



INGENIOUS

FAQ



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1. What is the INGENIOUS project?

INGENIOUS project is a funded EU project based on the attribution of grants to SMEs to develop collaborative and innovation projects, trainings and/or internationalisation missions in the Energy Intensive Industry areas like metalworking, nano and plasma technology, among others. This programme is intended to provide links between SMEs belonging to these fields and other different fields as ICT or Circular Economy and to foster digital and green transition and to build resilience. INGENIOUS will fund trainings, internationalisation and strategic plans preparation, validation of ideas and activities, through innovation and technical assistance grants.

2. What is the aim of the Innovation Grant Open Call?

The aim of INGENIOUS Innovation Grant Open Call is to provide an opportunity to European SMEs operating in Energy Intensive Industries, to develop products, technological solutions and services in collaboration with SMEs from emerging and advanced sectors.

The Innovation Grant competitive scheme provides direct financial support to innovative SMEs in order to enable and promote the adoption of processes and technologies to reinforce transformation into a greener, more digital and resilient economy in the Energy Intensive Industries (EIs) value chain.

3. What is an INGENIOUS Innovation Grant?

The INGENIOUS Innovation Grants will support projects that bring together SMEs operating in any of the fields inside Energy Intensive Industries towards green and digital transformation and resilience solutions. Through INGENIOUS programme, the European SMEs that belong to the countries eligible can enter new collaborations to develop products, technologies, solutions, and services. The call will support Grants providing financial support, up to € 60.000 per SME of each consortium, for the development of innovative projects.

4. What is the total amount of direct financial support for SMEs?

The total amount of direct financial support for SMEs in this Innovation Grant is € 1.000.000. The applicants can apply for a grant of max. €60.000 (including one mandatory training for resilience preparedness/business continuity per SME worth €250) covering 100% of the eligible expenses. The INGENIOUS consortium will organise a mandatory training with an external expert for all Innovation Grant beneficiaries. INGENIOUS will choose the best trainer for best value of money for this training. It is mandatory for each beneficiary to join the training. Each beneficiary needs to include in her/his subcontracting costs € 250 for this training. Each beneficiary will pay the training directly to the external trainer. There will be no financial relation or any other relation between the trainer and any of the partners of the consortium.

5. Which are considered Energy Intensive Industries (EIIs)?

The High-level Group on EIIs of the European Commission set up the *Masterplan for a competitive transformation of EU energy-intensive industries enabling a climate-neutral, circular economy by 2050*. This report contains the scheme below, which describes the main sectors of Energy-Intensive Industries and their links to other sectors:



Figure: Value chain links of energy-intensive industries to other sectors in the economy and other energy-intensive industries. Industrial Value Chain: a Bridge Towards a Carbon Neutral Europe-Europe's Energy Intensive Industries contribution to the EU Strategy for long-term EU greenhouse gas emissions reductions, 2018.

All the sectors shown in the figure will be accepted as Energy-Intensive Industries in INGENIOUS, although this is not an exclusive list, as other sectors can be accepted if this is duly justified. In any case, only proposals providing innovative projects aligned with one or more challenges defined in INGENIOUS (*question 10*) that shows the

appropriateness of the project for the Innovation Grant submission will be considered eligible.

6. What is the submission deadline?

The submission deadline is July 31st until 17:00 CEST.

7. Will an extension of the proposal submission deadline be possible?

No. The proposals must be submitted until July 31st, 17:00 CEST.

8. How do I apply?

The applications form must be submitted digitally via the INGENIOUS website: <https://ingenious-eurocluster.eu/innovation-grants/>. All templates are also available at the website. All these information are also given in the Guide for Applicants.

9. How many steps does the call have?

This is a one-step call.

10. What are the given challenges?

The INGENIOUS Innovation Grants will support projects that are aligned with the major challenges where SMEs need to accelerate the implementation of the digital and green transformation, provide affordable, clean and efficient technology solutions, develop new business models, innovate their services, technology and production lines, open new markets etc.

Challenges in EIs	Examples of measures (actions)
Challenge 1. Efficient and sustainable decarbonisation processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Development of technologies for the incorporation of alternative non-fossil carbon sources.B. Development of innovative technologies for the safe use of green hydrogen in industrial installations.C. Development of systems for CO2 capture, storage and use in industrial installations, to avoid emissions from combustion or processes.D. Research and development of alternative energy sources based on green electricity and green molecules.E. Quantitative reduction of GHG emission and reduction in the use of resources (energy, water, materials) in Energy Intensive Industries.

<p>Challenge 2. Technology improvement and/or product innovation for digital transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Development and implementation of new digital technologies, such as Data & Analytics, Cloud Computing, Block chain, Artificial Intelligence (AI) among others, that enable intelligent control and governance of energy-intensive industrial processes that allow the integration of energy flows and the improvement of energy efficiency. B. Development of innovative solutions to substantially improve the energy efficiency of industrial processes. C. Development of new technologies and implementation of innovative solutions for heat recovery in production processes or the use of energy from secondary flows. D. Development of digital technologies for localization, tracking and mapping of materials and products for process improvement.
<p>Challenge 3. Technology improvement and/or product innovation for green transition</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Development of solutions that enable smarter harnessing (optimization of the efficiency / usage) of renewable sources of energy (Solar Power, Wind Power, Hydropower, Geothermal Energy, Biomass, Biofuels ...). B. A safe use of green hydrogen in industrial installations. C. Design of process water circularity strategies. D. Recovering and re-use of heat and energy in industrial processes.
<p>Challenge 4. Closing loops for efficient and sustainable process innovation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Development and/or implementation of technology to increase the quality of recycling and its control. B. Development of new industrial processes for the treatment of recycled resources. C. Development and/or implementation of new technological solutions for the valorisation of by-products of production processes. D. Creation of a circular flow through sharing, repairing, reusing or recycling. E. Development and implementation of technological solutions for the use of waste as biofuels as substitutes for fossil fuels.

<p>Challenge 5. Ensuring safer and more efficient energy transition and supply</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. New developments and implementation of energy efficiency measures. B. Development of technologies for ensuring the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at an affordable price. C. Adoption of strategies to accelerate the transition from the use of fossil fuels to renewable energies. D. Implementation of solutions for green hydrogen as alternative energy source. E. Implementation of solutions and processes that will secure more effective quality control as for example improving the production data management and storage, controlling processes and quality assurance.
<p>Challenge 6. Advanced materials leading to competitive higher sustainability and digitalization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Creating new products from alternative resources. B. Re-using existing material as by-products of residues from production processes and/or advanced materials development. C. Incorporation of new raw materials and additives to reduce process emissions and EU-external dependency.
<p>Challenge 7. New-to-firm solutions and business strategies to face the challenges to overcome the EU-external dependency.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Innovative strategies aim at addressing emerging skill needs, while other approaches aim at adjusting existing mechanisms and systems. B. Cross-cutting topics, highlighting the importance of new business models, new financial and investment methodologies or new advanced training skills. C. Development of innovative new-to-firm green solutions: products, services or business process innovations to be adopted in Energy Intensive industries and avoid external dependencies of the EU.

11. Who is the target audience for Innovation Grant Open Call?

The Innovation Grant addresses small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that will tackle one of the above given challenges. Only consortia consisting of minimum two and maximum three SMEs will be considered for the allocation of funds. Other entities such as large companies, research institutes, universities, knowledge providers, associations, foundations, etc. can assist the SME partners in the implementation of the action (e.g. acting as subcontractors) but they cannot be direct beneficiaries in the project.

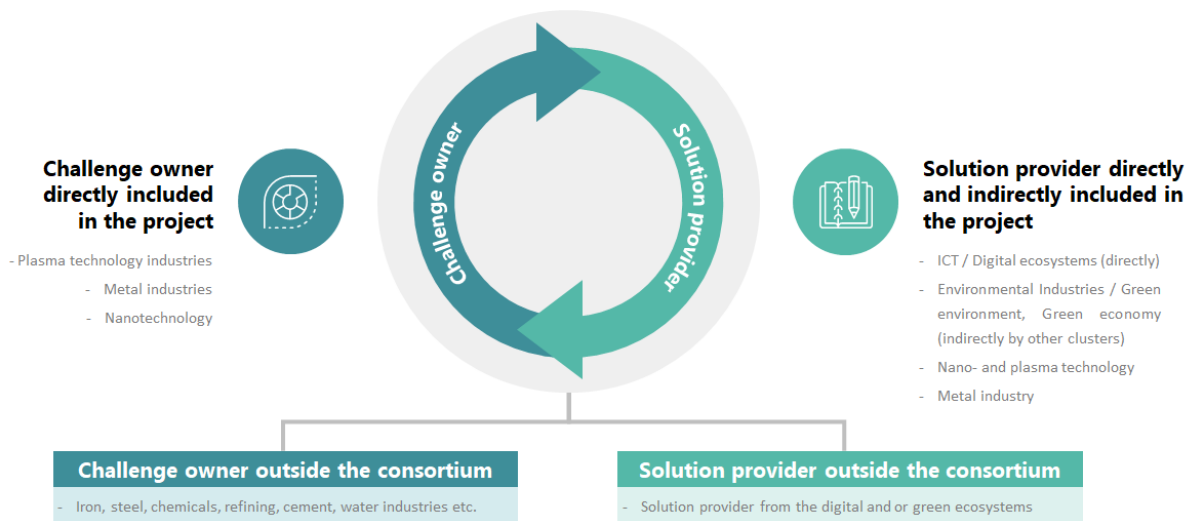
Members of the Cluster organisations participating in the project are eligible to apply, but project partners cannot.

Consortium composition: Only SMEs are eligible to participate. Consortia can be comprised by two or three SME with the following structure:

- a) 1 SME as challenge owner and 1 SME as a solution provider.
- b) 2 SMEs as challenge owners and 1 SME as a solution provider.
- c) 1 SME as challenge owner and 2 SMEs as solution provider.

12. What is the definition of challenge owner and solution provider?

Challenge owners are framed in the Energy Intensive Industries. **Solution providers** are ICT, Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency and Advanced Manufacturing SMEs that can provide innovation and services to the Challenge Owner Sector.



13. Is there a limitation in the number of actors participating in an application?

INGENIOUS will fund innovative, collaborative activities with the participation of minimum two and maximum three SMEs in each consortium, being at least one of the participating SME a “Challenge owner”, and at least one of the participating SMEs must be a “Solution provider”. In the case of a consortium of three SMEs, the third partner will be either a “Challenge owner” or a “Solution provider”.

14. Who may submit the proposals?

The final proposal must be submitted by the coordinator of the consortium. He/she will be responsible for ensuring of the correct fulfilment of the Application form of all the partners involved. This coordinating SME will be the contact point for the INGENIOUS team.

15. Is it possible to submit the same application more than once?

Yes. However, the application submitted at the latest will be taken into account.

16. What are the eligible criteria for SMEs?

The Innovation Grants are open to SMEs meeting the following criteria:

- The applicants must be SMEs (Small and Medium-size Enterprise) according to the EU definition (2003/361)¹ (Including public SMEs, young companies and start-ups):
- The main factors determining whether an enterprise is an SME are :
 - Staff headcount (< 250)
 - Either turnover (\leq € 50 m) or balance sheet total (\leq € 43 m). These limits apply to the figures for individual enterprises only. A company that is part of a larger group may need to include staff headcount/turnover/balance sheet data from that group, too.
- Applicants must be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)) and Ukraine
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the COSME part of the Single Market Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature (list of participating countries)
 - Hungarian applicants should not be excluded from participating in the Innovation Grant but Hungarian applicants will need to verify that their entities receiving FSTP funds are not part of the entities listed in the link
- Applicants need to belong to one of the following sectors:
 - Challenge owner:
Metalworking, nano technology, plasma technology, and other Energy Intensive Industries.
 - Solution providers:
 - Any SME implementing technological and/or innovation solutions in the Energy Intensive Industries.
 - Other directly related SMEs.
- SMEs must comply with ALL the following rules:
 - Being a legally established entity and belong to one of the EU Member States.
 - Have not been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
 - Has not been convicted for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, and unethical or illegal business practices.

¹ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-definition_en

- Are not under liquidation or under difficulty accordingly to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014 art. 2.18.
- Companies revealing economic difficulties only due to the pandemic situation will be analysed and considered even if they provide a negative balance of year 2021.
- Eligible countries have been selected paying attention to the importance of the Industrial modernisation partnership
- At least 10% of the supported SMEs will come from EU regions different from the countries of individual Euroclusters’ partners.” Specific attention will be paid to EU-13 countries in the calls and those EU regions with which the Euroclusters’ partners had no previous cooperation and shall focus on engaging actors from regions with different levels of economic development. INGENIOUS consortium will keep track of this in the eligibility of proposals-phase following the closure of the Open Call and prior to the assessment

In addition, for the whole selection and evaluation process and the duration of the agreement with Mazovia Cluster ICT as INGENIOUS project coordinator, selected applicants must commit to comply with the obligations that the European Commission set in the Grant Agreement with Mazovia Cluster ICT, including, among others:

- Avoid conflicts of interest (Article 12 GA)
- Maintain confidentiality (Article 13 GA).
- Promote the action and give visibility to the EU funding (Article 17 GA).
- Liability for damages (Article 33 GA).

17.It is mandatory to have partners involved from different countries?

No. It is not mandatory to have partners involved from different countries, but INGENIOUS highly encourage SMEs to involve international partners in the consortium.

18.Is there any gender dimension?

As gender equality is an overall priority in the call, proposals that provide a gender balance with regards to the people involved in the action will prevail.

19.Is a newly registered start-up eligible to apply?

Yes. Supporting new innovative companies with at least one year audited account are in line with this funding scheme and rules.

20.Can a single beneficiary apply?

No. All the funded projects must be collaborative.

21.Is there a minimum percentage of the budget that needs to be dedicated to the partners within the project?

No. There is no minimum percentage of budget for each partner within the project. Please take the maximum funding amounts into consideration when drafting the project.

22. How many main challenges must the proposal address?

It is mandatory to select one main challenge. However, the selection can cover several challenges. Information must be duly outlined in the proposal.

23. What are the expected TRLs for activities to be funded?

The expected TRLs for funded activities under this open call will be between TRL 6-9. The projects have to be minimum at TRL 5 at the beginning of the project activities. TRL means Technology Readiness Level and it is a method for estimating the maturity a technology solution during the acquisition phase of a program.

TRL 6 – Technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 7 – System prototype demonstration in operational environment
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TRL 8 – System complete and qualified
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TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space

24. What is the maximum funding?

The INGENIOUS type of financial support is a Lump-sum. Maximum funding for 1 INGENIOUS project is as follows:

- per SME: € 60.000 (including one mandatory training per SME for resilience preparedness/business continuity training worth €250 in the cost category subcontracting)
- per project of two participants: € 120.000
- per project of three participants: € 180.000

SMEs have the possibility to participate in different INGENIOUS grants, however the maximum possible financial support for any SME in all grants is limited to € 60.000.

25. What is a lump sum?

A lump sum is a fixed amount of money, which can be used by beneficiaries for several purposes related to the achievement of the project objectives. It is necessary to provide an explanation in the application form on how the lump sum will be used including a clear budget proposal (personnel, subcontracting, travel and consumables). Since the granting of a lump sum does not foresee the delivery of a detailed financial reporting and timesheets, the appropriateness of the project budget will be assessed by the evaluators considering the staff and technical requirements and monitored by the INGENIOUS coordinator. However, since beneficiaries will have to keep the original documents of their expenses (timesheets, invoices, contracts) in case of an audit, the following rules and limitations must be respected. The INGENIOUS consortium reserves

the right to inspect documents relating to the implementation of the awarded project at every stage of its execution.

26. What are the eligible costs?

Examples of **eligible costs**:

Ex1. Direct staff costs (personnel) - hourly cost of the staff of the beneficiary that is dedicated to actual work under the development of the project.²

Ex2. Subcontracting costs (external expertise): work carried out by an external provider, which has entered into an agreement on business conditions with the beneficiary. The subcontracting needs to be in line with the procurement rules of the beneficiary's company. If the beneficiary has no written procurement rules for this particular situation, then they need to follow and apply their usual national procurement practice. The external provider(s) cannot be one of the consortium partners. Note that up to 50% subcontracting is allowed € 250 needs to be included in subcontracting costs for the mandatory resilience preparedness/business continuity training.

Ex3. Other costs: further direct incurred costs can be claimed, like travel expenses and consumables.

Ex4. Prototype and material costs relevant to the execution of the project are eligible as consumables.

Examples of **ineligible costs**:

Ex1. Depreciation costs of equipment, infrastructure or other assets necessary for the project incurred and invoiced to the participating SME(s).

Ex2. Deductible VAT.

27. How does the lump-sum payment work?

- Payment will be made in three terms:
 - Pre-financing payment: 50% of the requested budget will be paid within 30 days after the Grant Agreement signature date.
 - Interim payment: 25% of the remaining budget will be paid within 30 days after MS1 achievement and Interim Report approval (halfway through the project). INGENIOUS will provide an Interim Report template to the beneficiaries.
 - Final payment: the remaining budget will be paid within 30 days after MS2 achievement and Final Report approval. INGENIOUS will provide a Final Report template to the beneficiaries.

² Hourly costs are calculated by taking the yearly salary excluding (holiday and performance- or profit based bonuses), multiplied by a factor 1.35 for coverage of employer/social costs, then the resulting amount multiplied by a factor 1.25 for overhead, and the total result being divided by 1.720 hrs per year on a 40-hourly working week basis.

28. How to apply?

The coordinator of the consortium submits the Grant application through application templates given on the website of the project that can be found at: <https://ingenious-eurocluster.eu/innovation-grants/>

- The submission language is English.
- Applicants are expected to provide complete, accurate data and contact details.
- The application reception will be opened from May 15th 2023 at 9:00hr CEST until July 31st 2023 at 17:00hr CEST.
- It is highly recommended to submit the application before the deadline to avoid any failures in applications because of technical issues.
- Only full and correct applications submitted will be considered, no rectification period is foreseen.
- The coordinating SME is responsible for ensuring of the correct fulfilment of the Application form of all the partners involved. This coordinating SME will be the contact point for the INGENIOUS team.

29. Are extra forms or documents necessary to accompany the proposal?

Yes. The following documents are all needed to be properly completed and submitted electronically through INGENIOUS website (<https://ingenious-eurocluster.eu/innovation-grants/>) to answer the call:

- Application form
- Ethics issues declaration
- Financial declaration
- Participating partner profile

30. Are CV required?

No. However, SMEs must provide information to support the participation in the project describing its adequacy and capacity to develop the project, and this will be considered in the evaluation process.

31. How will confidentiality be ensured? Is there a guarantee that my data is not handed over automatically to third parties?

INGENIOUS consortium will sign with applicants a grant agreement where the confidentiality and data management of applications will be guaranteed.

By applying, the applicants agree on the storage and use of their personal data for the execution of the INGENIOUS objectives and work plan. The INGENIOUS consortium commits to handling personal data confidential except for the call results, which will contain the following information:

- Information about successful Innovation Grants applications that will be made publicly available before the end of the project containing: project title, names of project partners and short project summary (as provided by the applicant in the application template).
- Information about successful Innovation Grants that will be made publicly available after the end of the project: project title, names of project partners,

awarded funding and updated short project summary (as provided by the project partners in the Final Report).

Applications selection and evaluation will be performed under the appropriate ethical conduct and will respect the confidentiality of the information received.

The arrangement of a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) is optional. It is the responsibility of each participant of the innovation project to protect sensitive information.

Applications selection and evaluation will be performed under the appropriate ethical conduct and will respect the confidentiality of the information received.

The applicants are advised to arrange internal contracts regarding Intellectual Property Rights, the use and dissemination of the results generated by the project teams through the funding obtained via INGENIOUS Grants.

For dissemination and use of results generated through the financial support from INGENIOUS, the beneficiaries must credit the INGENIOUS project through proper citation and appearance of the INGENIOUS logo and EU Logo, including the proper citation "This project has received funding from INGENIOUS, an project of the European Union's Single Market Programme under grant agreement No 101074635". A more detailed description will be included in the Grant agreement.

32. What is the expected time-to-inform and time-to-grant?



33. Who will evaluate my proposal?

The evaluation procedures are designed to identify the best proposals in terms of excellence, impact, quality and efficiency of the implementation, as thoroughly and

accurately as possible. The technical excellence is a must of the proposal itself, along with the innovativeness of the envisaged solution in the target sector for which the support is requested. The assessment will be undertaken in a fair, transparent and homogeneous way for all the proposals submitted under the call. Applications can only be handed in during the call period (see timeline above).

Pre-selection

A team composed of one representative from each INGENIOUS consortium partner staff will realise the pre-selection of the proposals. Firstable, they will verify the fulfilment of the requirements and the adjustment of the proposals to the strategy of the Open Call. Only the eligible proposals will be then evaluated according to the evaluation criteria listed below (excellence, impact and quality). The average of the three scores resulting from each criterium in the assessment will be drawn in the pre-selection list. The 12 projects with the highest average score will be move to the next stage, that will be the external evaluation. A Proposal Evaluation Form will be established for and filled in for each proposal and a summary report with the feedback will be sent to all applicants.

External evaluation

A database of external independent experts will be prepared. Two experts will evaluate each proposal according to the same evaluation criteria used in the pre-selection (listed below). The average of the two scores will be drawn in the external evaluation list. The Proposal Evaluation Form will be filled in by the external evaluators for each of the 12 proposals and a summary report with the feedback will be sent to all applicants by members of the INGENIOUS consortium.

The cumulative scores of the evaluations will be tallied, and those with the highest scores will be granted.

A 'reserve list' will also be defined with applications that may, in the end, get funding if one or more applications in the 'ranking list' cannot sign a grant agreement. The final list of selected projects will include projects up to the budget exhaustion allocated to this Innovation Grant.

34. Will the results of the Open Call be published?

Yes. A final ranking list of awarded projects will be published and disseminated on all INGENIOUS and consortium partner social media channels, ECCP and INGENIOUS website. Additionally, a factsheet will be prepared for each of the awarded projects and they will be published on the INGENIOUS website <https://ingenious-eurocluster.eu/>.

The INGENIOUS consortium shall be granted the authorization to disclose the subsequent information:

- Description of actions undertaken by the beneficiaries
- Date of the grant allocation
- Duration of the funding
- Name of the beneficiaries and corresponding websites.

35.What is going to be evaluated?

Proposals will be evaluated based on three evaluation criteria:

- 1) Excellence (40 points)
- 2) Impact (30 points)
- 3) Quality (30 points)

Criteria	Points
<p>Excellence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Innovation potential idea aligned with the challenges. b) The solution will contribute to the challenge, overcome the barriers and meet the challenges identified by INGENIOUS. c) Innovative solutions that go beyond the state of the art in comparison with existing or competing with existing solutions. d) Alignment of proposal with the challenges. 	40 (Threshold 25/40)
<p>Impact:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Realistic and relevant description of how the innovation will have impact on the participating companies. b) The solution will increase digitalisation, sustainability and resilience in the target industry (digital, green, resilient). c) The solution will have a sound impact on the whole value chain, considering providers and end users. d) The solution will be available in Europe and be made with components produced in Europe (resilient). e) Clear definition of the strategy to up-scale the solution and achieve the market. f) Clear business continuity plan for the solution considering both the technology development phase and the commercialisation. 	30 (Threshold 20/30)
<p>Quality:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Quality and complementarity of the participants and extent to which the consortium as whole brings together the necessary expertise. b) Quality and effectiveness of the work plan. 	30 (Threshold 20/30)

<p>c) Balance of the allocation of tasks and resources, ensuring that all the participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.</p> <p>d) The objectives defined are clear and realistic considering the project duration and scope</p> <p>e) Realistic identification of critical risks and uncertainties.</p>	
TOTAL	100 (Threshold 70/100)

36. Is this grant under de-minimis-rules?

No. The De-minimis funding cap does not apply to funding received in INGENIOUS.

37. What are the formal requirements for the applying company?

The applying company has to follow all the EU and national rules and regulations. E.g., taxation, public procurement etc.

38. Where do I find further information about this Innovation Grant?

You can find more information in the INGENIOUS Guidelines for Applicants (EN) at the website: <https://ingenious-eurocluster.eu/innovation-grants/> or by contacting:

MI4/SPAIN

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