Lower Bavaria received a verifiable application are not eligible for funding. The start of a project is generally deemed to be the submission of a binding declaration of intent to conclude a supply or service contract attributable to the execution of the project. Planning, certification and authorisation procedures do not count as the start of the project.

c) Who can submit an application?

Companies with a registered office or branch in the Free State of Bavaria are eligible to apply. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) as defined in Annex I of the GBER will be given preferential consideration. At least 60 per cent of the available ERDF funds should be used in RmbH areas. Projects in RmbH areas will therefore be given preferential consideration. The following also applies:

- Applicants or project participants must demonstrably use an appropriate amount of their own or external funds to finance the project, which are not financed by other public aid or subsidised interest.
- Applicants must have sufficient creditworthiness for the realisation of the project and provide evidence of this if necessary.
- Funding is not available to companies in difficulty (e.g. companies in insolvency proceedings) or companies that have not complied with a recovery order following a previous Commission decision declaring aid to be unlawful and incompatible with the common market.

d) How is funding provided?

1) funding is generally granted as investment aid for SMEs in accordance with Art. 17 GBER. The funding rate is up to 10 per cent of eligible expenditure for medium-sized companies and up to 20 per cent for small companies.

2) for large companies, the additional investment costs for the environmental protection component compared to a reference technology are eligible for funding in accordance with Art. 36 GBER. The funding rate for this type of funding (which can also be applied for by SMEs) is up to 40 per cent of the eligible expenditure. Costs for the conversion of conventional production facilities that use fossil raw materials to the use of renewable raw materials are considered additional investment costs.

The eligible expenditure must amount to at least 250,000 euros.



2.5 Brandenburg (DE)

Brandenburg is a federal state and, together with Berlin, is part of the capital region of Germany. Berlin-Brandenburg has the highest density of research facilities in Germany. Businesses have access to research institutes, universities and specialist colleges, as well as numerous technology and start-up centres, to collaborate and exchange knowledge with.

Economic Development
Agency | **Brandenburg**

The Economic Development Agency Brandenburg (WFBB)

helps investors, established companies and innovative start-ups in the state of Brandenburg to grow their businesses. The WFBB offers a wide range of business and employment promotion services under one roof – everything from assistance with relocation and expansion through innovation, internationalization and networking to the recruitment and training of skilled workers. It also acts as the state's energy agency and supports local authorities and companies in the efficient use of energy. WFBB supports sector-specific economic clusters in the German capital region Berlin-Brandenburg and the sustainable development of industrial and commercial sites.

The Food Industry Cluster and Cluster Plastics and Chemistry

They provide the platform for all bioeconomy players in the German capital region. It links the entire value chain with industry-related economic sectors and the scientific potential of the region. Consequently, it ensures sustainable growth through innovation and value creation. All companies, scientific institutions, associations and networks are welcome to be active partners in the Food Industry Cluster and Cluster Plastics and Chemistry.

The managements of the Food Industry Cluster and Cluster Plastics and Chemistry see their combined role as source of inspiration, initiator and moderator in the field of Bioeconomy. Most crucial is to encourage and sustainably establish the cooperation of all active Cluster members. This is achieved through promoting transparency, initiating contacts and launching both small and large-scale projects among companies or between scientific institutes and companies; nationally and internationally.



ProFIT Brandenburg 2023

As part of the programme, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy of the State of Brandenburg (MWAE) supports research and development projects in the State of Brandenburg via the ILB.

Companies and research institutions in the state of Brandenburg are eligible for funding. The programme supports the following topics Development of new products, processes and technologies as well as market introduction and feasibility studies via loans and grants. The funding body is the state of Brandenburg, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy of the State of Brandenburg (MWAE). The funds come from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), State of Brandenburg.

Aim of the programme

The aim of the funding programme is to maintain and increase the innovation intensity of Brandenburg's economy, taking into account the clusters defined in the regional innovation strategy of the state of Brandenburg and their master plans. In conjunction with this, the programme aims to increase the number of sustainable, new or improved products and processes. In particular, cooperation between science and industry and technology transfer are sought in order to strengthen and accelerate the economic utilisation of research and development results in Brandenburg. This explicitly includes R&D activities in connection with business start-ups and relocations as well as international co-operation.

a) Who is supported?

The ProFIT funding programme supports you if you belong to one of the following groups:

Companies:

- SMEs with their registered office, but at least one permanent establishment, branch or subsidiary in the state of Brandenburg
- Non-SMEs with their registered office, but at least one permanent establishment, branch or subsidiary in the state of Brandenburg
- Research organisations
- Research organisations with their registered office, but at least one permanent establishment, branch or subsidiary in the state of Brandenburg and only in association with at least one company (SME) from Berlin/Brandenburg

b) What is supported?

The ProFIT funding programme supports you with the following projects:

- Research and development projects (R&D projects) in the phases of industrial research and experimental development
- Market launch projects
- Feasibility studies
- Process and organisational innovations

Large companies are only funded in association with at least one SME from Berlin/Brandenburg and optionally a research institution. Research institutions are only funded in association with at least one SME from Berlin/Brandenburg. Depending on the innovation phase, funding is granted in the form of non-repayable grants and/or subsidised loans.



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The following maximum funding rates apply in relation to the eligible expenditure:

- Industrial research phase: 80 %
- Experimental development phase: 60
- Feasibility studies: 50 %

2.6 Other regions

Other regions, who were also interested in the IEC24, took part in early webinars or were in contact with the coordination office. However, some regions decided not to take part in the IEC24 because of reasons like not fitting timeframes, budget changes or the lack of a suitable funding programme.

Further regions that are interested in a future Innovation Express Call:

- Carinthia (AT)
- Lower Austria (AT)
- Baden-Württemberg (GE)
- Berlin (GE)
- Lombardy (IT)
- Piedmont (IT)
- Varying regions from Slovenia



3 RELATED ACTIONS TO BE UNDERTAKEN FOR SYNCHRONISATION

IEC24 was set up and rolled out based on the Innovation Express Scheme implemented within the Interreg Alpine Space project ARDIA-Net. Therefore to potential IEC24 partner regions it was communicated from the very beginning on that the call design builds upon the experiences of the Innovation Express Call 2021 (IEC21) and that the **Innovation Express Scheme works** without establishing new funding programmes, without developing new legal frameworks and without any cross-regional transfer of funds.

Synchronizing of existing regional funding programmes under the IEC24 means:

- Regions participate with their own, existing regional funding programmes.
- Participating regions remain in full control of their administrative procedures, financial management of the call as well as the decision-making process.
- Funding and eligibility rules apply according to the regional funding programme of the applicant's regions.
- Applications will be evaluated based on their potential to create benefits for participating applicants, to contribute to the competitiveness of the regional economy and in accordance with the criteria from the respective regional/national funding programmes.

Actions to be undertaken for synchronization of the regional/national funding programmes are on the one hand, joint actions and on the other hand, individual actions to be done by each partner region for each funding programme.

Joint activities are ideally facilitated by the coordination office:

- Defining a common call topic according to the focus topics of the regions
- Agree on start and end of the call
- Establishment of a joint application summary form which has to be submitted to the coordination office

The individual activities depend on the partner regions' legal framework and funding programmes that are applied for the synchronised funding scheme. In addition to the letter of intent which indicates the funding programme a region is willing to contribute with to the synchronised funding scheme, these individual activities mostly comprise:

- An addendum to the legal framework of the funding programme e.g. announcing that they call for cross-regional cooperation projects within the **Innovation Express Call 2024**
- An addendum to the programme document that foreign partners (e.g. from Innovation Express Call partner regions) are considered as project partners but will not be funded



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- In case of Upper Austria, the following sentence was added to the programme document in order to open this funding programme for cross-regional synchronized funding schemes: “Under certain circumstances, companies from other countries or other federal states may be considered as project partners, provided that the other criteria of this programme document are also met. However, they will not receive funding from the province of Upper Austria.”
- Others publish a press release for “Innovation Express Call 2024” informing that the call is about circular bioeconomy value chains as part of the “name of the funding programme” directive.

4 CALL DOCUMENT

The document was published at the IEC24 website (<https://www.iec24.info/about-the-call.html>)

INNOVATION EXPRESS CALL 2024 for Circular Bioeconomy Value Chains SYNCHRONIZED CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Circular bioeconomy value chains development becomes more prevailing but is more challenging to support due to their cross-regional nature. Therefore, INNOBIOVC partners have prepared the **INNOVATION EXPRESS CALL 2024 (IEC24)** - a synchronized call that facilitates the development of transregional circular bioeconomy value chains.

I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INNOVATION EXPRESS CALL 2024?

The Innovation Express Call 2024 represents a joint approach for supporting participants, especially **SMEs**, at international matchmaking and joint RDI projects in the fields of transregional circular bioeconomy value chains, key resources and sectors in **agriculture, food and beverages, chemistry, polymers and energy**. The funding instrument aims at facilitating cross-sector collaboration, the development of innovative solutions in two given thematic fields for projects by developing transregional linkages among SMEs, research institutions and other business organizations. Innovation Express Call 2024 is a joint call for proposals implemented within the frame of the INNOBIOVC project by synchronizing existing regional funding schemes in the Alpine Space and beyond.

Synchronizing of existing regional funding programmes under the IEC24 means:

- Regions participate with their own, existing regional funding programmes.
- Participating regions remain in full control of their administrative procedures, financial management of the call as well as the decision-making process.
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In order to facilitate the transregional joint projects, a free 30-minutes meeting with the Value Chain Generator (VCG.AI) team can be booked to explore project possibilities in the circular economy. (Virtual) project development meetings and matchmakings will be organized as workshops with a targeted approach to find suitable cooperation partners. Watch out for current dates at [INNOBIOVC](#) website and the [EVENT](#) section at IEC24.info or ask the IEC24 Coordination Office for current dates!

II. SCOPE AND THEMATIC FIELDS OF THE CALL

The funding call aims to support innovative collaborative projects within the domain of circular bioeconomy, fostering sustainable practices that contribute to environmental conservation, economic growth, and social well-being. The Innovation Express Call 2024 supports the following thematic fields:

1) Application and development of technology for implementing and upscaling bio-based solutions

Supporting projects that leverage advanced technologies. Emphasis on upscaling side and waste streams, turning them into valuable resources and contributing to a more sustainable and circular economy. Proposals could include the up-scaling of waste-to-resource technologies, for example fermentation technologies, biorefineries and bio-polymerisation. Proposals should focus on advancing innovations, technologies, and strategies that contribute to the following thematic areas:

a) Circular Production

- Optimising production processes and increasing resource efficiency through establishing cross-sector value chains
- Developing and implementing waste-to-resource technologies (e.g. biomass conversion technologies) for side and waste stream valorisation and up-scaling

b) Bio-Based Materials and Products

- Development of bio-based materials as alternatives to conventional plastics and chemicals

2) New Solutions for Climate Protection and Decarbonisation of Supply Chains

In this thematic field, the funding programme aims to stimulate new solutions for increased sustainability and decarbonisation of supply chains. These models are designed to enhance collaboration and to be implemented along different stages of the supply value chains. The emphasis is on creating synergies among diverse stakeholders, such as manufacturers, distributors and primary producers along different industry sectors. Key areas of interest include developing new or optimizing existing supply chains.

a) Sustainable Supply Chains

- Optimising and adapting cross-regional logistics and transportation processes in supply chains
- Development of cross-sectoral circular supply chain models through innovative logistics solutions, digital platforms or collaborative networks or enhancing resilience and risk mitigation within the value chains

b) Decarbonized Supply Chains

- Decarbonisation of cross-sectoral supply chains through application of circularity principles, e.g. integration of renewable energy sources into supply chain operations, closed-loop supply systems (e.g. waste management)



III. TYPE OF PROJECTS – ACTIVITIES TO BE SUPPORTED WITHIN THE FRAME OF INNOVATION EXPRESS CALL 2024

Projects should align with the principles of circularity, emphasizing the efficient use of resources, waste reduction, and the creation of value-added products. Further, the call emphasizes creation of innovative collaborations among stakeholders from different sectors, such as food and beverages, agriculture, energy, chemistry, and polymers to jointly push cross sectoral and transregional circular bioeconomy in Europe. The call encourages applications aiming at advanced Technology Readiness Levels (TRL).

Innovation Express Call 2024 funding partners ([funding programmes](#)) support proposals submitted by a pre-defined group of stakeholders (SME, research organizations or centres, large companies, technology providers, universities etc.) located in their geographical area and addressing an exchange activity across borders. A broad variety of innovation activities (according to the regional funding programmes) are supported, as well as many different stages of collaboration. **The proposed activities must include the participation of partners from at least 2 different partner regions.**

IV. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for funding, the applicants must be located within the below listed participating regions – the funding and eligibility rules apply according to the regional funding programme of the applicant's regions. Participating regions and funding partners are:

AT: Salzburg

Funding partner: Regional Government Office of Land Salzburg, Department Economy, Tourism and Municipalities

AT: Upper Austria

Funding partner: Regional Government Office of Upper Austria, Directorate for Regional Planning, Economic and Rural Development Department of Economics and Research

CH: Canton Fribourg

Funding partner: School of Engineering and Architecture of Fribourg and Confederation and Canton of Fribourg

DE: Bavaria

Funding partner: Bavarian State Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy

DE: Brandenburg

Funding partner: Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy State of Brandenburg (MWAE)

Type of eligible applicants:

- Innovation Express Call 2024 targets SMEs, research organizations, technology providers, large companies, universities, research centres, etc.
- Eligible applicants are located within a geographical area where an Innovation Express Call 2024 funding partner is present (see funding partners above).
- Proposals must be submitted by the legal representative of the applicant in accordance with the rules of the respective funding partners.



Further eligibility criteria:

- The applicant is a legal entity. Such can be companies in the commercial sector, that have their registered office, a branch or an operating facility in the funding partner’s geographical area as well as non-profit non-university research institutions as well as universities and higher education institutions based in the funding partner’s geographical area.
- The partner(s) of the applicant and he himself have to be located with a registered office, a branch or an operating facility in a geographical area where an Innovation Express Call 2024 funding partner is present.
- Proposed activities must include the participation of partners from at least 2 different partner regions.
- Due to the funding programmes of the participating regions, it is strongly recommended to include at least one SME in the proposal.
- Other eligibility criteria may be defined according to the applicant’s regional funding programme – check related funding conditions.

V. APPLICATION PROCESS

The call is open from March – 31 July 2024. - **Extension of the call until August 31, 2024!**

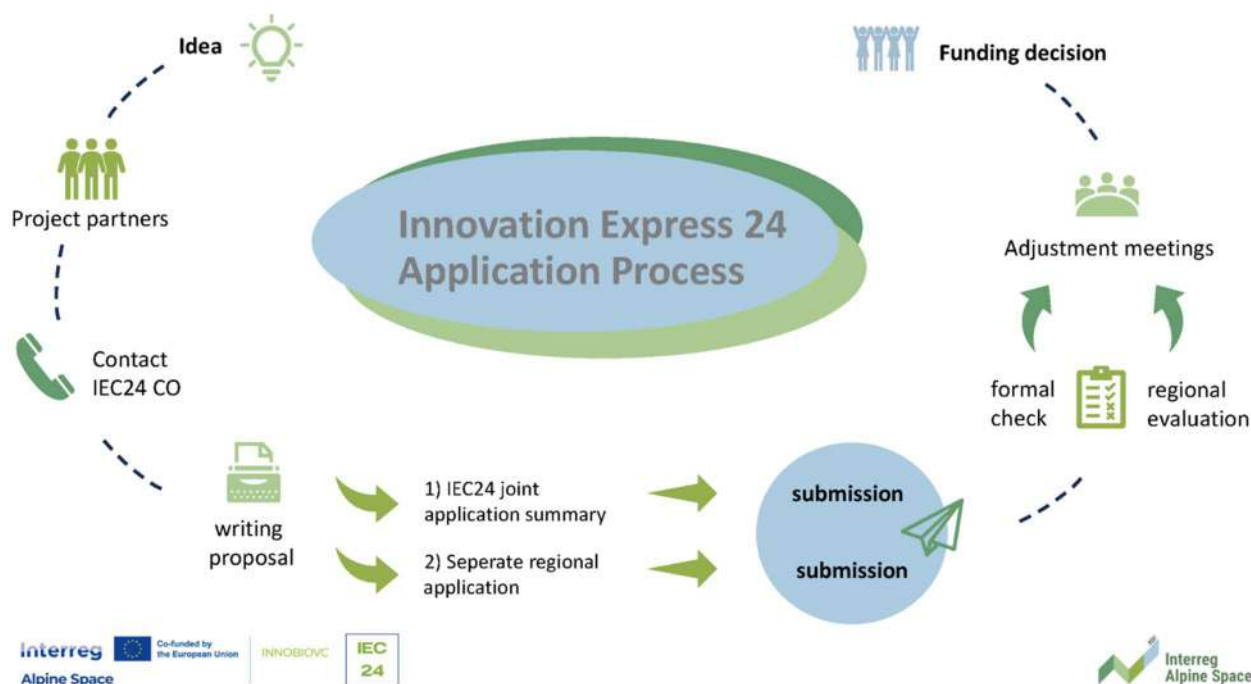


Figure 2: Depiction of the IEC24 Application process



Requirements that need to be fulfilled to apply for IEC24:

- Proposals must be in line with the supported innovation activities and other guidelines outlined by the responsible funding agency in the applicant's geographical area (to be found on the funding agency's own website - [partners table](#)). It is required that applicants contact their local Innovation Express Call 2024 contact person ([funding programmes](#)) to inform themselves about funding conditions.
- Each applicant must send his/her application separately according to requirements outlined according to the funding programme applicable in the geographical area of the applicant.
- Each consortium must complete the IEC24 joint application summary form in English ([downloads](#))
- Participating regions remain in full control of their administrative procedures, financial management of the call as well as the decision-making process.
- Applications will be evaluated based on their potential to create benefits for participating applicants, to contribute to the competitiveness of the regional economy and in accordance with the criteria from the respective regional/national funding programmes.
- All general and usual funding rules of the participating national/regional funding programmes apply. Funding decisions will be made by the regional/national funding agencies involved.

In addition to the requirements of the funding programme of the applicant's geography, all proposals are expected to provide:

- Clarity and relevance of the content of the transregional cooperation activities (see IEC24 joint application summary form ([downloads](#))).
- Added value and benefits for the partners and regions involved.
- Identified clear outputs/deliverables or expected results.
- All submitted proposals will be registered in a common database and distributed to the relevant funding agency.

VI. PROCESSING OF APPLICATION RELATED DATA

All application related data processed within the scope of the statutory obligations will only be passed on if the transfer is legally permissible or if the applicants have consented to the transfer.

Such recipients may be:

- other parties involved in the Innovation Express Call 2024,
- public authorities, e.g. the State Audit Office and its audit offices, the European Commission, etc.
- if applicable, order processors used by us, Art. 28 DSGVO, in particular in the areas of IT and telecommunications services,
- printing services as well as archiving and waste disposal,
- external service providers, e.g. auditors.



IEC24 Coordination Office

- INNOBIOVC organizes several (virtual) events to introduce the call, to facilitate matchmaking of potential applicants and facilitate project development.
- INNOBIOVC provides the IEC24 coordination office. It is operated in cooperation of Business Upper Austria (PP) and WFG Heilbronn (PL).
- The coordination office promotes the IEC24, gives information to interested applicants, manages the IEC24 website, arrange adjustment meetings with programme owners, collects the joint application summary form.
- Contact person: Iris Reingruber/Business Upper Austria is available for questions and as main link to experts. iris.reingruber@biz-up.at

Further information:

- IEC24_factsheet applicants_EN.pdf, IEC24_Infoblatt Bewerber_DE.pdf
- [INNOBIOVC project partners](#)
- Follow us on [LinkedIn](#)

