

About Vinnovate

Welcome to the Province of North Brabant page for Vinnovate, the new financial instrument aimed at inter-regional cooperation! Here you will find all the relevant information about the application process for the Vinnovate calls, including timeline and the necessary documents for a successful project submission.

About Vinnovate Open call 2024

Vinnovate Call 2024 will support the implementation of **interregional demonstration (TRL6-TRL8¹) projects** through the issuing of grants. The call aims at enabling the development and deployment of SMEs-led solutions, directly contributing to the transitions towards a more sustainable, a smarter or a less dependent industry. Interregional/international cooperation is very often instrumental in developing such complex solutions, connecting expertise and technologies across borders.

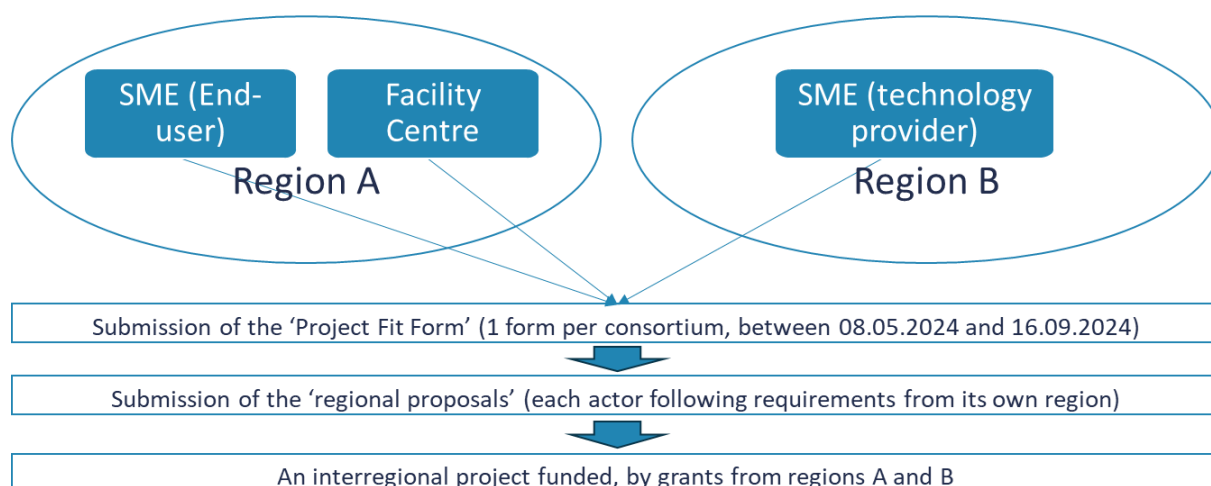
As detailed in chapter 2, projects consortia will be composed of at least one **SME cooperating** with either other SMEs, Large Companies, Universities, Research/Facility centres or Research and Technology infrastructures. The scope of the supported projects will be thematically linked to one of the current [8 pilots of the Vanguard Initiative](#) (see chapter 2 for more information).

Vinnovate Call 2024 is the first Call issued through the Vinnovate Mechanism. The Vinnovate mechanism has been developed² by the [Vanguard Initiative \(VI\)](#) and its participating regions. The strategic objective is to offer appropriate and timely funding opportunities for the implementation of industry-led and strategic interregional projects, therefore fully [realising VI ambition](#).

In general terms, and as described further in the chapter 5, Vinnovate Call 2024 is based on the following 'funding logic':

- Various regional/national funding sources have been connected and aligned.
- The applicants from Vinnovate participating countries/regions (namely **East NL, Norte, Wallonia, South NL (Brabant), North East Romania, Flanders, Galicia, Lower Saxony, Emilia-Romagna, Lower Austria, Wales**) are to be funded according to the rules and decisions of the respective regional/national funding programmes or instruments³, see illustrative figure below.
- One single Vinnovate project will therefore be supported by at least two grants sources.

An illustrative (!) VInnovate 2024 project generation



Description of the submission process:

- First, an interregional consortium will elaborate and submit a **'Project Fit Form'** (during the period 08-05-2024-16.09.2024)
- Then, following a positive assessment made by the VInnovate Secretariat, each applicant from the consortium will submit a **proposal, towards its regional agency, and following the corresponding regional instrument's requirements**. While all consortium partners will have a similar project description being submitted overall, specific requirements (e.g. providing the detailed impacts at regional level) might hold at the level of each instrument (see here). At the level of one project, all 'regional proposals' (and the draft consortium agreement) will have to be submitted by no later than 30.10.2024.
- The project is **selected for funding if all regions involved do select the project for funding** (see chapter 4).

VInnovate Call 2024 Projects requirements

Targeted beneficiaries

The following eligibility criteria will hold for VInnovate Call 2024 projects:

- The VInnovate beneficiaries must be all be located in a VInnovate 2024 member region/country, i.e. East NL (*Gelderland and Overijssel provinces*), Norte, Wallonia, South NL (*Brabant province*), North East Romania, Flanders, Galicia, Lower Saxony, Emilia-Romagna, Lower Austria, Wales.
- The project consortium can be eventually complemented with additional partners ("associated partners"); not funded through instruments activated in VInnovate 2024. Such associated partners should therefore secure other funding sources (private, regional, etc.).
- Each project consortium will be composed of VInnovate beneficiaries (excl. "associated partners") complying with the following criteria:

- at least 2 organisations located in at least 2 distinct VInnovate member regions/states (see list above) AND at least 2 distinct countries (namely Italy, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Wales, Romania, Portugal). Beyond ‘interregional cooperation’, each project should therefore promote international cooperation.;
- at least one SME (following EC definition available [here](#)).

In addition to one or several SMEs, a VInnovate consortium can potentially be composed of Large Companies, Universities, Research/Facility centres, Research and Technology infrastructures.

Applicants are requested to consult the description of their respective regional/national instrument (see instrument descriptions here) in order to be informed about the specific regional/national eligibility criteria in terms of the types of possible beneficiaries. In general, and in addition the criteria above, every VInnovate applicant will have to comply with requirements of the regional/national instrument to which the beneficiary is applying. We list in a box below examples of specific restrictions/requirements applying at regional level. For an overview of the instruments please visit the instruments main descriptions here.

2. Supported activities: types, costs and duration

- VInnovate Call 2024 will support activities at TRL6, TRL7 and/or TRL8, i.e. VInnovate will support post-prototyping activities⁴.
- The total project costs will be of minimum 100.000 € project cost per project (i.e. the sum of total costs of each partner in the project must be higher than 100.000 €).
- The project duration will be of maximum 36 months.

In addition to such criteria, every VInnovate candidate will have to comply with requirements (for example, regarding a maximum grant amount possibly set at regional level) of the regional/national instrument to which the beneficiary is applying. For an overview of the instruments please visit the instruments main descriptions here.

In general, the following types of costs can potentially be eligible for funding: Personnel costs, Subcontracting costs, Purchase costs (travel, equipment, consumables), indirect costs. Applicants are requested to check the regional instrument descriptions here for a confirmation of eligible costs.

Scope and Topics

Each project will aim at developing solution(s) that will support at least one of the following transitions:

- 1) a smarter and/or
- 2) a more sustainable and/or
- 3) a more autonomous/less dependent⁵ industry.

In addition to the previous criteria, each project must be linked (thematically) to at least one of the 8 VI pilots:

- 1) *New Nano-Enabled Products;*
- 2) *Bio-Economy;*

3) *Efficient Sustainable Manufacturing;*

4) *High-Performance Production through 3D Printing;*

5) *Advanced Manufacturing for Energy-related Applications in Harsh Environments;*

6) *Smart Health;*

7) *Artificial Intelligence;*

8) *Hydrogen.*

More information about **each pilot can be found in the glossary (chapter 5) and [here](#)**. (N.B.: should applicants have any questions or concerns regarding the linkages between their project and the pilots scope, they are invited to contact the pilots leads, whose contact details are indicated on the respective [webpages](#)).

In addition to such criteria, every VInnovate candidate will have to comply with requirements of the regional/national instrument to which the beneficiary is applying. For an overview of the instruments please visit the instruments main descriptions [here](#).

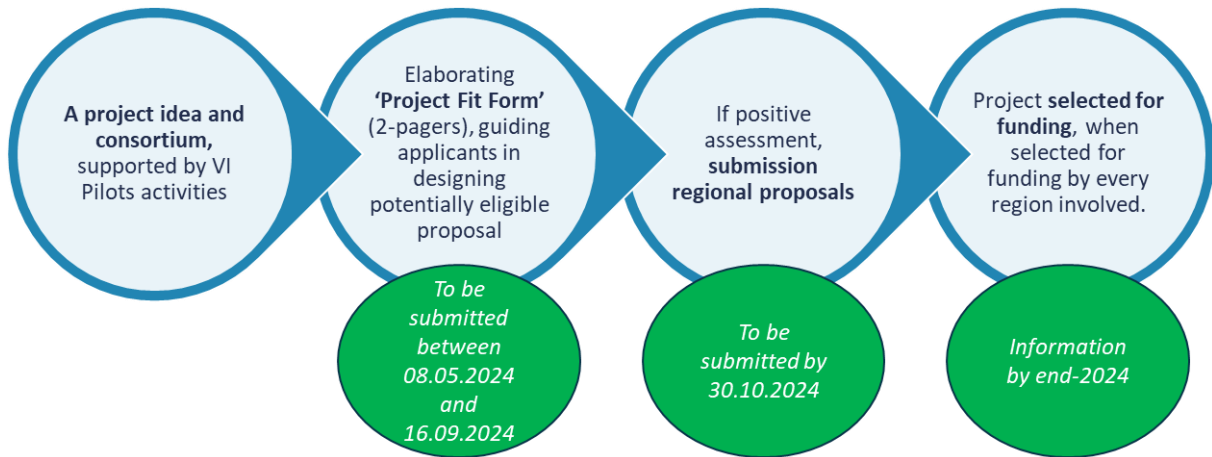
Timeline VInnovate Call 2024

Below, the timeline is presented. Please consult chapter 4 for information about processes and requirements at every main step.

- 8th of May 2024 (17:00 CET) : Opening of the Call
- 15th of May 2024 (11:00 – 12:30 CET): Info Day
- 16th of September 2024 (23:59 CET): Closing of the submission of project fit form (1 form per consortium)
- *N.B.: We highly recommend applicants to submit their project fit form as early as possible, before the 16.09.2024, in order to 1) receive the assessment on the project fit form as early as possible and therefore 2) have sufficient time to elaborate on the 'regional proposals' (see below).*
- 30th October 2024 (23:59 CET): Closing of the submission of regional proposals (and draft consortium agreement)
- 18th of December 2024: Communication results to applicants
- December 2024/February 2025: Signing of consortium agreement and funding negotiations, according to the respective regional/national rules, if necessary.
- Early 2025: Projects selected for funding are expected to start their activities no later than 3 months after the funding decision was communicated to them.

Application Procedure and Funding

The scheme below provides a description of the main steps, from the generation of projects ideas towards the selection of projects for funding. All relevant steps are then being described more in details.



Step 1 – Being supported in designing a project idea and consortium

Potential applicants (especially SMEs) can receive support towards elaborating possible proposals. Three complementary channels can be activated:

1. Projects generation- [activities will be organised by VI Pilots](#). More information about each pilot can be found [here](#). In every of the 8-pilots dedicated webpages, possible applicants will find the contact details of the pilot lead: applicants are invited to contact targeted pilots leads in order to 1) receive more information about upcoming projects generation activities and 2) eventually ask further information about the thematic focus of a given pilot, to guarantee alignment between a project idea and a pilot's scope.
2. Beyond such activities, potential applicants can consult the online 'partners search' tool available [here](#). Any organisation can create a profile, express interest (incl. detailing type of partners they are looking for) and/or contact those organisations already having expressed interest.
3. Finally, applicants can contact the VInnovate Secretariat (vinnovate@s3vanguardinitiative.eu), acting as helpdesk. Applicants can also directly consult the FAQ page [here](#).

Step 2 – Submission of VInnovate 'Project Fit Form'(between 08.05.2024 and 16.09.2024)

The 'Project Fit Form' template is available [here](#). This short form must be filled-out (1 form per consortium), signed by the consortium partners, and send as an attachment to the following email address vinnovate@s3vanguardinitiative.eu, by the interregional project coordinator⁶ of the project. Any project fit form (dully completed and signed) will have to be submitted before 16.09.2024 (23:59 CET). We encourage applicants to submit their 'Project Fit Form' as soon as possible: this will give them more time to prepare the 'regional proposals' (see step 4 below).

This is a compulsory step aimed at facilitating the generation of potentially eligible project ideas. In particular, the form will guide applicants in fulfilling the VInnovate Call 2024 eligibility criteria

(through 'self-declaration statements') and in establishing the international consortium (and their corresponding regional instruments).

Step 3 – Assessment Project Fit Form, in no more than 10 working days

During the period 08.05.2024-16.09.2024, any submitted Project Fit Form will be assessed by the VInnovate secretariat, in no more than 10 working days. This assessment will focus on the VInnovate eligibility criteria and on ensuring that there is no major inadequacy identified between the partners, their activities and the targeted regional funding instruments. Such assessment does not encompass an evaluation of the quality of the proposed project nor a proper and binding regional eligibility check, which will be performed in step 4.

Following the assessment, the applicants will receive an email from the VInnovate secretariat informing them about the outcome:

- In case of positive assessment, regional proposals (see 4.4) can be submitted (of course, these proposals can be prepared before that). A positive assessment should not be considered as an indication of selection for funding (see steps 4 and 5).
- In case of a negative assessment, modifications to and resubmission of project fit forms are possible (before 16.09.2024 (23:59 CET)).

Step 4 - Submission of 'regional proposals', at regional levels

Once the 'project fit form' was positively assessed, applicants can proceed with the submission of 'regional proposals'.

Each applicant will provide the information requested by the corresponding instrument, following the requests and procedures at regional/national level (which must be consulted here). This implies the various 'regional proposals' submitted by partners of a VInnovate project will share similar content (i.e. the description of the project's scope and activities, partners, impacts, etc.) and eventually specificities/peculiarities at regional level, following possible regional requirements.

Regional proposals will have to be submitted by 30.10.2024 (23:59 CET) at the latest.

Each applicant must attach to the regional proposal, a draft consortium agreement (unsigned). A template of consortium agreement is available here and must be adapted.

Step 5 – Evaluation, decision and communication

Following evaluation processes in place, a project is selected for funding when all regions involved in the project had selected the project for funding.

Information about the selection for funding will be communicated in the second half of December 2024.

Step 6 – Agreements, Contracts, Funding and monitoring

Selected consortia will have to **sign the consortium agreement**, supported by the VInnovate secretariat. The consortium agreement will regulate aspect such as the 1) identity of the partners, 2) contract period, 3) IPR ownership, IPR use and exploitation of the project results, 4) subcontracting to third parties, 5) contributions of each partner to the project, 6) confidentiality notes and freedom of publications rights. The consortium agreement is to be signed after the funding decision has been communicated and before applicants sign their contracts with the respective funding agencies. The complete set of signatures on the consortium agreement is a prerequisite for funding.

Funding will be provided to each partner/beneficiary by their corresponding national/regional funding agency according to its respective rules. Matters related to funding will be handled according to the respective national/regional agencies' rules. Projects will be monitored according to the rules of the respective country/region. Hence, technical as well as financial reporting will be required according to national/regional rules as well. Arrangements will be made during the funding negotiation process.

Projects selected for funding are expected to **start their activities no later than 3 months** after the funding decision was confirmed.

Glossary and concepts

- **The Vinnovate Project Fit Form.** The template of the project fit form is annexed to the present document. As detailed in the chapter 5, applicants have to submit, first, a filled-in and signed project fit form (1 per consortium, to be submitted by the interregional project coordinator⁷), before submitting the proper 'regional proposals' associated to the project.
- The aim of this step is to 1) guide applicants in the elaboration of the project, and in particular in the elaboration of a potentially eligible project; 2) offer a pre-assessment on the alignment between proposals characteristics and the associated regional instruments (*in particular, checking the alignment between the regional instrument's scope and the actors and activities from the project*) and 3) facilitate the organisation and anticipation, by regions, in terms of upcoming proposals submission. Overall, this step guarantees a more efficient submission process, avoiding time being spent on ineligible ideas.
- **The 'regional proposals'.** When referring to 'regional proposals', the present text refers to the whole set of information and documents requested by regions when applicants apply for the regional instrument activated for /used for Vinnovate. Such regional proposals are the core content of the proper evaluation process.

About Vanguard Initiative

The Vanguard Initiative was established in 2013 by ten European regions committed to lead by example in delivering growth and jobs through industry-led interregional cooperation, co-creation, and co-investment, on the basis of smart specialisation.

Since its launch in 2013, the Vanguard Initiative has been recognised as a strong and influential voice for the regional perspective on industrial transition. Our key message: that regions, smart specialisation and cluster-based interregional cooperation are key to new industrial growth, has been widely recognised and positively received by a wide range of partners and stakeholders, including the EU-institutions.

Achievements

One achievement of the Vanguard Initiative is the launch of the Thematic Smart Specialisation Platforms (S3P) by the European Commission at the Smart Regions conference in June 2016.

It is recognised that the Vanguard Initiative's Pilot Projects have served as the inspiration for the S3Ps. Another example is the proposal of the new funding instrument "Interregional Innovation Investments" which is in line with what the Vanguard Initiative actively has advocated for in our policy influencing efforts since 2016. Namely, that a funding instrument is needed that supports the creation of interregional public-private innovation partnerships that can strengthen our European industrial ecosystems and their key value chains, paving the way for follow up financing by private investors.

For more about Vanguard Initiative, including participating regions and thematic projects, please visit the official page: [Home | Vanguard Initiative \(s3vanguardinitiative.eu\)](https://s3vanguardinitiative.eu)