



InnoMatch

Powered by EIC Innovation Procurement Programme

Deliverable 3.1. – Report of the Open Call for Public and Private Buyers

29/08/2025



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D3.1. Open Call for Buyers Report

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Abstract	This report highlights the applications received as part of the Open Call for Public and Private Buyers launched by the InnoMatch Project from February to June 2025. It describes the main types of applications received, the dissemination of the Open Call, as well as the winners and next steps.
Keywords	open call buyers, private buyers, public buyers, unmet need

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ABBREVIATIONS

EIC	European Innovation Council
EIC IPP	EIC Innovation Procurement Programme
OC1	Open Call for EIC Awardee+Buyer
OC2	Open Call for Public and Private Buyers
OC Buyers	Open Call for Public and Private Buyers

Executive summary

- **Open Call for Public and Private Buyers: objectives and scope**

The [InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers](#) was launched in February 2025 as part of the broader [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme](#), supported by the [European Innovation Council](#). Its core objective was to attract and identify unmet innovation needs from a diverse range of European public and private sector buyers, spanning five key thematic areas: Agriculture, Food & Beverages; Construction, Infrastructure & Manufacturing; Digital Transformation & AI; Energy, Environment & Mobility; and Health & Life Sciences.

This Open Call served as a critical first step in the InnoMatch initiative, aimed at identifying real, pressing needs faced by public administrations, hospitals, municipalities, and private enterprises in the mentioned sectors. Through the design of this Open Call, a clear and structured roadmap was established to guide selected buyers through the subsequent stages of their participation.

The buyers selected through this Open Call and their identified unmet needs will now undergo a grouping and mentorship process through which they will be refined into actionable and publishable challenge statements, setting the foundation for a subsequent **Open Call targeting EIC Awardees**.

- **Key results of the Open Call for Public and Private Buyers**

A total of **35 applications** were received from **14 countries**, reflecting a wide geographic and sectoral interest in the InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers. Of these, **25 applications were deemed eligible**, covering all five thematic areas, with the highest number submitted under Energy, Environment & Sustainability, followed by Digital Transformation & AI areas. The applicant pool included both public and private sector buyers, with **private entities making up the majority**. This strong response highlights the relevance of the call and the growing demand for innovation procurement across Europe.

- **High-level findings from the evaluation process**

The evaluation process of the InnoMatch Open Call (conducted by external evaluators) revealed strong engagement from both public and private sector buyers. Most proposals demonstrated a **strong commitment to undergoing the InnoMatch Initiative**, with well-articulated unmet needs and internal capacity to support pilot deployments.

While the overall quality of eligible proposals was high, evaluators noted some **variation in the maturity and clarity of submitted needs**. Additionally, the relatively low number of **group applications** highlights potential challenges in cross-organisational collaboration at the submission stage, suggesting a need for increased support in the grouping phase of the Open Call process.

- **Main conclusions and recommendations for next steps**

The Open Call for Buyers demonstrated strong interest and wide thematic and geographic participation, resulting in **25 eligible applications**. While this confirms the relevance of the initiative, the limited number of group submissions and variation in proposal maturity point to the need for targeted support in the next phase of the Open Call.

To move forward, the InnoMatch Consortium will: (1) actively facilitate the grouping of buyers around shared needs, (2) provide tailored mentoring to refine unmet needs into clear innovation challenges, (3) prepare and promote the upcoming Open Call for EIC Awardees, (4) continue engaging all applicants through learning activities, and (5) maintain flexibility to activate reserve list applicants if needed.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of the deliverable

This deliverable reports on the **objectives, implementation, and results** of the InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers. It presents the procedural design, communication strategies, application outcomes, and evaluation process, concluding with key conclusions and lessons learned.

1.2 The InnoMatch Initiative context

The InnoMatch initiative, part of the [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme](#) (funded by the [European Innovation Council](#)), supports the adoption of innovation among both public and private buyers, and EIC Awardees, including deep-tech SMEs and start-ups capable of delivering innovative solutions. To this end, it funds pilot or proof-of-concept projects proposed by EIC Awardees to address the unmet needs of selected buyers, while also creating networking opportunities and facilitating EIC Awardees' access to procurement markets.

1.3 Role of the Open Call in achieving project objectives

The Open Call served as the critical entry point for identifying real-world unmet needs from buyers, which will be translated into innovation challenges. These challenges will drive the subsequent selection of EIC Awardees for pilot deployments or POC demonstrations.

1.4 Structure of the document

This deliverable contains the following sections:

- **Section 1** introduces the context and structure of the Open Call.
- **Section 2** details the call design and preparation, including key elements such as the award criteria, the open call documentation and the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
- **Section 3** reviews dissemination efforts developed by the InnoMatch Consortium, as well as the application submission process.
- **Section 4** covers evaluation and selection processes.
- **Section 5** presents the results (applications received) as part of this Open Call.
- **Section 6** concludes with lessons learned and next steps.
- **Annexes** provide supporting documentation.

2 Open Call design and preparation

2.1 Open Call Objectives and Thematic Focus

The [InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers](#) was launched in February 2025 as part of the broader [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme](#), supported by the [European Innovation Council](#). Its core objective was to attract and identify unmet innovation needs from a diverse range of European public and private sector buyers.

The call targeted unmet needs within five areas:

1. Agriculture, Food & Beverages
2. Construction, Infrastructure & Manufacturing
3. Digital Transformation & AI
4. Energy, Environment & Sustainability
5. Health and Life Sciences

2.2 InnoMatch support for selected entities

The [Guidelines for Applicants](#) published as part of OC2, outlined the recruitment process for buyers, while also highlighting several benefits for those involved and detailing the support provided to selected candidates. These include:

- **Tailored matchmaking opportunities.** Buyers may be matched with other organisations facing similar challenges, fostering collaboration and shared learning to address common needs more effectively. Groups will be created according to relevant thematic areas.
- **Challenge refinement and expert support.** Buyers will undergo both collective training and individualised mentorship to evolve their initially submitted unmet need into an advanced challenge statement. This is a refined version of their initial unmet need that can be understood by an EIC Awardee. Resources include online training, sharing of examples and tailored recommendations to improve their initial submission, as well as direct mentoring within buyers' groups.
- **Access to innovation procurement resources.** Buyers will have exclusive access to a comprehensive repository of innovation procurement tools, best practices, and resources, enabling them to make informed decisions throughout the process.
- **Solutions tailored to their specific needs.** InnoMatch will help buyers identify and engage the right suppliers EIC Awardees to develop tailored solutions that address their challenges.
- **Expert support** to implement the InnoMatch Programme: Prepare, Deploy and Assess.
- **Support to maximise impact & growth.** InnoMatch will guide buyers and EIC Awardees to plan for sustainability after the project, increasing the chances that successful pilots are adopted.

In particular, selected buyers as part of this Open Call will undergo the following process:



FIGURE 1. TIMELINE FOR SELECTED UNMET NEEDS

- **Grouping of buyers (September – October 2025).** With the support of the InnoMatch mentors, the single and group applications will be aggregated into max five groups, sharing the same or similar innovation needs, if applicable.
- **Identification of challenges (October – December 2025).** After buyers have been aggregated under the guidance of the InnoMatch Consortium, they will start an interactive process. This will consist of a collective training and individualised mentorship to evolve the initially submitted unmet need into an advanced, public-facing challenge statement.
- **Selection of the innovative solution (April – May 2026).** After the closing of the Open Call for EIC Awardees, a final selection process will take place to select the most appropriate innovative solution for each of the identified challenges.

2.3 Call timeline and key dates

The Open Call was launched the **6th of February 2025** and was initially designed as a three-month Open Call, with an initial deadline set the **8th of May, 2025 at 17.00 CET** (Brussels time). During the Open Call, the InnoMatch Consortium agreed with the Funding Authority to extend this timeline up to four months, due to the reasons detailed in [Section 6.3. – Deviations](#).

The Open Call for Public and Private Buyers officially closed the **6th of June 2025 at 17.00 CET** (Brussels time).

Description	Timeline
Open Call duration	The initial timeframe for this Open Call to receive applications was set for 3 (three) months. This was extended to 4 (four months) after a decision of extension of one month was agreed with the Funding Authority.
Open Call deadline	The Open Call officially closed on 06.06.2025, 17.00 CET (Brussels time).
Eligibility check	The eligibility check was carried out during five days: from the closing of the Open Call (6 June 2025) until the 13th of June.

Evaluation and selection of unmet needs	The external evaluation process was conducted from the 13th to the 23rd of June 2025 .

TABLE 1: TIMELINE OF THE OPEN CALL FOR BUYERS.

2.4 Eligibility, selection, and award criteria

The [Guidelines for Applicants](#) published in the InnoMatch website provided a detailed overview of the eligibility requirements and award criteria.

2.4.1 Eligibility criteria

These criteria determined which applicants were permitted to participate in the call and move forward to the evaluation phase. Five eligibility criteria were established:

Eligibility criteria	Description
Public or private buyers	The call was open to both public and private sector buyers, in accordance with EU procurement and innovation support frameworks. • Public buyers included contracting authorities, central and sub-central government bodies, agencies, and other public sector entities as defined by Article 2 of Directive 2014/24/EU. • Private buyers referred to legally registered private-sector organisations, including SMEs or large enterprises.
Eligible countries	Applicants were required to be legally established in one of the following: • EU Member States, including their outermost regions;

	• Horizon Europe Associated Countries, as listed in the latest official documentation from the European Commission. Applications from entities based in non-eligible countries or without proper legal establishment in one of the eligible territories were not considered.
Thematic areas	To ensure strategic alignment with the goals of the European Innovation Council (EIC) Innovation Procurement Programme, submitted unmet needs had to clearly fall within one of the following five predefined thematic areas: (1) Agriculture, Food & Beverages; (2) Construction, Infrastructure & Manufacturing; (3) Digital Transformation & AI; (4) Energy, Environment & Sustainability; and (5) Health & Life Sciences.
Submission format	Applicants could submit their proposals in one or more of the following formats: • Individual application: Submitted by a single buyer identifying a unique unmet innovation need. • Group application: Submitted by a lead applicant on behalf of two or more buyers who share a similar unmet innovation need. These options were not mutually exclusive. Each buyer was permitted to: • Submit one (1) individual application; • Submit one (1) group application as the main (submitting) applicant; • Participate in multiple group applications as an observing (non-submitting) buyer, without any limit on the number of such participations.
Language	All application materials, including the online application form and the mandatory Letter of Commitment, had to be submitted in English, which was the official language of the Open Call and the InnoMatch Programme.

TABLE 2: ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR THE OPEN CALL FOR BUYERS.

2.4.2 Award criteria

Applications that passed the eligibility check were evaluated based on four core award criteria designed to assess the quality of the proposed unmet innovation needs. Each application was independently reviewed by two external experts with relevant sectoral and procurement expertise, whose profiles can be consulted under [Section 4.2](#). Evaluators assessed the degree

to which each application aligned with the objectives of the InnoMatch programme and the potential for impactful, scalable outcomes through a future pilot deployment.

Each criterion was scored on a scale from 0 to 5, and weighted differently depending on its significance. A minimum threshold of **3 out of 5** was required for each individual criterion, and an **overall score of at least 12 points** was needed for the proposal to be considered for selection.

Criterion	Weight	Description
Commitment and Team	40%	This criterion assesses the level of internal engagement and readiness within the applicant organisation. Evaluators looked for demonstrated awareness and support from top management, indications of long-term interest in adopting the solution (e.g., future procurement potential), and the allocation of in-kind resources such as staff time, infrastructure, or facilities. Past involvement in EIC procurement activities was considered an added value. This information was further explained by the buyers in the Letter of Commitment.
Impact and Business Opportunity	20%	Evaluates the significance of the unmet need and the expected impact of solving it. This includes potential benefits to the applicant organisation, users, and/or citizens, as well as broader economic, social, or environmental outcomes. Consideration was also given to how the need aligns with EU policies, values, and market opportunities.
Alignment	20%	Assesses how well the proposed need fits within the InnoMatch methodology and its “Prepare, Deploy and Assess” programme. Evaluators looked for feasibility of pilot deployment within the project’s 12-month timeframe and €60,000 budget. Flexibility in co-developing a challenge with other buyers and openness to collaborative work were positively scored.
Innovation & Experience	20%	Focuses on the novelty and market gap related to the identified need. Proposals were expected to demonstrate that the issue cannot currently be solved by widely available solutions. Evaluators also considered the

		applicant's prior experience in innovation-related activities or pilot projects, especially in cooperation with other organisations.

TABLE 3: AWARD CRITERIA OF THE OC FOR BUYERS.

The experts scored each award criterion on a scale from 0 to 5, as shown in the table below.

Score rate	Meaning	Description
0	Application fails	Application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1	Poor	The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2	Fair	The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3	Good	The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4	Very good	The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5	Excellent	The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

TABLE 4: INNOMATCH SCORES DESCRIPTION.

Applications were ranked based on their final weighted scores. In the event of ties, the Guidelines established the following prioritisation rules:

- **Higher score on Commitment & Team**, especially for buyers previously involved in EIC Innovation Procurement initiatives.

- **Higher score on Impact & Business Opportunity**, in case the first criterion still results in a tie.

2.5 Call documentation and supporting materials

To ensure clarity, transparency, and consistency throughout the application and evaluation process, the **InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers** was accompanied by a comprehensive set of documentation:

- Guidelines for Applicants
- Application form (in the F6S Platform and read version)
- Letter of Commitment (template)
- Memorandum of Understanding (template)
- Action Plan (template)
- Letter of Commitment for Observing Buyers (template)

These materials were made publicly available on the InnoMatch website and the F6S Platform, and served as essential resources for applicants at all stages of the process, from preparation to submission.

2.5.1 Guidelines for Applicants

The primary reference document for all applicants was the [Guidelines for Applicants](#), which outlined in detail:

- The objectives and scope of the Open Call
- Eligibility and award criteria
- Thematic areas of focus
- Application process and timeline
- Roles and responsibilities of selected buyers
- Evaluation and selection procedures
- Legal and data protection considerations

This document served as the main source of information, and applicants were required to consult it thoroughly before preparing their submission.

2.5.2 Application form template

A **read-only version of the application form** was provided as a reference to help applicants prepare their responses before completing the official online form on the F6S Platform. The form included sections for:

- General organisational information
- Description of the unmet innovation need
- Expected impact
- Team structure and internal capacity
- Commitment and potential for adoption
- Alignment with the InnoMatch programme

All mandatory fields were clearly indicated, and applicants were advised to provide complete and concise responses supported by relevant evidence where applicable. An attached Letter of Commitment by the applicant was required.

2.5.3 Letter of Commitment template

Each application was required to include a **signed Letter of Commitment**, using the official template provided. This document demonstrated the buyer's readiness to participate in the InnoMatch process and outlined the in-kind contributions (e.g. staff time, facilities, internal coordination) the applicant would provide if selected.

For group applications, the lead applicant submitted a single letter on behalf of the group. Additional commitment letters from supporting group members and Observing Buyers were to be submitted only upon selection.

2.5.4 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

To support applicants and clarify common doubts, an evolving **FAQ section** was maintained and regularly updated on the F6S platform. It addressed recurring questions related to:

- Eligibility rules
- Submission process
- Group applications
- Letter of Commitment
- Thematic fit and challenge framing
- Evaluation methodology

The FAQ served as an additional support tool, complementing the formal guidelines and the established Open Call mailbox.

3 Call dissemination and application process

The InnoMatch Consortium followed the strategy developed as part of the **Deliverable 5.4 – Networking Strategy**, submitted to the Funding Authority in February 2025. This document outlined the main tools and activities to develop in terms of dissemination and recruitment of applicants for the InnoMatch Open Calls, also explained below.

3.1 Communication and promotion strategy

A targeted and multi-channel communication and promotion strategy was implemented to ensure wide visibility of the **Open Call for Public and Private Buyers** across Europe and Horizon Europe-associated countries. The strategy aimed to reach a diverse pool of potential applicants, including public administrations, private companies, healthcare institutions, municipalities, and other innovation-oriented organisations.

The main goals of the strategy were to:

- Raise awareness of the Open Call within the innovation procurement ecosystem.
- Clearly explain the application process, eligibility criteria, and thematic focus.
- Encourage participation from both public and private sector buyers.
- Facilitate access to guidance and support for potential applicants.

The promotional campaign was launched ahead of the official opening of the call and continued actively throughout the application phase, leveraging the networks of the InnoMatch Consortium and partner organisations.

3.2 Dissemination channels and activities

The InnoMatch Consortium leveraged both online and offline channels, complemented by targeted capacity-building activities designed to support applicants throughout the submission process.

- **Dedicated web section**

The open call was showcased on the project website through a dedicated [webpage](#) created for this purpose.

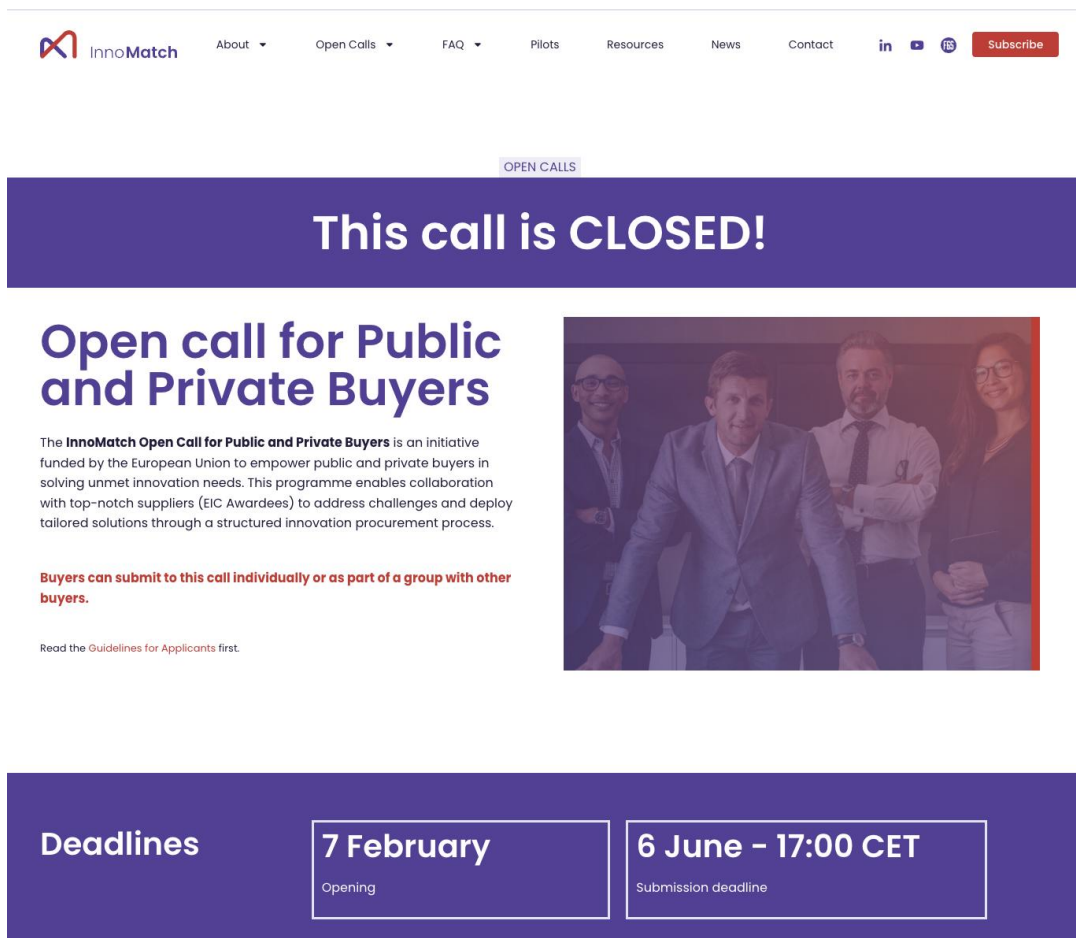
This new section included the goals of this initiative, the application deadline, the benefits for selected applicants, and a clear explanation of who was eligible to apply.

Additionally, the page featured a simple diagram of the InnoMatch process and a step-by-step guide on how to apply, complete with direct link to the F6S portal.

The evaluation criteria was presented, followed by a comprehensive documentation section that provided all the information and documents needed by applicants, such as the application guidelines. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section was also created to support all applicants in the first instance.

During the time the open call was open we've registered:

- 4K views
- 472 downloads for the guidelines for applicants



The screenshot displays the InnoMatch website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links: About, Open Calls, FAQ, Pilots, Resources, News, Contact, and social media icons (LinkedIn, YouTube, Instagram), along with a 'Subscribe' button. Below the navigation bar is a purple banner with the text 'This call is CLOSED!'. Underneath the banner, the main heading reads 'Open call for Public and Private Buyers'. The text below the heading states: 'The InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers is an initiative funded by the European Union to empower public and private buyers in solving unmet innovation needs. This programme enables collaboration with top-notch suppliers (EIC Awardees) to address challenges and deploy tailored solutions through a structured innovation procurement process.' A red line of text follows: 'Buyers can submit to this call individually or as part of a group with other buyers.' Below this is a link: 'Read the Guidelines for Applicants first.' To the right of the text is a photograph of four people (three men and one woman) standing together. At the bottom of the page is a purple section titled 'Deadlines' containing two white-bordered boxes. The first box says '7 February' with 'Opening' below it. The second box says '6 June - 17:00 CET' with 'Submission deadline' below it.

FIGURE 2: DEDICATED OC2 WEBSITE SECTION.

- **Social media campaign**

Active social media outreach was conducted via [InnoMatch's LinkedIn](#) channel. Posts promoted the call launch, application deadlines, webinar invitations, and capacity-building events. In addition, dedicated innovation procurement groups on LinkedIn **were used** to promote the open call and its related activities. The promotion of the open call itself on the project's LinkedIn page generated the following results:

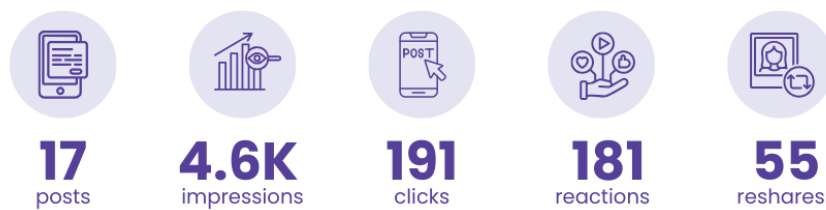
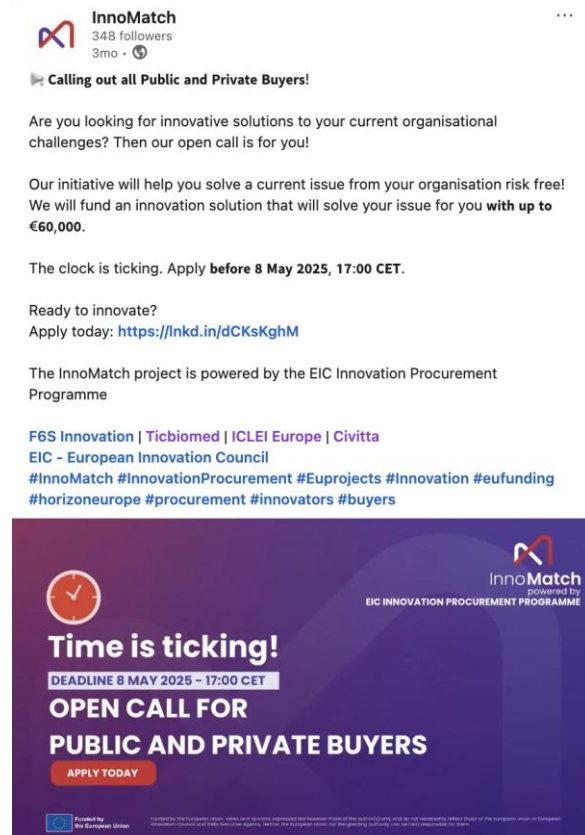
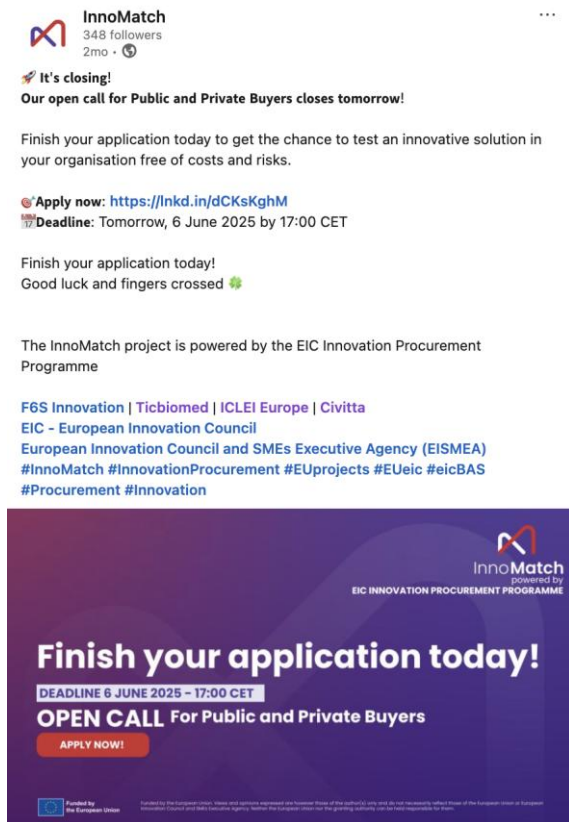


FIGURE 3: RESULTS OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN.



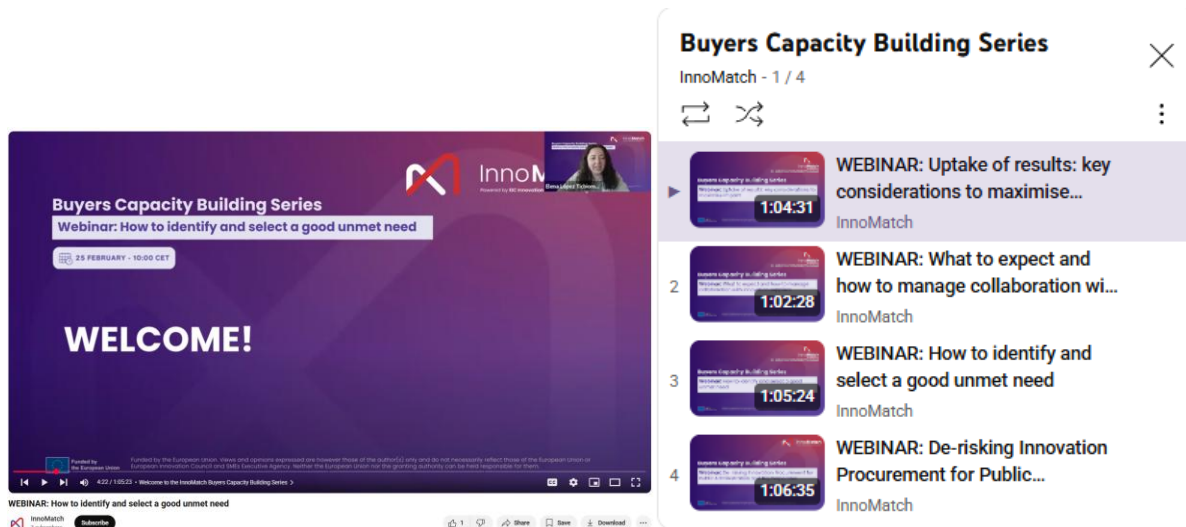
FIGURES 4 AND 5: OC2 SOCIAL MEDIA DISSEMINATION EFFORTS.

- **Buyers' Capacity Building Series and info-sessions**

As a key enabler of participation, the **Buyers' Capacity Building Series** empowered potential applicants with the knowledge and tools to succeed in innovation procurement. Organised and led by TicBiomed in collaboration with InnoMatch partners, the series comprised four in-depth webinars covering essential topics.

- [\(1\) De-risking innovation procurement for public administration and big corporates](#)
- [\(2\) How to identify and select a good unmet need](#)
- [\(3\) What to expect and how to manage collaboration with innovation suppliers](#)
- [\(4\) Uptake of results: key considerations to maximise impact](#)

Two info sessions were embedded in these webinars (number 2 and 4), further explained under [Section 3.4. Support for applicants.](#)



FIGURES 6 AND 7: CAPACITY BUILDING SERIES AVAILABLE IN IM'S YouTube CHANNEL.

- **Partner newsletters and direct outreach**

Emails and newsletters from the consortium's partner networks (e.g., innovation institutions, procurer networks, etc.) were used to promote the call:

- [Ticbiomed Newsletter – Open Calls & Webinar Information](#) (4 February 2025).
- AMETIC Newsletter – Information on the OCs (25 February 2025)
- [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme Newsletter](#) (March 31, 2025)
- [ICLEI Member Monthly](#) (16 April 2025)
- [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme Newsletter](#) (July 11, 2025)
- F6S Targeted newsletter (12,3K subscribers)
- F6S broadcast email sent to the wider NCPs network, EEN (Enterprise Europe Network), DIHs network (Digital Innovation Hubs), ECCP (European Cluster Collaboration Platform) network (1,9K subscribers).

Additionally, **direct outreach emails** were sent to contacts (both procurers and multipliers) in the partners' networks such as procurement networks, innovation hubs, and associations, encouraging organisations to apply or to disseminate the call further within their networks.

- **Pool of buyers registered in the Expression of Interest**

InnoMatch launched an early [Expression of Interest](#) that aimed at creating a pool of buyers interested in exploring the innovation procurement opportunities that InnoMatch offers. As a result, **23 buyers from the public and private sector** subscribed to the EU Survey and accepted

being included in the mailing list to receive updates and information about the project. Both Open Calls, as well as the matchmaking opportunities, were disseminated as part of this outreach through the official project mailbox (opencallbuyers@innomatchproject.eu).

- **Participation in external events**

In addition to dedicated webinars and online platforms, the InnoMatch team actively promoted the Open Call through participation in **external events, conferences, and webinars**. These venues offered valuable opportunities to directly engage with public and private buyers, innovation stakeholders, and procurement professionals across Europe. These include the following:

Event	Relevance
Procure4Health Impactful Innovation Working Group (26 February 2025)	Brings together active public buyers focused on impactful innovation in healthcare procurement, making it a strong peer forum to showcase InnoMatch as a tool to connect with suppliers.
4YFN > EIC BAS Support to Innovation Procurement (5th March 2025)	This EIC-led session attracted innovators and buyers interested in procurement support, offering a direct opportunity to position InnoMatch as a practical instrument for cross-border collaboration.
4YFN > Health Procurement Thematic InnovationEcosystem (6th March 2025)	Health-sector procurers and stakeholders in Barcelona's innovation hub were gathered, an ideal setting to promote InnoMatch within a thematic ecosystem already prepared for adoption.
Foro Transfiere (11-13 March 2025)	Spain's leading R&D and innovation brokerage event brings together buyers, suppliers, and policymakers, providing broad visibility to the Open Call among diverse procurement actors.
PPE+ Europe trainings (17-21 March 2025)	Training sessions engage procurers directly in capacity-building, offering a practical touchpoint to introduce InnoMatch as a complement to their learning journey.
NetZeroCities Webinar (19 March 2025)	Connects cities and buyers committed to climate-neutral solutions, a targeted audience where InnoMatch can support scaling of innovative procurement for sustainability.
Big Buyers Annual Event (24-26 March 2025)	The flagship event for large European procurers creates high-level visibility and strong peer-to-peer networking to promote the Open Call among influential buyers.

PROCURE (27 March 2025)	A cross-sector conference dedicated to procurement practice, offering a neutral platform to engage buyers from multiple fields and raise awareness about InnoMatch.
EIC Summit (1 April 2025)	High-profile EU event convening innovators, buyers, and policymakers, offering maximum visibility to the InnoMatch initiative across innovation ecosystems.
SPIN4EIC Academies (7-10 April 2025)	Hands-on academy format with strong SME participation, providing an opportunity to engage directly with participants and promote the Open Call in an applied setting.
PROCURE Innovation EU (9 April 2025)	Focused specifically on innovation procurement, making it a prime venue to introduce InnoMatch as a tool designed to strengthen buyer engagement and collaboration.
Cities Mission Conference (5-7 May 2025)	Brings together cities advancing the EU Missions agenda, a strategic forum for reaching procurers aligned with urban innovation and climate-neutrality goals.
Health Revolution Congress, session 'Public procurement of Innovation and Govtech in the health sector' (14 May, 2025)	Dedicated session on PPI and Govtech in health which ensured a highly relevant audience of health procurers and innovators, maximizing resonance for the InnoMatch promotion.

TABLE 5: EXTERNAL EVENTS ATTENDED TO PROMOTE OC2.

The pictures below show the participation of the Consortium Partners in some of the events mentioned above.



FIGURES 8 AND 9: ATTENDANCE TO EXTERNAL EVENTS TO PROMOTE INNOMATCH.

- **F6S Platform**

The Open Call was published and promoted on the F6S innovation portal, offering visibility and transparent access for applicants.

3.3 Application submission platform (F6S Platform)

The InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers was hosted on the **F6S platform** (www.f6s.com), a widely used online submission and innovation management tool for European and international funding programmes. The platform provided a centralised and user-friendly environment for managing the application process from registration to submission.

3.4 Support for applicants

The InnoMatch Consortium implemented a comprehensive **applicant support strategy** alongside the open call. This included:

- **Helpdesk and technical support**

A dedicated InnoMatch Helpdesk was available via email at opencallbuyers@innomatchproject.eu for questions regarding eligibility, documentation, or the evaluation process.

For F6S-specific technical issues, applicants were directed to support@f6s.com for assistance.

- **FAQ and clarifications**

A [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) section](#) was maintained and regularly updated on the InnoMatch website. Additionally, applicants could address their doubts through the F6S Platform discussion board.

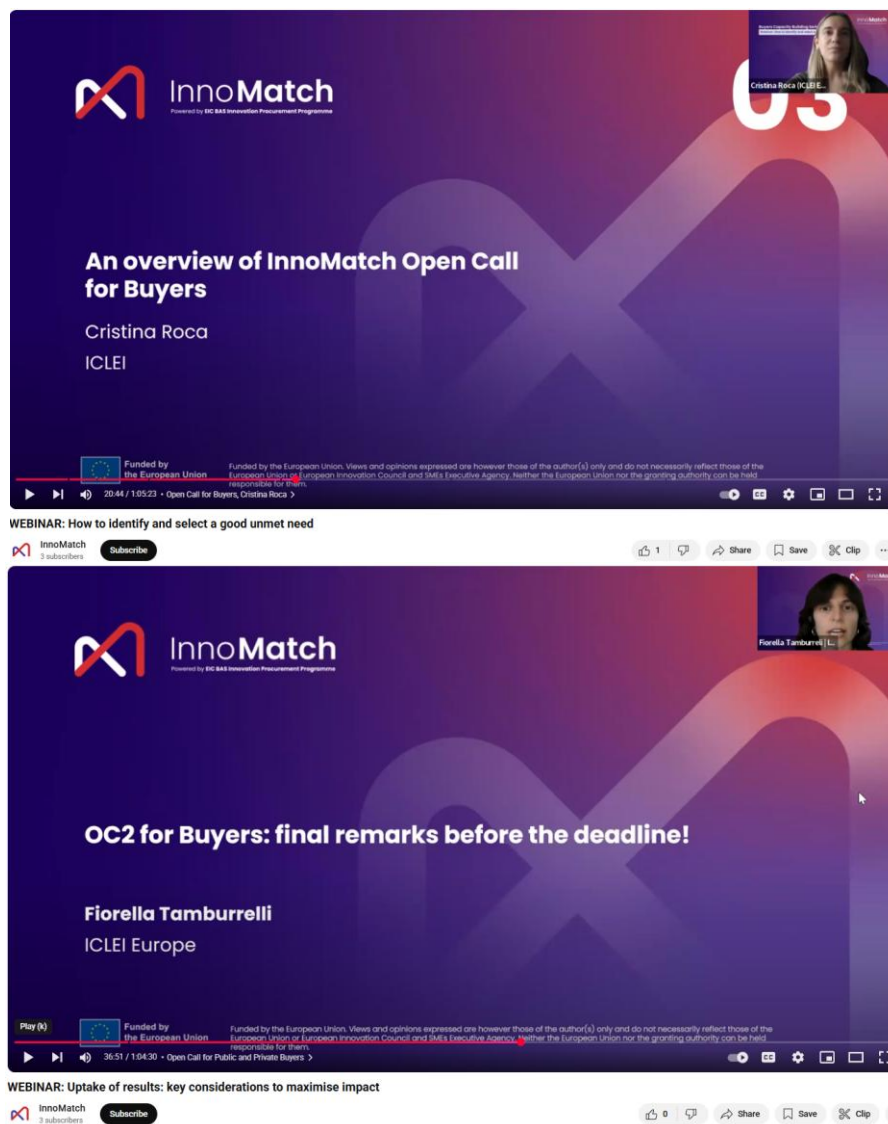
Clarifications and official answers were published publicly to ensure equal access to information for all applicants.

- **Webinars and capacity building sessions**

A total of two live info webinars were implemented by the Open Call Coordinator. Both sessions were embedded in the Capacity Building Series, specifically in the second and last webinar:

- [\(2\) How to identify and select a good unmet need](#) (25 February 2025 – minute 19:42)
- [\(4\) Uptake of results: key considerations to maximise impact](#) (15 April 2025 – minute 36:41)

Both sessions introduced the Open Call, offered Q&A sections, and walked participants through the application form. These events were recorded and made available on-demand to maximise reach and convenience. These resources can be consulted under the [Resources](#) section in the IM Website.



FIGURES 10 AND 11: INFO SESSIONS OF THE OPEN CALL FOR BUYERS.

- **Templates and guidance documents**

A complete application support package was published, including:

- Guidelines for Applicants
- Letter of Commitment Template
- Application Form Template (read-only)
- Memorandum of Understanding (for selected applicants)
- Action Plan Template (for pilot phase)

4 Evaluation and selection procedures

4.1 Overview of the evaluation process

The evaluation process for the InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers was designed to ensure a transparent and fair selection of applications. It was structured in two main stages:

4.1.1 Eligibility check

Conducted by the InnoMatch Consortium, this initial screening verified that applications met the formal eligibility criteria outlined in the Guidelines for Applicants. This included checks on applicant type, geographic eligibility, completeness of submission, alignment with thematic areas, and submission language.

Only applications that fully complied with all eligibility requirements were passed on to the next phase.

A detailed report of the eligibility check performed can be consulted under [Section 4.3.1](#).

4.1.2 Remote evaluation by external experts

Eligible applications were evaluated remotely by **two external, independent experts**, each assigned based on relevant expertise in innovation procurement and the applicant's thematic area. Evaluators scored each application against the four predefined award criteria: Commitment & Team; Impact; Alignment with InnoMatch; and Innovation & Experience. Each criterion was scored from 0 to 5, with weighting applied to calculate a final total score.

Applications that met or exceeded the minimum quality thresholds (≥ 3 per criterion, ≥ 12 overall) were ranked. The ranking was done based on the overall weighted score of each application. The objective was to select the top five highest-scoring applications (one per thematic area)

for participation in the next phase of the programme (buyer grouping and challenge refinement). Additional proposals that passed the threshold would be placed on a reserve list.

Applicants would be then informed of the results through official email communication, accompanied by an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) detailing feedback from reviewers and their total score.

A detailed report of the evaluation results can be consulted under [Section 4.3.2](#).

4.2 Profile and composition of the evaluation panel

An [Expression of interest for external evaluators](#) was launched on the InnoMatch website right after the launch of the first open call. Expert evaluators were invited to submit their applications via the F6S platform. **As a result, a pool of 10 renowned expert evaluators was selected.**

The evaluators had to be experienced in business and innovation procurement, with expertise covering, among others:

- Technology Development and Commercialisation
- Business Strategy and Planning
- Market Analysis and Forecasting
- Financial Analysis and Investment
- Experience in working with public or private procurement customers
- EIC (European Innovation Council) / EIC BAS (EIC Business Acceleration Services)

Moreover, applicants with 10+ years of experience in the specific field/subject area of claimed expertise were given preference. .

Expression of interest for evaluators

Join InnoMatch pool of external evaluators to evaluate the applications for the Open Calls for EIC Awardees.



About InnoMatch Open Calls

InnoMatch de-risks Innovation Procurement by matching Innovators and Buyers and supporting the pilot testing or proof-of-concept (PoC) demonstration of innovative solutions.

At least 38 pilots / PoCs will be selected within InnoMatch, granting up to €80,000 each. The selected pilot or proof-of-concepts will enter the 12-month InnoMatch Programme.

InnoMatch will run three open calls for EIC Awardees throughout its duration:

- OC1 wave 1 for EIC Awardee + Buyer – launched in the first half of 2025
- OC1 wave 2 for EIC Awardee + Buyer – launched in the second half of 2025
- OC for EIC Awardees – launched in the first half of 2026

Currently running

OC1 EIC Awardee + Buyer

Open Call for Public and Private Buyers

About the EoI for external evaluators



The external experts will be selected through an open and competitive process to ensure independence and transparency in evaluating the applications of the InnoMatch open calls for EIC Awardees.

Selected evaluators will be invited to join the InnoMatch pool of external evaluators.

Depending on the number of the received proposals in the InnoMatch open calls, 2 to 5 experts from the pool will be contracted for each open call.

- ✓ OC1 wave 1 for EIC Awardee + Buyer Selection and Evaluation will run from April until June 2025
- ✓ Open Call for Public and Private Buyers will run from February until May 2025
- ✓ OC1 wave 2 Selection and Evaluation will run from February until April 2026
- ✓ OC for EIC Awardees will run from April until June 2026

FIGURE 12: EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR EVALUATORS.

The OC2 evaluation panel consisted of three highly qualified external experts from the pool of 10 with extensive experience in innovation procurement, public-private collaboration, EU-funded projects, and technology adoption across relevant sectors.

4.2.1 Independence and conflict of interest management

Relevant measures were implemented to preserve the independence and integrity of the evaluation process. All external experts signed as part of their Expert Contracts:

- a Code of conduct, defining the workflow and confidentiality matters
- a Declaration of Honour confirming the experts had no conflict of interest (financial, professional, or institutional) with any applicant;

Evaluator assignments were carefully managed to avoid geographic bias, meaning no expert reviewed any proposal from their home country. The InnoMatch Consortium also ensured that all communication with applicants was conducted centrally.

4.2.2 Expertise and gender balance

In terms of gender balance, the panel included one female and two male evaluators. While not equally split, the inclusion of a senior female expert with significant experience in public innovation and digital transformation contributed to diversity of perspective. Future calls will aim to further strengthen gender parity, while continuing to prioritise technical expertise and thematic relevance in the selection of evaluation panel members.

4.3 Evaluation and selection process

4.3.1 Eligibility check

The eligibility check was duly performed from the 6th until the 13th of June, 2025. Verifications included applicant type, geographic eligibility, completeness of submission, alignment with thematic areas, and submission language of the 35 received applications.

- Out of the 35 applications received, ten (10) were identified as not eligible. These were applicants who did not clearly qualify as buyers, often appearing to be technology providers or otherwise outside the defined scope of the call.

While some cases were clearly not eligible due to their nature as technology providers, the following applicants required further assessment to determine their eligibility as demand-side actors.

Additional eligibility verifications were required due to ambiguities or inconsistencies in certain applications. Specifically:

- Some of the applicants did not clearly identify themselves as buyers, raising concerns that they may be technology providers applying in error. These cases were carefully reviewed to confirm their role as demand-side actors. As a result of this review, four (4) were confirmed as eligible.
- Three (3) applicants submitted incorrect or incomplete Letters of Commitment. To ensure fairness and avoid excluding eligible participants due to administrative oversights, the Consortium allowed the applicants to resubmit corrected letters within a defined timeframe.

These additional checks were necessary to uphold the purpose of the call, which was specifically designed to support buyers with unmet innovation needs.

Following this verification process, a total of 25 proposals were confirmed as eligible and advanced to expert evaluation. All others were formally deemed ineligible and excluded from further consideration.

4.3.2 Individual evaluation by experts

Prior to the start of the evaluation process, a briefing between the InnoMatch Project Coordinator, the Open Call Coordinator, the Funding Authority and the evaluators was held on the 13th of June, 2025. During the meeting, the Open Call Coordinator highlighted the award criteria and other aspects relevant to the evaluation process. Evaluators had the opportunity to clarify their doubts and the meeting was recorded for further consideration.

Following the eligibility screening and the briefing, the 25 eligible applications were each subjected to an individual evaluation process. This was conducted remotely by the panel of three external experts, with each proposal being reviewed by two evaluators, carefully assigned to avoid any national affiliation conflicts. The following table provides an overview of the number of the applications evaluated per thematic area as well as per buyer type.

Sector	Private	Private (Group application)	Public	Public (Group application)	Total
Agriculture, Food & Beverages	5	1			6
Construction, Infrastructure, Manufacturing	1				1
Digital Transformation&AI	1		5		9
Energy, Environment & Sustainability	4	1	3	1	9
Health and Life Sciences	3				3
Total	14	2	8	1	25

TABLE 6: NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS PER THEMATIC AREA.

The evaluators assessed each application against the four predefined award criteria:

1. Commitment & Team (40% weighting)
2. Impact & Business Opportunity (20%)
3. Alignment with InnoMatch approach (20%)
4. Innovation & Experience (20%)

Each criterion was scored on a scale from 0 (poor) to 5 (excellent), with a sum of the producing a final total out of 20 points. Evaluators provided detailed justifications for their scores, contributing to both transparency and constructive feedback for applicants.

The evaluation process emphasised not only the quality of the proposed unmet need but also the buyer's commitment to the programme and replicability potential, experience in pilot

deployments, as well as previous experiences within the EIC Innovation Procurement Programme.

4.3.3 Final ranking

To be considered for selection, each proposal had to:

- **Score at least 3 out of 5 on each individual criterion, and**
- **Achieve an overall total score of at least 12 out of 20.**

Once both evaluations for each proposal were submitted, average scores were calculated, and proposals were ranked in descending order based on their overall weighted scores.

This was not possible in the case of the area Construction, Infrastructure & Manufacturing, where the only proposal received did not meet the minimum quality threshold required for selection. As a result, no proposal was selected from this sector in the current round of the Open Call.

Remaining proposals that also passed the quality thresholds were placed on a reserve list, which can be consulted under [Section 5.4](#). These applications may be invited to participate in the programme if selected applicants withdraw or cannot proceed to the next phases.

All applicants were notified of the results on the 24 of July of 2025, and received an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) detailing their scores and feedback. No appeal procedure was foreseen in the Guidelines of this Open Call.

5 Open Call results

The following section provides a comprehensive overview of the applications received, showcasing the numbers by thematic area, country, as well as by type of buyer and submission. A summary of the evaluation outcomes, final list of selected candidates, and reserve list is also provided. Additionally, an overview of the Open Call numbers is offered in the figure below.

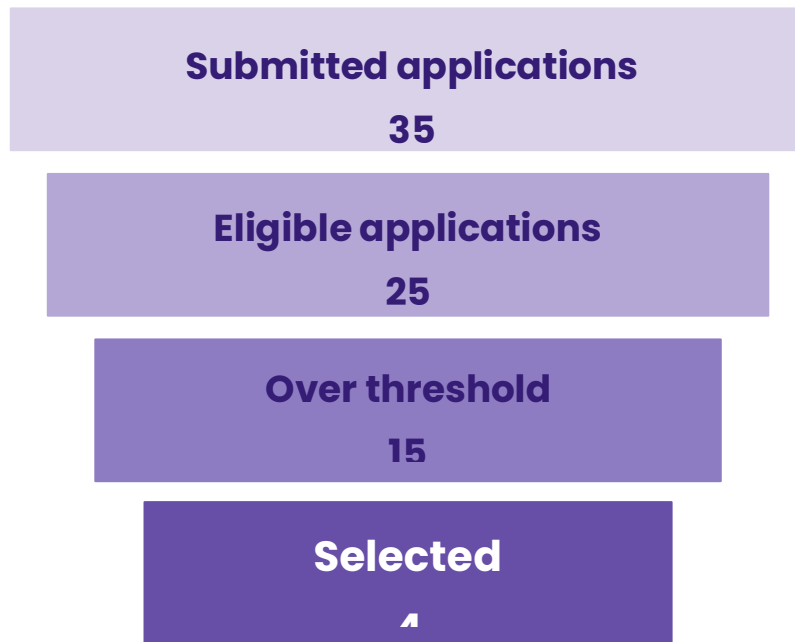


FIGURE 13: OPEN CALL FOR BUYERS – OVERVIEW IN NUMBERS.

5.1 Statistics of received proposals

5.1.1 Number of submitted applications

A total of 35 applications were received through the application form in F6S Platform:

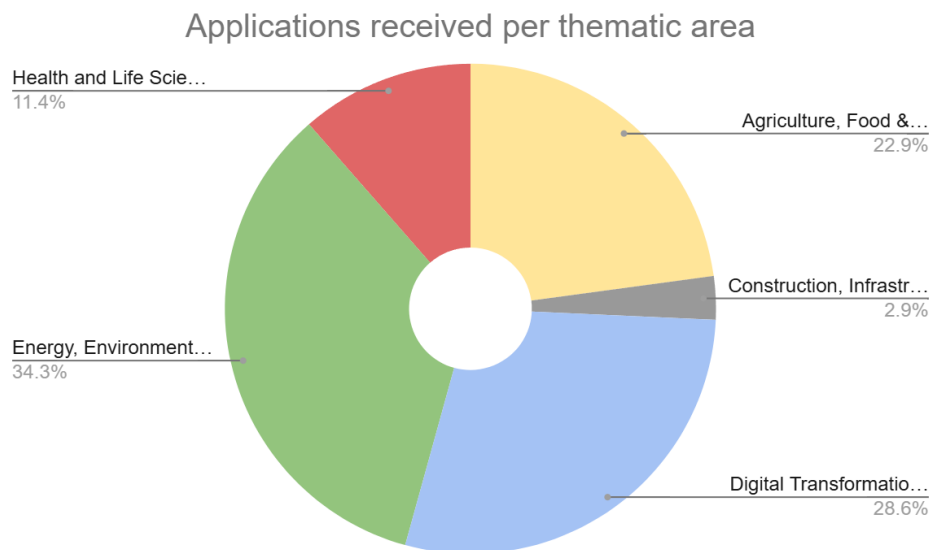


FIGURE 14: NUMBER OF RECEIVED PROPOSALS PER THEMATIC AREA.

Applicants were asked to align their unmet innovation needs with one of the five defined thematic areas of the call. As shown in Figure 14, the highest number of submissions was recorded in the **Energy, Environment & Sustainability** sector, with 12 proposals, followed closely by **Digital Transformation and AI** with 10 proposals. These figures suggest a strong demand for innovation in climate action, digitalisation, and smart solutions across both public and private buyers.

The **Agriculture, Food & Beverages** sector also demonstrated notable interest with 8 submissions, reflecting growing attention to food sustainability and agri-tech. Meanwhile, **Health and Life Sciences** counted with 4 proposals, many of which addressed unmet needs in care delivery, data management, and medical procurement. Only 1 proposal was submitted in the area of **Construction, Infrastructure & Manufacturing**, which possibly highlights a gap in awareness or readiness within that sector, which may be further explored in future outreach activities.

5.1.1.1 Extension of the deadline

In response to interest from potential applicants and to ensure broader participation, the InnoMatch Consortium decided to extend the submission deadline for the Open Call for Buyers by one month. This extension aimed to give additional time for organisations (particularly those needing internal coordination or final approvals) to complete and submit their applications.

As a result of the extended deadline, **7 additional applications were received**. Notably, **3 of these came from public buyers**, aligning with InnoMatch’s objective to strengthen public sector engagement. The remaining 4 were submitted by private buyers.

This extension was positively valued by the InnoMatch Consortium, as it allowed for increasing participation, especially among buyers who may have required additional time due to administrative or institutional processes.

All applications received during the extension period were evaluated under the same eligibility and assessment criteria as those submitted before the original deadline in order to ensure fair treatment to participants.

5.1.2 Geographical distribution of applicants

The InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers attracted a diverse range of applicants from across Europe and neighbouring associated countries, reflecting strong international interest in innovation procurement.

A total of **35 proposals** were received from **15 different countries**, with a particularly high level of engagement from **Ukraine** (9 proposals), followed by **Spain** (8 proposals). Other countries with multiple applicants included **Belgium** and **Germany** (3 each), as well as **Bulgaria** (2). A mix of EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries was represented.

The full breakdown of proposals by country is presented below:

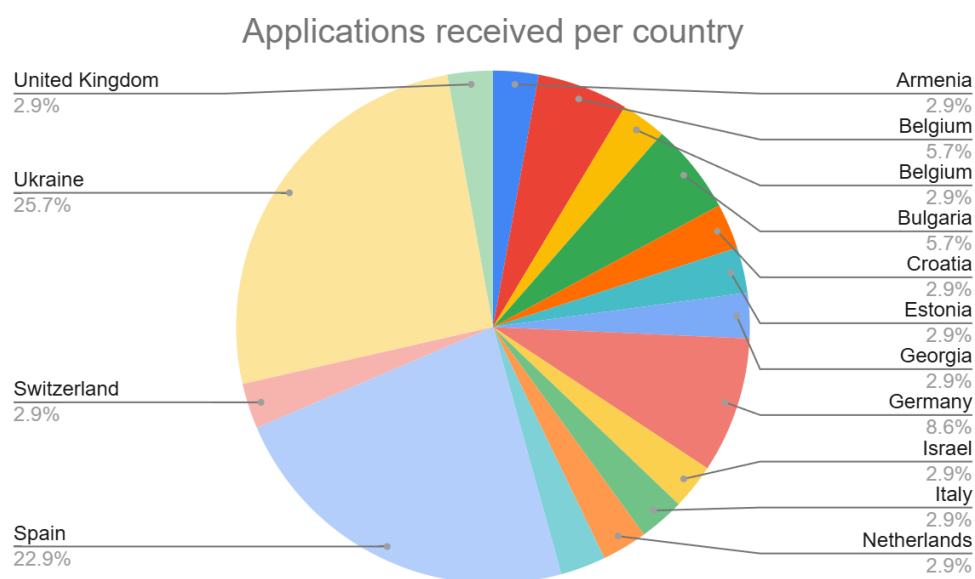


FIGURE 15: NUMBER OF RECEIVED APPLICATIONS PER COUNTRY.

5.1.3 Distribution by type

The InnoMatch Open Call was open to both **public and private buyers**, including the option for organisations to apply individually or as part of a group application representing multiple buyers with shared innovation needs.

As shown in Figure 16, the **majority of applications (23 out of 35)** were submitted by individual private buyers. This was complemented by **2 private group applications**.

On the public side, **9 applications** were received from individual public buyers, such as municipalities, hospitals, or regional agencies. In addition, **1 group application** was submitted representing a group of public entities with aligned challenges.

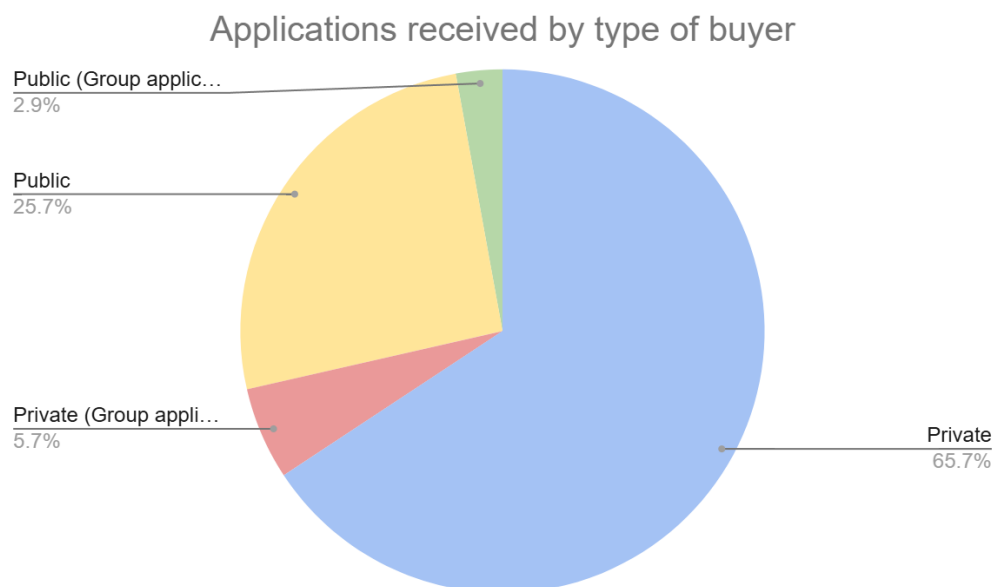


FIGURE 16: NUMBER OF RECEIVED APPLICATIONS PER BUYER TYPE.

5.2 Evaluation outcomes

5.2.1 Number of eligible and ineligible proposals

All 35 proposals submitted through the F6S platform underwent an initial **eligibility check** conducted by the InnoMatch Consortium. This screening was based on the criteria outlined in [Section 2.4.1](#), which included applicant type (public/private buyer), geographic eligibility, completeness and validity of documentation (such as the Letter of Commitment), thematic

alignment, and correct submission format and language. Additional checks described in [Section 4.3.1](#) were also conducted.

Following this review, **25 proposals were deemed eligible** and were forwarded to the expert evaluation phase. The remaining **10 proposals were found to be ineligible**, due to issues such as unclear applicant status (e.g. applying as a provider rather than a buyer), missing or incorrect documentation, lack of legal entity backing, or submission of multiple proposals from the same organisation.

Result of the eligibility check	Number of proposals
Eligible	25
Not eligible	10
Total	35

TABLE 7: NUMBER OF PROPOSALS ACCORDING TO ELIGIBILITY.

The table below shows the sectoral distribution of the 25 eligible proposals, disaggregated by type of applicant.

Sector	Private	Private (Group application)	Public	Public (Group application)	Total
Agriculture, Food & Beverages	5	1			6
Construction, Infrastructure & Manufacturing	1				1
Digital Transformation & AI	1		5		9
Energy, Environment & Sustainability	4	1	3	1	9
Health and Life Sciences	3				3
Total	14	2	8	1	25

TABLE 8: ELIGIBLE APPLICATIONS TO THE OPEN CALL FOR BUYERS.

5.2.2 Number of proposals above and below quality thresholds

Out of the **25 eligible proposals** evaluated in the InnoMatch Open Call for Buyers, a total of **15 proposals successfully met the minimum quality thresholds**. These thresholds required applicants to score at least 3 out of 5 on each of the four award criteria, and achieve a final weighted score of at least 12 out of 20. These high-quality proposals demonstrated strong alignment with the programme's objectives, credible innovation needs, and readiness for challenge development.

The remaining 10 eligible proposals did not meet the minimum thresholds, and were therefore not considered for selection or placement on the reserve list. Common issues among these proposals included vague or insufficiently developed innovation needs, limited organisational readiness, or unclear commitment for procurement or escalation of the pilot.

Result of the eligibility check	Below the threshold	Above the threshold
Private buyer	5	11
Public buyer	5	4
Total	10	15

TABLE 9: NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS PER BUYER TYPE (PRIVATE / PUBLIC).

5.3 Final list of selected buyers

Based on the expert evaluation results and in alignment with the Open Call's objective of selecting one high-quality proposal per thematic area, the following **four buyers** were selected by the IM Selection Committee to receive InnoMatch support in the next phase of the programme.

Each selected buyer demonstrated a clear unmet innovation need, strong institutional commitment, and alignment with challenge-based procurement principles. The proposals were evaluated against award criteria and were ranked highest within their respective thematic areas, while also meeting the minimum quality threshold of 14 points.

Sector and name of buyer
Agriculture, Food & Beverages
The Deep Group UG
Digital Transformation (Digital and ICT)
Stadt Gent
Energy, Environment & Sustainability

EH Group Engineering
Health and Life Sciences
Medtronic Iberica

TABLE 10: LIST OF SELECTED PROPOSALS PER THEMATIC AREA.

These selected entities will now enter the **Challenge Refinement Phase**, during which their proposed unmet needs will be further developed into actionable challenges to be addressed by innovative solution providers in the forthcoming EIC-funded call. The InnoMatch team will provide technical and strategic support throughout this process to ensure readiness for implementation and impact.

5.4 Reserve list

In addition to the selected buyers, a **reserve list** has been established based on the evaluation scores and ranking of eligible proposals. Buyers on the reserve list met the minimum quality threshold and demonstrated strong potential to participate meaningfully in the InnoMatch programme, but were not selected due to the limited number of available spots per thematic area.

Should any of the selected buyers be unable to continue in the next phase, proposals from the reserve list may be considered for inclusion. The InnoMatch Consortium will reach out directly to reserve list candidates if such an opportunity arises.

All applicants on the reserve list will also be invited to participate as **observing buyers**, enabling them to follow the challenge development process, stay connected with the programme, and potentially collaborate in future activities.

6 Conclusions and lessons learned

6.1 Summary of call achievements

The InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private successfully mobilised public and private buyers across Europe to identify and articulate unmet innovation needs within five strategic sectors. **A total of 35 applications were received from 15 countries**, reflecting a wide geographic and institutional diversity. Through a rigorous evaluation process, four high-quality

proposals (each representing a distinct thematic area) were selected for further support in the challenge definition phase.

The **use of an early Expression of Interest (EOI)** ahead of the official launch proved to be an effective engagement strategy. It allowed the consortium to build momentum and pre-identify interested organisations. This preparatory step increased overall visibility and contributed to other project activities, such as the matchmaking sessions.

The call resulted in the **selection of four strong buyer proposals**, one per strategic sector, which will now be further supported in the challenge co-creation phase. Additionally, several proposals met the quality threshold and were placed on a reserve list, ensuring continuity should new opportunities arise. Beyond the selected applicants, the Open Call created a broader **community of engaged buyers** who may continue to collaborate as **observers** or future adopters of innovative solutions.

6.2 Lessons learned from the process

The experience of launching and managing this Open Call has provided several valuable lessons for future iterations of the programme and for similar innovation procurement initiatives:

- **Balance between innovation and implementation feasibility:** Some proposals presented very novel challenges but lacked sufficient clarity on scalability, replicability, or relevance to other buyers. Strong proposals should not only reflect unmet needs but also consider practical implementation, transferability, and the ability to attract existing EIC-funded solution providers.
- **Targeting solution-provider readiness:** The feasibility of launching a matching call with suitable EIC awardees depends on how well buyer needs are aligned with realistic solution availability. Sectoral mapping and early scanning of the EIC portfolio should be strengthened to ensure that upcoming buyer challenges match solution-provider capabilities.
- **Streamlining the application process:** Despite comprehensive guidelines, some applicants faced challenges with formal documentation requirements (particularly the Letter of Commitment). Simplifying the required documents or providing submission support (e.g. templates, examples, FAQs) could ease the process and reduce errors in upcoming Open Calls.

- **Flexibility in eligibility checks:** A few applicants misunderstood the role distinction between buyers and solution providers or submitted incomplete documentation that was not clearly addressed in the criteria. Future calls may benefit from a more flexible or phased eligibility process, which could include pre-checks, clarifications, or opportunities to correct minor administrative mistakes.
- **Challenges in mobilising public buyers outside procurement procedures:** Mobilising public buyers proved particularly challenging, as under the InnoMatch Programme public authorities work for a 12-month period with a private company to develop a solution addressing their unmet needs, with a view to possible adoption, outside the traditional legal framework of public procurement procedures. While interest from the private sector was strong, this legal and procedural constraint limited the ability of many public buyers to participate.
- **The lack of funding:** Financial support specifically aimed at covering the human resources that public buyers allocate during the InnoMatch Programme – for instance, to take part in meetings to monitor the solution’s development – could have perhaps encouraged greater participation.
- **Early engagement through the Expression of Interest:** The EOI mechanism, along with targeted outreach through partner networks, helped build early interest for the Open Call.

The next steps of the Open Call for Buyers include a kick-off meeting to align expectations and set the framework in early September. This will be followed by an aggregation exercise to group buyer challenges and foster collaboration. This will lead into a challenge identification phase, ensuring that the procurement needs are clearly defined and matched with innovative solutions. All these lessons learned will be carefully considered and integrated into the design and execution of the upcoming **Open Call for EIC Awardees**.

6.3 Deviations

In response to interest from potential applicants and to ensure broader participation, the InnoMatch Consortium decided to extend the submission deadline for the Open Call for Buyers by one month. This extension aimed to give additional time for organisations (particularly those needing internal coordination or final approvals) to complete and submit their applications.

As a result of the extended deadline, **7 additional applications were received**. Notably, **3 of these came from public buyers**, aligning with InnoMatch's objective to strengthen public sector engagement. The remaining 4 were submitted by private buyers.

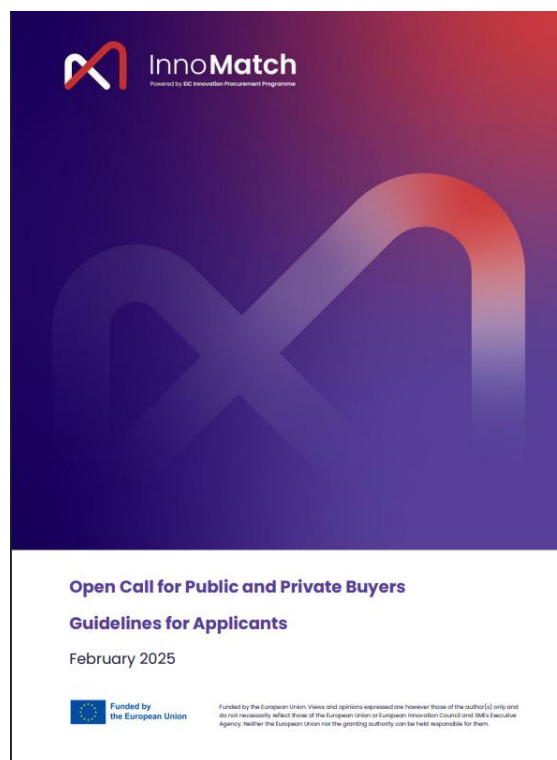
This extension was positively valued by the InnoMatch Consortium, as it allowed for increasing participation, especially among buyers who may have required additional time due to administrative or institutional processes.

All applications received during the extension period were evaluated under the same eligibility and assessment criteria as those submitted before the original deadline in order to ensure fair treatment to participants.

7 Annexes

7.1 Annex I: Open Call Guidelines

The Guidelines for Applicants are [available on the InnoMatch website](#) as well as accessing the link in the figure below.



7.2 Annex II: Application Form

SECTION 1: APPLICANT LEGAL DATA		↕
☐	1 Type of applicant (select one of the two options)	↕
	2 Legal Name of the public or private company / organisation applying to this open call.	↕
	3 VAT Number (or equivalent) of the applicant	↕
☐	4 Type of organisation of the applicant	↕
	5 Sector of Activity of the applicant - choose form the drop-down list	↕
	6 Country of Headquarters of the applicant	↕
	7 Website of the applicant	↕
SECTION 2: CONTACT DETAILS		↕
	8 Full name of the contact person of the applicant	↕
	9 Position of the contact person	↕
	10 Email of the contact person	↕
	11 Name of the unit / department (if applicable)	↕
	12 Phone of the contact person (include prefix)	↕
SECTION 3: APPLICATION INFORMATION		↕
	13 Title of the unmet innovation need	↕
☐	14 Thematic area of the unmet innovation need - please select	↕
	15 Summary of your unmet innovation need.	↕
	16 If you are applying together with a group of other Buyers, sharing the same or similar innovation need, please list those organisations/c...	↕

SECTION 4: COMMITMENT		⬇
☐	17 Please describe what in-kind contributions (e.g., team capacity, infrastructure, facilities) will your organisation provide to support th...	⬇
☐	18 Please describe the roles and responsibilities of your team members who will be involved in this program.	⬇
☐	19 What measures will your organisation take to ensure continuity in participation and avoid dropouts during the process?	⬇
☒	20 Does your organisation have preliminary plans for adopting the solution if successful?	⬇
☐	21 If yes, please describe them, including potential funding sources and expected departmental support.	⬇
☒	22 Have you been so far involved in any activities from the EIC Innovation Procurement Programme, including such in the context of the EIC B...	⬇
☐	23 If yes, please mention briefly the activities related to the EIC Innovation Procurement Programme and/or any EIC Business Acceleration Se...	⬇
☐	24 Letter of Commitment by the applicant (the Buyer submitting this application representing a group of Buyers or submitting the application...	⬇
SECTION 5: IMPACT & BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY		⬇
☐	25 How do you envision the situation improving if the unmet need is successfully addressed? Please outline the expected benefits, also in te...	⬇
☐	26 What are the expected economic, social, and environmental impacts of solving this unmet need?	⬇
☐	27 How will a successful solution be measured?	⬇
SECTION 6: ALIGNMENT		⬇
☐	28 How does the unmet need align with the InnoMatch "Prepare, Deploy and Assess" Programme and the 6-month deployment phase of the pilot and...	⬇
SECTION 7: INNOVATION & EXPERIENCE		⬇
☐	29 Please explain why your unmet need requires an innovative solution that is not currently available or widely available on the market.	⬇
☐	30 Why do you believe that external support is essential to address this unmet need? What are the innovation components to justify the exter...	⬇
☒	31 Has your organisation previously participated in innovation pilots or similar initiatives?	⬇
☐	32 If yes, please provide examples and outcomes.	⬇
☒	33 Do you have experience collaborating with other organisations (Buyers) in innovation projects?	⬇
☐	34 If yes, please share key lessons or best practices from those experiences.	⬇

SECTION 8: REFERRALS		⬆
☐	35 How did you hear about this open call?	⬆
SECTION 9: REQUIREMENTS TO JOIN THE PROGRAMME		⬆
☐	36 COMPLY with the definition of 'public organisation' or 'private organisation' as described in the Guidelines for Applicants.	⬆
☐	37 ACCEPT all conditions of the Terms and conditions of InnoMatch as outlined in the Open Call for Buyers - Guidelines for Applicants.	⬆
☐	38 DECLARE to be authorised to apply in your organisation's name, and confirm that the information submitted within this application is true.	⬆
☐	39 CONFIRM not to have nor foresee any conflict of interest with the InnoMatch consortium. You confirm that the team members involved in the...	⬆
☐	40 ACCEPT the data privacy policy as described in the Guidelines for Applicants.	⬆
☐	41 ACCEPT that the information provided and submitted in this proposal can be shared by F6S with the project consortium and the external eva...	⬆

7.3 Annex III: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) List

OPEN CALL FOR PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BUYERS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

General Information

- What is the InnoMatch Open Call for Buyers?

The InnoMatch Open Call invites public and private buyers to submit their unmet innovation needs. Selected buyers will collaborate with innovative SMEs (EIC Awardees) to develop and test tailored solutions through the InnoMatch "Prepare, Deploy, and Assess" Programme.

- What are the benefits of participating?

Buyers gain access to innovative solutions tailored to their needs, receive expert mentorship, and de-risk innovation procurement. They also access a robust innovation procurement toolkit and collaboration opportunities.

- Who can apply?

Eligible applicants include public and private entities based in EU Member States or Horizon Europe-associated countries.

- What are the key dates for the Open Call?

Open Call duration: February 6, 2025 – May 7th, 2025 (17:00 CET)

Eligibility check results: Until the end of May.

Evaluation and selection results: Until the end of June.

Eligibility and Application

- What is an unmet need and what types of unmet needs are eligible?

An unmet need is a buyer's purchasing requirement that is currently not met and for which a solution is not yet available or widely available on the market.

Unmet needs must align with one of the five thematic areas:

- Agriculture, Food & Beverages
- Construction, Infrastructure, Manufacturing
- Digital Transformation and AI
- Energy, Environment &, Sustainability
- Health and Life Sciences

- Can buyers apply as a group?

Yes, group applications are encouraged. Groups must include a buyer representing the group, and an unlimited number of buyers as part of the group.

- Can a buyer submit multiple applications?

A buyer can submit one unmet need as an Individual Buyer/Lead Buyer but may participate in multiple applications as an Observing Buyer.

Buyers can participate in multiple submissions within the Open Call process.

- Each buyer is allowed to submit up to one (1) group application (unmet innovation need), where they take the principal role in the application, submitting it on behalf of a group of buyers.
- Can submit up to one application (unmet innovation need) as a single applicant.
- There are no restrictions on the number of applications where the buyer is part of a group application where the buyer is not the one submitting the application on behalf of the group.

- What documents are required for application?

Applications must include:

- A completed application form.
- A signed Letter of Commitment outlining the buyer's in-kind contributions and support for the process.

In case of group applications, the Letter of Commitment only will be filled and signed by the buyer applying on behalf of the group.

Selection and Process

- How are unmet needs evaluated?

Applications are assessed based on four criteria:

- Commitment: Willingness and ability to implement the solution, as well as previous links from the buyer with the EIC Innovation Procurement Programme.
- Impact: Benefits of addressing the unmet need.
- Alignment: Fit with InnoMatch's approach and methodology.

- Innovation: Need for a new solution and prior innovation experience.

- What happens if my unmet need is selected?

Selected buyers will:

- Receive a group proposal from the InnoMatch Consortium (only in case similar unmet needs from other buyers are identified).
- Refine their unmet needs into challenges with expert guidance.
- Collaborate with an EIC Awardee to deploy and assess a pilot solution.

- What is the role of the Lead Buyer vs. Observing Buyers?

Lead Buyer: Pilots the solution on-site, collaborates with the innovator, and provides direct feedback.

Observing Buyers: Assist in refining challenges and provide feedback without piloting the solution themselves.

The roles of Lead and Observing Buyers will be signed after the selection process, during the grouping phase described in the Guidelines.

- While the primary objective is to form groups consisting of at least one Lead Buyer and one Observing Buyer, the InnoMatch Consortium reserves the right to establish a group consisting solely of a Lead Buyer if the number or nature of applications requires it.
- It is also important to note that applying as the representative of a group does not guarantee being designated as the Lead Buyer if stronger applications from individual buyers with the same unmet need are identified. In such cases, the main applicant will have the option to either take part in the observers group formed by InnoMatch or withdraw from the process if preferred.

Funding and Implementation

- Is funding available for buyers?

No, buyers do not receive monetary funding. However, EIC Awardees will receive up to €60,000 to develop and pilot solutions for the buyers' challenges.

- What is the InnoMatch "Prepare, Deploy, and Assess" Programme?

It's a three-phase framework designed to support pilot implementation:

- Prepare: Develop a Pilot Action Plan with objectives, KPIs, and timelines.
- Deploy: Execute the pilot with regular monitoring and support.
- Assess: Evaluate outcomes, including impact and scalability.

- What happens after a successful pilot?

Buyers and innovators will be supported in planning for sustainability and scaling the solution for broader adoption. Everything concerning the subsequent purchase of the solution will be regulated by the parties. In case of public buyers, it will proceed with the purchase of the solution according to the rules that govern public tender procedures. If it is a private buyer, it will proceed with the negotiation and the relative purchase according to the rules of private law.

Additional Information

- How is data protection handled?

All data is managed in compliance with GDPR. The F6S platform and the InnoMatch Consortium ensure secure handling of personal and industrial data.

- What should I do if I face technical issues with submission?

Contact support at support@f6s.com before the submission deadline.

- Where can I find more resources?

Visit the [InnoMatch website](#) or check the [F6S platform](#) for additional templates, guides, and updates.

- Can I withdraw from the process after being selected?

In case of Lead buyers, withdrawal may require Observing Buyers in your group to take over as Lead Buyer, subject to InnoMatch Consortium approval.

- Our organisation is familiar with an EIC Awardee that is willing to develop a solution for our unmet need. Can we apply together?

Joint submissions between buyers and EIC Awardees can be submitted under [Open Call 1: EIC+ Buyer](#).