



## **INNOVATION EXPRESS 2021 - SYNCHRONIZED CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

### **I. INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS INNOVATION EXPRESS 2021?**

Innovation Express is designed as a quick response to the economic recovery after Covid-19 offering SMEs the possibility to widen their markets and develop new products and services with partners in Europe.

This first call, Innovation Express 2021 represents a common approach for supporting SMEs at international matchmaking and joint R&D projects in the fields of "Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Applications" and "Digital solutions in sustainable industry".

The funding instrument aims at facilitating internationalization, development of innovative solutions in two given scopes for projects by developing transnational and transregional linkages among SMEs, research institutions and other business organizations.

Innovation Express 2021 is a joint call for proposals implemented within the framework of the four macro-regions of the European Union initiated by the EUSBSR Policy Area "Education, Science and Social affairs" and the EUSDR Priority Area "SME competitiveness".

The call is funded by existing national/regional funding programmes and managed by participating funding agencies to initiate, develop or enhance transnational exchange activities among applicants and their project proposals to be funded.

Applications will be evaluated based on their potential to create benefits for participating applicants and in accordance with the criteria from the respective regional/national funding programmes.

In order to facilitate the international joint projects, the virtual matchmaking event will be organized on 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021. The participants from eligible regions will be able to conduct 1:1 virtual meetings through b2match platform. The matchmaking will be available until 16<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

The registrations to the event and bookings of the meetings will be open from 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and available through the event's website: <https://innovation-express-2021.b2match.io/>.

### **II. SCOPE AND THEMATIC FIELDS OF THE CALL**

Innovation Express 2021 funding partners (see "funding partners for Innovation Express 2021" below) will support proposals submitted by a pre-defined group of stakeholders (SMEs, research organizations, cluster, or other business organizations) located in their geographical area and addressing an exchange activity across borders.

A broad variety of innovation activities (see below) are supported, as well as many different stages of international cooperation (from initial contact and networking to the final set up of a long-term innovation project). Within the framework of the Innovation Express 2021 call, there is a particular focus on supporting linkages among applicants with



complementary fields of expertise (cross-sectoral) in order to tackle shared challenges or pursue international market opportunities through collaborative efforts.

The Innovation Express 2021 supports the following thematic fields:

### **Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare Applications**

Big data and digitalized information are having an impact on most aspects of modern life, including healthcare. All this data can be used for very detailed personal profiling, which may be of great value for behavioural understanding and targeting but also has potential for predicting healthcare trends. Artificial intelligence (AI) has been proven of being able to provide substantial improvements in all areas of healthcare from diagnostics to treatment. There is already a large amount of evidence that AI algorithms are performing on par or better than humans in various tasks, for instance, in analysing medical images or correlating symptoms from electronic medical records with the characterization and prognosis of the disease.

Projects funded within this scope shall provide dedicated results how AI-based solutions can be embedded in healthcare applications.

### **Digital solutions in a sustainable industry**

Digital solutions, nowadays, can be applied for smart metering, data science, predictive analytics, forecasting, and other advanced analytics that help increase efficiency and effectiveness of industrial operations. Analytics and forecasting solutions help to identify both opportunities, such as increased process flexibility, efficiency and security, as well as risks, such as potential system faults or unexpected changes in energy demand. On the other hand, those digital solutions also add great value in terms of optimizing processes, transport and logistics systems and improving general efficiency performance. Lower costs, less time necessary to complete a process, limiting manual work – those are a few examples of adopting IoT, automation, and self-improving mechanisms, such as machine or deep learning algorithms capable of transforming huge data amounts into optimized processes and performance.

Projects funded within this scope shall provide dedicated results how digital solutions can be embedded in industrial processes to make them more sustainable.

### **III. ACTIVITIES TO BE SUPPORTED WITHIN THE FRAME OF INNOVATION EXPRESS 2021**

FUNDING PARTNERS		PARTICIPATING NATIONAL / REGIONAL FUNDING PROGRAMME	SUPPORTED INNOVATION ACTIVITIES	CONTACTS
Baden-Württemberg	Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism	Kapi.Tra.BW	A, B, C, D, E, F	Dr. Judit Schrick-Szenczi Phone: +49 (0) 711-123 2402 E-mail: judit.schrickszenczi@wm.bwl.de

				<p>Svenja Stalf Phone: +49 (0) 711-123 2360 E-Mail: <a href="mailto:svenja.stalf@wm.bwl.de">svenja.stalf@wm.bwl.de</a></p>
Brandenburg	<p>Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy</p> <p>in cooperation with:</p> <p>WFBB Land Brandenburg GmbH</p> <p>and the</p> <p>ILB Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg</p>	ProFIT Brandenburg	A, F	<p>For questions about the funding:</p> <p>ILB Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg Referat Innovationen Babelsberger Straße 21 DE-14473 Potsdam Mr. Nabegh El Shorafa Phone: +49 (0)331 660 - 1634 E-mail: <a href="mailto:nabegh.el_shorafa@ilb.de">nabegh.el_shorafa@ilb.de</a></p> <p>Questions concerning technical evaluation of R&amp;D project proposals:</p> <p>WFBB Wirtschaftsförderung Land Brandenburg GmbH Babelsberger Straße 21 DE-14473 Potsdam Dr. Jens Unruh Phone: +49 (0)331 730 61 - 331 E-mail: <a href="mailto:jens.unruh@wfbb.de">jens.unruh@wfbb.de</a></p>
Canton Fribourg	Fribourg Development Agency (FDA)	Collaborative Projects within the Implementation Programme of the New Regional Policy (NRP) 2020-23	A, B, C, F	<p>Michael Keller and Pascal Bovet INNOSQUARE – Fribourg E-Mail: <a href="mailto:michael.keller@hefr.ch">michael.keller@hefr.ch</a> Phone: +41 26 429 67 39</p>
Salzburg	Regional Government Office of Land Salzburg, Department Economy, Tourism and Municipalities	Unternehmenskooperationen und Netzwerke WISS2025	A, C, D, E, F	<p>Innovations- und Technologietransfer Salzburg GmbH</p> <p>E-mail : <a href="mailto:simone.weiss@itg-salzburg.at">simone.weiss@itg-salzburg.at</a></p> <p>E-mail : <a href="mailto:madeleine.koch@itg-salzburg.at">madeleine.koch@itg-salzburg.at</a></p>



- A. Research, development and innovation activities that lead to new products, processes or services
- B. Market research activities
- C. Technology/knowledge transfer
- D. Recruitment/training/education
- E. Workshops and study trips, networking activities
- F. Feasibility studies and piloting prior to RDI projects

#### **IV. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To be eligible for funding, the applicants must be located within the below listed participating regions. Funding partners and participating funding programmes for Innovation Express:

AT: Salzburg (Funding partner: Regional Government Office of Land Salzburg, Department Economy, Tourism and Municipalities; Funding programme: Unternehmenskooperationen und Netzwerke, WISS2025)

DE: Brandenburg (Funding partner: Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Energy in cooperation with: WFBB Land Brandenburg GmbH and the ILB Investitionsbank des Landes Brandenburg; Funding programme: ProFIT Brandenburg)

DE: Baden-Württemberg (Funding partner: Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labour and Tourism, Funding programme: Kapi.Tra.BW)

CH: Canton Fribourg (Funding partner: Fribourg Development Agency (FDA); Funding programme: Collaborative Projects within the Implementation Programme of the New Regional Policy (NRP) 2020-23)

#### Type of eligible applicants

Innovation Express 2021 targets SMEs, research organizations, technology providers, large companies, universities, research centres, etc.

Eligible applicants are located within a geographical area where an Innovation Express 2021 funding partner is present (see funding partners in Section III.).

Proposals must be submitted by the legal representative of the applicant or by the lead of the consortium in accordance with the rules by 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 2021 funding partner is present.
- Proposed activities must include the participation of at least 2 partners from 2 different partner regions. (The participation of even more partners is strongly recommended.)





- Due to the funding scheme 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 scheme (check related funding conditions).

## V. APPLICATION PROCESS

The call will be open from **17 May – 16 July 2021.**

- 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 - see table under Section III.). It is required that applicants contact their local Innovation Express 2021 contact person (see above) in order to inform themselves about funding conditions.
- Each applicant must send his/her application separately according to requirements outlined according to the funding scheme applicable in the geographical area of the applicant.
- Each consortium must complete the Innovation Express 2021 summary application form in English (available [here](#)) and send it together with all individual participating members' application forms of the consortium partners in electronic version to [application@innovationexpress2021.net](mailto:application@innovationexpress2021.net) latest by 16 July 2021.

## VI. FUNDING PROCESS

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

- Clarity and relevance of the content of the transnational cooperation activities (action plan; see Innovation Express 2021 summary application form, to be downloaded here: <https://innovation-express-2021.b2match.io/>).
- Added value and benefits for the partners involved.
- Identification of clear outputs/deliverables or expected results.
- Description of the partnership and motivation for continued/more ambitious activities – including how they will build on previous results.

All submitted proposals will be registered in a common database and distributed to the relevant funding agency.

The funding decision (i.e., the level of funding and the costs covered) will be made dependent on the scope of the proposal (kind of activities, partners involved, etc.) and on





the guidelines of the participating funding schemes. All usual funding schemes of the participating national/regional funding rules apply.

Funding decisions will be made by regional/national funding agencies.

## **VII. 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 2021 call,
- 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.

