Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

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 SMEs[1] 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.

The Oslo Manual[2] 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] *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 Eurostars[1] 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 Country[2].
4. The budget of the SMEs from the Eurostars countries, 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 exclusive focus on civil applications.

Eurostars countries[1]: 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 eleventh cut-off under Eurostars-3 (Deadline 10 September 2026). Organizations from Belgium (Brussels region does not foresee public funding but Flanders and Wallonia do), Cyprus, Italy (both MIMIT and MUR), Israel and Singapore are welcome to apply but will have to fully self-finance their part of the project.

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

As from 1st January 2025, entities established in Switzerland are considered to be established in a Horizon Europe Associated Country.

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. If one or more organisation(s) in your consortium receives a negative assessment for the legal and financial viability check (please read chapters 3 and 4), your application will be evaluated but rejected before the assessment by IEP.

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

3.1 Eligible Swiss Partners

SME: According to the EU definition[3], 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 employees and has an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

Large companies: According to the EU definition, any entity engaged in an economic activity, irrespective of its legal form, is considered a large company, if it employs more than 250 full-time-equivalent employees and has an annual turnover exceeding EUR 50 million, and/or an annual balance sheet total exceeding EUR 43 million.

Not-for-profit organisations are eligible for project partners if they actively contribute to the project work and provide evidence of an added value from the expected project results. Small and large not-for-profit organisations are distinguished by the threshold of 250 full-time-equivalent employees.

Research institutions: In order to be eligible as a research centre, the applicants must meet the requirements of Article 4 and 5 RIPA.

[3] *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*

Non-eligible Swiss partners

Shell Companies or domicile address: The applicant must have sufficient operational substance in Switzerland to implement the project independently. This requires a registered operating establishment with a transparent organizational structure and own staff employed under Swiss contracts. A mere Shell company or domicile address without dedicated operations does not qualify. If the applicant is part of a corporate group, strict operational control over project activities must reside within the Swiss entity. Furthermore, no subsidies are granted without Swiss added value. The project must be primarily managed and implemented using local resources and the mere transfer of funds abroad is not allowed. For cross-border commuters, an A1 certificate may be requested as supporting documentation.

Companies listed on the SECO sanctions list and partners without a UID number are not eligible for funding.

3.2 Funding of eligible Swiss partners

Innosuisse represents Switzerland in EUREKA's Eurostars programme and funds eligible costs of Swiss project partners with the following funding rates:

SME, small organisations, Universities, R&D institutions:	max. **50 %** of eligible costs
Large Companies, large organisations:	max. **25 %** of eligible costs

There is no maximum public funding amount for the Swiss partners in a Eurostars project, but the Innosuisse funding must reflect the financial capacity of the partner to finance own contributions (see following chapter 4).

Your international proposal will be made in Euro. The exchange rate between Euro and CHF is determined on the day the call for proposals opens (09.07.2026 for cut-off 11) and you can find the exchange rate here.

Generally, a first payment installment of 35% of the funding will be paid on contract signature, the next tranche of 35% after review of the first Project Progress Report since project midterm on the Eureka Project Management Platform and the last one (remaining costs up to 30%) after approval of the final financial report.

4 Financial Capacity

4.1 Assessment

All Swiss partners must **contribute 50–75% of their project costs from own resources**. Innosuisse assesses whether applicants have sufficient financial capacity to implement the project and finance their required own contribution.

The assessment considers the applicant's overall financial position, including liquidity, capitalisation, solvency, going-concern position (cf. Art. 725 OR) and ability to sustain operations throughout the project duration.

The following document will not be considered as sufficient evidence of financial capacity:

- Non-binding declarations of support or letters of intent;
- Non-binding or grant-conditional financing arrangements.

Applicants with multiple simultaneous active or pending Innosuisse-funded projects must demonstrate sufficient operational and financial capacity to implement all projects concurrently. All such projects must be disclosed at the time of submission. It must be possible to clearly distinguish between the projects and their respective tasks. This also applies to project accounting.

A self-assessment tool providing a preliminary, non-binding indication of financial capacity is available on the Eureka website and should be completed before submission. The self-assessment tool is provided solely for indicative purposes and does not create any entitlement, expectation or presumption regarding eligibility, financial capacity or funding approval.

4.2 Documentation Requirements

Research partners, large companies and other implementation partners counting **more than 250 full-time-equivalents** are not obliged to submit financial documents unless specifically requested.

SMEs, start-ups, for-profit and non-profit and end-user organisations counting **less than 250 full-time-equivalents** that are requesting **less than CHF 500’000** in funding must provide:

- Copies of signed financial statements (including annexes) of the last 2 business years or since inception;
- Summary of financial statements in the Innosuisse financial table template;
- Copies of bank account statements as of last year-end and most recent month-end;
- Copies of final auditors' letters (in case of limited or full audits);
- Copy of latest official extract from the debt collection register in case of threatened or ongoing debt collection proceedings.

SMEs, start-ups, for-profit and non-profit and end-user organisations counting **less than 250 full-time-equivalents** that are requesting **CHF 500’000 or more** must additionally provide:

- 5-year forecast (Innosuisse template);
- Copy of latest shareholder register (including disclosure of economic beneficiaries per Art. 697j CO);
- Organisational chart (including all parents and subsidiaries, domestic and foreign);

- Copies of all loan agreements (including shareholder loans) and supporting documentation for any current or planned sources of funding used to demonstrate financial capacity.

The documents must be submitted by IncaMail to eureka@innosuisse.ch, which is a federally recognised, secure and mutually functioning delivery platform. There is no charge for receiving digital registered mail. A certain number of registered items of mail can be send each month free of charge. For more information, please consult the Innosuisse website.

Applications lacking required financial documents may be rated incomplete and excluded from evaluation. Innosuisse may request additional financial information or supporting documentation at any stage of the assessment process.

5 Eligible costs (Budgeting)

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. For a detailed breakdown of which staff and material costs qualify, including examples, please check the "**Eligible Material and Personnel Costs**" document.

5.1 Salaries

- For research partners pursuant to Article 4 letter c RIPA[4], the institution's usual salary rates apply. **Please note that for Eurostars 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 7 par 2 FIPBV):

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 are calculated by dividing the annual net salary by 1'850 hours. On top of the gross salary rates and the effective Swiss employer's contributions[5] 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. Salaries of employees working at a foreign subsidiary are not eligible for funding.

5.2 Fixed assets

Depreciation is subject to the institution's internal guidelines. Depreciation is mandatory for values exceeding CHF 30'000 at the start of the project. Above this value, Innosuisse only covers costs during the project period. For example, if a new machine or system is purchased, it must be depreciated over the duration of the project. In other words, Innosuisse covers the depreciation amount for the duration of the project (loss of value).

5.3 Consumables

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

5.4 Travel costs

Travel costs within Switzerland are not eligible for funding.

Internationals travel costs, which are necessary for the execution of the project (e.g. coordination meetings, tests abroad, etc.), are eligible costs. Effective costs for hotels are eligible up to CHF 200.- per night. Expenses for meals abroad are reimbursed at the following flat rates: CHF 15.- for breakfast; CHF 30.- for lunch or dinner. All other expenses must be specified and documented in detail.

Travel costs for conferences abroad are only eligible for funding, if their necessity for executing the project is explained in detail in the application and only up to the specified amount.

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

[5] Old-Age and Survivors' Insurance (**AHV/AVS**), Disability Insurance (**IV/AI**), Income Compensation Allowance (**EO/APG/IPG**), Unemployment Insurance (**ALV/AC/AD**), Occupational Pension Scheme (**BV/PP**), Accident Insurance (**BU & NBU/AP & ANP/IP & INP**)

5.5 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. Subcontracted organisations deliver a defined service, must be specified in the Eurostars application and for subcontractings above 20'000 CHF please provide a quote.

5.6 Overhead costs

Overhead costs are expenses that cannot be directly linked to a specific project or revenue unit (indirect costs such as electricity, water, rent, etc.). Overhead costs are applied to all eligible cost categories except subcontracting. They are calculated at the Innosuisse rate of 15% except for research institutions (Technology Competence Centers) that have a separate agreement with Innosuisse.

5.7 Non-eligible costs

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

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 and Ms. Marina Dorner, Programme Managers
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 your grant office.