

Interregional funding mechanisms: Vinnovate

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Vanguard Initiative: Iniciativas Piloto e Oportunidades de Financiamento Inter-regional

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Vinnovate – the Interregional Funding Tool of the Vanguard Initiative

Funding (grants) for international innovation (TRLs 6-8) projects



The Vanguard Initiative

- Established in 2013 for fostering interregional innovation collaboration
- Ambition to transform regional network into an Innovation Ecosystem of Regions
- Currently 32 European Regions from 13 countries
- Focus on 8 Enabling Transformation Technologies (4 Manufacturing areas, Bio-Economy, AI, Energy, Health)
- A financial support tool 'VInnovate' for deployment-ready solutions
- A Policy Influencing Taskforce for regulatory intelligence on industrial policy & competitiveness
- Regular strategy meetings at Regional Director & Political Level

List of participating regions

Only organisations located in these regions are eligible for funding!



- East NL (Gelderland & Overijssel provinces)
- Noord Brabant
- Lombardy
- Norte
- Basque Country
- Lower Austria
- Emilia-Romagna
- Wales
- Lower Saxony
- Galicia
- North-East Romania

Characteristics of eligible projects



Funding & activities

- Grant (funding rate specified at regional level)
- Supporting TRLs 6-8 activities



Scope

- Solutions for a smarter, a more sustainable or a more autonomous industry
- Thematically linked to at least one VI Pilot



Consortia

- At least two organisations from at least two different countries
- At least one SME cooperating with at least one other organisation (company, research/technology centre)



Range

- Total project costs: min. 100.000€
- Total project duration: max. 36 months

In general, following costs eligible (but some restrictions in some regions !):
Personnel costs, Subcontracting costs, Purchase costs (travel, equipment, consumables), Indirect costs.

! Applicants are requested to check the regional instrument descriptions for a confirmation of eligible costs !

Transitions:

- More sustainable industry
- Smarter industry
- More autonomous industry (*considerably reduce the European dependency on other regions for deep-tech innovations as well as for services of strategic interest*)

Pilots:

- New Nano-Enabled Products
- Bio-Economy
- Efficient Sustainable Manufacturing
- High-Performance Production through 3D Printing
- Advanced Manufacturing for Energy-related Applications in Harsh Environments
- Smart Health
- Artificial Intelligence
- Hydrogen

Type of organisations eligible for funding, per region

SMEs

- East NL (Gelderland and Overijssel provinces)
- Noord Brabant
- Basque Country
- North East Romania
- Norte
- Lower Austria
- Emilia-Romagna
- Lower Saxony
- Galicia
- Wales
- Lombardy

Large companies

- East NL (Gelderland and Overijssel provinces)*
- Noord Brabant *
- Lower Austria
- Galicia*
- Wales
- Lower Saxony*

Universities

- East NL (Gelderland and Overijssel provinces)*
- Noord Brabant*
- Norte*
- Emilia-Romagna
- Lower Saxony*
- Galicia*
- Wales
- Lower Austria
- Lombardy* (TBC)

Research / facility centers

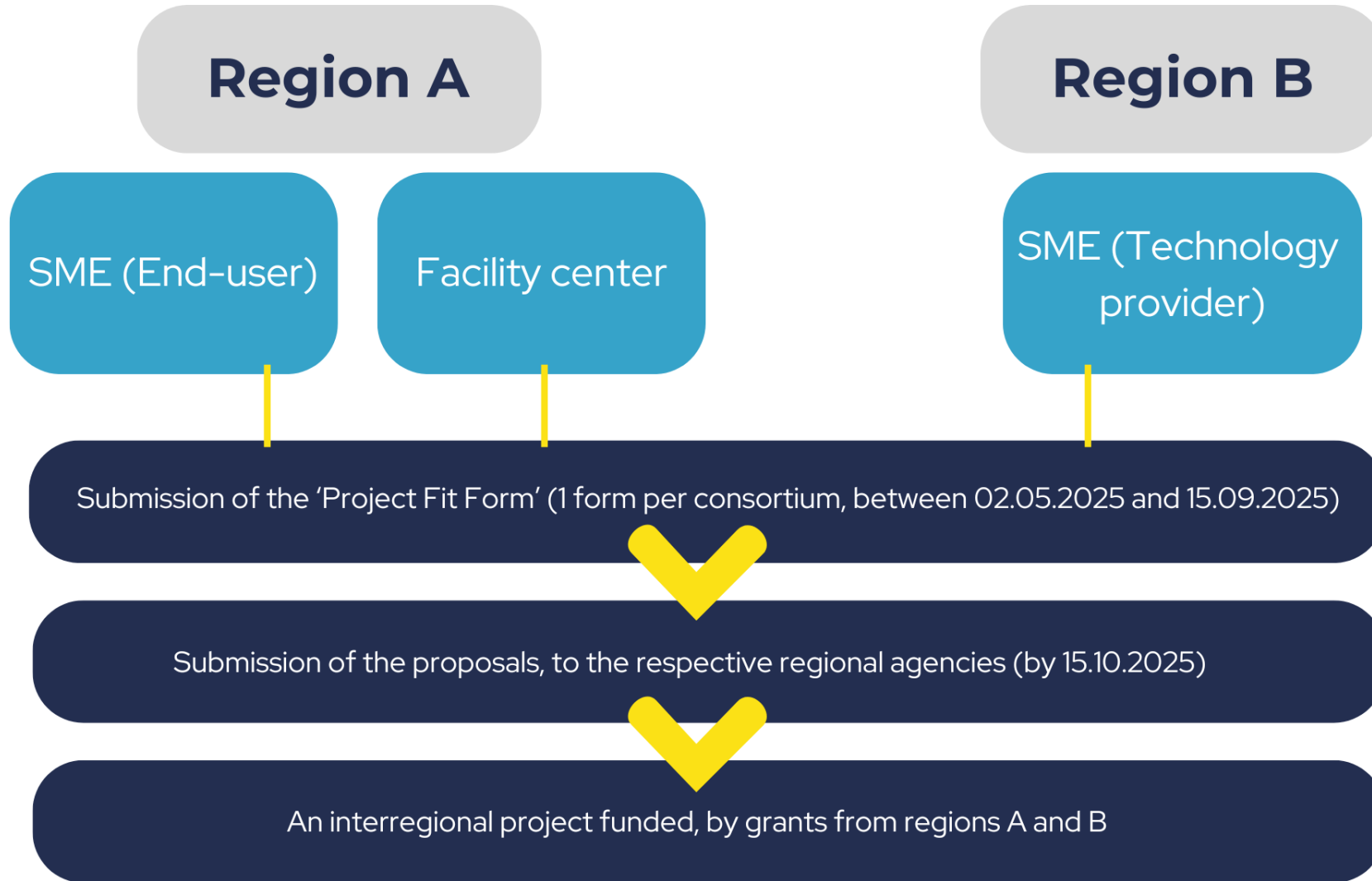
- East NL (Gelderland and Overijssel provinces)*
- Noord Brabant*
- Norte*
- Emilia-Romagna
- Lower Saxony*
- Galicia*
- Wales
- Lower Austria
- Lombardy* (TBC)

* In cooperation with at least one SME from the region

Submission process



An illustrative (!) Vinnovate 2025 project generation



Focus on the Project Fit Form

1. Project description and alignment with Vinnovate 2025 eligibility criteria

Category	Answers
Project Title	

Short project description	
Objectives and main activities of the project (400 words max.)	
Innovativeness (200 words max.) <i>Justify how innovative is the solution developed compared to existing solutions.</i>	
Interregional dimension (200 words max.) <i>Justify why interregional cooperation is necessary/of added value to the project.</i>	
Expected main impacts (200 words max.) <i>Describe the main impacts expected, both in economic terms (productivity, etc.) and in terms of impact on the transition(s)¹ targeted by the project</i>	

Vinnovate eligibility criteria self-assessment					
Name	Covered transitions			Smarter industry: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	<i>Indicate the extent to which the project will develop solution(s) for at least one of the targeted Vinnovate Call 2025 targeted transitions: 1) a smarter and/or 2) a more sustainable and/or 3) a more autonomous/less dependent industry².</i>			More sustainable industry: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	Covered VI Pilots			More autonomous/less dependent industry: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	<i>The project must be <u>thematically</u> linked to the scope of at least one of the Vanguard Initiative Pilots: 1) New Nano-Enabled Products; 2) Bio-Economy; 3) Efficient Sustainable Manufacturing; 4) High-Performance Production through 3D Printing; 5) Advanced Manufacturing for Energy-related Applications in Harsh Environments; 6) Smart Health; 7) Artificial Intelligence; 8) Hydrogen. More information about each pilot can be found here.</i>			Thematically linked to at least one VI pilots: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Organisation 1	Justification thematic link(s) with one pilot (150 words)				
	<i>Briefly justify the thematic linkage(s) between your project and at least one VI pilot.</i>				
	TRLs covered			TRL 6: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Beneficiary	<i>Indicate the extent to which the following TRLs are covered or not: TRL6 (yes/no), TRL7 (yes/no) and TRL8 (yes/no). As a reminder, the project activities must be at TRL6, TRL7 and/or TRL8, i.e. the project is composed of post-prototyping activities.</i>			TRL 7: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
	Corresponding region from the drop-down list below: Select one entry only			TRL 8: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
Estimated total project costs for organisation 1:					
Estimated total					

Some tips for ‘interregional’ projects elaboration

- **Find partners / ideas**, using complementary channels:
 - The VInnovate Projects Generations Webinars
 - The [VI online Gateway](#) (open to any organisation located in VI regions)
 - The VI Pilots activities and contact persons
- **Elaborate project proposal**
 - Anticipate on ‘full’/regional proposals preparation
 - Make sure project idea fits with main regional instruments specificities (see ‘regional instruments specificities slides’, 17-32 and dedicated webpages + contact persons)
 - Eligibility
 - Scope (Regional priorities, etc.)
 - Budget restrictions
 - Etc.
 - For efficiency purposes, when working on ‘full’ proposals (i.e. to be submitted by 15.10.2025), agree (among the international consortium) on/depart from a main common basis to describe the project activities:
 - E.g. a structure with WPs/Tasks/Contributors
 - Ideally, reflecting the requirements (terminology, if any) from the regional instruments targeted
 - Each partner then adds possible complementary information, when submitting to each corresponding regional instrument, depending on requirements
 - “Projects selected for funding when all regions involved select the project for funding”: consider impacts on all regions involved !

Regional Instruments

Some attention points – Type of eligible applicants and Scope

Some attention points – NORTE

Name Instrument: Programa Regional do Norte 2021-27 / Norte Regional Programme 2021-27 (NORTE 2030)

Eligibility – Type of organisations

- SMEs: YES
- Large Companies: **NO**
- Universities: YES*
- Research/Facility Centre: YES*

! *At least one SME from the region per consortium !

Aside from SMEs, Mid-caps are also eligible. Among Norte partners, the application must be led by a company (SME or mid-cap), and can then have universities / R&D centers as co-promoters.

Scope – Some attention points

- “Comply with the Norte 2030 strategy, namely to be framed within the Smart Specialization Strategy of Norte region, S3Norte. Compliance with the specific domains of S3Norte is a compulsory requirement”

Contact person: innovation@ccdr-n.pt

Indicative budget (grant) potentially available: 250.000 €



Instrument description
available [here](#)



Vinnovate – Regional Program integration

Portugal 2030 programs by Policy Objective (OP)


Programas	OP1 +Competitive	OP2 +Green	OP3 +Connected	OP4 +Social	OP5 +Proximity	JTF	AT	TOTAL
Programas Temáticos Multiregionais	2 567	2 724	1 459	6 001	34		308	13 094
Inovação e Transição Digital	2 567	815		400			123	3 905
Ação Climática e Sustentabilidade		1 568	1 459				78	3 105
Demografia, Qualificações e Inclusão				5 601			90	5 691
Mar		341			34		18	393
Programas Regionais do Continente	2 270	2 352	280	1 069	1 490	224	147	7 833
Norte	1 000	911	95	501	767	60	61	3 395
Centro	630	637	105	270	400	90	40	2 172
Alentejo	234	340	81	144	213	74	19	1 104
Lisboa	170	96		55	48		12	381
Algarve	235	368		100	62		15	780
Programas das Regiões Autónomas	413	315	202	892	36		42	1 899
Açores	219	194	127	561	16		23	1 140
Madeira	194	121	75	331	20		19	760
Programa de Assistência Técnica							169	169
Total	5 250	5 391	1 941	7 963	1 560	224	667	22 995

Estrutura de programação: Objetivos de Política, Eixos Prioritários e FEEI (FEDER, FSE+ e FTJ)

OP	EP	FEDER (M€)	FSE+ (M€)	JTF (M€)	Total (M€)
1	EP1A – More competitive Norte	950			950 (28,0%)
	EP1B - Norte mais Competitivo e Conetividade Digital	50			50 (1,5%)
2	EP2A - Norte mais Verde e Hipocarbónico	867			867 (25,5%)
	EP2B - Norte mais Verde e Hipocarbónico e Mobilidade Sustentável	46			46 (1,4%)
3	EP3A - Norte mais Conectado	95			95 (2,8%)
4	EP4A - Norte mais Social	200	301		501 (14,8%)
5	EP5A - Norte mais Próximo dos Cidadãos	765			765 (22,5%)
NA	EP6A - Norte Neutro em Carbono e Transição Justa			60	60 (1,8%)
NA	EP7A - Assistência Técnica		61		61 (1,8%)
Total (NORTE 2030)		2.973	362	60	3.395 (100%)

OP1 – More Competitive Norte

- RS01.1. Develop and reinforce the capabilities for research and innovation and adoption of advanced technologies
- RS01.2. Aproveitar as vantagens da digitalização para os cidadãos, as empresas, os organismos de investigação e as autoridades públicas
- RS01.3. Reforçar o crescimento sustentável e a competitividade das PME, bem como a criação de emprego nas PME, inclusive através de investimentos produtivos
- RS01.4. Desenvolver competências para a especialização inteligente, a transição industrial e o empreendedorismo
- RS01.5. Reforçar a conectividade digital



SIID:
Individual (SME/SMC)
Copromotion(SME/SMC+...)

Individual Demonstrators
(SME)
Copromotion Demonstrators
(SME/SMC+)

(...)





Vinnovate – Challenges and difficulties

Type of Action: Demonstrators in Copromotion

Eligibility – Type of organisations

SMEs: YES

Large Companies: NO

Universities: YES*

Research/Facility Centre: YES*

* At least one SME from the region.

* Copromotors only.

External requirement...

Comply with the Norte 2030 S3 strategy domains.

External requirement...

Setup

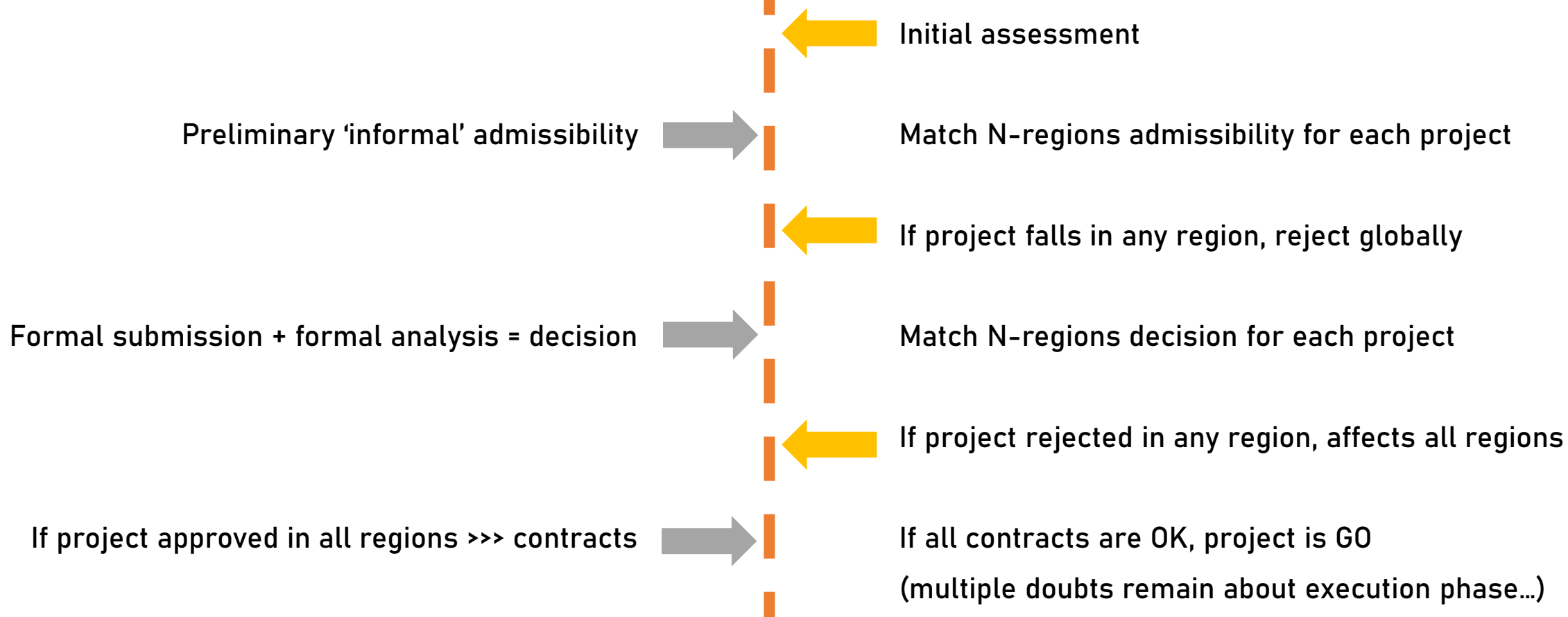


Region-specific restriction...

Region-specific restriction...

Region-specific restriction...

Workflow



Concluding remarks

- Very interesting instrument, particularly in terms of networking/collaboration. This allows (when the region decides so) that no new mechanisms, regulations, or cross-region transfer of funds are required. However, matching the requirements from multiple regions / regional programs requires substantial coordination.
- The timeline of existing funding mechanisms at a regional level varies, somewhat complicating inter-regional funding schemes, in particular those that require incorporation in an existing mechanism. Having multiple evaluators/exports involved (at the region level) further complicates the global final assessment.
- Although there is a common procedure under Vlnnovate, formally the beneficiaries are contractually obligated only to their own region (which still leaves opens potential issues with changes during execution).
- There should be provisions to adapt regional programs (cohesion funds) for pooling multiple regions funds.
- Current programs such as Horizon Connect tackle this issue (FSTP), but more flexibility overall is desirable.