

Call for expression of interests

for InnoStars Expert Pool

Version 2.0
31 August 2026

1. Overview of InnoStars

InnoStars (“InnoStars”) is a non-profit association dedicated to strengthening health and life sciences innovation capacity in emerging and moderate innovation regions. As a Life Sciences Cluster, InnoStars supports regional innovation ecosystems through international collaboration, connecting start-ups, researchers, institutions and public stakeholders with knowledge, partnerships and opportunities that help innovation grow. InnoStars operates across Europe, with local presence in Hungary, Italy, Poland and Portugal. Its partners represent industry, academia, hospitals and research centres.

For more information please visit <https://innostars.org/>

2. Subject of the call for expression of interest

InnoStars is updating its database of external experts consisting of both natural persons and legal entities for its various business needs, primarily (but not exclusively) to support:

- Assessing applications for cascade funding projects
- Evaluating proposals received in response to a Call for Proposals when selecting beneficiaries for a competition/ programme/ training, etc
- Evaluating Business Plans and pitch decks prepared by start-ups
- Participating as a jury member in various competitions organised by InnoStars
- Providing regulatory and market access, commercialisation and technology transfer expertise
- Providing Mentoring, training, and coaching
- Acting as Moderators, facilitators, and speakers for online or in-person events workshops, 1:1 meetings, webinars for beneficiaries, partners or start-up teams
- Providing in-depth expertise to InnoStars and InnoStars’ partners in their innovation projects
- Providing expert opinions and advice on specific issues relevant to InnoStars’ activities

List of expertise sought includes, but not limited to the following:

- a) Health industry specific expertise, including:
 - Biotech/Pharma
 - Digital Health
 - MedTech
 - Healthcare and Research expertise
 - Healthcare systems
 - Clinical specializations
- b) General business expertise, including:
 - Business/Commercial expertise
 - Financial expertise
 - Public and private funding
 - Legal expertise
 - Organisational expertise
- c) General Innovation expertise
- d) Education expertise
- e) Other/non-healthcare specific areas

For detailed list of experience sought within each category, please see the Submission Form (Annex 1) attached.

Please note: you may only select a maximum of fifteen different expertise from the list. Applicants should select only those areas for which they can demonstrate relevant professional experience and expertise.

3. Place of delivery

The expert services shall primarily be provided remotely. Participation in meetings at a physical location may also be requested; applicable requirements are to be specified in the relevant invitation to assignment document.

The related communications are mainly via e-mails, online collaborative solutions and platforms, telephone or videoconference calls (platforms are provided by InnoStars).

The official working language of InnoStars is English.

4. Registration procedure

Registration for this Call for expression of interest is permanently open until the end of 2029. InnoStars reserves the right to extend use of applications beyond that date subject to financial coverage.

Applications shall be submitted electronically to: procurement@innostars.org with the following wording in the subject field: **'Call for expressions of interest - InnoStars Expert Pool'**, along with the documents attached as described in **Section 5**.

InnoStars aims to assess complete applications and provide feedback within one month of receipt. This period may be extended where additional information or clarification is required.

Applicants accepted into the expert pool will be requested to sign a Service Agreement, depending on whether the application is submitted as a natural person or legal entity.

Inclusion in the expert pool and the signature of a Service Agreement do not create any obligation on the part of InnoStars to offer assignments or to procure any minimum volume of services. This will depend on InnoStars' operational needs and the fulfilment of certain requirements (selection procedure for assignments described in Section 6).

Additional selection or allocation mechanisms may apply to individual assignments, including rotation, consideration of the number of assignments previously received, or other assignment-specific criteria.

5. Information and documents to be provided

The following information/documents shall be provided to InnoStars to be accepted to the pool of experts:

- Submission form (see Annex 1 attached) – please make sure you fill in both the 'Application form' and the 'List of expertise' tabs, selecting at least one expertise, with references to your CV for each selected area
- Up-to-date CV and if possible, supporting documents/evidences proving that the applicant fulfils the requirements related to the profile(s) they are applying for;
- Signed Code of Conduct document (see Annex 2 attached).

InnoStars may request additional information, clarification or supporting documentation where necessary to verify the information provided in the application or to assess the applicant's eligibility, expertise or independence.

Applications that are incomplete or do not provide sufficient evidence of the claimed expertise may be rejected or returned to the applicant for clarification.

6. General description of the procedure

The procedure consists of the following main stages:

a) Registration and assessment

Applications are requested to be submitted in accordance with the requirements of this Call. InnoStars assesses applications against the applicable exclusion and selection criteria and reviews whether selected expertise' are verifiable and justifiable with the references and the CV submitted; where the requirements are met, includes eligible experts in the expert pool database.

b) Identification of experts for individual assignments

When an expert service is required, InnoStars identifies one or more experts from the expert database whose expertise, experience and other relevant characteristics correspond to the requirements of the assignment.

c) Assignment-specific selection

Selection for an individual assignment shall be based on the specific requirements and objective evaluation criteria established for the assignment. Depending on the nature of the assignment, these may include relevant expertise and experience, availability, demonstrated quality of previous work, independence, absence of conflicts of interest, rotation and/or remuneration or price where applicable.

The Invitation to Assignment shall specify, as applicable, the scope of work, tasks, expected deliverables, timeline, remuneration and reimbursement conditions (if not part of the evaluation criteria), and any other relevant requirements.

d) Confirmation and assignment

Experts selected for an assignment shall confirm their interest and availability and return the applicable Invitation to Assignment (or other assignment) document duly signed.

e) Performance and completion

The expert shall perform the assignment in accordance with the agreed upon requirements and deadlines. InnoStars may monitor the expert's performance during the assignment and shall assess the completion and quality of the services provided.

f) Payment and performance record

Payment shall be made following acceptance of the services and the fulfilment of the applicable contractual and documentation requirements. Information on the expert's performance may be retained and considered in the selection of experts for future assignments. Please note: Experts' individual performance will be monitored and reviewed during and after the assignments; results would be used when selecting experts for further works.

7. Protection of personal data

The processing of applications involves the collection, recording and processing of personal data, such as the applicant's name, contact details, professional information and CV, in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR) and other applicable data protection legislation.

Unless otherwise indicated, the personal data provided by applicants will be processed by InnoStars for the purposes of assessing applications, establishing and maintaining the expert database, and managing potential expert assignments.

8. Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest

Experts shall treat as confidential all information and documentation received in connection with an application, selection procedure or assignment and shall not disclose or use such information except as necessary for the performance of the relevant assignment and in accordance with the applicable contractual obligations.

Before accepting an individual assignment, the selected expert shall confirm that no actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest exists in relation to the assignment. The expert shall immediately notify InnoStars if any such conflict arises during the assignment.

InnoStars may replace or withdraw an expert from an assignment where a conflict of interest or other circumstance arises that may affect the expert's independence, objectivity or ability to perform the assignment appropriately.

9. Appeal and Complaint procedure

Applicants who consider that they have been harmed by an error or irregularity during the selection/award process (as part of a selection or procurement procedure, or that the procedure was vitiated by any maladministration) may file a complaint. Appeals should be addressed to InnoStars at innostars.procurement@innostars.org in writing and shall clearly state the decision or procedural step concerned and the grounds of the complaint.

Complaints shall be reviewed in accordance with the applicable InnoStars internal procedures and procurement rules.

The submission of a complaint shall not automatically suspend an ongoing procedure or assignment.

10. Use and duration of the Expert Pool

The expert pool established through this Call shall be used for the selection and engagement of external experts for the types of services and areas of expertise described in Section 2 and Annex 1.

Individual assignments may only be awarded in accordance with the applicable InnoStars procurement and financial rules and within the applicable contractual and financial thresholds.

Where the applicable thresholds are reached or the anticipated value of an assignment exceeds the limits applicable to the database procedure, InnoStars shall apply the relevant procurement procedure in accordance with its applicable procurement rules.

The database resulting from this call is valid until the end of 2029. Subject to financial coverage InnoStars reserves the right to extend this duration.

11. Exclusion criteria

Experts shall be excluded from participation if:

- they are subject to bankruptcy, winding up, court-ordered administration, arrangement with creditors, suspension of business activities or similar procedures
- they are in breach of social security or tax obligations
- they are guilty of grave professional misconduct (Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage)
- they have committed fraud, corruption, participation in a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking
- they have shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar
- they are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 on the protection of the European Communities financial interests
- they have created an entity under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin
- they have an actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest at the commencement or at any time during the entire duration of the contract; a conflict of interest could arise in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

Before signing a contract, experts shall provide a signed Code of Conduct (See Annex 2 attached) with its declarations, stating that they are not in one of the situations of exclusion listed above. In case of doubt, experts may be requested to provide supporting evidence of non-exclusion.

12. Selection criteria

Experts expected to have:

- duly documented experience of minimum three years in at least one of the areas listed in the Submission Form
- **relevant and demonstrable professional expertise** corresponding to the area(s) selected in the application;
- clear and advanced writing and verbal skills in English
- the ability to perform assignments independently, objectively and professionally

Additional requirements are to be established for individual assignments, including specific sectoral, technical, professional, language, geographical or availability requirements.

13. Conditions of remuneration and reimbursement of experts

The experts will be paid as per the actual Invitation to assignment with InnoStars (unless pricing is requested from expert as part of the evaluation criteria when selection). Depending on the nature of the assignment, remuneration may be established as a daily or hourly rate, a fixed fee, or another appropriate basis. Where relevant, InnoStars may use European Commission expert remuneration levels or other appropriate market benchmarks as a reference when determining or assessing the applicable remuneration. The main condition of payment for an expert fee paid is that the provided

assistance specific to the project/activity concerned and reflected in related documentation, for example, minutes, e-mails, evaluations on and offline are fulfilled on time and in the desired quality.

If the activity takes place offline or at the premises of InnoStars, the expert is entitled to reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses, as per the actual Invitation to assignment document.

The travel shall be organised on the basis of the most appropriate means of transport and trying to benefit from the most economical travel rates; public transport options are preferred options wherever possible.

Travel expenses shall be reimbursed on the basis of the actual travel policy of InnoStars (please see Annex 3 attached). Daily subsistence allowance is not provided by InnoStars.

Reimbursements/payments are always subject to the approval of InnoStars via a performance certificate.

14. Suspension or Removal from the Expert Pool

InnoStars may suspend or remove an expert from the database where:

- the expert no longer meets the applicable eligibility or selection requirements;
- the expert has not updated its CV for more than 4 years, therefore their contract with InnoStars expires without renewal;
- information submitted in the application is found to be substantially inaccurate, incomplete or misleading;
- the expert becomes subject to an exclusion criterion;
- a conflict of interest arises that cannot be appropriately managed;
- the expert materially fails to comply with contractual, confidentiality or other applicable obligations; or
- the quality or timeliness of services provided under previous assignments is repeatedly unsatisfactory.

Experts may also request removal from the database by notifying InnoStars in writing.

15. Liability and General Provisions

The rights and obligations of InnoStars and the expert, including their respective liability in connection with the performance of the services, shall be governed by the applicable Service Agreement and the applicable law.

Annexes:

Annex 1: Submission Form

Annex 2: Code of Conduct

Annex 3: Travel policy for experts