



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra  
Swiss Confederation  
**Innosuisse – Swiss Innovation Agency**

# Innovation Booster

## Guidelines for leading houses





This document contains the guidelines for leading houses of an Innovation Booster (IB) initiative. Additional communication guidelines can be found in the separate document *IB communications and visual presence (11.11.2022)*.

This version 2.0 of the guidelines serves in particular as a guidance to potential applicants to the Innovation Booster call for the funding period 2024-2027.

This document contains paragraphs formatted in a blue background and preceded by the text EXAMPLE:

These paragraphs serve as exemplary concretisations of particular passages of these guidelines and should not be taken as “best practices” or suggestions of implementations but only as concrete possible case studies for the implementation of an Innovation Booster.



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# 1 Innosuisse

**Key points in this chapter:**

- 1) The Innosuisse office is the first point of contact for questions about the IB instrument ([1.1](#))
- 2) Innosuisse experts accompany and evaluate IBs during the funding period ([1.2](#))
- 3) The Innosuisse Innovation Council awards funding for a maximum of four years and makes a go/no-go decision at the midterm review ([1.3](#))

## 1.1 Innosuisse office

The Innosuisse office is the first point of contact for IBs for formal questions and clarifications regarding the IB instrument. The office manages the instrument and coordinates the evaluation and review processes, as well as the new IB calls during the years.

Thank you for contacting us or sending your questions to the team mailbox: [ktt.support@innosuisse.ch](mailto:ktt.support@innosuisse.ch).

## 1.2 Innosuisse experts

Innosuisse experts have expertise in the area of their assigned IB, know its ecosystem and have experience in knowledge and technology transfer. They are assigned to an IB at the beginning of the funding period and they evaluate its performance and assess whether its operation and development support the objectives of the IB instrument. They do this by:

- Actively participating in events organised by their IB in order to assess their activities
- Participating in the annual exchange of experience ([11.1](#)) together with the IBs to take part in and support IB learning culture
- Attending the annual retrospective meeting ([10.5](#)) with the IB to review its performance specifically with regards to annual output objectives and KPIs as well as the agreed budget and to review the new goals set by the IB for the following year in an outlook
- Monitoring performance and signalling to the Innosuisse office significant deviations from their IB's expected performance
- Making a recommendation to the Innosuisse Innovation Council regarding the "go/no-go" decision at the midterm review ([10.7](#)) based on the IBs performance towards the end of the first two years and the expected future performance and impact for the remaining funding period

## 1.3 Innosuisse Innovation Council

The Innovation Council is the specialised body of Innosuisse. The main duty of the Innovation Council is to review, analyse and take decisions on funding applications and to support the execution of funding activities. It is responsible for monitoring the IB instrument. Its task is to approve or reject applications, budget or contract amendments and to make a "go/no-go" decision at the midterm review ([10.7](#)). It receives evaluations and recommendations from the Innosuisse experts, which it uses as a basis for their assessments and autonomous decisions.



## 2 Innovation Booster

### Key points in this chapter:

- 4) IBs are initiatives administrated by a leading house that is operationally supported by an alliance of key actors ([2.1](#))
- 5) The leading house accounts for the goals outlined in the *IB mission statement 1.0* ([2.2](#))
- 6) The leading house is responsible for implementing all Innosuisse guidelines ([2.2](#))

### 2.1 Leading house and alliance members

The IB alliance's goal is to bring together representatives of all the necessary key actors to successfully implement an IB and boost radical innovation in its chosen innovation theme. The alliance is an essential part of the operational support structure of an IB.

Innosuisse does not prescribe how the alliance should organise itself. However, the alliance is led or represented by a leading house, an organisation with its own legal personality and a registered office in Switzerland, that acts as applicant and administrative contact point towards Innosuisse. If an application is successful, Innosuisse awards funding to the leading house, which then assumes all rights and obligations for the execution of the initiative.

If the leading house, in its organisational form (e.g. association), does not include all alliance members, it should create appropriate and transparent governance structures to involve the remaining alliance members in the steering and relevant decision processes of the IB.

In the application, the leading house demonstrates the motivation of the most important alliance members through appropriate declarations of support and ensures their involvement throughout the funding period.

**Important:** The leading house must ensure that the external perception of the IB is not limited to the leading house itself but focuses on the innovation theme and includes the alliance when relevant.

**EXAMPLE:** During an event organised by the Innovation Booster with the active support of a local member of the alliance, the Innovation Booster is represented by the local representatives, the role of the alliance member is clearly communicated to the participants for instance via a welcome speech, and the communication around the event follows the Innosuisse communication guidelines for the Innovation Booster instrument.

### 2.2 Responsibilities of the leading house

The leading house is the grant recipient and sole contractual partner vis-à-vis Innosuisse. As an organisation, it therefore holds all rights and obligations for the execution of the Innovation Booster project. As such, the leading house ensures that the IB carries out the IB mission and follows the guiding principles outlined in the *IB mission statement 1.0*. It further ensures that the IB complies with all contractual obligations, the principles of the present guidelines and the requirements in the document *IB communications and visual presence (11.11.2022)*. In particular, the leading house:



- Coordinates all necessary resources and activities to fulfil the mission of the IB and reach its goals
- Involves, supported by its alliance partners, relevant stakeholders from research, business, politics and society in the design and management of its activities
- Sets up and maintains mechanisms to monitor the achievement of its objectives to ensure quality and impact
- Allocates funds to IB activities correctly and transparently
- Keeps a transparent accounting system
- Organises orderly reporting and financial audits for Innosuisse
- Coordinates the alliance in order to facilitate decisions on the IB strategy

## 2.3 Innovation theme

IBs must propose an overriding innovation theme for the four years of funding. Within their innovation theme, they must generate added value for the Swiss economy and/or society through their innovation activities (4).

Innovation themes can focus on technology-based, management-based or social innovation and aim at supporting the development of novel products, processes, or services. Within their overriding innovation themes, IBs must identify specific challenges that are of high significance to the Swiss economy and society and attract interest from research as well as from implementation partners.

**EXAMPLE:** Already running IBs offer a large palette of inspiration for possible innovation themes well suited for an initiative. For example, *IB Blockchain*, *IB Microtech* or *IB Robotics* are centred around themes that represent technology platforms for different sectors or user bases. The *IB Technology for Special Needs* has a theme with a clearly defined user group and focuses on its pains and problems. As another example, the *IB Plastic for Zero Emission* focuses on a specific technological goal that is relevant for, and can be applied to, many different sectors.



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## 3 Contract

After a successful evaluation of a proposal, Innosuisse concludes a contract with the leading house for the four years of funding. As specified in Article 8 paragraph 2 of the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, that enter into force on 1 January 2023, the contract regulates:

1. the subject, scope and duration of the funding;
2. the maximum total amount committed for the duration of the funding, as well as the cost ceilings for a two-year period;
3. the objectives for a two-year period;
4. the conditions and the deadlines for contribution payments and any repayments;
5. Innosuisse's specifications for implementing the Innovation Booster;
6. other rights and obligations of the contracting parties;
7. the basis for evaluating performance;
8. the reporting requirements and deadlines;
9. the termination of the contractual relationship.



## 4 Execution strategy

### Key points in this chapter:

- 1) IBs manage a two-stage process to boost radical innovation: the challenge stage and the idea stage (4.1)
- 2) IBs set up a transparent and fair evaluation and selection process for allocating the financial contributions to innovation teams to further exploring their initial ideas for radical solutions (4.1.1)
- 3) IBs can only allocate innovation team funding to innovation teams once they have been formed and ideas for radical solutions have been selected (4.1.1)
- 4) IBs implement measures supporting the IB mission in the areas of open innovation (4.2), diversity (4.3) and communication (4.4)

IBs support radical innovation in Switzerland by fostering an open innovation culture and by making user-centricity key in their innovation processes. Rather than incremental innovation seeking to improve existing products, processes or services, IBs focus on generating radical innovation aimed at the creation of novel products, services or processes that solve a problem in a new way.

To achieve this goal, they implement a two-stage process including a challenge stage and an idea stage. Both stages are supported by targeted open innovation, diversity and communication measures. The organisation of these stages is based on the execution strategy presented by the IBs in their initial applications and can be further developed and refined to fit the purpose and create the desired impact during the funding period. IBs must reflect on the failures and successes of their strategies in their annual retrospectives and explain past and future adaptations in their annual reporting.

### 4.1 Challenge and idea stage

As mentioned above, an Innovation Booster initiative is structured around two main stages:

1. In the **challenge stage**, IB activities will push the participants to identify and engage with challenges collaboratively and with user-centric methods. The aim is to help them better understand and address their key problems, to discover radical innovation opportunities and to generate and develop ideas for radical solutions. At the end of this stage, the Innovation Booster selects the innovation teams that generated the best ideas, to offer them further support.
2. In the **idea stage**, IBs provide selected innovation teams with methodological and/or financial support to explore their initial ideas by testing their desirability, feasibility and viability.

IBs design the two stages and implement the necessary supportive measures to help boost radical innovation within their innovation theme. Leading houses and the alliance must possess or have access to the necessary methodological expertise to successfully manage the two stages.

### 4.1.1 Challenge stage

Focus			Goals			
Identify challenges	Assemble stakeholders	Explore problems	Discover opportunities	Form teams	Develop ideas for radical solutions	Select ideas & teams

#### Focus

**Identify challenges:** Each IB works with key stakeholders to identify relevant challenges. They thus ensure that the selected challenges are of high relevance for their community as well as the Swiss economy and society.

**Assemble stakeholders:** To work on the challenge, IBs assemble a wider range of stakeholders, including potential users. They focus on the interface between research, business, politics and society and assemble all the relevant stakeholders within the innovation theme vertically (along the value chain), horizontally (across topics and sectors) and geographically (supra-regionally, nationally, internationally) and involve participants with diverse backgrounds.

**Explore problems:** Once IBs have assembled stakeholders around the challenges identified, they facilitate collaborative and user-centric explorations of the underlying problems and thus help them gain novel perspectives and the deeper understanding needed to discover opportunities for radical innovation.

#### Goals

**Discover opportunities:** IBs help participants discover innovation opportunities consisting of a clearly defined and well understood problem which, if solved, will create added value and may lead to truly novel products, processes, or services.

**Form teams:** In preparation of the idea stage, IBs support the formation of innovation teams [\(5\)](#) that collectively possess the necessary knowledge and skills to address the problem.

**Develop ideas for radical solutions:** The IBs provide methodological support to participants to generate and develop ideas for radical solutions. Different methodologies can be used.

**Select ideas & teams:** IBs select innovation teams for the idea stage who have developed ideas for radical solutions with a particularly strong potential towards the creation of a new product, service or process that solve a problem in a new way.

### Requirements for the allocation of innovation team funding

IBs select innovation teams that will receive innovation team funding [\(6.3\)](#) and provide the funds to one beneficiary, who can then allocate the funds within the team as necessary for the purpose of idea exploration. Supported ideas must be outcomes of the IBs challenge stage,



meaning they must have emerged from or undergone significant development in the framework of IB activities.

Innovation teams need to present a clear plan on how to verify and test their idea for a radical solution in terms of:

1. **Desirability:** Is it reasonable to think that the final users will need or want to use the solution?
2. **Viability:** Does the solution seem worth pursuing and the commercialisation business model sustainable?
3. **Feasibility:** Is it reasonable to assume that the solution can technically be implemented or realised?

The process of evaluating and selecting ideas that will receive support is the responsibility of the IB, but must be open, transparent and fair, and based on the following minimum criteria:

1. **Impact:** Does the idea have the potential to create sustainable added value for the implementation partner?

For ideas relating to society and social development: Does the idea have the potential to reduce social costs and create economic added value?

2. **Level of innovation:** To what degree does the idea present a potential pathway to a radically novel technological, economic and/or social innovation?
3. **Methodological quality:** Will the funds be used to test the idea efficiently and with methodological rigor? In particular, does the innovation team plan to verify all necessary aspects to reach a solid innovation implementation plan (viability, desirability, feasibility)?

The exact evaluation criteria and, if an inquiry is made, the reasons for the rejection of a submitted idea should be communicated clearly and timely by the IBs to the innovation teams requesting them.

**Important:** The IBs must take all necessary measures to prevent conflicts of interest among all persons involved in the selection of ideas. This obligation prevails or arises in particular when:

- The persons conducting the evaluation and selecting ideas have a personal interest in the matter or could be biased for various other reasons;
- There is a risk that funds, work resources, information or other intangible assets allocated to the innovation teams will be used against the public interest, for personal gain or for the benefit of relatives or acquaintances.

#### 4.1.2 Idea stage

Focus		Goals		
Support teams methodologically and/or financially	Test the ideas	Knowledge gain in order to determine the next steps		
		Implementation plan	Pivot strategy	Discontinuation

#### Focus

**Support teams methodologically and/or financially:** IBs provide their selected innovation teams with the methodological and financial support they need to test their idea. They make sure teams follow a user-centric approach. The support structure can be decided by each IB, but must respond to the Innovation Teams' needs. A maximum amount of CHF 25'000 from the Innosuisse funds can be allocated per single idea supported ([7.2](#)).

**Test the ideas:** This stage is first and foremost about knowledge gain and not implementation. The selected interdisciplinary innovation teams ([5](#)) test their idea for a radical solution to verify its desirability, viability and feasibility. IBs make sure this process takes place in an agile, user-centric and iterative manner in order to create as much knowledge gain as possible.

**EXAMPLE:** In the case of an innovation team composed by a relative of a member of the jury delegated by the IB to the evaluation of ideas, the concerned jury member should recuse himself from, at least, the evaluation of the concerned proposal.

**EXAMPLE 1:** A supported innovation team wants to test the feasibility of their ideas, as a user association is part of the team and already has evidence of its desirability. In this case, the IB helps and supports the team to access the means needed to develop a minimum viable prototype.

**EXAMPLE 2:** A different innovation team has a strong technical background and needs access to users to test the desirability of their idea. They are helped by the IB with methodology and funds to organise more extensive user testing and user study, in order to better verify the potential customer needs and prepare their next steps or pivot.

**EXAMPLE 3:** An innovation team is already formed around a pre-conceived idea, and is only looking for funding for a feasibility study. In this case, the IB's support is not the most suited support (and, in case of an idea which is not an outcome of the **challenge stage**, it should not even be available to them) and the innovation team should instead better apply for another type of support, for example an Innosuisse innovation cheque.



## Goal

The goal of this stage is for innovation teams to test their ideas and to gain knowledge to the degree that they reach one of the following outcomes:

*Implementation plan:* Innovation teams have concluded that they want to pursue their idea further. They therefore plan the next steps in the direction of an implementation. This might involve setting up an innovation project and applying for follow-up funding with another Innosuisse instrument or with another organisation.

**Important:** IBs assist innovation teams in their search for follow-up support (4.6), when useful and necessary. To this end, they cultivate an exchange with Innosuisse and other organisations and actively help the innovation teams with planning suitable next steps.

*Pivot strategy:* Innovation teams use the learnings they gained to develop a pivot strategy. They formulate a plan on how to adjust their approach and potentially redefine their idea, solution or approach.

*Discontinuation:* Innovation teams decide to discontinue working on their idea.

**Important:** Whatever the outcome of the idea stage, teams should share their learnings with the IB community.

## 4.2 Open innovation

With their open innovation processes, IBs promote a culture of collaborative exploration, ideation as well as quick testing and learning. They create an environment of transparency and trust and make sure that the collaboration is of benefit to all participants.

A number of ideas for radical solutions that initially appear promising will fail. However, by supporting collaborative exploration and peer-learning, IBs enhance long-term success probabilities and strengthen the competitive advantages of Swiss SMEs. By supporting the discovery and adoption of novel innovation management methods for collaborative exploration and quick testing, IBs help participants gain novel insights and develop their capacity for radical innovation. Peer-learning helps participants to learn from each other's successes and failures.

IBs implement the necessary measures to support this purpose. They support the generation of radical innovation through open innovation activities that are accessible to all and bring together diverse stakeholders. They additionally build and manage an open innovation community consisting of a wide range of multidisciplinary, diverse perspectives and committed to better understanding complex contemporary challenges and deriving truly novel solutions.

**Important:** While IBs promote a pragmatic and fair handling of intellectual property based on trust, they develop an approach that protects business secrets and secures the intellectual property of the involved. IBs should design their open innovation approach to suit the needs of their community and tailor it to different innovation phases.



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## 4.3 Diversity

A diversity of perspectives and skills is crucial to radical innovation and to gaining a new and deeper understanding of the challenge at hand. People with different professions and experiences, from different disciplines, different economic sectors and with different roles along the value chain will ask different questions, adding their perspectives and ideas.

IBs therefore make diversity a priority both within their own organisational makeup and among the participants and stakeholders they work with. In particular, IBs strive for equal gender representation in their interest groups, committees and innovation teams, as well as among the participants.

**EXAMPLE:** For an ideation session organised around healthy living and commuting in a city, the IB's challenge stage is open to all citizens of the city. The IB includes their pain points, ideas and inputs in the idea generation process and potentially integrates them then into supported innovation teams, ensuring potential final user participation from the beginning of the innovation process.

## 4.4 Communication

With their communication, IBs support the open innovation culture. With targeted measures, they try to communicate their offers, activities and results to all interested stakeholders from all over Switzerland and increase their outreach. To this purpose, they set up and use the channels and the IB branding specified by Innosuisse in the document *IB communications and visual presence* (11.11.2022).

IBs contribute to promoting the positive image and awareness of the IB programme. With good examples, they demonstrate the contribution they make to Swiss innovation activities, the economy and society. Through their communications, they also aim to inspire and promote each other.

## 4.5 Sustainability

IBs must consider how their overarching theme and their activities can support the sustainable development of society, economy and environment. Their considerations should be rooted in a holistic understanding of sustainability and refer to the UN sustainable development goals.<sup>1</sup>

Their impact is considered primarily in terms of the ideas for radical solutions they generate and support. IBs should, in principle, support ideas that might have a positive impact or ideas that seek to minimize a negative impact. They must avoid supporting ideas with a clearly negative impact on sustainability.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://sdgs.un.org/goals#goals>

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## 4.6 Follow-up support for Innovation teams

Within the process of implementing a promising innovation idea, many additional support measures are available outside the IB after the first verification support. IB managers cultivate an exchange with Innosuisse and other organisations and actively help the innovation teams plan suitable next steps. Innosuisse, for instance, offers a wide range of support options, such as advice for start-ups (coaching programme), assistance in setting up innovation projects (mentoring programme), access to project funding (national and international) and support in finding international partners (Enterprise Europe Network).

In addition to the Innosuisse offers, other interesting support options are available. For example, if an implementation partner needs help embedding the innovation idea into the existing organisation, specialised staff in the cantons and regions may be able to help. They also offer risk financing programmes.

### **SME support from the regional innovation systems (RIS)**

Regional innovation systems (RISs) are economic areas that transcend cantonal and sometimes national borders, and in which cooperation between three key actors in the innovation process is actively promoted: businesses, research centres and the public sector. A RIS comprises all the organisations and institutions that work together in a network and contribute to dynamic innovation in a region.

RIS services speed up the pace with which businesses' innovation plans are transformed into reality. The RISs provide support to organisations including SMEs on issues relating to their innovation activities, ranging from themes such as resources and expertise to useful networks.

Key account managers (KAMs) working in the RIS management units play a central role in this. A KAM is a person who is in regular, direct contact with the companies in a RIS. The KAM function is given different names in different RISs (e.g. innovation coach, technology and innovation expert, business consultant, etc.). KAMs carry out independent needs analyses to establish the potential for innovation and the support requirements of an SME, define the necessary action plan in partnerships with it and support the implementation process.

In this way, KAMs can play an important and complementary role to the IB by helping SMEs to integrate ideas into their business strategies.

Those responsible for the IB initiatives are encouraged to contact the applicable RIS management office at an early stage and to explore the potential for SMEs to unlock synergies.

The current addresses of RISs from all the regions are listed on the [regiosuisse.ch](https://regiosuisse.ch) site:

<https://regiosuisse.ch/regionale-innovationssysteme-ris>

## 5 Innovation teams

### Key points in this chapter:

- 1) Innovation teams must consist of at least one research and one implementation partner ([5.1](#))
- 2) Innosuisse provides definitions for research ([5.2](#)) and implementation partners ([5.3](#))
- 3) International partners can be part of innovation teams but are subject to certain conditions ([5.4](#))

### 5.1 Team composition

Innovation teams getting IB support for idea testing must consist of at least one research partner and one implementation partner. An innovation team includes all partners who have the potential to make an important contribution to develop and improve the ideas.

### 5.2 Research partners

Research partners include university research institutes, non-commercial research centres outside the university sector, departmental research institutions with their own research projects and federal research institutes<sup>2</sup>. They collaborate with implementation partners and contribute to the innovation process through their research findings, knowledge and competencies.

### 5.3 Implementation partners

Implementation partners can be start-ups, SMEs or larger companies that offer products or services or implement processes. But they could also be non-profit organisations such as municipal administrations, charitable associations or social advocacy groups that can generate societal benefits and/or reduce public costs through the implementation of innovations. Implementation partners are the driving forces for potential future value creation and contribute with their knowledge of the necessary conditions and success factors for implementation.

Implementation partners need not always be commercial entities, their definition depends on the type of idea being explored. Ideas still quite removed from the final customer or B2B projects can also profit from a research or non-commercial organisation as an implementation partner, doing concrete first tests on a limited number of users or testing the idea in a limited field first.

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<sup>2</sup> Pursuant to Art. 4(c), Art. 5, Art. 16(3) and Art. 17 of the Federal Act on the Promotion of Research and Innovation (FIFG) of 14 December 2012





EXAMPLE: An idea consisting of a software facilitating cloud access to documents is tested by an innovation team consisting of researchers from two different UASs; one of them acts as implementation partner by organising the development steps and distribution to their students as a first implementation pilot phase.

For ideas closer to the market or B2C products and services, implementation partners must also offer – depending on the case – industrialisation or mass production capabilities, commercialisation capabilities, product or service support. It is the job of each IB to evaluate the implementation partners of the supported innovation teams along the lines of this definition.

## 5.4 International partners

Innovation teams can include international partners whose support is necessary for the successful testing and verification of an idea. However, as the IB instrument should primarily benefit the Swiss economy and society, the following conditions apply:

- 1) IBs have to award and release the innovation team funding to a Swiss beneficiary
- 2) At least one Swiss implementation partner must be part of every innovation team and the main value creation must occur in Switzerland

## 6 Eligible expenses

### Key points in this chapter:

- 1) Funding is organized into two categories: programme funding ([6.2](#)) and innovation team funding ([6.3](#))
- 2) Maximum hourly rates apply to personnel costs ([6.2.1](#)) and external mandates ([6.2.2](#))

### 6.1 Programme and innovation team funding

Two funding categories, programme funding and innovation team funding, determine how IBs can use Innosuisse contributions ([7](#)) and third-party contributions ([8](#)).

### 6.2 Programme funding

IBs use programme funding to cover costs tied to the implementation of their IB initiative and to the management of related activities ([4](#)) in particular during the **challenge stage**. Only expenses for necessary activities of the IB within the scope of its concept and innovation theme ([2.3](#)) and in support of the overall IB mission and annual targets are eligible for funding. As specified in Article 10 paragraph 1 of the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, entering into force on 1 January 2023, programme funding can be used to cover personnel and functional costs in support of activities that could include the following:

- Personnel costs incurred exclusively for the purpose of preparing and carrying out the activities, subject to the maximum amounts specified in the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, Art.11, entering into Force on 1 January 2023 ([6.2.1](#))
- Employer contributions ([6.2.1](#))
- Costs for event spaces or for infrastructure for virtual events
- Costs for appropriate catering for participants
- Reimbursement of expenses of experts
- Costs for advertising and communication
- Costs for tools in connection with the mechanisms and methods for promoting the transfer of knowledge and technology, for example for Internet-based platforms or for methodological support work by specialists
- Methodological and expert support for participants and teams
- Promotion of a learning culture among IB participants
- Communications and marketing of the IB initiative
- Capacity building for participants and teams on methods and mechanisms to foster technology transfer and idea generation
- Support for innovation team formation and to increase technology and knowledge transfer among participants to events organised by the IB
- Follow-up support for innovation teams supported by the IB

**Important:** Events and activities financed with programme funding must be, in principle, open and free to all interested parties.

**EXAMPLE:**

- An IB rents an event hall to organize an event promoting a culture of open innovation and involving stakeholders from research, business, politics and society. At the same open innovation event, the IB uses programme funding to cover catering costs. As part of the challenge stage, the IB requires additional expertise for a workshop on IP in open innovation settings. It therefore mandates an external lawyer specialized in this topic.
- At a workshop focused on exploring problems related to the challenges, it also hires an expert in design thinking to help manage the ideation process.
- An IB wants to promote an upcoming call for challenges. It therefore invests funds in a social media campaign to spread the word.
- An IB uses programme funding to cover the cost of an online platform such as Hype or Jointcreate to collect and publish challenges submitted in response to a call.
- Costs for joint activities in the field of capacity building or communication, attended by multiple Innovation Boosters and planned by IBs or by Innosuisse.

All of the activities above and their related costs constitute eligible expenses within the programme funding budget.

- An IB manager registers and participates to a two-days design thinking class.
- As part of the activities of the association that acts as a leading house for an IB, the manager visits a client (SME) to assist them bilaterally to develop an innovation strategy and offer some business consulting.

The activities above and their related expenses (train, course registration, hours invested by the manager) **do not** represent activities necessary for the IB implementation and **are therefore not** eligible for reimbursement within the programme funding budget.

### 6.2.1 Rules for personnel costs

IBs can use programme funding to cover personnel costs connected to the implementation of their concept and management of the related activities. The eligible costs for personnel entrusted with the IB's operational management as well as coordination and communication tasks are subject to the rules detailed in Article 10 paragraph 1 letter a and b of the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, entering into Force on 1 January 2023.

The following maximum rates for eligible gross annual salaries, as stated in Article 12 paragraph 2 of the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, entering into Force on 1 January 2023, apply for persons in employment:

- a. Director: CHF 220,500 (CHF 119 per hour)
- b. Team leader, senior scientific officer: CHF 175,000 (CHF 95 per hour)
- c. Scientific officer: CHF 126,000 (CHF 68 per hour)
- d. Specialist assistant: CHF 113'400 (CHF 61 per hour)
- e. Doctoral student and auxiliary: CHF 85'100 (CHF 46 per hour)

The reimbursement by Innosuisse cannot exceed the maximum hourly rates and will correspond to the actual salary costs paid by the employer. Innosuisse may request disclosure of actual salary costs and salary certificates, as well as respective annual timesheets, as part of an audit.

**Note:** In addition to the gross salaries, employer contributions actually paid in accordance with OASIA, InvIA, LECA, OPA, UIA and AIA are chargeable as stated in Article 10 paragraph 1 letter b of the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, entering into Force on 1 January 2023.

### 6.2.2 Rules for functional costs

**External mandates:** A maximum hourly rate of CHF 200 (incl. all taxes and VAT) applies to external persons who are commissioned within the scope of the functional costs and needed for the provision of specific services, or to provide specialist competences that are not available within the leading house (e.g. IP lawyers consultancies, design thinking workshops, etc.). If higher rates are claimed, the leading house must also prove that these are in line with the market and bring the corresponding added value.

**Reimbursements for committee members and experts:** Persons who support the leading house in the implementation of the IB programme by serving in committees (e.g. management board, advisory boards, evaluation committees etc.) generally work on a voluntary basis and do not receive a salary. The leading house may reimburse such persons for expenses incurred due to their support work (such as out-of-pocket expenses). It must disclose such remuneration explicitly and in detail in the annual financial statement.

**Important:** Overhead costs such as office rent or standard infrastructure are not eligible expenses.

## 6.3 Innovation team funding

The IB supports selected innovation teams with dedicated innovation team funding. Innovation teams can use this support exclusively for necessary expenses connected to the exploration of their idea for a radical solution. For more information on possible idea exploration activities, see chapter [4.1.2](#). The purpose of innovation team funding is stated in the Implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, Art.9.b, entering into Force on 1 January 2023. Art.10 paragraph 2 of the same document, states that eligible expenses can include expenses for:

- feasibility, user or market studies;
- the development of explorative models and prototypes to illustrate innovation ideas and test potential solutions;
- the methodological support provided to the innovation teams by specialists, for example using design thinking methods.



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## 6.4 Financial control

The leading houses must keep appropriate accounting records and show the actual income and expenses over the respective reporting period. For this purpose, they must use the templates provided by Innosuisse. Reporting documents to be submitted are specified by Innosuisse in reporting guidelines that will be provided to the IBs. Furthermore, the standard Innosuisse financial controlling practices apply.

**EXAMPLE:** Original invoices, documents confirming expenses, salary certificates or timesheets might be asked for in the course of an audit.

Third-party contributions to innovation team funding do not have to make the diversion via the accounts of the leading house and can be directly provided from the third party to the relevant innovation team. However, IBs must ensure innovation team funding beneficiaries have written confirmations as to what amounts they used and for what purpose. Innosuisse reserves the right to check these documents in the course of an audit.



## 7 Innosuisse contributions

### Key points in this chapter:

- 1) Innosuisse releases programme funding following the contractual payment plan ([7.1](#))
- 2) IBs can award up to CHF 25'000 to each selected innovation team for idea exploration ([7.2](#))
- 3) IBs apply with Innosuisse for innovation team funding on an ongoing basis ([7.2.1](#))
- 4) Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding must amount to at least half of the total Innosuisse contributions used by IBs ([7.2](#))

### 7.1 Innosuisse contributions to programme funding

#### 7.1.1 Payment process

Innosuisse releases programme funding in a standardized process based on the four-year budget plan submitted with the application. The contributions to programme funding are pre-paid to the Innovation Booster at the start of the funding year according to the detailed plan described in the contract.

#### 7.1.2 Amount reserved by Innosuisse

Out of the Innosuisse contributions to programme funding paid to IBs, CHF 15'000 annually could be invoiced annually by Innosuisse to cover costs for activities that support the building of the IB community such as communication measures, exchanges and trainings. IBs must reserve the full amount in the annual budget.

At the beginning of each year, the Innosuisse office will communicate what parts of the CHF 15'000 the IBs can use for certain defined purposes or jointly organised capacity building workshops and under what conditions.

### 7.2 Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding

#### 7.2.1 Payment process

Once the IB has selected innovation teams ([5](#)) fulfilling the minimal requirements ([4.1.1](#)), they can provide them with Innosuisse innovation team funding for the exploration of their ideas for radical solutions:

IBs can award up to **CHF 25'000** of Innosuisse innovation team funding per funded team and idea in a single or in staged payments.

Support for the innovation teams can be supplemented by third party contributions to idea funding, for example through partner-to-partner contributions or sponsoring. This contribution ensures the partners' interest in the idea.

The maximum annual amount of Innosuisse contributions to team funding available to IBs is determined in the four-year budget plan ([9.1](#)) of the contract. The maximum amount for years



3 and 4 of the funding period may be adjusted at the midterm review ([10.7](#)), for instance to include unused funds from the first contractual period.

**Important:** Over the entire funding period, the Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding must be at least 50% of the total Innosuisse contributions used.

### 7.2.2 Invoicing Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding

IBs can invoice contributions to innovation team funding to the Innosuisse office on an **ongoing basis**.

When applying for Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding, the IB should use the relevant reporting documents, specified in the internal reporting guidelines. Once the Innosuisse office has received all necessary documents and information, it will pay the requested funds to the leading house of the IB within 30 days.

**Important:** When applying for Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding for the running year, IBs must submit all required documentation by 31. December the latest.

## 7.3 Actual Innosuisse contributions

The two-year cost ceilings ([9.2](#)) determine the maximum Innosuisse contribution for the first and second half of the funding period. However, Innosuisse only reimburses costs actually incurred, declared and chargeable and not covered by third-party contributions. The actual total Innosuisse contributions for the first and second half of the funding period can therefore be lower than the two-year cost ceilings.

To assess the actual use of funds, Innosuisse will determine the actually incurred and chargeable costs after each funding year based on the final report ([10.8](#)). If an IB does not agree with the determination made by Innosuisse, they are able to challenge it within 30 days. In justified cases, Innosuisse will adjust its determination.

## 8 Third-party contributions

- 1) IBs must generate third-party contributions to cover at least 10% of their total expenses ([8.1](#))
- 2) Every IB's innovation team funding design must include third-party contributions to innovation team funding ([8.2.2](#))

### 8.1 Required third-party contributions

Over the course of the entire funding period, the IB must cover at least 10% of the totally incurred and eligible costs with third-party contributions.

To ensure they fulfil this requirement, IBs set annual targets for third-party contributions of at least 10% of the annually incurred and eligible costs. If an IB fails to meet their target, the future third-party contribution targets must be set in such a way that the third-party contributions cover at least 10% of the totally incurred and eligible costs at the end of the funding period.

**Important:** If an IB fails to generate third-party contributions covering at least 10% of the totally incurred and eligible costs by the time its funding contract ends (e.g. after a “no-go” decision at the midterm review or after four years), Innosuisse reclaims contributions already paid. The amount to be reclaimed will be set to ascertain that the actually generated third-party contributions amount to 10% of the total IB expenses after the reclamation.

### 8.2 Eligible third-party contributions

Third-party contributions to programme funding or innovation team funding have to be a cash contribution. While the use of third-party contributions to programme funding is governed by the rules for programme funding ([6.2](#)), the use of third-party contributions to innovation team funding is governed by the rules for innovation team funding ([6.3](#)).

#### 8.2.1 Third-party contributions to programme funding

IBs can use the following contributions as third-party contributions to programme funding:

- 1) **Participation fees:** Fees paid by participants to workshops, events and other organized activities.
- 2) **Sponsoring:** Funds received as sponsoring of specific IB activities
- 3) **Donations:** Funds received as support of the IB's overall mission

#### 8.2.2 Third-party contributions to innovation team funding

In addition to third-party contributions to programme funding, IBs must include third-party contributions to innovation team funding in their funding design. The following third-party contributions to innovation team funding are possible:

- 1) **Sponsoring:** Funds from sponsors going to innovation teams for idea exploration





- 2) **Partner-to-partner contributions:** One team partner's cash contribution to one or several other team partners.

**Important:** Team partners who make a partner-to-partner contribution to innovation team funding cannot at the same time receive Innosuisse or third-party contributions to innovation team funding.

- 3) **External materials and services:** Any team partner can provide third-party contributions to innovation team funding by paying for external materials or services.

**Important:** Expenses for external services and materials declared as third-party contributions to innovation team funding must be spent in addition to the total Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding and other third-party contributions to innovation team funding used.

**EXAMPLE:** An innovation team is composed of two implementation partners (a and b) and one research partner (c). The partner (a) will receive funding from the IB. Partner (c) will have their expenses partly covered by partner (a). Partner (b) will provide own funding to cover another part of the expenses of partner (c); these additional funds coming from (b) can count towards third party contribution to innovation team funding.

### 8.3 Contributions that do not count as third-party contributions

Third-party contributions cannot include:

- 1) **Cash self-contributions:** Partner-to-partner contributions made by a beneficiary of Innosuisse or third-party contributions
- 2) **In-kind contributions:** Contributions provided in the form of goods or services
- 3) **Public contributions:** Contributions from the public sector or from public actors

**EXAMPLE:** An innovation team is composed of a research partner (a) and an implementation partner (b). While partner (a) receives financial support from the IB, the financial support is then split between both partners (a) and (b). In addition, partner (b) contributes to the idea verification with partner-to-partner and in-kind contributions (hours worked on the idea). These funds do not count as third-party contributions to the IB.

## 9 Financial planning

### Key points in this chapter:

- 1) IBs submit a four-year budget plan with their application ([9.1](#))
- 2) Programme funding is limited by a cost ceiling covering the whole funding period and two two-year cost ceilings ([9.2](#))
- 3) The definitive second two-year cost ceiling is determined at the midterm review ([9.2](#))
- 4) Within the limits of their two-year cost ceiling, IBs can reallocate unused funds of up to 15% of the first-year total budget to the second year without permission and funds of more than 15% with Innosuisse approval ([9.4](#))

### 9.1 Budget plan

With the application, the IB submits a justified budget plan for the whole funding period. The funds requested must be reasonable in relation to the planned output and impact, take into account the evolution of the activities over time, and show the expected changes in income and expenses for the entire funding period.

The plan must demonstrate the following:

- 1) The annual funding requirement over the four years
- 2) The necessity of the funds requested for the planned activities
- 3) The use of funds according to purpose and cost type
- 4) An income mechanism to generate third-party contributions.

**Important:** The total amount of Innosuisse contributions is limited to a maximum of CHF 500,000 per year. The IB budget can be lower than this amount, but will represent a cost-ceiling available for the IB over the four years and in principle will not be raised after approval. Within the approved amount, Innosuisse contributions to innovation team funding must amount to at least 50% or more of the total Innosuisse contributions over the entire funding period.

### 9.2 Cost ceilings

Based on the plan submitted with the application, Innosuisse determines the cost ceiling for the entire funding period as well as the cost ceiling for the first two years of activity. The definitive cost ceiling for the second half of the funding period will be determined at the midterm review ([10.7](#)).

Year 1	Year 1	Year 3	Year 4
<b>Cost ceiling for the whole funding period</b> Determined in contract before the start of activities			
<b>1<sup>st</sup> two-year cost ceiling</b> Determined before the start of activities		<b>2<sup>nd</sup> two-year cost ceiling</b> Definitively determined at midterm review	



Together, the cost ceilings for the first two years and the last two years cannot exceed the total contractual cost ceiling for the funding period. The actual Innosuisse contributions may be equal to or lower than the maximum Innosuisse contributions defined by the cost ceilings; Innosuisse will only reimburse the eligible costs defined by the guidelines for programme funding ([6.2](#)) and innovation team funding ([6.3](#)).

### 9.3 Annual budgets

Before the start of each year's activities, the IB proposes a detailed budget for the following year to show how it plans to allocate resources over the course of the year. The degree to which the IB can follow this plan successfully or whether changes in the financial plan are justified will be a criterion relevant for the assessment at the midterm review ([10.7](#)).

### 9.4 Budget flexibility

While the annual budgets are an important element in the IBs' planning and evaluation and IBs must stay within the two-year cost-ceiling, Innosuisse contributions to programme funding not used at the end of the first of each two-years period can be easily reallocated by the IB on the second-year budget. For unused amounts higher than 15% of the first-year total budget, a written communication to Innosuisse is necessary and Innosuisse approval is needed.

In order to re-activate unused funds from the first two-year cost ceiling (both programme funding and innovation team funding), IBs can propose before the midterm review to reinvest them during the second half of the funding period. The Innovation Council will evaluate the IBs' proposal during the midterm review process ([10.7](#)) and could increase the budget for the second half of the funding period accordingly. Note that in the frame of the midterm review process the remaining budget could also be reduced.

EXAMPLE: An IB ends the first year of activity having used CHF 210'000 of their CHF 225'000 cost ceiling to programme funding. They can, without the explicit approval from Innosuisse, reallocate the unused CHF 15'000 to their programme funding budget in the second year of activity.

EXAMPLE 2: An IB ends the first half of the funding period having used CHF 980'000 of their CHF 1'000'000 cost-ceiling (including both programme and innovation team funding). They ask the Innovation Council to reinvest the unused CHF 20'000 in years 3 and 4 and might be allowed to reallocate this amount for the second half of their funding period.



## 10 Performance evaluation

### Key points in this chapter:

- 1) Innosuisse evaluates IBs annually based on key performance indicators ([10.2](#)) and based on the assessment of the accompanying experts ([10.6](#))
- 2) Each year, IBs discuss and analyse their performance in a retrospective meeting with their experts ([10.5](#))
- 3) After two years, IBs undergo a midterm review with a go/no-go decision ([10.7](#))

Innosuisse, together with the IBs, strives to achieve the highest possible efficiency and effectiveness of the resources used in order to achieve the greatest possible impact. To this effect, Innosuisse annually evaluates IBs based on the set KPI targets and the annual report. In addition, a midterm review involving a go/no-go decision on whether to continue or discontinue the initiative takes place after two years.

### 10.1 Output objectives

IBs set annual output objectives indicating their planned annual output. These objectives will not have an automatic impact on the IB's annual evaluation score, but illustrate the plan and ambition of the IB. The numbers provided should be realistic and should justify to the budget invested.

### 10.2 Key performance indicators

The performance of each IB will be evaluated after each year of operation on the basis of key performance indicators (KPIs). The KPIs will focus on the success of the activities outlined in chapter 4 such as the identification of challenge, the exploration of problems, and the testing of ideas for radical solutions in innovation teams.

### 10.3 Accompaniment by Innosuisse experts

Each IB is accompanied by two experts from Innosuisse. They get an impression by attending activities of the IB and assess its development and expected achievements. The experts pay particular attention to the maturity and further development of the IB.

**Important:** IBs should proactively inform their experts about planned and upcoming events and activities as well as significant changes in their annual planning.



## 10.4 Provisional report

By October 31 each year, IBs submit their provisional report including attachments with status as of 30 September. The provisional report is the basis for the retrospective meeting in November.

As part of the provisional report, IBs submit a proposal for the budget and the output objectives for the following year to be discussed with their experts at the retrospective meeting.

## 10.5 Retrospective meeting

The annual retrospective between the experts and the IBs must be held in November each year. It is a review of the IB's performance during first three quarters and an outlook for the last quarter as well as a discussion of the budget and output objectives for the following year. It is all about the culture of improvement and learning that Innosuisse wants to cultivate with the IBs.

**Important:** IBs must get in touch with their experts to set a date for the retrospective meeting and inform the Innosuisse office of the date by April 30 each year. When scheduling the meeting, please plan at least 5 work days between the submission of the provisional reports by the IBs (by October 31) and the retrospective meeting (in November).

## 10.6 Expert assessment and evaluation

The two Innosuisse experts assigned to the IB add their comments and assessments directly to the completed provisional report ([10.4](#)) of their IB. They do so before the retrospective meeting ([10.5](#)) takes place. The document serves as a basis for discussion at the retrospective; the assessments are openly communicated.

After the retrospective, the two experts will have a final discussion and enter their joint overall assessment in the document.

## 10.7 Midterm review and "go/no-go" decision

At the end of the second year, an in-depth assessment of the development of the IB will be carried out (see Article 13 paragraph 2 of the implementing provisions for networking activities of 2 September 2022, entering into force on 1 January 2023). The first annual final report ([10.8](#)), the provisional report ([10.4](#)) of the second year and the continuous assessments of the Innosuisse experts form the basis for this. An extra assessment is made by the experts as to whether the IB has the potential to achieve its objectives detailed in the original application in the second half of their funding period.

In addition, Innosuisse can have a review carried out by third parties and conduct surveys among the actors involved. Innosuisse makes the results available to the leading house as part of the improvement and learning culture.



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If the forecasts are good, Innosuisse takes a “go” decision for the last two years of funding and can, at the request of the IB, release funds that were not used in the first two years. These are then additionally available to the IB for the remaining time. In this case, the cost-ceiling for the second two-year period specified in the IB contract will be adjusted accordingly.

In the event of insufficient IB performance, unfavourable forecasts and/or breaches of the contract and principles of the programme, Innosuisse may adjust the two-year cost ceiling for the second half of the funding period accordingly or dissolve the contractual relationship.

## 10.8 Final report

The IBs submit the complete final annual report to the Innosuisse office via SharePoint by **31 January**. The definitive annual report contains all the information already requested in the provisional report, but updated to include all results until December 31<sup>st</sup>.



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## **11 Peer exchange**

### **11.1 Annual exchange of experience**

At Innosuisse's annual exchange of experience in autumn, the IBs will present their achievements and challenges and engage in formats to work on common topics. The exchange between the IBs, experts, and the Innosuisse office supports a culture of improvement and learning within the IB instrument.

Special preparation tasks for each exchange will be formulated by the Innosuisse office and communicated to all IBs ahead of each exchange.

### **11.2 Other formats organised by Innosuisse office**

During the IB performance year, Innosuisse may organise additional exchange formats and need-oriented workshops to which all IBs attend and make active contributions.