

# Innovative Starters Award

## Guidelines - Call of April 2022

*This English translation is only provided for your convenience. In case of inconsistencies, the French and Dutch versions shall prevail.*

### OBJECTIVE

The "Innovative Starters Award" initiative aims to favour the development of high innovation potential companies, especially those proposing technologies and solutions in line with the 6 strategic innovation domains defined in the Regional Innovation Plan.

The 6 strategic innovation domains are reiterated below:

- advanced digital technologies and services (including technologies and services related to the domains mentioned below);
- climate: sustainable buildings and infrastructure;
- optimal use of resources;
- efficient and sustainable urban space and flows;
- health and personalised and integrated care;
- social innovation, government innovation and social inclusion.

The projects submitted under ISA must, on the one hand, demonstrate a strong ambition in terms of innovation and a high potential for economic development. On the other hand, they must also demonstrate a positive impact on the Brussels Region in social, environmental and/or ecosystem terms.

The company named as the innovative start-up of the year, will benefit from an aid of a maximum of €500,000 for a maximum period of 3 years, in order to finance all or part of its Strategic Innovation Plan.

### STRATEGIC INNOVATION PLAN (SIP)

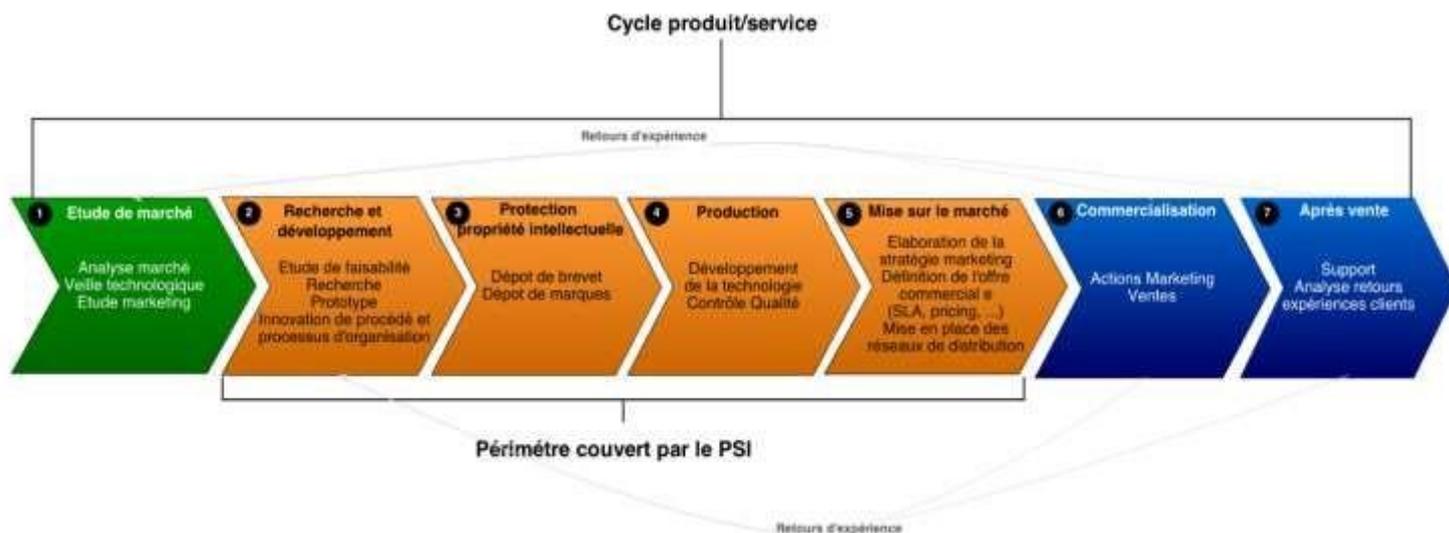
The strategic innovation plan is defined as an all-in programme (RDI, finance, business development, internal organisation) presenting in detail the vision and strategy of innovative start-ups. The SIP may concern several products and services. The strategic nature of the proposed plan must therefore be concrete, in the sense that it contributes to the technical and commercial development of the applicant company.

Its implementation must have a favourable impact on the economy, employment and the environment of the Brussels-Capital Region. The SIP must also address one or more key strategic issues:

- in the social field : reduction of inequalities, people's well-being and security, improvement of working conditions, etc.
- in the environmental field : sustainability, eco-design, reduced resource consumption, etc.

- on the impact on the regional R&D ecosystem: diffusion of expertise and knowledge, development of local partnerships, etc.

Below is the illustration of the scope that may be covered by the Strategic Innovation Plan financed by Innoviris (phases 2 to 5) and how it is part of the company's overall strategy.



## ELIGIBLE UNDERTAKINGS

Those eligible to apply for an aid from the Region with a view to implementing its Strategic Innovation Plan (SIP):

- any small company, meaning a company which employs fewer than 50 persons and whose annual turnover or annual balance sheet total does not exceed EUR 10 million, in accordance with Article 2, § 2 of Annex I of the GBER
- which complies with the conditions laid down in Article 22 of the General Block Exemption Regulation (GBER), with the definition of «innovative enterprise» laid down in article 2, 80 of the GBER and with that of innovative start-up found in article 4, 8° et 9° of the order of 27 July 2017 :
  - "Start-up": any unlisted small enterprise up to five years following its registration, which has not yet distributed profits, has not been formed through a merger, is not the subsidiary of a large company and has not taken over the activity of another enterprise;
  - "Innovative start-up": any start-up
    - able to demonstrate, by means of an evaluation carried out by an external expert that it will in the foreseeable future develop products, services or processes which are new or substantially improved compared to the state of the art in its industry, and which carry a risk of technological or industrial failure
    - **OR the research and development costs of which represent at least 10 % of its total operating costs** in at least one of the three years preceding the granting of the aid or, in the case of a start-up enterprise without any

financial history, in the audit of its current fiscal period, as certified by an external auditor

- Which is not an undertaking in [difficulty according to European legislation](#) (point 20)
- which has at least one place of business in the Brussels-Capital Region
- which has fulfilled its obligations under previous aid granted by the Region.
- which has not obtained the RISE OR ISA award in the past.

These six conditions must be met simultaneously.

In order to apply the condition of age (5 years maximum on the date of the granting of the aid) presented in article 22 of the GBER, the aid being granted at the latest on 31 December 2022, the company must have been created on or after 1/1/2018 (official starting date according to the CBE).

The company must comply with all conditions at the time of submission and at the time of the granting of the aid. **No further delay will be granted after the submission deadline to comply with them.**

## AMOUNT OF FUNDING

The "Innovative Starters Award" initiative allocates a grant to the company/companies named as innovative start-up of the year.

This grant of a maximum of €500,000 may cover costs of all sorts concerning the implementation of the SIP. In particular, this may be:

- staff costs
- operating costs
- investment costs
- subcontracting costs

## SUBMISSION AND SELECTION OF APPLICATIONS

The applications are drawn up using the form available on the Innoviris website ([www.innoviris.brussels](http://www.innoviris.brussels)). Applications submitted via a method other than this form will not be taken into consideration.

Applications must be submitted electronically to Innoviris using the e-mail address [funding-request@innoviris.brussels](mailto:funding-request@innoviris.brussels), by 4 pm on 8 July 2022 at the latest. Applications submitted after this date will not be taken into account.

The application must contain all the information and documents stipulated in the form and any other useful document supporting the application. No further delay will be granted to produce further documents.

## EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE OF APPLICATIONS

After analysis of eligibility, Innoviris will carry out a pre-selection on the basis of the criteria provided for by the order [of 27 July 2017](#).

After this preselection, only the best ranked candidates will be presented to a unique and multidisciplinary jury comprising scientific and economic experts in charge of actual evaluation.

The selection and organisation of this jury is carried out by Innoviris, which also chairs it.

The jury's evaluation is carried out on the basis of the analysis of the documents submitted as part of the application and an interview with the candidate.

The applications are evaluated by the jury according to the following criteria:

- The innovative character of the SIP.
- The technological and societal challenges that have to be faced
- The competence of the team and its ability to implement the SIP
- The suitability and realism of the work programme and budget
- The coherence of the overall strategy, the relevance of the business model, in light of the economic transition in the Brussels-Capital Region
- The quality and relevance of the financial plan
- The prospects for valorisation and its potential impact on the on the Brussels Capital Region, in a context of exemplary economic transition economy,
- The company's financial health
- The strategic nature of the Strategic Innovation Plan
- The quality of the application and of the candidate's oral defence

After the evaluation, Innoviris sends an argued report suggesting to the Secretary of State in charge of Scientific Research the awarding of the grant to the companies best ranked as innovative startups of the year.

In the event that none of the applications meet the evaluation criteria in a satisfactory manner, no grant will be awarded.

## TIMETABLE

- Submission of applications to Innoviris by 4 pm on 8 July 2022.
- Evaluation by the unique and multidisciplinary jury (September 2022).
- Award decision by the Government (November - December 2022).
- Official prize ceremony (December 2022 – January 2023).
- The implementation of the SIP may start between 1 December and 31 December 2022.

## WINNERS AND 'LABEL ISA'

The winners of the Innovative Starters Award receive an "ISA label" and thus automatically benefit (in addition to the financing amount mentioned above) from the opportunity to present their project to the Economic Coordination Council of the Brussels-Capital Region, to allow personalized

access to the offer of support, financing and ad hoc housing (more info: <https://hub.brussels/en/economic-coordination-council/>)

The laureates are also expected to represent and promote the Brussels Capital Region as an innovative and pioneering region in terms of economic transition. This both during and after their SIP, just like the winners of the previous editions ("ISA alumni network"). This role of "ambassador" of innovation in Brussels must be meticulously fulfilled, at Innoviris' request.

## MONITORING PROTOCOL

The beneficiary or beneficiaries provide Innoviris, at **time intervals defined in the agreement**, with the following documents:

- Activity reports (state of progress of the implementation of the PSI, the results of the plan in RDI, finance, business development)
- Accounting reports (debts, supporting documents, and payments).
- Report on the industrial use and valorisation of the results of the subsidised PSI, three years after its completion.

With a view to ensuring the monitoring of the implementation of the PSI, these documents may be submitted for evaluation by a jury constituted by Innoviris.

## BENEFICIARY'S OBLIGATIONS

The Beneficiary cannot combine the aid to innovative start-ups and minimum aids that meet the conditions of the EU Regulation 1407/2013, or any other funding, if these minimum aids or this other funding concern the same admissible costs.

The beneficiary informs Innoviris of any aid applied for or received during the three years of the awarding of the aid for innovative start-ups.

## FORMS AND INFORMATION

The application forms can be downloaded on the website [www.innoviris.brussels](http://www.innoviris.brussels)

The Brussels Institute for Research and Innovation,  
Chaussée de Charleroi 112  
1060 Brussels  
Tel.: 02/600 50 28 (F. Billen) - E-mail : [fbillen@innoviris.brussels](mailto:fbillen@innoviris.brussels)

**This document must be signed by the authorised person of the applicant company and include the phrase "read and approved" and enclosed with the form and the appendices submitted for the application.**

**Name of the applicant company:**

**Date and authorised signature:**