



InnoMatch

Powered by EIC Innovation Procurement Programme

D4.1 Open Call #2 for EIC Awardees – Report

31/07/2026



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ABBREVIATIONS

DIH: Digital Innovation Hub

DoH: Declaration of Honour

EEN: Enterprise Europe Network

EIC: European Innovation Council

EIC BAS: EIC Business Acceleration Services

EIC IPP: EIC Innovation Procurement Programme

EISMEA: European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency

ESR: Evaluation Summary Reports

FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

FSTP: Financial Support to Third Parties

IPTF: Innovation Procurement Task Force

KPIs: Key Performance Indicators

NCPs: National Contact Points

OC1: Open call for EIC Awardee + Buyer

PoC: Proof-of-concept

Executive summary

This report details the process and outcomes of the InnoMatch Open Call #2 for EIC Awardees. The objective of this Open Call is to fund pilot testing or proof-of-concept (PoC) demonstration of innovative solutions, tailored to the **four (4) predefined Innovation Challenges of 4 selected Buyers into 4 thematic areas:**

- “Digital Transformation and AI”, with a challenger **the City of Ghent**
- “Energy, Environment, Sustainability”, with a challenger **EH Group**
- “Agriculture, Food and Beverages”, with the challenger **DeepSoil**
- “Health and Life Sciences”, with the challenger **Medtronic Iberica**.

It aimed to facilitate the deployment of pilots or PoCs, pairing EIC Awardees with the preselected InnoMatch committed Buyers to test and validate the innovative solutions in the Buyers’ premises, with the aim of optimising the potential post-pilot adoption of the innovative solutions.

This last InnoMatch call provided up to €60,000 in funding available per pilot / PoC, with the main aim to successfully transition towards procurement and adoption.

The process involved several key stages:

- **Application:** The call was open from 16 February 2026 to 17 April 2026.
- **Promotion & targeted matchmaking activities:** A multi-channel promotional strategy was used to attract applicants, including a dedicated webpage, social media campaigns, and informational webinars. Four dedicated matchmaking sessions were scheduled – one for each buyer’s innovation challenge, to connect buyers with innovators.
As a result, from the targeted outreach and matchmaking activities performed from February 16th until April 17th, at least one application was received for each of the pre-defined buyers’ innovation challenges.
- **Evaluation & Selection:** A transparent, multi-step procedure was followed, beginning with an internal eligibility check and proceeding to a remote evaluation by a panel of independent external experts. Proposals were scored against four criteria: Alignment & Impact, Excellence, Commitment, and Team & Implementation.
- **Deviation to the initially agreed time plan:** The call was launched a month later – in February 2026, instead of in January 2026 as planned, in order to avoid overlapping with the second wave of the Open Call for EIC Awardee + Buyer, which was extended by almost a month.

The next step is to proceed with the contracting phase for the selected pilots / PoCs.

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose and Scope of the Deliverable

This deliverable explains [the InnoMatch open call #2 for EIC Awardees](#) process. It presents the open call documentation kit and focuses on the terms and conditions to apply, including the eligibility and evaluation criteria, and the financial support available. The document presents in detail the application process and the selection procedure. Specific focus is put on the targeted matchmaking activities performed by the InnoMatch partners with the active participation of the 4 InnoMatch Buyers.

1.2. Role of the Open Call in Achieving Project Objectives

InnoMatch is powered by the [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme](#) (EIC IPP), an initiative of the European Innovation Council (EIC), that aims to facilitate access to procurement markets in Europe and at the global level, ensuring increased market opportunities for innovative SMEs and start-ups and contributing, at the same time, to their scaling up.

Finding first customers is one of the main barriers that is hampering access to market and commercialisation of innovative solutions developed by innovative SMEs. To facilitate the uptake of innovation procurement, InnoMatch will support the pilot testing of innovative solutions provided by the EIC Awardees for public and private procurement customers (Buyers). The innovative solutions of top-notch EIC-backed companies (EIC Awardees) will be selected through an open and competitive process, in a series of open calls, managed within the InnoMatch project.

In total, €2.28M will be offered in the context of the InnoMatch project to support at least 38 pilots, covering up to €60,000 per pilot.



Figure 1 InnoMatch Concept

1.3. Structure of the Document

- **Section 1** presents the context and introduces the general information regarding the open call for EIC Awardees.
- **Section 2** describes the open call objectives and its design and preparation, including key elements such as the FSTP framework, the call time plan, the eligibility and evaluation criteria, and the application process.
- **Section 3** presents in brief the communication and dissemination efforts focused on bringing the best EIC innovators on board. It also describes the conducted Matchmaking sessions as a tool to recruit the right applicants on board.
- **Section 4** covers evaluation and selection processes.
- **Section 5** presents a comprehensive statistic of the open call results.
- **Section 6** marks the deviations from the originally designed process and the lessons learned throughout the process.
- **Section 7** provides conclusions and a summary of the accomplished work.

2. Open Call Design and Preparation

2.1. Open Call Objectives & Buyers' Innovation Challenges

The InnoMatch open call #2 for EIC Awardees was launched in February 2026. Its objective was to support the pilot testing or proof-of-concept (PoC) demonstration of innovative solutions tailored to four (4) pre-defined specific innovation challenges of 4 buyers selected from the InnoMatch open call #2 for Buyers back in 2025.

As a result of the [InnoMatch Open Call for Public and Private Buyers](#) (closed in 2025), InnoMatch selected 4 Buyers and their unmet innovation needs. The selected Buyers received targeted support to translate those needs into clear, well-structured Innovation Challenges, specifically designed to attract and engage innovative SMEs and start-ups backed by the European Innovation Council (EIC Awardees).

The 4 (four) InnoMatch Innovation Challenges of the Buyers are the setting ground for this last InnoMatch call for EIC Awardees. This call is looking for innovative companies (EIC Awardees) to propose solutions tailored to the identified **4 InnoMatch Innovation Challenges. Each one of them tackling a specific thematic area:**

Challenge 1: Ai4PP
Digital Transformation and AI
Buyer: The City of Ghent

- The [detailed innovation challenge #1 of the City of Ghent](#) can be downloaded from the InnoMatch website.

Challenge 2: CHEF
Energy, Environment, Sustainability
Buyer: EH Group

- The [detailed innovation challenge #2 of EH Group](#) can be downloaded from the InnoMatch website.

Challenge 3: SoilPulse

Agriculture, Food and Beverages

Buyer: DeepSoil

- The [detailed innovation challenge #3 of DeepSoil](#) can be downloaded from the InnoMatch website.

Challenge 4: PrediHeart

Health and Life Sciences

Buyer: Medtronic Iberica

- The [detailed innovation challenge #4 of Medtronic Iberica](#) can be downloaded from the InnoMatch website.

As for the other InnoMatch open calls, the main aim remained **achieving a higher chance of potential post-pilot adoption**.

Specific matchmaking activities and active targeted outreach were performed to attract several applicants fitting each of the four pre-defined innovation challenges of the buyers. More information is provided in the sections below.

2.2. Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP) Framework

2.2.1. Origin of funds

All selected applicants (EIC Awardees) sign a Sub-Grant Agreement with InnoMatch. The funds attached to the Sub-Grant Agreement come directly from the funds of the European Project InnoMatch, funded by the European Innovation Council (EIC) and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA), and remain, therefore, property of the EU until the payment of the balance, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in InnoMatch via European Commission Grant Agreement Number 101165966.

2.2.2. Financial Support

The InnoMatch funding is provided in the form of a lump sum.

2.2.3. Funding Limit

The maximum InnoMatch grant available for all Open Calls is up to €60,000. If selected, an EIC Awardee can receive up to this amount, based on the budget requested in its Proposal.

For all InnoMatch Open Calls, applicants are allowed to co-finance any additional costs related to the pilot implementation beyond the maximum InnoMatch grant available (up to €60,000). However, the time plan of the co-funded activities must comply with the timeline of the InnoMatch Programme (12 months in total) and the actual pilot / PoC deployment (6 months).

2.3. Open Call Timeline and Key Dates

The Open Call for EIC Awardees was launched on 16 February 2026 and remained open for applications for two months, until 17 April 2026.

In the table below is presented the initial time plan of the call:

Description	Dates
Open call launch	16.02.2026
Open call deadline	17.04.2026, 17.00 CEST
Eligibility check	April 2026
Evaluation and selection	April – May 2026
Contracting phase	June – July 2026

Table 1 TIMELINE OF THE OPEN CALL #2 FOR EIC AWARDEES

2.4. Eligibility, Evaluation & Selection Criteria

To be considered for funding, all applicants had to comply with the InnoMatch Open Call eligibility criteria, and their proposal had to meet the call evaluation criteria and selection standards and rules, as described in the Open Call Guidelines.

2.4.1. Eligibility Criteria

According to the call eligibility criteria, to be declared eligible, all applicants (EIC Awardees) had to be:

- Single legal entities.
- Entities that have a signed contract under any of the EIC initiatives in Horizon Europe: EIC Pathfinder, EIC Transition, EIC Accelerator, or are EIC Prizes winners, as per the definition in the [EIC Work Programme 2023](#).
- Entities that can facilitate commercial exploitation of the solution, in case the pilot is successful, and to bring the innovation to the market.

Each EIC Awardee was allowed to submit 1 proposal, subject to addressing one of the four pre-defined innovation challenges.

2.4.2. Evaluation & Selection Criteria

The InnoMatch Open Call for EIC Awardees set 4 main evaluation criteria presented in the table below. These criteria provided a balanced assessment framework for both applicants and evaluators. Each of the four evaluation criteria had different weights.

The different weights for each criterion reflected the strategic priorities and goals of the InnoMatch call. The weighting system aimed to provide additional guidance to the applicants, showing them where to focus their efforts, helping them to create stronger proposals, more relevant to the call topic and priorities.

Criterion	Description	Weight of the criterion
1. Alignment & Impact	Applications must align with the Open Call objectives. Solutions must be focused on solving the targeted innovation challenge of the Buyer.	20%
2.Excellence	Applications must demonstrate the technical soundness of the proposed solution related to the concrete challenge of the Buyer it aims to solve. The applicants must elaborate on	20%

	its feasibility, scalability, and present an overall measurement model.	
3. Commitment	The applicant has to explain how the challenge aligns with their business strategy and their interest in pursuing commercialization after the pilot ends. A specification of the TRL related to the proposed solution to be provided.	40%
4. Team & Implementation	Applicants must show evidence that the team has the necessary skills, infrastructure and management experience to implement the pilot in the defined timescale and budget, and to further facilitate the commercial exploitation of the solution.	20%

Table 2 INNOMATCH OPEN CALL FOR EIC AWARDEES EVALUATION CRITERIA

The call Guidelines defined the overall score per evaluation criterion between 0 and 5, with up to two decimal places allowed, with a minimum score of 3 points (out of 5) in each criterion. The overall default threshold, considering the sum of the individual scores, was defined as 15 (out of 20 points) for the proposal to be considered for funding.

- **That means if a proposal receives less than 3 in one criterion or less than 15 in the overall score, it is automatically rejected.**
- **All proposals were finally ranked based on their overall weighted average score.**

The call Guidelines defined the scores as follows:

Score rate	Meaning	Description
0	Proposal fails	Proposal 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 proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3	Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4	Very good	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5	Excellent	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Table 3 INNOMATCH OPEN CALL FOR EIC AWARDEES SCORES DESCRIPTION

Finally, the call Guidelines stipulated the following three ranking rules:

Rule	Description
Rule 1	The proposals were ranked based on their overall score first.
Rule 2	In case following Rule 1 there were proposals in the same position, priority was given to proposals that have a higher score on the <u>Commitment criterion</u> , with priority given to proposals where the pilot / PoC is co-funded (over the available InnoMatch grant of up to €60,000) by the applicant and/or other sources.
Rule 3	In case following Rule 2 there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have a higher score on the <u>Team & Implementation criterion</u> .

Table 4 INNOMATCH OPEN CALL FOR EIC AWARDEES RANKING RULES

2.5. Open Call Documentation & Application

2.5.1. Guide for Applicants & Supportive Documentation

The open call documentation kit was published on a dedicated webpage on the InnoMatch website and composed by 1). Documents to be considered at the application stage and 2). Documents for selected applicants.

Documents to be considered and filled in at the application stage:

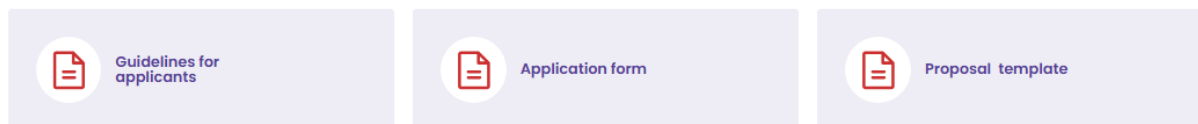
- **Guidelines for applicants**
- **Annex 1** – Application Form (read-only document)
- **Annex 2** – Proposal template

Documents to be considered in case the proposal is selected – only informative:

- Annex 4 – Sub-Grant Agreement template
- Annex 5 – Action Plan template
- Annex 6– Memorandum of understanding (template)
- Annex 7 – Declaration of Honour (DoH)
- Annex 8 – SME Declaration

Documentation

Documents at application stage



Documents in case you are selected

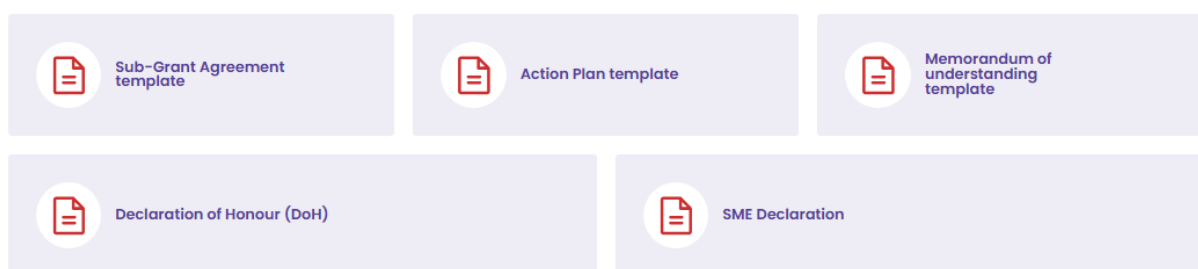


Figure 2 OPEN CALL DOCUMENTS ON THE INNOMATCH WEBSITE

2.5.2 Application Submission Platform (F6S)

The applications to the call for EIC Awardee + Buyer, wave 2 had to be submitted electronically [via the F6S Platform](#).

The applicants had to answer all mandatory questions and attach to the online application form the filled-in [Proposal template](#) provided as part of the call documentation kit.

Only proposals submitted through the official open call submission tool – the F6S platform, and within the call deadline were accepted. Proposals submitted by any other means were not considered and evaluated.

The form was deactivated on 17 April 2026 at 17:00 PM CET, thus any applications received after the specified deadline were blocked from submission. It was strongly recommended, and all applicants who started their applications were constantly reminded to submit their applications well in advance of the deadline to accommodate any potential technical or connectivity issues and ensure timely delivery.

The outlook of the application submission form on the F6S platform is provided in Annex 1 to this document.

2.6. Support for applicants

To ensure a structured and successful application experience, a comprehensive support system was designed to guide the applicants through the process. Thus, ensuring that the applicants had all the information needed to submit quality proposals within the given deadline.

2.6.1. Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

The [FAQ section for OC#2 for EIC Awardees in the InnoMatch webpage](#) was designed to address common questions and concerns from potential applicants. It acted as a centralised resource that clarifies ambiguities in the call guidelines, saving time for both organisers and applicants by reducing the need for individual email inquiries.

The FAQ section covered questions divided into three main sub-sections:

- About InnoMatch
- EIC Awardees-focused questions related to eligibility, specific requirements, and submission process

F.A.Q.

Open call 2 for EIC Awardees

(wave 1)

About InnoMatch

How does InnoMatch work?	—
Powered by the EIC Innovation Procurement Programme, an initiative of the European Innovation Council (EIC), InnoMatch is an initiative focused on bringing access and visibility to the European procurement market scenario. We offer financial support to selected EIC Awardees (EIC granted beneficiaries) to implement their solutions in a pilot testing structure to solve buyers innovation challenges.	
What are the timelines for this open call 1?	+
Where does the funding come from?	+
How does the funding mechanism work?	+
What is a pilot?	+
What is a proof-of-concept?	+
What are the EIC Awardees?	+
Eligible applicants	+
What are the criteria to be evaluated on each proposal?	+

EIC Awardees

What is the value for me in participating as a EIC awardee?	—
If selected, you will be receiving from InnoMatch: financial support to fund your company on the development of the specific result, in addition to a networking boost and connections to direct customers, enriching your business path and scaling up your business.	
Will InnoMatch offer support on finding a buyer for me?	+
Are there any industry sector restrictions or requirements?	+
How many proposals can I submit?	+

Figure 3 OC2 for EIC AWARDEES FAQ SECTION ON THE INNOMATCH WEBSITE

2.6.2. Helpdesk and Technical Support

- InnoMatch provided information to the applicants via the [Discussion Board on the F6S platform](#), so that all questions and answers were visible to all participants.
- In addition to that, a dedicated InnoMatch Helpdesk was available via email at: info@innomatchproject.eu, for any extraordinary questions regarding eligibility, documentation, or the evaluation process.
- For any specific issue concerning the F6S platform, the applicants were invited to address their questions directly to the F6S Support Team, and to receive timely support: support@f6s.com

3. Open Call Promotion & Matchmaking activities

A comprehensive, multi-channel promotional strategy was implemented to maximise the reach and impact of this Open Call. This followed a clear three-step process:

1. **Planning Phase:** Before the launch, all promotional channels and tools were defined. A promotional kit, detailed below, was created and shared with partners to enable immediate dissemination once the call was live.
2. **Execution Phase:** While the call was open, a range of communication materials was created and consistently shared across the selected channels.
3. **Post-Call Phase:** After the call closed, the performance of the performed communication efforts was analysed. Subsequent communication steps included publishing statistics and announcing the winners.

To ensure the initiative reached a large yet targeted audience (EIC Awardees only), key channels and tools, including public relations, media outreach, social media, partner synergies, and dedicated website content were selected. All messaging was strategically crafted to clearly disseminate the open call's objectives and the benefits for applicants.

Below is a detailed description of the channels, tools, strategies, and relevant KPIs from these communication efforts.

3.1. Open Call Webpage

A [dedicated webpage was developed to present the open call to the public](#). The page outlined the core objectives of the initiative and featured clearly highlighted deadlines. The benefits

were detailed for both EIC Awardees and Buyers in separate sections, alongside comprehensive information on eligibility criteria and key target sectors.

The InnoMatch programme was briefly introduced, followed by a simple, step-by-step guide on how to apply, which included direct links to the application portal. All associated documentation was made available in a user-friendly format. To encourage submissions, prominent Call to Action (CTA) buttons were placed strategically throughout the page, linking directly to the application form.

This call is CLOSED!

Open call 2 for EIC Awardees

The objective of this Open Call is to fund the pilot testing or proof-of-concept (PoC) demonstration of innovative solutions, tailored to the four (4) predefined Innovation Challenges of the InnoMatch Buyers.

It will facilitate the deployment of pilots or PoCs, pairing EIC Awardees with the preselected InnoMatch committed Buyers to test and validate innovative solutions in the Buyers' premises, with the aim of optimising the potential post-pilot adoption of the innovative solutions.

Only Horizon Europe EIC Awardees are eligible to apply for this open call.

The call is open until 17 April 2026 – 17:00 CET. Check the info below and read the [Guidelines for Applicants](#) first.

APPLICATIONS CLOSED



Deadlines

16 February 2026
Opening

17 April 2026 – 17:00 CET
Submission deadline



What we offer

- ✓ **4 pilots or proof of concepts** will be funded with a maximum of **60k euro each**.
- ✓ Selected applicants will enter the 12-month **InnoMatch Programme**, and will have up to 6 months to deploy their innovative solutions
- ✓ Selected applicants (EIC Awardees) and their committed Buyers will receive **additional support for maximising impact and growth** (training sessions, coaching, mentoring)
- ✓ Become part of the **EIC Innovation Procurement Community** and benefit from the additional services, opportunities and the wide network of professionals in the field
- ✓ Access to a **community of public & private buyers**, the **EIC Innovation Procurement Toolkit** and a dedicated **social media group** for EIC Awardees and buyers interested in innovation procurement.

Figure 4 INNOMATCH OPEN CALL WEBPAGE

3.2. Public Relations

To promote the Open Call, a promotional kit was created and distributed to partners to help them share the opportunity within their networks. The kit included ready-to-share social media messages with visuals, and a press release.


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EIC INNOVATION PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME

For immediate release

**InnoMatch Launches Open Call 2 for EIC Awardees
Offering €60,000 Grants for Pilot Deployment**

February 2026
InnoMatch, a key project of the European Innovation Council (EIC) Innovation Procurement Programme, has officially launched Open Call 2 for EIC Awardees.

This call, open from 16 February 2026 until 17 April 2026 (17:00 CET), aims to fund the pilot testing or proof-of-concept (PoC) demonstration of innovative solutions addressing four predefined Innovation Challenges identified by committed InnoMatch Buyers.

The call will support four (4) pilot projects, each receiving up to €60,000 in funding, enabling Horizon Europe EIC Awardees to validate their solutions directly within the Buyers' operational environments.

Targeted Innovation for Real Market Needs.
The InnoMatch programme is a collaborative bridge between EIC Awardees and procurement customers (Buyers). Open Call 2 focuses on four specific Innovation Challenges defined by selected Buyers following a dedicated scouting and preparation phase.

These challenges cover the following thematic areas:

- Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence
- Energy, Environment and Sustainability
- Agriculture, Food and Beverages
- Health and Life Sciences


InnoMatch
powered by
EIC INNOVATION PROCUREMENT PROGRAMME



OPEN CALL

Find your next client
Apply to the InnoMatch Open Call 2 for EIC Awardees

€
Financial support up to €60,000 per pilot

DEADLINE: 17 April 2026, 17:00 CET



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OPEN CALL

Open call 2
for EIC AWARDEES

Four pilot projects will be funded, up to €60k each

DEADLINE: 17 April 2026



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Figure 5 OPEN CALL COMMUNICATION MATERIALS: SOCIAL MEDIA VISUAL AND PRESS RELEASE

During the open call, a total of five outreach activities were featured in the digital news section, alongside three supporting social media posts provided by our partners. In addition, a broadcast e-mail was sent to the F6S network, which resulted in 17.4% open rate and 3.7% click rate.

InnoMatch leveraged the **EIC network** as it provided a direct channel to the call's primary target audience:

- **A detailed article was published on the EIC Community platform (141 page views)** and shared across the EIC's social media channels and newsletter.

- The call was promoted via the [EIC Innovation Procurement Programme LinkedIn group](#) as well as the matchmaking sessions to directly promote the open challenges and their buyers.

3.3. Social media

The promotional social media strategy for the open call focused not only on the call itself, but also on driving engagement with the matchmaking sessions. These sessions allowed applicants to learn more about the challenge, the buyer, and the application process.

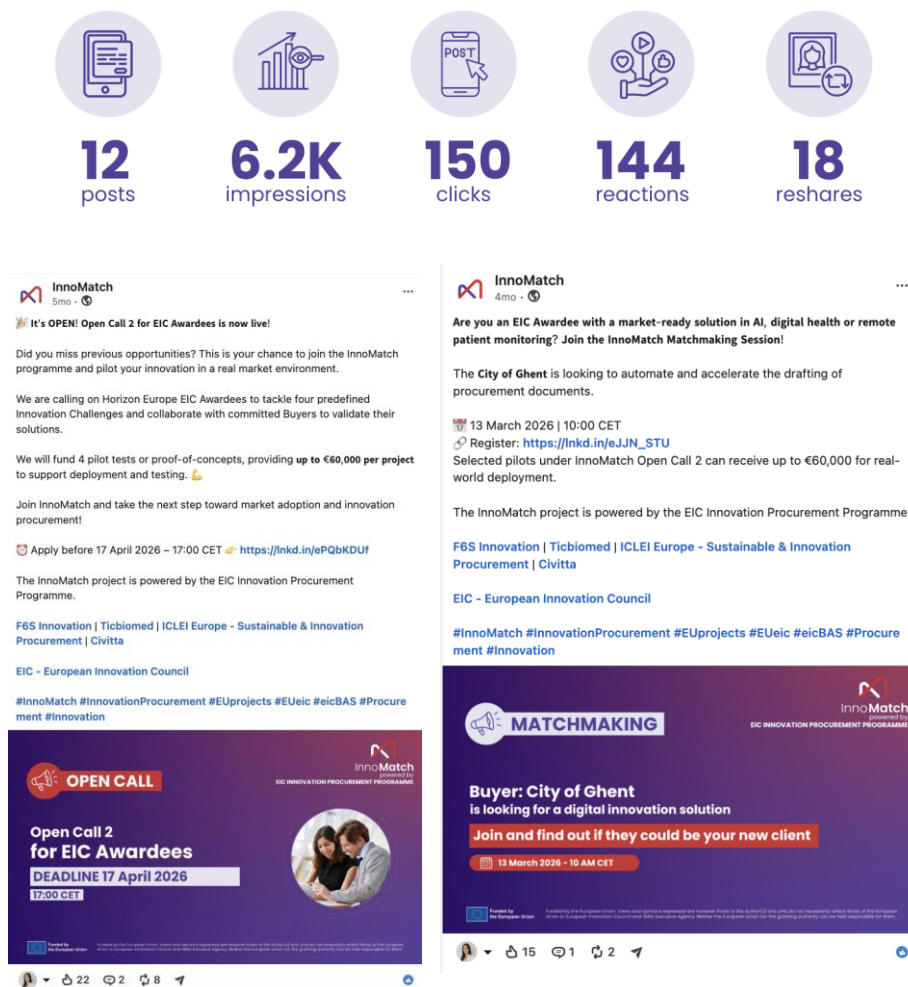


Figure 6 OC#2 PROMOTION ON LINKEDIN

3.4. Matchmaking & Info webinars

The InnoMatch Matchmaking activities for this last Open Call supported the scouting, recruiting and matching of EIC Awardees, addressing the needs of the pre-defined four innovation challenges of the 4 selected InnoMatch buyers (in [OC#2 for Public and Private Buyers](#)).

The screening of potential matches (suppliers) to the 4 buyers' innovation challenges started before the call was officially launched and a long list of potential candidates was curated for each of the challenges.

Four dedicated matchmaking sessions, one per buyer's innovation challenge, were scheduled, in collaboration with the sister initiative SPIN4EIC.

3.4.1. Recruitment of EIC Awardees and mobilisation strategy

Targeted identification of relevant EIC Awardees: A targeted scouting exercise was carried out to identify EIC Awardees with a high potential fit for the four specific buyer challenges under OC#2. Rather than conducting broad, generic promotion only, the recruitment effort was structured around challenge–solution fit. All partners recruited the identified EIC Awardees for the already existing EIC databases as well as their personal contacts and the SPIN4EIC network.

A structured tracker was prepared and maintained to record the prospective EIC Awardees, the corresponding buyer challenge, and the contact responsibility. This ensured that recruitment was not handled ad hoc, but through a traceable and organised process. The tracker linked each target company with one of the four InnoMatch buyers and therefore served as the central operational document for mobilisation.

- **Medtronic Iberica – PrediHeart / digital health:** A total of 8 target companies were shortlisted for this buyer challenge.
- **EH Group – CHEF / sustainable energy:** A total of 5 target companies were associated with this buyer challenge in the tracker.
- **City of Ghent – AI4PP / digital transformation (GovTech):** A total of 2 target companies were identified for this buyer challenge.
- **DeepSoil – SoilPulse / sustainable agriculture:** A total of 10 target companies were associated with this buyer challenge in the tracker.

Buyer-specific matching: Each prospective company was matched to the most relevant buyer challenge according to thematic alignment, sector relevance, and likely capacity to address the stated unmet need. This reduced dispersion in the outreach effort and enabled the invitations to be framed around a clear use case and an identifiable buyer challenge.

Direct outreach: The shortlisted companies were approached directly by InnoMatch consortium partners. On top, outreach was reinforced through the wider EIC Innovation

Procurement Programme ecosystem, with the support of the EIC IPP sister initiative SPIN4EIC as a co-organiser of the OC#2 dedicated Matchmaking sessions.

In addition to that, SPIN4EIC contributed a dedicated short presentation within the sessions, broadening the value proposition for participants by connecting the Open Call with wider EIC innovation procurement opportunities, such as tailored assistance for EIC innovators to ensure the scale-up of the InnoMatch pilots. Which was another excellent example of the strong synergies and support within the EIC IPP and its sister initiatives.

3.4.2. Matchmaking sessions

These sessions functioned as conversion-oriented actions designed to move prospects from initial interest to concrete application preparation. The sessions were designed to present the challenge, explain the funding opportunity, allow the buyer to pitch its needs, and enable Q&A with the invited EIC Awardees.

Four sessions in total were scheduled, and three live matchmaking sessions took place, organised for the buyers City of Ghent, EH Group, and Medtronic Iberica. DeepSoil did not proceed with a completed matchmaking session since none of the identified and scouted companies registered for participation at that time. The sessions were organised online in the form of a reverse pitch. The buyers had to prepare in advance a PowerPoint presentation describing the challenge they are facing and their needs.

Session format and facilitation

Each matchmaking session had an expected duration of approximately one hour and followed a common facilitation structure to ensure consistency across the buyers' challenges. The standard agenda was: (i) EIC Innovation Procurement Programme and Open Call presentation (20–25 minutes), (ii) buyer presentation (15–20 minutes), (iii) Q&A (15–20 minutes), and (iv) a short presentation on SPIN4EIC opportunities. This format combined programme awareness, buyer engagement, and practical clarification for applicants.

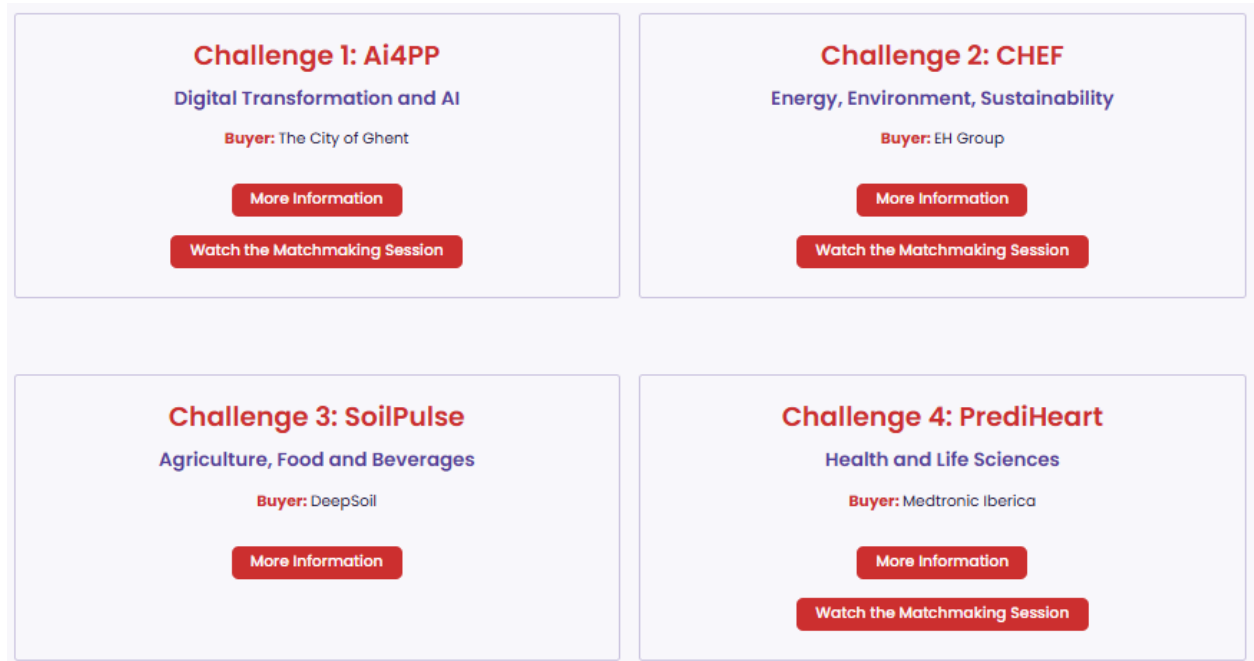
Session	Buyer	Date	Time	Thematic area	Format	Status
1	Medtronic Iberica	12 March 2026	10:00 CET	Digital Health (cardiovascular care)	Online (reverse pitch)	Held / confirmed
2	EH Group	12 March 2026	11:30 CET	Sustainable Energy	Online (reverse pitch)	Held / confirmed

3	City of Ghent	13 March 2026	10:00 CET	Digital Transformation (GovTech)	Online (reverse pitch)	Held / confirmed
4	DeepSoil Group	13 March 2026	11:30 CET	Sustainable Agriculture	Online (reverse pitch)	Cancelled

Table 5 Matchmaking sessions organised under OC2

The matchmaking sessions were scheduled in a compact sequence over 12–13 March 2026. This clustering of sessions likely contributed to efficient mobilisation, visibility, and internal coordination, while keeping the momentum of the Open Call communication high.

All OC2 Matchmaking sessions were recorded and are available on the [InnoMatch website](#).



The screenshot displays four challenge cards arranged in a 2x2 grid. Each card contains the following information:

- Challenge 1: Ai4PP** (Digital Transformation and AI) with Buyer: The City of Ghent. It includes buttons for "More Information" and "Watch the Matchmaking Session".
- Challenge 2: CHEF** (Energy, Environment, Sustainability) with Buyer: EH Group. It includes buttons for "More Information" and "Watch the Matchmaking Session".
- Challenge 3: SoilPulse** (Agriculture, Food and Beverages) with Buyer: DeepSoil. It includes a button for "More Information".
- Challenge 4: PrediHeart** (Health and Life Sciences) with Buyer: Medtronic Iberica. It includes buttons for "More Information" and "Watch the Matchmaking Session".

Figure 7 MATCHMAKING RECORDING ON THE INNOMATCH WEBSITE

3.4.3. Info webinars

To maximise efficiency and value for applicants, an informational segment was integrated into each online Matchmaking session. Participants could ask general questions about the application process, as well as specific questions regarding the buyers' concrete innovation challenges. Rather than holding a single, broad info session for the entire Open Call, three tailored sessions were organized to reflect the unique requirements of this final InnoMatch call.



Figure 8 INFO WEBINARS ORGANISED ALONG EACH ONLINE MATCHMAKING SESSION

4. Evaluation and Selection Procedure

The evaluation and selection of proposals submitted to this Open Call were conducted through a formal, competitive, and transparent procedure. This process was designed in such a way to ensure objectivity, fairness, and equal treatment for all applicants. Each eligible proposal was assessed on its individual merits by a panel of independent experts, based strictly on the evaluation criteria outlined in the call Guidelines.

The following subsections provide a comprehensive, step-by-step description of the entire procedure, from the initial administrative and eligibility checks to the final ranking and selection of proposals for funding.

4.1. Pool of External Evaluators

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, with balanced expertise.**

The selected pool of 10 experts had balanced experience in topics, relevant for the InnoMatch open calls, 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.

Two evaluators from the pool were selected to review the received applications under the InnoMatch OC#2 for EIC Awardees.

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 €60,000 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 9 EOI FOR EXTERNAL EXPERTS PUBLISHED ON THE INNOMATCH WEBSITE

4.2. Evaluation & Selection Process

The InnoMatch Open Call #2 for EIC Awardees Evaluation & Selection followed a strict step-by-step process divided into two main phases: 1. Internal Eligibility verification, performed by the InnoMatch partners, and 2. External Evaluation performed by external expert evaluators, recruited via a competitive process.

4.2.1. Eligibility Check

An eligibility verification was performed by the InnoMatch consortium. In the cases where a proposal was deemed ineligible, applicants were promptly notified of its status, and can submit a complaint within a three-day period, as stipulated in the call Guidelines.

The eligibility check verified the following:

- The Applicant is an EIC Awardee.
- The applicant has a PIC number.
- The applicant has a legal VAT number or equivalent.
- The applicant declares not to have received funding for this or a very similar activity.
- The applicant accepts the InnoMatch Open Call Terms and conditions.
- All required attachments are submitted, using the provided templates (Proposal template(s) & Letter of commitment from the Buyer for each proposal)
- The submitted application, and all relevant attachments, were filled out in English.
- The application was submitted within the required deadline of the open call.
- The total funding requested from InnoMatch did not exceed €60.000.
- The applicant can facilitate the commercialisation of the solution in case the pilot deployment is successful.

After the internal eligibility check, all shortlisted applications proceeded to the next phase – an external (remote) evaluation, performed by expert evaluators.

4.2.2. Remote Evaluation

All eligible proposals were evaluated based on criteria aligned to the Horizon Europe programme, and following the rules stipulated in the [open call Guidelines](#). The evaluation was performed remotely.

The InnoMatch Selection Committee appointed 2 external evaluators (from the pool of 10), with preference for those evaluators from the previous InnoMatch open calls, who showed great understanding of the call objectives and rules, and exceptional professionalism. The evaluation of each application was performed by the two experts.

Before the start of the evaluation process, the InnoMatch open call manager F6S organised an online briefing session for the experts. The focus was put on the priorities of the open call, and the main steps and requirements of the evaluation process. In addition to that, the open call manager F6S presented the online evaluation tool (Individual Evaluation Card) and in an open Q&A provided clarifications about the evaluation process's main steps.

During the evaluation process all data management and confidentiality rules were kept, as per the call Guidelines and in line with the experts' contracts signed before the official start of the evaluation process. The evaluation was conducted in several stages:

- **Individual Evaluation:** the period was shortened, compared to the other InnoMatch open calls, due to the limited number of applications expected for this call. Each of the evaluators used an Individual Evaluation Card (online evaluation tool) provided by the open call manager F6S to fill in their justifications and the respective score for each of the four (4) open call evaluation criteria.
- **Consensus Briefing & Bilateral Consensus Calls:** The open call manager identified the proposals with significant divergence in the scores received, and a follow-up Consensus Briefing was organised with the evaluators. The evaluators were invited to schedule bilateral consensus calls organised between each of them for a consensus discussion to reach agreement on their expert justifications and scores.
- **Quality verification of the experts' justification:** Acting on behalf of the European Commission, the InnoMatch open call manager (F6S) and the InnoMatch Selection Committee ensured the entire selection process was fair, transparent, and high-quality, by overseeing the work of the external experts. The InnoMatch Selection Committee performed a critical quality check on the evaluators' justifications, under the close supervision of the Funding Authority.
- **Evaluation Summary Reports (ESR) and redress process:** The final Evaluation Summary Reports were drafted, and sent to the applicants, allowing a three-day period to submit their official appeals, if any.

4.2.3. Final List of Selected Applicants

After the end of the Evaluation phase, the proposals were ranked based on their overall weighted score, and considering the defined open call ranking rules, a Final List of Selected Applicants was drafted.

Ranking Position	Selected EIC Awardee	Country	Proposal Title	Buyer Challenge	Overall Weighted Average Score
1	IDOVEN 1903, S.L.	Spain	Willem AI for Proactive Cardiovascular Care: Integrating ECG	InnoMatch_Challenge 4_Medtronic	4.410

			Intelligence into Medtronic's GetReady Platform		
2	Naco Technologies SIA	Latvia	HMS-Enabled Ultra-Low Platinum CCMs for Cost-Effective, High-Performance Fuel Cells	InnoMatch_Challenge 2_EH Group	4.213
3	Technical University Munich (TUM)	Germany	N-CARB: Nutrient enabled carbon farming	InnoMatch_Challenge 3_DeepSoil	4.023
4	Compliance Tech Sociedade Unipessoal LDA	Portugal	AI4PP-Ghent: Context-Aware AI Drafting Assistance for Public Procurement	InnoMatch_Challenge 1_City of Ghent	3.710

Table 6 FINAL LIST OF SELECTED APPLICANTS

5. Open Call Statistics

5.1. Eligibility phase



19 Submitted Applications



6 Eligible Applicants



4 EIC Awardees with women in C-level



Eligible applicants from 5 Member States

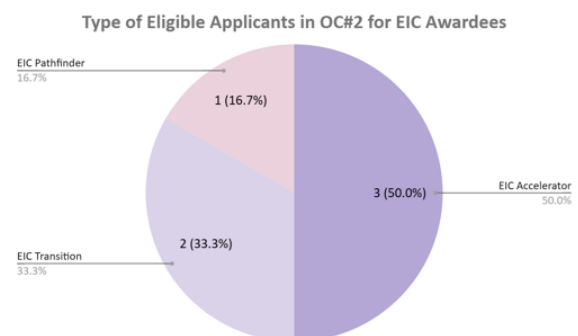


Figure 10 SUMMARY OF RECEIVED APPLICATIONS

5.2. Selected EIC Awardees

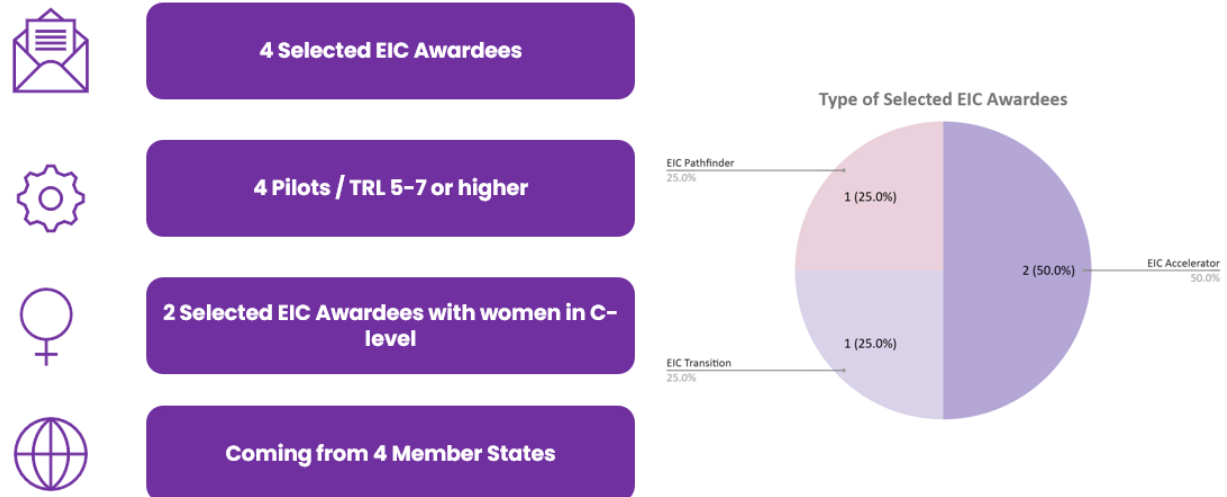


Figure 11 SUMMARY OF AWARDED PROPOSALS

5.3. Open Call KPIs

As shown in the table below, all project KPIs related to the Open Call for #2 for EIC Awardees were successfully met, with some KPIs even exceeding the initially set target.

KPI Description	KPI Target	Achieved
OC Guidance document created	1 foreseen	1 Guideline for Applicants pack
Nr. of online info webinars OC EIC Awardee + Buyers (1 per wave)	1 per open call	3 info webinars (+ Q&A sessions) organised in parallel with each online Matchmaking session for OC#2 for EIC Awardees
Nr application submitted	The target for all InnoMatch Open Calls was 100, and was overachieved with over 130 submitted applications	19 submitted / 6 eligible in OC#2 for EIC Awardees

Nr. of Member States represented among applicants	Overall target for all InnoMatch Open Calls is 20 and was overachieved	5 Member States of eligible applicants / 4 MS represented amongst the selected applicants
Applications from EIC Awardees with women in leading positions	30% planned for all InnoMatch open calls, overachieved with the first wave of OC#1	4 amongst eligible applicants / 2 amongst selected EIC Awardees
Nr. of EIC Awardees scouted	120 planned in total	25 through targeted scouting only for the specific needs of OC#2 for EIC Awardees
Nr. of interactive sessions bringing together Buyers + EIC Awardees (Matchmaking sessions) – for all OCs	9 planned in total for all open calls	3 targeted online Matchmaking sessions successfully organised in the scope of OC#2 for EIC Awardees

6. Deviations

- **Awardee & Need Selection:** Only 4 EIC Awardees were selected (versus 5 planned) because the Open Call for Public and Private Buyers identified only four unmet needs across four thematic areas. No buyer's unmet innovation need was selected under the "Construction, Infrastructure, Manufacturing" thematic area.
- **Adjusted Call Timeline:** The call launched one month late and ran for two months instead of three. Because targeted scouting and applicant outreach began well before launch, a longer application window was unnecessary.
- **Matchmaking & Submissions:** The 4th matchmaking session (for the innovation challenge of DeepSoil) was canceled due to zero registrations. However, because detailed challenge parameters were available on the InnoMatch website, a high-quality application was successfully submitted for this challenge.

7. Conclusions

This deliverable comprises the full process, from the Open Call publication to the selection of the proposals to be funded in the last InnoMatch call OC#2 for EIC Awardees.

The Open Call process was successfully carried out by the open call manager (F6S), with the invaluable support of the InnoMatch Selection Committee, and the best 4 proposals were

selected to enter the InnoMatch Programme, and to receive expert support in piloting their innovative solutions, along with growth services and consultations for a potential adoption of the successful solutions.

The targeted promotion and matchmaking efforts in scouting eligible applicants (EIC Awardees) led to a low number of applications coming from non-eligible companies. A significant number of the applicants were attracted through the different EIC communication channels, and because of strong synergies built within the EIC IPP, and the targeted scouting efforts of the InnoMatch team.

The synergies within the EIC IPP and collaboration in terms of onboarding EIC Awardees and offering them excellent opportunities continued and resulted in 3 successfully conducted joint online Matchmaking sessions. A dedicated tracker was created and maintained by the InnoMatch and SPIN4EIC partners to structure the outreach process and record the EIC Awardees associated with each buyer challenge. In total, 25 EIC Awardees were mapped across the four buyers.

The thorough quality verification of the external experts' evaluation performed during the process resulted in zero appeals received from the companies, providing evidence of the robust evaluation process. The ESRs provided valuable feedback to the applicants, focusing on the main points for improvement of the proposals for future funding opportunities.

As a next step InnoMatch will proceed with the contracting preparation process and signing the Sub-grant Agreements with the selected applicants, which marks the transition from the selection process to the pilot implementation and generating real impact.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Application Form on the F6S platform

SECTION 1: Applicant Legal Data

SECTION 1: Applicant Legal Data

1 Applicant Name (EIC Awardee) *

2 Company PIC Number (9-digit Participant Identification Code) *

In case you do not have one, you can register and get it on the following page: ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/participant/register/identification

3 Company VAT Number (or equivalent) *

4 Country (where the legal entity is registered) *

5 Legal address

SECTION 2: Contact Details

SECTION 2: Contact Details

6 Legal representative First and Last Name *

This is the person to sign the Sub-Grant Agreement and all other mandatory docs, if the proposal is selected.

7 Legal representative Email address *

8 Main contact person for the proposal First and Last Name *

9 Main contact person Email address *

10 Main contact person Phone number

11 Company / organisation website

SECTION 3: Proposal Information

SECTION 3: Proposal information

12 Choose the InnoMatch Innovation Challenge to which you are proposing a solution. *

In this Open Call you can apply with a solution to any of the 4 (four) predefined InnoMatch Innovation Challenges, as described in the call Guidelines.

- ☐ InnoMatch_Challenge 1_City of Ghent
- ☐ InnoMatch_Challenge 2_EH Group
- ☐ InnoMatch_Challenge 3_DeepSoil
- ☐ InnoMatch_Challenge 4_Medtronic

13 Title of the Proposal. *

As per your Proposal template.

14 What is the total requested funding that you are applying for? *

As per the information in your Proposal template. The maximum available funding provided by InnoMatch is 60.000 EUR.

€ ▼	
-----	----------------------

15 Are you co-financing the pilot / PoC? *

In this case co-financing means providing additional financing over the requested up to 60.000 EUR from InnoMatch.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

16 Type of the proposed solution *

Definition available in this Open Call Guidelines for applicants.

- ☐ Proof-of-concept (PoC)
- ☐ Pilot

17 TRL of the proposed solution *

- ☐ TRL 2 - 4
- ☐ TRL 5 - 7
- ☐ Higher TRL

18 Please upload your filled Proposal template here. (Max file size 30MB.) *

Applicant to attach file here.

[Choose a File](#)

SECTION 4: Eligibility & Commitment

SECTION 4: Eligibility & Commitment

19 Please indicate what type of an EIC Awardee your company is. Choose one of the proposed options. *

As per the Open Call 1 EIC Awardee + Buyer requirements, only Horizon Europe EIC Awardees who are single entities, are eligible to apply under this Open Call. For detailed information, please check the open call Guidelines.

- ☐ EIC Accelerator beneficiary
- ☐ EIC Transition beneficiary
- ☐ EIC Pathfinder beneficiary
- ☐ EIC Prizes winner (The European Prize for Women Innovators, The European Capital of Innovation Awards, The European Innovation Procurement Awards, The European Social Innovation Competition, The European Innovation Prizes)
- ☐ None

20 Are you currently implementing an EIC funded project/contract (EIC Transition, EIC Pathfinder, EIC Accelerator)? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

21 Please, provide your Grant Agreement number for your EIC funded project / contract. *

Please, write N/A if this is not applicable in your case.

22 Please, provide the name of your Horizon Europe funded project / contract (under any of the EIC Initiatives eligible under InnoMatch: Transition, Pathfinder, Accelerator), or more details on your EIC Prize, if this is the case. *

23 Have you been involved or is currently involved in the EIC Innovation Procurement Programme, any other of the EIC Business Acceleration Services? *

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ EIC Corporate Partnership Programme | ☐ EIC Innovation Procurement Programme | ☐ EIC International Trade Fairs Programme |
| ☐ EIC Investor Readiness and Outreach Programme | ☐ EIC Scaling Club | ☐ EIC Soft-landing programme |
| ☐ None of the mentioned. | | |

24 If you have chosen any or several of the options above, please provide more information. Please, write N/A if this is not applicable in your case. *

25 In case you have been involved before in the EIC IPP, please specify in which EIC IPP initiative exactly have you been involved? *

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| ☐ SPIN4EIC (Strategic Innovation Procurement) | ☐ InnoBuyer: Fast Track to Innovation Procurement | ☐ InnoMatch: Matching EIC Awardees with committed buyers |
| ☐ None of the above. | | |

SECTION 5: Referrals

SECTION 5: Referrals

26 How did you hear about this Open Call? *

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Referral | ☐ InnoMatch partners | ☐ Social media |
| ☐ InnoMatch social media channels | ☐ News and media | ☐ F6S Platform |
| ☐ Event | ☐ EC / EIC / EISMEA | ☐ EIC Innovation Procurement Programme newsletter |
| ☐ Other | | |

27 Are you interested in being contacted for future funding opportunities by F6S? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

SECTION 6: Gender Balance

SECTION 6: Gender balance

28 Do you have women in C-level positions in your company? *

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

SECTION 7: Requirements to join the Programme

SECTION 7: Requirements to join the programme

A set of individual questions with one checkbox each, requesting that the applicant confirms the following (as applicable).

29 I ACCEPT the conditions of the InnoMatch programme (available at the InnoMatch website) and confirm that have read the privacy policy (available at www.f6s.com/privacy-policy-participants) and agree to the processing of your personal data for these purposes. *

- ☐ I ACCEPT the conditions of the InnoMatch programme (available at the InnoMatch website) and confirm that have read the privacy policy (available at <https://www.f6s.com/privacy-policy-participants>) and

30 I CONFIRM that I accept all the conditions in the Declaration of Honour (Annex 6 of the Open Call OC2 for EIC Awardees) and the information contained therein, and that it will be provided signed and stamped should this proposal be accepted for funding. *

- ☐ I CONFIRM that I accept all the conditions in the Declaration of Honour (Annex 6 of the Open Call OC2 for EIC Awardees) and the information contained therein, and that it will be provided signed and s

31 I ACCEPT that the information provided and submitted in this proposal can be shared by F6S with the InnoMatch project consortium for the purposes of managing the InnoMatch programme. *

- ☐ I ACCEPT that the information provided and submitted in this proposal can be shared by F6S with the InnoMatch project consortium for the purposes of managing the InnoMatch programme.

32 I DECLARE that the company / organisation has not received EU funding for the same or very similar project. *

- ☐ I DECLARE that the company / organisation has not received EU funding for the same or very similar project.