

Research Platform 2025

Towards a caring society

Programme rules

Deadline for submitting the project outline: 28 June 2024 at 12pm

Deadline for submitting the full proposal: 30 October 2024 at 12pm

Submission in electronic format

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Introductory note

This document is for research teams interested in submitting a project in the framework of the *Research Platform (RPF) 2025*. It describes the objectives of the programme and its context and sets out this year's theme. You will also find a description of the eligible entities, the procedure for submitting and assessing an application and the grants you can claim. The aim is to provide an overview of what is expected of project leaders.

Two application forms are available in addition to this document:

- the expression of interest form, to be submitted by the end of June 2024;
- the Full Project (FPP) form, to be submitted before the end of October 2024, upon receiving an invitation to submit from Innoviris.

If you have any questions after reading this document, please contact Véronique Mukendi (vmukendi@innoviris.brussels).

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1. Context and objective of the RPF program

Innoviris is a public interest organisation whose mission is to promote and support innovation through the funding of research and development projects carried out by companies, the non-profit sector and research bodies located in Brussels.

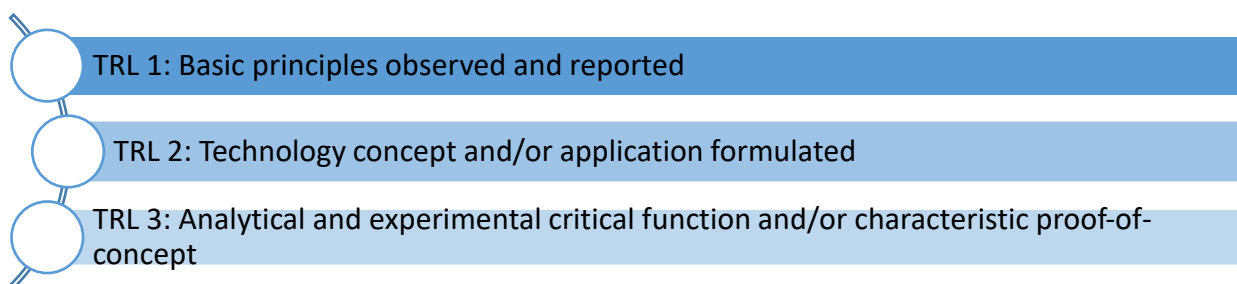
Among the different tools used by Innoviris to boost innovation, the *Research Platform Programme* (RPF) aims to support **collaborative and multidisciplinary research projects** carried out by **research organisations** which conform to the definition of point 16 ff of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation C(2022) 7388 (universities, colleges, De Groote centres, etc.) that have at least one place of business on the territory of the Brussels Capital Region.

The research to be carried out as part of this programme meets the definitions of *oriented basic research* and *applied research* set out in the Frascati Manual 2015¹, namely:

"Oriented basic research is carried out with the expectation that it will produce a broad base of knowledge likely to form the basis of the solution to recognised or expected current or future problems or possibilities."

"Applied research involves considering the available knowledge and its extension in order to solve actual problems. The results of applied research are intended primarily to be valid for possible applications to products, operations, methods or systems."

As an example, in the context of this call for projects, research proposals may take as a reference the spectrum of *Technology Readiness Levels* (TRL)¹ from 1 to 3.



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The programme aims to carry out disruptive research to **anticipate major socio-technical developments and/or needs in areas that are strategic** for the Region. The ultimate aim is to develop the results in the medium term, in particular by transferring knowledge, methodologies and

¹ NASA - "NASA Procedural Requirements 7123.1B: NASA Systems Engineering Processes and Requirements" - <https://www.nasa.gov/directorates/somd/space-communications-navigation-program/technology-readiness-levels/>

² <https://recherche.wallonie.be/en/home/je-dois-savoir/avant-de-recevoir-un-financement/question-de-vocabulaire.html>

technologies to companies, organisations and institutions in Brussels.

The choice of the themes selected for the *Research Platform* calls for projects is based on the Regional Innovation Plan (RIP). This plan defines six strategic innovation areas representing innovation opportunities for greater prosperity, resilience, sustainability and well-being in Brussels. The RPF 2025 call focuses on two strategic innovation areas: "Personalised and integrated health and care" and "Social innovation, public innovation and social inclusion".

To anchor research in the fabric of Brussels, the research projects must be sponsored by a public institution, a non-profit organisation and/or a company based in Brussels.

2. 2025 Theme

2.1. Context

The current social, economic and ecological challenges involve unprecedented changes in the way our societies function. Just like energy, mobility, food, the economy, urban planning, etc., health, a societal challenge for the Region, must also face up to its own changes and consider making its own transitions. These transitions require disruptive changes and the exploration of entirely new pathways while consolidating robust mechanisms such as social security.

This call invites academic consortia to conduct collaborative, disruptive and multidisciplinary research to meet these challenges.

To this end, the thematic field of action of the call has been expanded to cover a range of health-related research fields. These thematic fields are described in the portfolio "Transition in health research for the Brussels Capital Region and its inhabitants: Portfolio of themes".

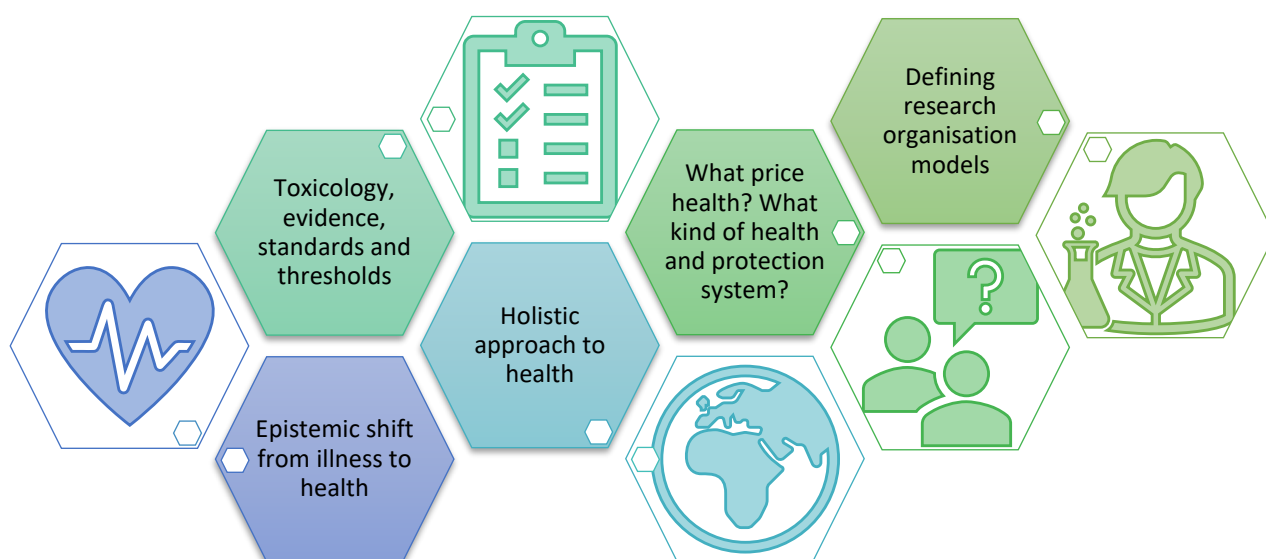
In this document, each field presents a justification of the theme as well as a set of research proposals. Projects must fall within a thematic field. Within this field, project teams can then draft a research proposal based on the proposals that have been made or a new proposal, provided that they can demonstrate their suitability for the thematic field.

2.2. Scope

This call invites academic consortia to conduct collaborative, multidisciplinary research on health, i.e. a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity³. This state is itself the result of many different social, cultural, economic, environmental and educational factors at play at multiple levels (individuals, populations, territories, landscapes, ecosystems, social and public infrastructures, etc.). The deterioration in the health of ecosystems threatens the good health of populations. Our societies are facing a large number of diseases with different aetiologies (cardiovascular diseases, cancers, neurodegenerative diseases, infectious diseases, mental illnesses) which can also be linked to environmental causes.

It is on this premise that the different thematic areas of this health portfolio have been defined. Each one aims to encourage a unique approach to health research, promoting an in-depth exploration of the links between the medical, social and environmental aspects of health.

³ WHO (World Health Organization) definition



The full documentation on the construction and characteristics of the portfolio, as well as a detailed explanation of the five thematic areas, is available on the [Innoviris website](#).

2.3. Expected impact

The selected research projects aim to stimulate and improve health in the Brussels Capital Region. They will put forward innovative areas that will shape new healthcare approaches in Brussels, opening up promising prospects for improving services and outcomes in physical, mental and social well-being. In view of this objective, the participating consortia are required to be part of at least one public institution, non-profit organisation and/or company based in Brussels.

As medium-term development is expected, particular attention must be paid to the impact of projects on the economic, social and environmental landscape of the Brussels Capital Region. As a reminder, this call for proposals aims to promote the transfer of knowledge from research bodies to public institutions, non-profit organisations and/or companies based in Brussels.

In short, projects must:

1. Encourage a shift from a reductionist to a holistic science paradigm, considering health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being for people and their ecosystems.
2. Conduct targeted research aimed at producing knowledge, analysing data, gaining a better understanding of phenomena and/or developing expertise that will be useful to stakeholders, practitioners and/or policy-makers;
3. Make a significant contribution to the state of the art in the field of health, based on one of the five thematic approaches proposed in the portfolio.

3. Programme framework

3.1. Consortium

The research projects must be conducted by a **consortium of research teams from at least 2 independent institutions**. The eligible institutions are **research organisations** which conform to the definition of point 16 ff of the Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation 2022/C 414/01 (universities, colleges, De Groote centres, etc.) that have at least one place of business on the territory of the Brussels Capital Region. Complementarity of the partners and interdisciplinarity of their expertise are key elements to the soundness of the consortiums.

For the expression of interest phase (project outline), the research partners must at least be known and there must be a letter of intent.

To submit a full proposal, the partner research teams must negotiate and validate a consortium agreement that governs the terms and conditions of the collaboration project (in particular the sharing of risks and results, the dissemination of results and the allocation of and access to intellectual property rights).

In the proposal, each research team has to be represented by a promoter, which must be a professor or an established researcher. The promoter must have a permanent position in the research institution. **Please note** that a promoter cannot be involved in more than two projects submitted for this call.

A coordinator must be identified among the partners. They will act as the main contact and will be responsible for the project's internal communication.

3.2. Valorisation

The programme aims to carry out disruptive research to anticipate **major socio-technical developments and/or needs in strategic areas** for the Region. The ultimate aim is to develop the results in the **medium term**, in particular by transferring knowledge, methodologies and technologies to companies, organisations and institutions in Brussels. Particular attention should be paid to the valorisation of the projects and their impact on the Brussels ecosystem, society and the environment.

Here are a few examples of medium- and long-term valorisation:

- transfer of knowledge, methodologies and/or technologies to companies, non-profit organisations or public institutions;
- transfer of knowledge, methodologies and/or technologies through R&D projects, consultancy services, etc.;
- sale/licensing of intellectual property to an organisation;
- spin.

3.3. Mentors

To achieve the valorisation objectives, the project consortium must be associated with at least one **mentor** other than research organisations, each of which has a place of business in the Region and is independent of the consortium.

The independence between the mentor and the partners is intended to be both legal and factual independence. It is therefore necessary to consider not only the legal elements (any statutory or contractual provisions) but also the factual elements. An entity is independent when it is capable of performing its activities alone, given its organisational structure, capital, equipment and workforce. In other words, in addition to the fact that the two entities are not part of the same group and are not controlled by the same shareholder, there must be no sharing of staff or equipment and no interference by one entity on the other in the definition of the strategy/mission.

Particular attention is paid to cases in which a natural person both has an academic role in the consortium and holds a position in the entity presented as a mentor.

Each mentor must show its active interest in the valorisation of the project's results for internal use, for integration into their *core business* activities or any other involvement for the entity. More generally, the mentor can provide a problematic that is of concern for the society in general. In conclusion, the mentor can be involved in any way in the Brussels Region that could be impacted by and thus have an interest in the project's results.

The mentor must be involved all along the project. It can validate and/or give inputs on the valorisation, the exploitation or the dissemination of the results. It is up to the mentor to clearly state its level of involvement. This level is to be chosen between the following five:

- Level 1 – Inspiration/technological watch
The mentor/entity is interested in the project in an active way. A representative attends project follow-up committees or dissemination activities to keep up to date with the results.
- Level 2 - Challenging
The mentor has more regular contacts and interactions with the research consortium. It gives its active feedback on the project.
- Level 3 – Collaboration
The mentor shares its expertise and results linked to the project with the consortium and gives access to its facilities. This requires more time and human resources.
- Level 4 - Pilot case
The mentor offers a case study, in its facilities or activities. It is involved in the pilot case definition and may benefit from it.
- Level 5 - Effective collaboration
Specific human resources at the mentor's facilities are dedicated to the project and the mentor performs some of the project's research tasks. The mentor is then a research partner.

At least one of the mentors must be involved at level 2 (or more). High levels of involvement are a good sign for Innoviris, in terms of the effective valorisation of research results.

Please note that if a mentor chooses the effective collaboration (mentor level 5, see above), he then becomes part of the consortium and must fill out the application forms and participate in the consortium agreement as such. A grant is then likely to be granted. Specific eligibility conditions and levels of intervention are described in Annex 1. As level 5 collaboration is an exceptional measure, the mentor's involvement and budget will be assessed.

Innoviris reserves the right to reconsider the mentor's level of involvement.

For the project outline phase, **at least one** mentor must be known and must submit a project outline.

3.4. Platform

A platform gathers research teams (consortium) and mentor(s) associated with a project. Exchanges between different projects (and associated platforms) are encouraged to build broader knowledge and expertise in the field.

3.5. Intellectual Property

The intellectual property generated during the project belongs exclusively to the consortium as described in the consortium agreement. In this document, the terms must be in accordance with the European Directives stipulating that the research organisations or research infrastructures receive compensation equivalent to the market price for the IPR which result from their activities and are assigned to the participating undertakings, or to which participating undertakings are allocated access rights. The aim of this point is to prevent indirect aid from being granted to participating companies via research organisations due to the more favourable terms of the collaboration. The absolute amount of the value of the financial and other contributions of the participating mentor(s) to the costs of the activities of the research organisation or research infrastructure that generated the DPI concerned may be deducted from this remuneration.

3.6. Project duration

The project duration is minimum two years and maximum three years.

3.7. Financing

The funding may be up to 100% of the research teams' budget. The eligible costs are described in the [accounting guidelines](#) available on our website.

Only mentors involved in an effective collaboration (cf. 3.3) are eligible for funding, provided that they meet the requirements set out in Annex 1.

3.8. Project submission

3.8.1. Submitting your application

Applications are drafted using the forms available on the Innoviris website (<https://innoviris.brussels/research-platforms>).

Each application file must be submitted by the Knowledge Transfer Office (or equivalent) of the coordinator's research organisation, after approval by the authorities of the different research teams. They must be sent to the following email addresses: funding-request@innoviris.brussels and vmukendi@innoviris.brussels. Applications submitted in any other form or by any other means will not be considered.

Please contact the Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) or its equivalent in your research organisation as soon as possible to prepare your application and plan its submission.

Application files are submitted in two stages:

1. Project outline:

This first phase consists of a short form in which you must explain your project, describe the partners and establish the budgets. This form must be submitted **between 1 April and 28 June 2024 at 12pm**.

2. Full proposal:

During this second phase, a platform may submit a full proposal. This phase is only accessible to projects that have been positively assessed by Innoviris during the project outline phase. Completed forms may be submitted between 1 August **19 and 30 October 2024 at 12pm**.

3.8.2. Processing of your application

3.8.2.1. Receipt

On receipt of your application, both the project outline and the project proposal, Innoviris' services will send a confirmation of receipt within 5 days following the submission of the application.

3.8.2.2. Admissibility

Within the month, you will receive a letter informing you of the administrative admissibility of the application. An application is admissible if it is full and meets all the criteria set out above, in particular:

1. compliance with the submission deadline;
2. the eligibility of the participating entities (please note that a promoter cannot be involved in more than two projects submitted for this call);
3. the fact that the project has not started after the submission of the aid application;
4. if the project is not carried out in effective collaboration, at least one letter of intent from the mentor must be attached to the application to reflect the interest of the socio-

economic sector in the project **and** to confirm that its financial situation is "healthy" (as defined by European legislation⁴);

5. if the project is carried out in effective collaboration, the Brussels-based entity applying for funding meets the conditions set out in Annex 1.

3.8.2.3. Project outline analysis

Innoviris will carry out an analysis of the project's relevance to the call (theme, consortium composition, mentoring modalities, project duration, etc.).

If necessary, Innoviris reserves the right to appoint external experts to carry out this analysis.

Innoviris will invite any project deemed admissible during the project outline phase to submit a *full project proposal* by the specified deadline.

3.8.2.4. Evaluation and selection (*full proposal*)

For an application in the full proposal phase, the content and level of detail of the application must enable the project to be assessed according to the criteria defined below. Innoviris reserves the right to carry out a pre-assessment according to these criteria to confirm the relevance of presenting the application to the jury of experts. Where applicable, only shortlisted projects will be assessed.

Each eligible (and, where applicable, shortlisted) project will be assessed by a jury organised and presided by Innoviris. The jury is made up of experts selected for their specific skills related to the subject covered by the project, as well as representatives of Innoviris. The consortium may inform Innoviris when submitting the application of any conflicts of interest that may exist with certain specialists in the field concerned, in Belgium and abroad.

Each expert signs a confidentiality agreement before receiving a copy of the project for prior reading. The evaluation is based on the analysis of the documents submitted by the applicant and an interview by the jury. The project is defended by the research teams and their mentors and KTOs (or counterparts).

The evaluation criteria are as follows:

- **The innovative character and scientific quality of the project:** Excellence of the research program, contributions to the state-of-the-art, clarity, quality and relevance of the objectives and research question and/or hypotheses.
- **The feasibility of the project:** Quality and relevance of the work program and methodology, realism of the execution plan and the planned use of resource, risks and mitigation strategies.
- **The expertise, scientific reputation, complementarity and relevance of the scientific teams that make up the consortium**
- **The motivation and relevance of the mentor(s)**
- **The prospects for using the results of the project to benefit the Region:** potential for using the project results in the Brussels Region in the medium term and exemplarity in terms of

⁴Cf. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651_p19_§18

the social and/or environmental impact on the Brussels ecosystem (cf Art 4/2 of the 2024 version of the Ordinance), which means that it makes a significant contribution to at least one of the following objectives:

- a sufficient standard of living for the most vulnerable groups or those with specific needs, including improved access to products and services that meet basic human needs, such as water, food, housing, healthcare and education; improved access to basic economic infrastructures, including sustainable transport, telecommunications and the internet, electricity and financial inclusion;
- the development of quality local employment;
- the development of social and democratic entrepreneurship;
- the creation of a more inclusive society;
- the more rational use of resources;
- an improved environmental impact, particularly in terms of pollutant emissions, mobility, biodiversity and ecosystems;
- adaptation to climate change.

Furthermore, the project can also not significantly harm any of the above objectives.

Innoviris will make a selection based on the overall evaluation by the juries. This selection will then be proposed to the sponsoring authority.

3.8.3. Protection of personal data

The personal data collected by Innoviris, as data controller, via this form, will be used to process your subsidy application (this mainly involves analysis and evaluation by Innoviris and an external jury). Their processing is necessary to meet a legal obligation incumbent on the data controller (i.e. the non-economic ordinance and its implementing decree) and the performance of a public interest mission or one that is subject to the exercise of public authority vested in the data controller. No data is shared with third parties without the prior agreement of the person in question or unless Innoviris is required to do so due to a legal obligation. Innoviris will do everything in its power to guarantee the confidentiality and security of the processed data. The data will be kept for the period necessary to accomplish the aims of the processing operations. If you have any questions or would like to apply your rights under Articles 15 to 22 of the GDPR, please contact dpo@innoviris.brussels or consult our "privacy" website page.

3.8.4. Monitoring of the project and payment of the subsidy

The partners are responsible for the correct implementation of the project.

The aid is paid in instalments, with the amount of each instalment expressed as a percentage of the total aid granted. Payments are made at regular intervals throughout the project.

A regular activity report will be sent to Innoviris. This report will include the actions undertaken, any

difficulties, the results achieved and the progress made in developing the results.

For the selected projects, the supervisor-coordinator will ensure that the different stages for the launch and follow-up of the project are respected. This is necessary for the successful progress of the programme. Innoviris will provide the financial and scientific follow-up of the projects based on the documents provided by the coordinator. In this respect, the documents submitted to Innoviris for the project follow-up are very important elements that must be completed correctly. They make it possible to assess the quality of the work carried out and provide the best project follow-up.

The financial and scientific follow-up procedures (financial report, activity report, monitoring committees, etc.) will be included in the grant agreement. Document templates will be sent to the coordinator.

3.8.5. Calendar and deadlines

- Launch of the thematic call: 1 April 2024
- Deadline for the receipt of project outlines: 28 June 2024
- Organisation of a launch event: 18 April 2024
- Analysis of project outlines: July - August 2024
- Invitation to submit full proposals: 19 August 2024
- Deadline for the submission of the FPP: 30 October 2024
- Assessment by ad hoc juries: November 2024 - February 2025
- Award decision by the government: March 2025 - April 2025
- Project launch: 1 May 2025 - 1 September 2025

3.9. Conflicts of Interest

The promoters must take all necessary measures to prevent any situation that could compromise the impartial, objective implementation of the project, including situations that could constitute a conflict of interest.

A conflict of interest may result from economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional attachments, or any other shared relations or interests.

Any situation that comprises a conflict of interests or is liable to lead to a conflict of interests during the execution of the project must be notified to Innoviris in writing immediately.

3.10. Information and contacts

All additional information can be obtained from Véronique Mukendi (vmukendi@innoviris.brussels).

Annex 1 - Requirements for effective, subsidised collaboration with the mentor

If a Brussels-based mentor chooses the involvement level 5, that is effective collaboration as research partner, he might be eligible for a subsidy from the Brussels Region. In that case, the

mentor becomes a full member of the consortium.

To be eligible for a subsidy, the mentor must:

- have at least one place of business in the Brussels Capital Region;
- Be a company or similar (i.e. have an economic activity potentially impacted by the project);
- be in a healthy financial situation as defined by the EU legislation (cf. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014R0651> p19, §18);
- where applicable, provide proof of their ability to finance their share in the project;
- have fulfilled its obligations in the context of previous grants allocated by the Region.

Note: If the partner entity is a public body, the tasks carried out as part of an "RPF" project must obviously relate to tasks not already covered by the grant or other subsidies received by the body. This is to avoid double financing.

The percentages of the budget covered by Innoviris (intervention rate), for research projects in effective collaboration, are as follows:

	Rate of maximum intervention
Non-economically motivated body	100%
(T)PE = [Very] Small Enterprise	80 %
ME = Medium Enterprise	75 %
GC = Large Enterprise	65 %