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**Innosuisse – Swiss Innovation Agency**

# **Innovation Booster call for the 2024- 2027 funding period**

## **Guide for applicants**





This document details the objectives and conditions of the Innovation Booster call for the funding period 2024-2027, including a discussion of the call's target audience, the funding contribution and period and the application process.

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# 1 Call for applications

Innosuisse calls on interested parties to apply for the implementation of a four-year Innovation Booster initiative. Innosuisse will finance around eight thematically different Innovation Boosters (IBs) during the 2024-2027 funding period.

## 2 Innovation Boosters

The IB instrument aims to support Swiss thematic communities in moving towards a culture of open innovation to develop ideas for radical solutions. In this way, the funding instrument strives to create science-based and competitive advantages for innovative Swiss organisations and SMEs.

### *What are IBs?*

IBs are temporary initiatives managed by a leading house and supported by an alliance of key actors. Together, they promote open innovation and knowledge transfer by bringing together participants from research, economy, politics and society along the entire value chain of their innovation themes. IBs manage two stages: In the challenge stage, they involve stakeholders to identify challenges and explore problems through user-centric methods. On this basis, they help their participants discover opportunities for radical innovation and develop ideas for radical solutions. In the idea stage, IBs provide innovation teams with direct financial and need-based methodological support. Innovation teams consisting of at least one research and one implementation partner use this support to perform some first tests on the viability, desirability and feasibility of their idea for a radical solution.

### *What is an innovation theme?*

Applicants must propose an innovation theme for their IB, which presents an opportunity to identify several challenges and find promising opportunities for radical innovation. Innovation themes must present a high potential to generate added value for the Swiss economy and/or society and must be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders across Switzerland and across different sectors. They can focus on technology-based, management-based or social innovation. They must present a promising basis for the development of novel products, processes, or services.

### *How does an IB choose its innovation theme?*

The leading house and the alliance determine the innovation theme together. Ideally, they include a wide range of stakeholders to ensure it is of high significance to the Swiss economy and society and that it is of interest to research as well as implementation partners. While an innovation theme should appeal to a large number of relevant sectors, industries and communities, it should nevertheless maintain enough focus to be able to initiate targeted and effective innovation co-operation.



### **3 Who is the target audience of this call for applications?**

This call for applications is aimed at alliances of key actors that have recognised the opportunities offered by a particular innovation theme and are prepared to jointly stimulate and promote radical innovation. Crucially, successful applicants must show that they have the potential to boost innovation activities in their chosen themes, meaning they have access to relevant stakeholder networks and communities and collectively possess or have access to the required skills and knowledge. Their success as IBs therefore to a large extent depends on their ability to organize and manage innovation activities at an early stage, to foster ideas which will potentially lead to radically new products, processes, or services in the foreseeable future.

Alliances comprise key actors from research, business, politics and society who together wish to implement an IB initiative. Innosuisse does not prescribe precisely how an alliance should organise itself. However, only one organisation, the leading house, acts as applicant vis-à-vis Innosuisse and on behalf of the alliance. If an application is successful, funding is awarded to the leading house, which then assumes all rights and obligations for the execution of the project. To be eligible, leading houses must have their own legal personality and have a registered office in Switzerland.

The leading house can, for example, be an association in which key actors from research, business, politics and society have joined forces and organised themselves. If an organisation that does not include all the alliance members acts as a leading house, it must create appropriate support structures to involve the other alliance members who are not part of the leading house. In addition, alliance members must demonstrate their motivation and contribution through appropriate declarations of support.

### **4 Funding contribution and period**

Innosuisse grants IB funding for a maximum of four years. The annual financial support of an IB can be up to a maximum of CHF 500'000 per year. The grants are regulated in detail in a contract between Innosuisse and the leading house.



## 5 Legal basis

The support provided by Innosuisse is based on the possibility of making contributions to network activities around specific innovation themes as described in Art. 47–49 of the Innosuisse Funding Ordinance of 4 July 2022 (SR [420.231](#)) and Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022 that will enter into force on 1 January 2023.

## 6 Further documentation

Before submitting an application, please consult the following documents for further information: The *IB Mission Statement 1.0* outlines the mission of the IB instrument and introduces its guiding principles, the document *IB guidelines 2.0* discusses in detail the rules and conditions that apply to IBs and the document *IB communications and visual presence (11.11.2022)* details the communication guidelines for approved IBs. All documents are available for download on the Innosuisse IB webpage.

## 7 Application process

The call for tender will take the form of a competition. This will ensure competition and transparency in the allocation of funds. The evaluation of applications will follow the rules detailed in the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022 that will enter into force on 1 January 2023.

The application process has three stages.

- 1) *Formal Check*: Innosuisse checks whether applications fulfil all necessary formal criteria.

*Possible outcomes:*

- decision of “non-consideration”, for applications that are not formally accepted;
- application passes to the next evaluation step.

- 2) *Pre-selection*: Innosuisse evaluates the formally eligible applications and rates how well they meet each of the selection criteria with a score. A ranking based on these scores will determine which applications are rejected and which will be invited to present their proposal in detail in a subsequent oral hearing.

*Possible outcomes:*

- negative decision because the overall application score is too low in comparison to the other applications, or too low in absolute value (i.e. the funding criteria are not sufficiently fulfilled);
- invitation to the oral hearings



- 3) *Oral hearings*: The selected candidates will present their proposal to Innosuisse in an oral hearing. Innosuisse will approve those applications which best fulfil the funding criteria and can be funded within the available budget. The best applications will be approved according to the final ranking list and based on the overall score received.

Innosuisse reserves the right to attach additional conditions to the approval, which may include requests for additional information or preliminary work for the implementation of the IB.

Possible outcomes:

- negative decision because the total application score is too low in comparison to the other applications;
- decision to fund the application for the period 2022-2027.

The applicants (leading house) of the selected applications and Innosuisse sign a contract covering the four-year funding period.

Each stage of the application process is self-contained and ends with a legally binding decision in case of a rejection. The respective decision will be communicated to the applicants in writing.

## 7.1 Submission of an application

By submitting an application according to the instructions listed on the Innosuisse website<sup>1</sup>, the leading house accepts the framework conditions and the award procedure. This means that no legal claim for funding arises from the submission of an application and that Innosuisse has the decision-making authority to select the IBs to be funded in view of national overall interests (e.g. thematic coverage) and the overall Innosuisse budget.

In the interest of a fair process, the leading house must ensure that it provides Innosuisse with all information relevant for the decision-making process. The leading house is obliged to use the form provided for the application for funding. The structure and content of this form must not be changed. The leading house must comply with the limit on the maximum number of characters. Applications can be submitted in Italian, French, German, and English.

Questions regarding the call for applications can be submitted to Innosuisse in writing. Answers to questions submitted during the timeframe specified in the schedule below will be published.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.innosuisse.ch/inno/en/home/project-set-up-assistance-and-networking/innovation-booster/launch.html>  
Status 10.11.2022



## 7.2 Schedule

The call for tender for the 2024-2027 period will be made according to the following schedule:

When?	What?	Who?
02 January 2023	Submission window opens	Applicants
Until 05 March 2023	Option for submitting questions in writing to Innosuisse ( <a href="mailto:ktt.support@innosuisse.ch">ktt.support@innosuisse.ch</a> )	Applicants
27 March 2023	Publication of responses on <a href="http://www.innosuisse.ch">www.innosuisse.ch</a>	Innosuisse
17 April 2023, 1 pm	Submission deadline for applications	Applicants
	Formal check Evaluation Pre-selection	Innosuisse
End of June 2023	Dispatch of negative decision letter in case of unsuccessful application or invitation to oral hearings	Innosuisse
26 June -7 July 2023	Oral hearings, 30' each per IB: 10' presentation 20' questions	Innosuisse, Applicants
End of July, beginning of August 2023	Dispatch of negative decision letter in case of unsuccessful application or information letter communicating a positive funding decision	Innosuisse
	Preparation of contractual documents	Innosuisse
31 December 2023	Signing of contract for selected IBs	Innosuisse, Applicants

**Table 2:** Schedule IB call for tender funding period 2024-2027