European Commission

European Committee of the Regions

Call for expression of interest to develop Regional Innovation Valleys

To all EU regions and territories,

A complex geopolitical situation and the heightened global competition call for **a stronger and more advanced European innovation ecosystem connecting all EU territories**, to address Europe's societal challenges, and to foster stronger cohesion. The **New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA)** aims to address these challenges by harnessing the potential of deep tech innovation across the different EU territories, highlighting the need to accelerate and strengthen innovation in European innovation systems, and addressing the innovation divide by fostering interconnected regional innovation valleys.

One key action under NEIA is to identify up to 100 regions committed to enhance the coordination and direction of their research, innovation and policies, at regional level and expect these regions to prioritise three to four inter-regional innovation projects including in deep tech innovation, linked to key EU priorities. We will build on over 180 national and regional Smart Specialisation Strategies and, where applicable, on the participation in the pilot action Partnerships for Regional Innovation (PRIs).

We call on all regions in the European Union to express their interest to become regional innovation valleys.

If your region is willing to join the endeavour, we invite you to set out your commitment in the The New European Innovation Agenda (europa.eu) by 18th September 2023, indicating the priorities in which you would like to engage in interregional innovation collaboration and projects. Participating regions will be requested to complement their initial input with additional information after the closure of the call for expression of interest. For more information, do not hesitate to refer to the RTD-REGIO-REGIONAL-INNOVATION-VALLEYS@ec.europa.eu.

In this context, the European Commission will also launch two calls for proposals on 17th May 2023 under the European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE), part of Horizon Europe, and the Interregional Innovative Investments (I3) of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Altogether, the Commission intends to devote €170 million, €100 million and €70 million respectively, with an emphasis on addressing the innovation divide.

Join us in this effort to change Europe's innovation landscape! Become a regional innovation valley!