



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Swiss Confederation

Innosuisse – Swiss Innovation Agency

Eurostars - A Cross-Border Programme for innovative SMEs

The **mission** of Eureka's Eurostars-3 programme is to support **innovative SMEs** to develop products, processes and services and bring them to the market through funding market-led, cross-border, R&D&I collaborative projects and connecting to accompanying measures enabling:

- Access to new knowledge, and high quality, mutually beneficial collaborations;
- Faster time to market;
- Access to new markets or value chains, leading to improved market share and sales for Eurostars SMEs;
- Business growth and scale-up, leading to increased employment and turnover.

Eurostars is part of the European partnership on Innovative SMEs¹ and will mainly focus on innovative SMEs with the ambition to actively pursuing collaboration activities that result in business innovation for the benefit of the SMEs.

According to the EU definition², any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form, is considered a SME, if it employs less than 250 full-time-equivalent persons and has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million. The Oslo Manual³ definition for innovation will be applied: a business innovation is a new or improved product or business process (or combination thereof) that differs significantly from the firm's previous products or business processes and that has been introduced on the market or brought into use by the firm.

The programme follows a market-driven approach and has the ambition to introduce R&D results to the market or clinical trials latest two years after project completion.

¹ Details on European partnerships are available on the EC [Website](#).

² Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises notified under document number C(2003) 1422 Official Journal L 124 , 20/05/2003 P. 0036 – 0041

³ OECD/Eurostat (2019), Oslo Manual 2018: Guidelines for Collecting, Reporting and Using Data on Innovation, 4th Edition, The Measurement of Scientific, Technological and Innovation Activities, OECD Publishing, Paris/Eurostat, Luxembourg

1 Eurostars Eligibility Criteria:

The formal eligibility criteria are:

1. The project is led by an innovative SME from a Eurostars¹ country.
2. The project consortium is composed by at least two entities that are independent of one another.
3. The project consortium is composed by entities from at least two Eurostars countries with at least one organisation coming from an EU or Horizon Europe Associated Country².
4. The budget of the SMEs from a Eurostars country, excluding subcontracting, is 50% or more of the total project cost.
5. No single participant or country is responsible for more than 70% of the project budget.
6. The project duration is 36 months or less.
7. The project has an exclusively civilian purpose.

¹ **Eurostars countries:** Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, **Greece***, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, **Israel***, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, **Slovenia***, South Africa, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye, and the United Kingdom

*The bold marked countries will not foresee public funding for organizations from their countries applying to the sixth cut-off under Eurostars-3 (Deadline 14 March 2024). Greek, Israeli and Slovenian organizations are welcome to apply but will have to fully self-finance their part of the project.

² **Eurostars countries which are not an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country:** Canada, Republic of Korea, Singapore, South Africa, Switzerland

2 Application and evaluation procedure:

A single application must be submitted per project via the Eurostars [website](#), including all contributions from partners of the different countries before the published cut-off date (submission deadline). The application is evaluated centrally by Eureka experts with the adequate area of expertise and ranked by the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP).

The evaluation criteria include: Quality of the consortium and methodology, added value through cooperation, excellence in innovation, time-to-market and return on investment, contribution to sustainable development.

Generally, 3 months after the cut-off date the result of the evaluation (ranking list and expert evaluations) is communicated to the applicants by the Eureka Secretariat.

The projects are funded by the national funding bodies following the order of the ranking list. Projects are funded, if all involved countries have the necessary financial resources to cover the cost of the parties originating from their country. Generally, 4 months after the cut-off date the funding decision is communicated to the applicants by the Eureka Secretariat.

The negotiations for the funding contracts with the national funding bodies and for final Consortium Agreement between project partners should lead to an overall **time to contract of less than 7 months**.

3 Funding Conditions for Swiss Eurostars participants

Innosuisse represents Switzerland in EUREKA's Eurostars programme and reimburses eligible costs of Swiss project partners as follows:

| | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Funding rate for SME, Universities and R&D institutions : | max. 50 % of eligible costs |
| Funding rate for Large Companies : | max. 25 % of eligible costs |

The Swiss partners must submit the following financial annexes with their application:

| What type of organisation are you? | Financial annexes you may be required to submit from your NFB | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------|---------------|
| | Financial report Year -2 | Financial report Year -1 | Business plan |
| SME (start-up, no accounts) | - | - | x |
| SME (started last year, one closed account, not submitted or submitted) | - | x | x |
| SME (closed accounts for two or more years) | x | x | - |
| Large company | x | x | - |
| Research Centre (private) | x | x | - |
| University (private) | x | x | - |
| University (100% publically financed) | - | - | - |
| Hospital (100% publically financed) | - | - | - |
| Research Centre (100% publically financed) | - | - | - |

SME requesting more than CHF 1 million public funding have to upload a due diligence form along with the financial annexes to the online application. The form can be downloaded from the Innosuisse [Website](#). If Innosuisse already checked the due diligence in the context of another initiative, the result will be considered in an appropriate way.

SME requesting less than CHF 1 million funding have to upload the financial annexes only.

4 Eligible costs

Only costs necessary for the execution of the project are eligible. They are defined in the Ordinance of 20 January, 2021 on the measures for the participation of Switzerland in the programmes of the European Union in the field of research and innovation (SR 420.126, in German) and in the present document. Only costs documented by employment contracts of Swiss project partners or invoices to Swiss project partners will be reimbursed.

4.1 Salaries

- For universities pursuant to Article 4 letter c RIPA⁴, the institution's usual salary rates apply. Only effective wage costs are eligible.
- For companies as well as non-commercial research institutions and institutions outside the higher education sector, effective wage costs are eligible up to the following maximum amounts (Article 4 letter c RIPA):

| Employee category | Gross hourly rate | Gross annual salary |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|
| Project coordinator, deputy project coordinator, experienced researcher | max. CHF 119/h | max. CHF 220'500 |
| Research assistant, scientific collaborator | max. CHF 68/h | max. CHF 126'000 |
| Technician, Programmer | max. CHF 61/h | max. CHF 113'400 |
| Postgraduate, Assistant | max. CHF 46/h | max. CHF 85'100 |

The gross hourly rates correspond to an annual full-time equivalent of 1853 hours per year. On top of the gross salary rates, the effective social costs are eligible.

The salary costs must be verifiable (e.g. by means of time sheets or wage payments) and auditable. Only salaries of personnel with a Swiss employment contract of a partner registered in Switzerland are eligible. Employees working at a foreign subsidiary count as subcontractors.

4.2 Fixed assets

Depreciation of fixed assets necessary for the execution of the project are eligible costs, unless the asset in question is fully depreciated or procured using third-party funds specifically earmarked for this purpose. The depreciation rates for equipment are determined in accordance with the internal accounting rules. If the equipment is not used exclusively for the project, the respective actual share of use in the project may be taken into account. The proportion of use of the equipment must be verifiable (e.g. by means of laboratory records) and auditable. Companies without a specific internal accounting rule, calculate depreciation costs as follows:

$$\text{fixed asset depreciation cost} = \frac{\text{purchase price}}{\text{lifetime}} * \text{time fixed asset is reserved for project}$$

4.3 Consumables

Project expenses like consumables (fully depreciated on the project), which are necessary for the execution of the project are eligible costs.

⁴ Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (RIPA, SR 420.1)

4.4 Travel costs

Travel costs within Switzerland are not eligible for funding.

Internationals travel costs, which are necessary for the execution of the project, are eligible costs. Travel costs for conferences abroad are only eligible for funding, if participation is linked directly to the Eurostars project and the partner makes an active contribution to the conference (presentation, poster, paper, booth). Effective costs for hotels are eligible up to CHF 300.- per night. Expenses for meals abroad are reimbursed at the following flat rates: CHF 14.- for breakfast; CHF 27.- for lunch or dinner. All other expenses must be specified and documented in detail.

4.5 Subcontracting

Subcontracting costs are eligible for funding if they are not amongst project partners. Their necessity for the execution of the project must be duly justified and complement the participants' own contribution to the project in a suitable way.

4.6 Overhead costs

Overhead costs are expenditures, which cannot be conveniently traced to or identified with any particular revenue unit. Overhead costs include for example accounting fees, advertising, insurance, interest, legal fees, rent, repairs, supplies, taxes, telephone bills, utilities, etc. Overhead costs are applied to all eligible cost categories except subcontracting. Overhead costs correspond to the Innosuisse rate of 15 % except for research institutions with a separate agreement with Innosuisse.

4.7 Non-eligible costs

Costs which are not essential for the execution of the Eurostars project plan are not eligible for funding.

5 Payment of the funding contribution

The upfront payment after the signature of the contract will cover approximately 75% and the final payment 25% of the total funding contribution.

6 Contacts

More detailed information is available on the [Eurostars](#) and [Innosuisse](#) website. Further guidelines that will help you to prepare your Eurostars application are available [here](#). If you have specific questions afterwards, please contact the following person:

Mr. Janique Siffert, Programme Manager Eurostars
Email: eureka@innosuisse.ch

7 Support

As a Swiss SME, you can get support for your Eurostars project from an Innosuisse innovation mentor. [Here](#) you can find more information about the mentoring. If you are interested, you can contact the person responsible directly.

As a Swiss research institution you can get support for your Eurostars project from Euresearch. [Here](#) you can find more information about Euresearch. If you are interested, you can contact the person responsible directly.