

Statement on the Innovation Fund

Third Large Scale Call

The EU Innovation Fund offers great funding opportunities for the demonstration of innovative low-carbon technologies. In the light of the opening of its Third Large Scale Call, the European Association of Innovation Consultants (EAIC) wishes to welcome the recent changes made to the instrument.

EAIC Members have supported several of the selected Innovation Fund projects under both Large- and Small Scale calls, across multiple countries. Through their services provided to applicants, EAIC Members benefit from first-hand experience with the features of the Fund, its technicalities, the effort required by the applicants as well as their expectations and reactions after the selection process.

EAIC Members and their clients particularly welcome the creation of a specific budget for **medium-sized pilots**, as medium-sized projects could barely compete with larger projects in the first two Large Scale calls. The four newly introduced topics with **ring-fenced budgets** will lead to a more level playing field for applicants. In addition, the weight factors per topic, allowing a topic-specific emphasis, should enable the selection of the most fit-for-purpose projects.

The **third-party verification** of the GHG emission avoidance and relevant cost calculations are no longer mandatory. This is also a positive development since the added value of such verifications was not quite clear. There have been several past instances when verifiers approved the calculations, and yet the evaluators spotted flaws in these very calculations. Applicants should indeed not underestimate the importance of the quality of these calculations; however, they are now free to ensure maximum quality in the most suitable way.

With regards to the **transparency of the evaluation process**, of the data made available, EAIC would welcome additional and clearer information on the amount of promised GHG avoidance. This should be made available not only with regard to the projects selected for funding but also pertaining to unsuccessful ones which were eligible, i.e. above threshold score, in each of the Sectors. This would greatly help potential applicants in benchmarking their projects and assessing chances of success.

A substantial **strengthening of the Innovation Fund Help Desk** is encouraged. In previous calls, the exchanges for clarification during the application period have often been unsatisfactory, with long response times and often evasive answers. In this context, EAIC

welcomes the provision of technical assistance to appointed **National Contact Points** to reinforce their role. EAIC invites Member States to consider a streamlined approach to reduce discrepancies in the support provided to applicants.

EAIC acknowledges the complexity of the Innovation Fund instrument, considering its strategic role especially in the current context of instability. EAIC is therefore ready to collaborate with the relevant services (e.g. European Commission: DG CLIMA and CINEA) and contribute to making the programme even more efficient and truly decisive in determining the future leadership of the Union in the decarbonisation of the economy.

About EAIC:

EAIC gathers consultancy companies active in the field of European research and innovation projects, facilitates the exchange of experience and good practices among its members and promotes professional skills and expertise in European Projects.

EAIC Members adhere to the principles of [EAIC Code of Conduct](#).

For further information, visit: www.eaic.eu or write to: info@eaic.eu