



The initial design of the InnoNext scheme

Deliverable D1.1

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Deliverable abstract	The present deliverable describes the early steps of implementation of the InnoNext scheme. In particular, the needs elicited from the EU programme partners and the initial InnoNext methodology definition containing all the steps to manage the open calls for applications and the internships.
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¹ Dissemination level: **PU** = Public, **PP** = Restricted to other programme participants (including the JU), **RE** = Restricted to a group specified by the consortium, **CO** = Confidential, only for members of the consortium

² Nature of the deliverable: **R** = Report, **P** = Prototype, **D** = Demonstrator, **O** = Other

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Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	6
1.1. InnoNext overview	6
1.2. Purpose of the Document	7
2. Co-Design with EU Partner Programmes	9
2.1. Methodology.....	9
2.2. InnoNext co-design implementation	10
2.2.1. Background.....	10
2.2.2. "InnoNext meets"	11
2.2.3. Indications and Requirements from the Partner Programmes	11
3. The InnoNext operational scheme.....	14
3.1. The beneficiaries	14
3.2. The InnoNext scheme	14
3.2.1. The engagement strategy	18
3.2.2. The eligibility process	19
3.2.3. The matchmaking method.....	19
3.2.4. The internship activation and Onboarding	21
3.2.5. Evaluation and Monitoring	21
4. Conclusion	23
5. ANNEXES.....	24
5.1. The involved EU Partner Programmes	24
5.2. Script of questions for requirements and suggestions collection from EU PPs.....	25
5.3. Visual analysis board and InnoNext call web design.....	27
5.4. EU PPs requirements and InnoNext solutions.....	37

List of Figures

Figure 1 – The InnoNext scheme	7
Figure 2 – InnoNext Co-design phases	9
Figure 3 – InnoNext cycle	15
Figure 4 – InnoNext main actors' journey	17
Figure 5 – Visual analysis of the EIC programmes websites	28
Figure 6 – Visual analysis of the ERC programmes website.....	29





Figure 7 – Visual analysis of the SoE and HERI programmes website.....30
 Figure 8 – Visual analysis of the EIT programme website.....31
 Figure 9 – Visual analysis of a European call for proposals (a) and job positions offered on the website <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/search>.....31
 Figure 10 – Early sketch of the InnoNext call for application layout.....32
 Figure 11 – Web page of the call for application for Visiting Talents, <https://innonext-project.eu/en/talents>.....34
 Figure 12 – Web page of the call for application for Hosting Companies, <https://innonext-project.eu/en/companies>. –36

List of Tables

Table 1 – EU Programmes websites analysed 10
 Table 2 – Requirements and Recommendations - Eligibility Criteria37
 Table 3 - Agreements: framing the collaboration among the involved actors38
 Table 4 - Communication and Dissemination.....39
 Table 5 - Workshops and Mentorship.....40
 Table 6 - Monitoring and Evaluation41

Acronym List

AL	Activity Leader
BAS	Business Acceleration Service
EIC	European Innovation Council
EIT	European Institute of Innovation & Technology
ERC	European Research Council
EU PP	European Partner Programme
HC	Hosting Company
HE	Horizon Europe
IN	InnoNext
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MSCA	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
PC	Project Coordinator
PI	Principal investigator
PO	Project Officer
RI	Research Infrastructure
SoE	Seal of Excellence
VT	Visiting Talent





Executive summary

The InnoNext Project, funded by the European Commission under the HORIZON-EIC-2023-TALENTS-01-01 initiative, is designed to foster innovation and entrepreneurship by enabling talented researchers to collaborate with startups, SMEs, and scale-ups across Europe. With the goal of activating 600 innovation internships, the project creates opportunities for researchers and companies to address skill gaps and facilitate impactful transitions from research to market.

The InnoNext process and assets result from a co-design phase that has involved the active collaboration of EU Partner Programmes such as EIC, MSCA, ERC, EIT, RI. This collaborative approach ensures the project aligns with EU frameworks by addressing specific eligibility criteria, communication needs, and operational requirements. Tools such as self-declaration templates and standardised agreement kits have been developed on the requirements received to accommodate the diverse needs of the EU Partner Programmes with the aim to synthesise them into one common procedural package.

InnoNext operates through two open calls for researchers and companies, remaining active until 2026. These calls are supported by continuous monitoring and iterative updates, implemented over five cycles within an 18-month period. A hybrid matchmaking platform, enhanced by artificial intelligence and supervised by experts, ensures the effective alignment of researchers' applications with internship vacancies created by the hosting companies. InnoNext also features a comprehensive mentorship plan that includes online workshops for researchers and one-on-one guidance for companies aimed at fostering innovation and entrepreneurship skills. Additionally, tailored administrative and logistic support, including streamlined agreements and mentoring activities, are planned to facilitate a smooth onboarding process. The scheme includes a monitoring and evaluation framework to track defined Key Performance Indicators, gather qualitative insights, and assess the efficiency of processes and beneficiaries and stakeholder satisfaction.



1. Introduction

1.1. InnoNext overview

InnoNext is a European Commission initiative funded under the call HORIZON-EIC-2023-TALENTS-01-01 "Next Generation Innovation Talents", aiming to cultivate an entrepreneurial mindset by creating collaboration opportunities for talented researchers and innovators to work with startups operating in their areas of expertise, across the EU with the support of the extensive network of EIC and various European Partner Programmes.

InnoNext scheme includes 2 open calls dedicated to aspiring Visiting Talents and Hosting Companies to collaborate through an Innovation internship. The calls for interests, which will remain open for the whole duration of the project until 2026, facilitate a tailored matching process. Moreover, InnoNext offers different resources to connect beneficiaries and support them during the internship, including a comprehensive mentoring and acceleration plan. InnoNext aims to activate 600 internships involving multiple beneficiaries (Table 1).

Table 1 - InnoNext beneficiaries

Visiting Talents	Hosting Companies
<p>Including PhD candidates, and postdoctoral researchers participating in projects funded by the following EU Partner Programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIC Pathfinder • ERC • MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships • MSCA Doctoral Networks, • MSCA COFUND • Research Infrastructures • EIT Label Masters and Doctoral programmes, Alumni, Jumpstarter, EIT KIC Postdoctoral training programmes 	<p>Including startups and startups and SMEs supported by the following EU Partner Programmes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIC Accelerator • EIC awarded Seal of Excellence • EIC Transition • EIT KIC Innovation and business creation services • Scaleups with at least one EIT Alumni member co-founder.

The InnoNext scheme is structured in six sequential phases (Figure 1) and the following distinctive pillars:

- The **collaboration with the EU Partner Programmes**, which has been involved since the beginning in the call design and during the process through the integrated communication and dissemination of the calls to the potential beneficiaries, as well as the eligibility and monitoring criteria.
- Two **Application calls** dedicated to Visiting Talents and Hosting Companies. The calls, largely disseminated thanks to Research and Innovation European Programmes support, will remain open for 18 months. During this period, the continuous monitoring of the process and feedback of beneficiaries and stakeholders might result in the call updates, handled in 5 releases.
- A **dedicated platform** that facilitates the Hosting Companies in creating internship vacancies and allows Visiting Researchers to apply for them throughout a well-driven and easy process,



supported by dedicated guides and indications. The service includes mechanisms to keep the registered users informed about all the opportunities and suggestions resulting from the matchmaking, the internship activation steps and the mentoring activities, making the whole process understandable and transparent.

- A **hybrid matchmaking process** based on an AI-based algorithm processing the needs and ambitions of the applicants will propose ranked shortlists of opportunities. Shaped and supervised by experts, the whole process will guarantee equal access⁴ to opportunities for the applicants.
- A **comprehensive mentorship plan** to offer and share knowledge and tailored support to nurture the entrepreneurship potential of participants. Background and skills such as innovation management, teamwork, and internal communication will be deepened in experiential workshops for Talent and Enterprises. These activities will be planned based on direct feedback collected from the beneficiaries, allowing to improve and refine the InnoNext initiative schema continuously.

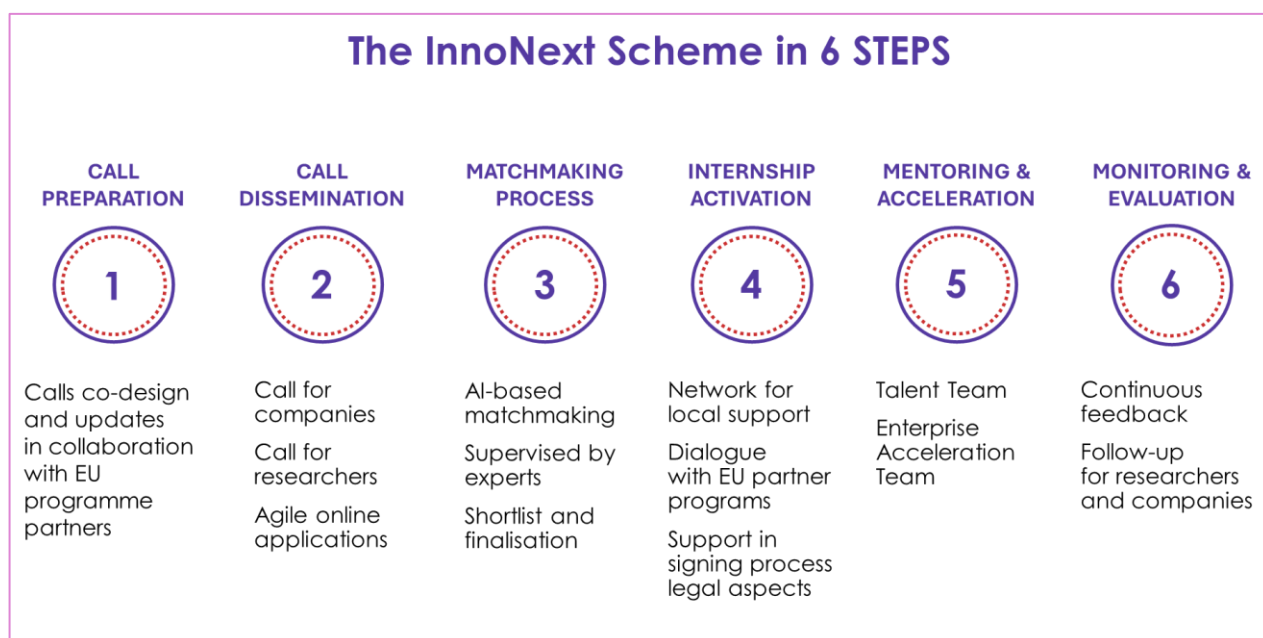


Figure 1 – The InnoNext scheme

1.2. Purpose of the Document

The present document describes the **path that led us to define the InnoNext schema and its pillars** in detail. This results from an early collaborative phase that actively involves the EU Partner Programmes. Strategic and operational indications have been collected to shape the schema and reply to the specificities of the ongoing activities, searching for the most suitable solutions to facilitate the InnoNext introduction into the range of opportunities promoted by the EU and EIC.

⁴ Criteria of fairness and impartiality will be consistently and transparently applied uniformly to the whole process. Every application will have the same opportunities, resources, and consideration without favouritism, discrimination, or any barriers that could disadvantage individuals or groups,



The deliverable is a report structured as follows:

- Section 2 describes the **codesign approach** and activities carried out to engage the EU Partner Programmes and collect their requirements and suggestions.
- Section 3 describes the **overarching InnoNext scheme**, the requirements collected by the EU Partner Programmes and the solutions identified and implemented to integrate them into the InnoNext schema.
- Section 4 **concludes** the deliverable and outlines the next steps.
- Section 5 – **Annexes** – details the co-design tools and intermediate results supporting the process.



2. Co-Design with EU Partner Programmes

2.1. Methodology

The engagement of InnoNext European Partner Programmes (EU PPs are described in Annex 5.1) is the first pillar of the initiative, which is crucial to shape the following steps in line with their priorities, needs, and current activities.

The applied methodology (Figure 2) lies in a comprehensive, multi-phase approach to defining the InnoNext calls of interest and the underlying process, focusing on maximising the collaboration with EU PPs.

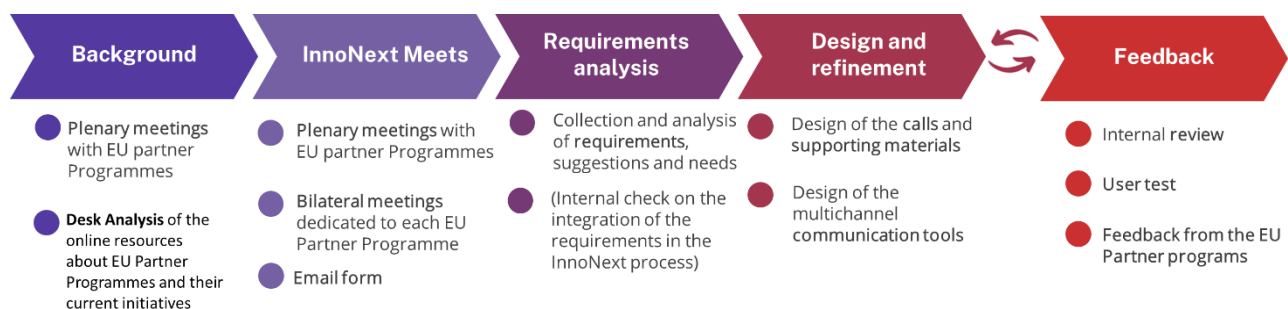


Figure 2 – InnoNext Co-design phases

The approach and activities start with a foundational **background phase**, where the InnoNext team conducted a detailed desk analysis of European Partner Programmes' current initiatives dedicated to innovation and entrepreneurship promotion.

This initial understanding of the existing landscape is the basis of the following phase, called "InnoNext meets", aimed at collecting needs, suggestions, and **requirements from the specific EU Partner Programme**. Different engagement and data collection techniques have been used to frame a participatory approach to the schema definition:

- plenary meetings, bringing together the EU PPs representatives for a collective InnoNext introduction and discussion.
- focused bilateral meetings, facilitated by the InnoNext Project Officers, to set Programme-specific conversations.
- a script of questions (included in Annex 5.2), used to systematically collect inputs during the meeting and shared via email as an additional data and feedback collection channel.

Every meeting and exchange offered the opportunity to consolidate the InnoNext concept with suggestions and requirements and to frame the collaboration with the EU PP.

The information gathered from the early interactions was shared with the EU PPs to be **enriched and validated**. On this basis, the InnoNext team started identifying **solutions** to comply with the requirements, designing and developing the underlying process, the digital touchpoints and tools, and the content to launch and run the InnoNext initiative. The **calls for interest** dedicated to researchers and companies, supporting materials, including guides for applicants and the legal kit, and the communication tools (including the InnoNext website) have been designed and iteratively refined according to the feedback received by the POs and EU PPs representatives, enabled to provide reviews on prototypes and minimum viable version of the InnoNext



touchpoints and content. The intermediate version of the website and resources were then tested with a small sample of representative users to assess their usability, clearness, exhaustiveness and inclusiveness.

Additional refinements are expected to solve possible issues and comply with needs and errors that might emerge after the official launch, leveraging the schedule of the five call promotions (Figure 3), which will also progressively allow the refinement of the InnoNext scheme.

2.2. InnoNext co-design implementation

2.2.1. Background

A **desk analysis** of online resources was the foundational activity to learn about style, structure, lexicon, and visual identity adopted by the EU PPs initiatives. An initial analysis also included the social media channels and events. Afterwards, the heuristic analysis focused on the **websites** concerning calls for interest and for projects to learn useful elements to design the InnoNext calls, supporting materials and the underlying process, including the promotion, communication and management details.

A systematic examination of UI elements of the EuPPs websites was conducted to identify **patterns in structure, layout, topic coherence, and language**. The activity involved segmenting the interfaces into units like screens, sections, and components and then analysing these for content, message, and visual clues (Figure 5). The heuristic analysis allowed us to code and identify recurring patterns, information architecture and thematic connections. The online walkthrough focused on functionalities, navigation, and interaction and communication modes. By taking screenshots, aspects such as the **content hierarchy and structure, UI components**, recurring visual motifs, institutional communication EU branding elements, colour schemes, typography, and imagery styles have been compared.

The visual analysis facilitated the InnoNext call's initial design, providing indications to define the layout and content. It also provided suggestions for structuring the supporting materials collected in the InnoNext Starter kit (described in D1.1). Early ideas were shared internally through sketches and draft content, which underwent progressive iterations of redesign and refinement, culminating in version 1.

This iterative process allowed for the gradual alignment of visual and textual elements, ensuring both clarity and coherence. Feedback loops were crucial in enhancing usability and ensuring the additional resources met the intended audience's needs, laying a strong foundation for subsequent development phases.

Table 2 summarises the websites analysed, and Annex 5.3 shows the visual analysis board and the early wireframe of the online page dedicated to the InnoNext call.

Table 2 – EU Programmes websites analysed

EU Partner Programme	Website
EIC	https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en
EIC Pathfinder	https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-pathfinder_en
EIC Transition	https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-transition_en
EIC Accelerator	https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-accelerator_en



EIC Seal of Excellence	https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-accelerator/seals-excellence_en#how-to-use-it
EIT	https://eit.europa.eu/
EIT communities	https://eit.europa.eu/global-challenges/about-our-communities
EIT Alumni	https://eit.europa.eu/our-communities/eit-alumni
ERC	https://erc.europa.eu/homepage
ERC (call)	https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/starting-grant
Euraxess	https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/ https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/search?f%5B0%5D=offer_type%3Ajob_offer
MSCA	https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/
RI	https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/research-infrastructures_en

2.2.2. "InnoNext meets"

In parallel, several meetings were conducted, both in plenary sessions and one-on-one discussions, with representatives of the EU Partner Programmes. These engagements aimed to gather valuable insights for defining the overall process in a way that aligns seamlessly with current initiatives and caters effectively to the specific target audiences. Key topics explored included **strategies for promotion and communication, management of the application collection process, and, notably, the agreement on eligibility verification methods** for beneficiaries across each programme. These collaborative discussions ensured a **harmonised approach** that respects the requirements and goals of all EU Partner Programmes while refining operational and procedural details to ensure efficiency and clarity.

In total, 14 meetings were organised from September to November 2024. The round started with a plenary meeting to introduce the InnoNext project and a meeting with the EU communication coordination. Afterwards, bilateral meetings involving 17 representatives from the Partner Programmes, namely EIC board, EIC Pathfinder, EIC Transition, EIC Accelerator, MSCA, EIT, EIT KICs, ERC, HE Research Infrastructures, EIC Seal of Excellence, the POs and the InnoNext team were organised and, in several cases, iterated and continued via email. The topics cover various areas, including eligibility checks, communication strategies and promotion, financial arrangements, intellectual property rights (IPR), and programme-specific actions.

2.2.3. Indications and Requirements from the Partner Programmes

The meetings highlighted several common topics and actions to harmonise the InnoNext project across EU programmes. A central focus was developing a **cohesive communication strategy**, ensuring alignment with EU branding and utilising cross-promotion through social media, info days, and EU Programme events to enhance the visibility and outreach of the project.



The **eligibility check** is a central theme that, after evaluating different methods to manage it, has been streamlined through self-declarations, letters of support, and transparent mechanisms that accommodate the specific requirements of each programme. **Internship design** emphasised the relevance of creating specialised, high-quality opportunities for researchers, incorporating regular progress reviews with company CEOs and talents, and clearly defining tasks that align with participants' research backgrounds. **Intellectual property rights** (IPR) and contractual support were also addressed, with templates and guidelines proposed to assist the targeted companies that may lack dedicated HR resources. **A training and mentorship plan** was explored, focusing on entrepreneurship and business skills, leveraging synergies with existing initiatives like ATTRACT and EIT schools. Finally, **monitoring and evaluation plans** were discussed, emphasising both qualitative and quantitative metrics to assess the success and impact of the internships, ensuring continuous improvement and transparent reporting.

In addition, Programme-specific requirements emerged and have been processed to align InnoNext with each EU initiative's objectives and operational frameworks.

- For the **EIC**, internships will be integrated with Pathfinder grants. Costs for relocation will be covered by InnoNext in the form of a monthly mobility allowance. To promote the initiative, success stories and links with networks like the Enterprise Europe Network can be considered to expand outreach.
- **MSCA** emphasises embedding internships into its established framework, emphasising high-quality opportunities. A specific requirement emerged concerning the agreement, which must include the Hosting Company as a member of the project consortium with which the visiting researcher is affiliated.
- **EIT** explored synergies with the current training activities, certification for graduates, and strategies to streamline the eligibility check of the candidates. The possibility of financial support for startups through KIC mechanisms to address funding challenges was also explored.
- **ERC** emphasises the challenge of broadening the audience to include talents from ongoing and completed projects. Simplifying the eligibility step through **self-declarations** of honour and refining IPR and remuneration strategies to align with its existing policies are the points to develop to facilitate the candidates' onboarding.
- **Research Infrastructures**, targeting researchers involved in transnational access or Infratech collaborations, highlight the need to overcome financial barriers by emphasising the value of internships for piloting technology and skill-building. Leveraging ATTRACT training initiatives and focusing on clear communication will be needed to ensure participation from relevant stakeholders.
- **Seal of Excellence** (SoE) engages with companies holding the award, including those without EU project funding or using alternative funding and broadening the outreach through the community of practice and direct contact with SoE awardees. The key factors are the clear communication with BAS services and the agile internship process design, including minimal setup agreements and relocation logistics.



Specific actions required and suggested measures to be integrated into the InnoNext schema have been identified, described, and prioritised for each issue. The requirements tables are included in Annexe 5.4.

During the design and implementation phase of the process, materials, and supporting tools, collaboration with the Programmes remained ongoing. Intermediate reviews and feedback were continuously incorporated, ensuring iterative refinement and alignment. This approach culminated in the finalised framework, outlined in the following section.



3. The InnoNext operational scheme

3.1. The beneficiaries

InnoNext considers three main categories of beneficiaries, encompassing both direct and indirect stakeholders:

1. Direct beneficiaries:

- **Visiting Talents:** PhD, postdoctoral candidates, and graduates from the InnoNext Partner Programmes are invited to apply to participate in the innovation internships promoted by the project.
- **Hosting Companies:** Startups and SMEs willing to offer internship opportunities to visiting talent.

2. Indirect beneficiaries:

- **EU Programmes:** EU Programmes supporting the Visiting Talents and Hosting Companies eligible for InnoNext, including EIC Pathfinder, EIC Accelerator, EIC Transition, EIC Seal of Excellence, ERC, Research Infrastructure, EIT, EIT KICs, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, HE Research Infrastructure. Although not directly involved in the internships, these programmes maintain a vested interest in the project's operations and outcomes, as internships will occur during the grant period of these programmes.

3.2. The InnoNext scheme

The InnoNext scheme is a dynamic process designed to facilitate the interplay among the beneficiaries and to reach the general goal of nurturing an entrepreneurial mindset through collaboration between talented researchers, innovators and startups across the EU.

The scheme becomes operative for the beneficiaries after the first phase of the co-design and the first launch of the Call for application. The scheme underlies **five phases and iterations**.

The phases have been designed to guarantee the proper and essential information exchange and interaction among the involved actors. Curated from each beneficiary's perspective, the scheme is **described as a journey** accompanying them from the status of **Applicants to becoming Visiting Talents and Hosting Companies**, facilitated by the EU PPs communication, InnoNext platform and experts, supporting each action in every phase.

As shown in Figure 4, the process begins with the InnoNext call's **launch and dissemination**. In this phase, the EU Partner Programmes share the communication content created ad hoc to introduce the opportunity through their channels.

The **launch started with the Call for Companies**. It was decided to start collecting interest and early internship offers from the start-ups. After the first launch, **the call will remain open for 18 months**, until July 2026. During this period, five relaunches of the call are scheduled (Figure 3) to sustain the audience engagement, continue to promote the initiative and – if required – refine possible issues in the scheme to improve the overall experience till the end of the project.

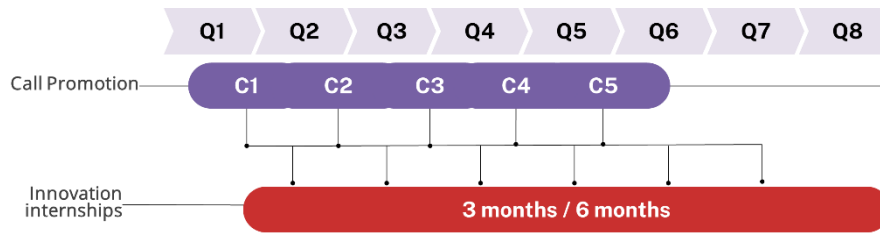


Figure 3 – InnoNext cycle

On the InnoNext website, which is the main touchpoint to start the journey, Companies and Talents independently discover the **InnoNext opportunities** and the **eligibility criteria** and move the first step by filling out the **Application form**. The two calls for application include a dedicated form for Companies and Talents, collecting the essential information concerning the eligibility criteria.

- In the case of Companies, the application requires them to read and sign the **Letter of Commitment (LoC)** template. The LoC is the document summarising the Company information and includes the general conditions of the internship in Annexes that the Company can consult from the beginning. The LoC signed (without Annexes) sent back to InnoNext completes the Company's registration⁵. This enables them to access the InnoNext matchmaking platform, where they start **posting internship** vacancies. These will be published on the InnoNext website dedicated section (<https://www.innonext-project.eu/en/internships>)
- The application form for Talents requires different information and the **CV upload**. Also in this case, the application confirmation coincides with the registration to the InnoNext platform. On the InnoNext website, they can consult the Innovation internship vacancies that Companies post and consult the details. By signing up for the matchmaking platform, they will be able to apply for a specific vacancy. In this case, a **Declaration of Honour (DoH)** is required. The DoH confirms that the application is authorised by the PI/Project coordinator/employers. It is necessary to regulate and facilitate future internship activation and the relationship among all directly and indirectly interested actors. The talents must upload on the matchmaking platform one DoH for each vacancy they want to apply for. The DoH is the document that completes an application. At this point, the matchmaking platform can process the information to find the most suitable match for the internship vacancies.

The template of the Letter of Commitment, the Declarations of Honour, and the Agreement guide are available in the [Resources](#) section of the InnoNext website. The [FAQ](#) for both Hosting Companies and Visiting Talent further describe the content and exchange flow of the required documents, which are defined according to the EU PPs guidelines.

Once the data and documents are uploaded, the **matchmaking** phase begins. Companies' positions are matched with applications by leveraging AI and expert input. Every Talent can access to the full list of the available internship vacancies, and every Company can consult the

⁵ The template of the Letter of Commitment and the Agreement guide are available in the [Resources](#) section of the InnoNext website. The [FAQ](#) for both Hosting Companies and Visiting Talent further describe the content and exchange flow of the LoC.



Applications and Talents profiles. In addition, each actor receives **matchmaking suggestions** on the platform. The Company reviews the applications and candidate profiles and autonomously manages the selection process, inviting those who want to interview and notifying InnoNext of their selections. Talents, in turn, review the internship vacancies and the Hosting Company's description. Talents receive the interview invitations from the Companies and decide whether to accept or decline them. After the **interviews**, every actor decides; the company indicates their preferred candidate, and the Talent either accepts or declines the offer, marking the conclusion of the application process.

The next stage, the **internship activation**, involves the Hosting Companies and Visting Talents signing the agreements prepared by InnoNext, which provides legal and, when applicable, logistic support. Once the formalities are completed, the Innovation internship begins. **Becoming a Hosting Company and a Visting Talent**, the collaboration starts. To enhance the internship experience, online workshops are conducted by InnoNext mentors, focusing on group learning and mentorship. Throughout the internship, InnoNext monitors progress, collects feedback from the beneficiaries, and ensures timely internship payments. The final stage is the internship conclusion, marked by additional workshops, feedback sessions, and evaluations. The process closes with a **final evaluation** of the overall experience, ensuring continuous improvement for future cycles. The interactions between actors—companies, talents, EU programmes, and InnoNext—are intricately linked, with the platform serving as the central facilitator at each stage.

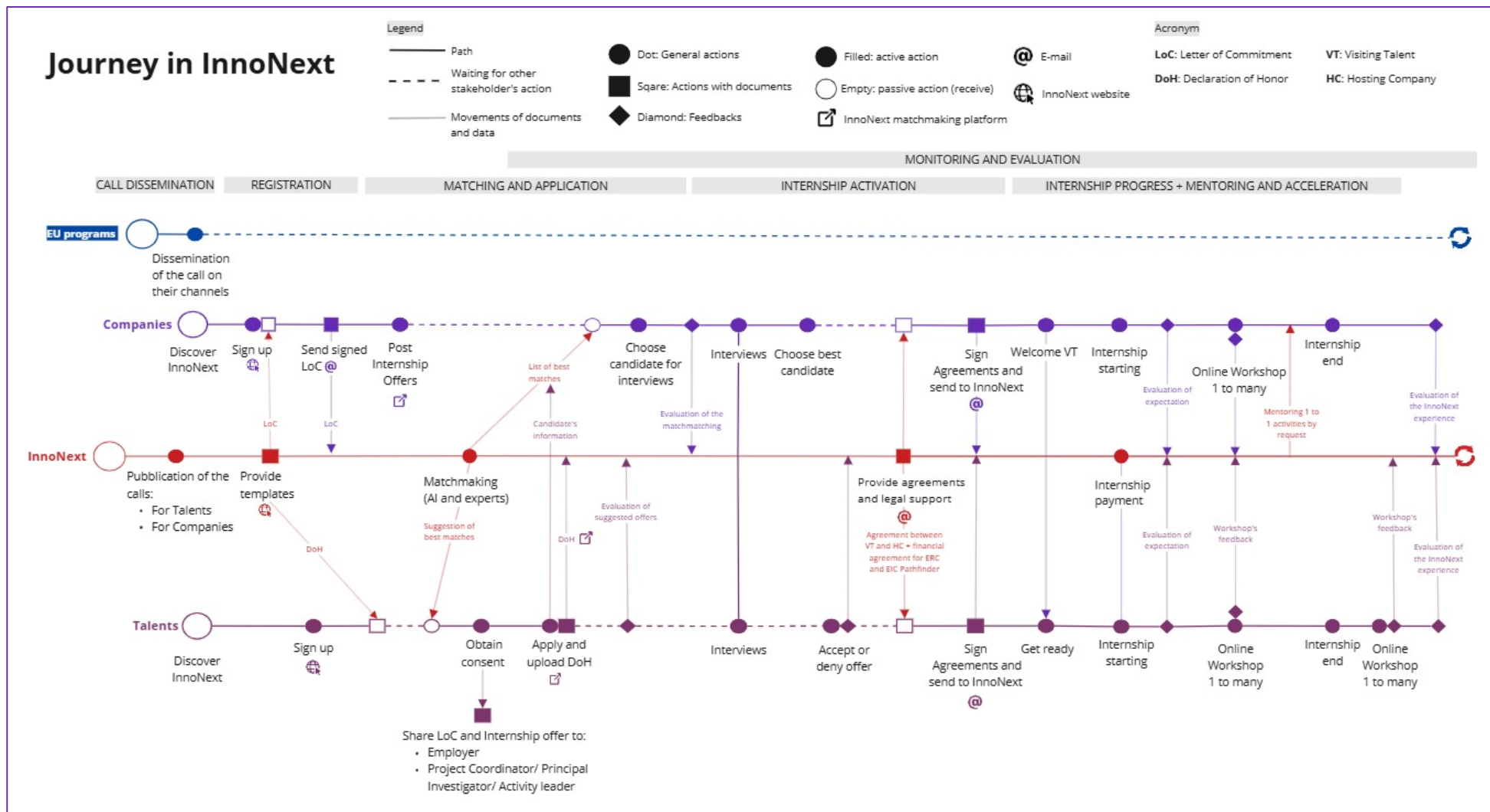


Figure 4 – InnoNext main actors' journey



3.2.1. The engagement strategy

The InnoNext journey is structured as a continuous engagement strategy, ensuring active collaboration, alignment of needs, and iterative refinement to meet the ambitious target of activating 600 innovation internships. Some key points in the engagement strategy:

- The active engagement of **EU Programme Partners**, to boost the call dissemination through their established networks and channels throughout the initiative lifecycle. Their actions are fundamental to legitimate and valorise the initiative when reaching a wide range of companies and researchers.
- The InnoNext schema aims to create opportunities and procedures **aligned with the needs** of researchers (talents) and companies (hosts). On the researcher's side, the schema addresses the demand for hands-on experience to learn and/or consolidate impactful innovation-related skills. This is reflected in the InnoNext communication strategy, supporting materials, matchmaking platform, mentoring plan, and all the elements designed for this purpose. On the company side, the focus is on sourcing high-level talent to address specific innovation challenges or skill gaps. The alignment process begins with a detailed understanding of each party's goals, facilitated by the templates provided for researchers and companies to articulate their expectations clearly. By maintaining transparency and conducting ongoing surveys, the scheme ensures that the internship structure meets evolving needs, fostering satisfaction on both ends and encouraging effective collaboration.
- A **structured relaunch plan** of the open call for application ensures sustained engagement across the project timeline. Five iterations over 18 months will provide consistent opportunities for beneficiaries to engage with the initiative (Figure 3). The D4.1 – Communication and dissemination plan infrastructures the call relaunch cycle and the engagement.
- The schema is built on a proactive interaction strategy, ensuring dedicated touchpoints with all stakeholders - companies, researchers, and EU PPs. Notifications are strategically scheduled at critical stages of the journey, such as:
 - Registration feedback and instructions to complete it.
 - Matchmaking updates
 - Interview reviews or reminders.
 - Notifications about required documentation, timelines, and workshops.
- **Iterative and distributed feedback collection** is an integral part of the schema, serving as a tool for continuous improvement. Feedback is gathered by applying different methods:
 - **Intermediate quick surveys** to check the clarity of specific steps, such as the registration process and the matchmaking outputs.
 - **Qualitative and quantitative surveys** will be conducted during workshops to assess the relevance and effectiveness of learning sessions.
 - **Internship conclusion survey** to gather feedback on the overall experience, including challenges and successes.

This feedback is systematically analysed to identify pain points and areas for improvement. For example, if companies express difficulty in understanding the application process, communication materials or additional guidance will be introduced. Similarly, if researchers report mismatched expectations during internships, the platform adjusts its matchmaking



algorithms to prioritise alignment. By iteratively refining communication and processes, the scheme ensures that it remains adaptive, responsive, and effective in achieving its objectives.

3.2.2. The eligibility process

Each applicant, both company and talent, who wants to enter InnoNext opportunities will be asked to check their eligibility. The criteria for companies and talents are reported on the homepage of the InnoNext platform. In addition, they are additionally explained in dedicated FAQs.

InnoNext applies the eligibility check as indicated by the EU PPs, and the platform is designed to support it accordingly.

The single-page application calls inform both Hosting Companies and Visiting Talents about the steps from the application to the internship and the conclusion. The information and documents required to confirm their eligibility are highlighted in the application form and explained in the supporting materials contextually linked and collected on the Resources page.

The registration form is designed to collect these data from the beginning.

- The Talent is required to input the EU programme and project they are working on. Furthermore, he/she must upload a **Declaration of Honour** in which he/she will declare that the employer /project coordinator/principal investigator or activity leader is properly informed and agrees to apply for the innovation internship. This step is required to inform all the reference persons about the internship conditions. The Template of the document is provided online.
- The Company is required to input the affiliate EU Programme, the PIC number and, if applicable, the project acronym, and the project ID (i.e., the grant agreement or the SEP number). Furthermore, as explained above, the company must send a signed Letter of Commitment. This document completes the Company's profile and is useful for informing talents and their referees about the Hosting Company.

The possible specific needs have been analysed and replied to, with the help of the EU PPs and reported in the online resources such as the InnoNext Guides for applicants, the Agreement kit and the FAQs.

Concluded the Application, the beneficiaries are registered and ready to use and exploit the matchmaking platform. The talents can explore the available Internship vacancies and apply to many by providing one DoH per each. Similarly, the Companies can coherently create more Innovation internship vacancies with their operational capabilities to coordinate them. Creating the internship vacancies, the goals and activities that the internship focuses on must be very clear and interesting for talents, able to suggest possible scientific and professional advancements in the specific field of interest.

3.2.3. The matchmaking method

The InnoNext matchmaking method combines human expertise and digital automation to create a **hybrid system**. This balance ensures efficiency without compromising the personal touch essential in matchmaking and decision-making.



The InnoNext platform processes the data provided by the beneficiaries, candidate applications and internship positions to identify an **initial ranked list of matches**. In particular, the matchmaking algorithm will compare and align three critical aspects:

- Skillsets of the talents (e.g., technical skills, educational qualifications, and practical experience).
- Research focus (e.g., the candidate's areas of academic or professional interest).
- Companies' internship goals (e.g., specific projects, technical challenges, or innovation requirements).

These algorithms assess compatibility by examining keywords, job descriptions, and explicit preferences provided by both parties. For example, a company seeking expertise in AI-driven data analysis will be matched with researchers whose profiles emphasise machine learning, statistical modelling, or similar skills. The alignment process ensures that both parties see value in the potential collaboration.

After the platform generates matches, they are **reviewed by the InnoNext experts**, ensuring accuracy, fairness, and quality. The platform produces a ranked list of applications for companies, sorted by relevance and suitability. Experts oversee these suggestions, addressing anomalies, edge cases, or special requirements that the algorithm might miss. Once matchmaking is completed and reviewed, the results are communicated to both companies and researchers via the platform. Each beneficiary receives a **personalised notification** with the outcomes:

- For Companies: A ranked list of suitable candidates, complete with their profiles, resumes, and a brief explanation of why they were recommended.
- For Talents: Notifications about companies that have shown interest in their applications, alongside an invitation to proceed to the next steps.

The platform allows both parties to decide how to proceed independently. They can review their matches, evaluate compatibility, and decide whether to proceed with interviews or explore other options. This autonomy ensures that both companies and researchers feel empowered in their decision-making.

If both parties express interest, the company takes the lead in arranging interviews. This step is **intentionally decentralised** to allow for flexibility. Companies autonomously manage the interview scheduling, format, and content, creating a customised process suited to their needs. Once the interview concludes and both parties agree on the internship terms, they proceed to the administrative and logistical setup phase. This includes signing agreements, finalising schedules, and making any necessary arrangements, such as relocation or onboarding plans.

Throughout the process, the platform actively requests feedback from all participants, guiding them to rate the quality of matches or inquiring about possible delayed or missing interactions with beneficiaries. Automated reminders to ensure stakeholders take timely action are designed in advance and will be refined throughout the process in a continuous improvement cycle based on feedback and usage data.

Ethical improvements are an ongoing commitment to ensure that InnoNext can accomplish its goals by promoting inclusivity, fairness, and trust among all participants, as described in D5.1 – Data Management plan.



3.2.4. The internship activation and Onboarding

The details agreed upon during the interview are the basis of the collaboration between the Hosting company, the Visiting talents, and possible indirect actors. Formalisations are facilitated by InnoNext, which provides templates of agreements designed ad hoc to meet the EUPP's specific rules and streamline the administrative process. Tailored agreements, in fact, allow to adapt to varying scenarios, including the case in which the Hosting Companies join the consortium of the EU project funding the MSCA Talents. The agreements describe terms related to the duration and the financial support to the talent. Intellectual property rights, confidentiality clauses and any additional conditions necessary for specific collaborations complement them.

For EIC Pathfinder's talents, additional mobility support would be provided to help them move to the internship location.

Besides the legal and administrative procedures, InnoNext incorporates a **structured mentorship** plan to enhance the value of the internship experience. This plan includes online workshops designed to provide interns with professional development, guidance, and networking resources. The workshops focus on relevant skills, industry trends, and practical advice for succeeding in their roles while also fostering a sense of community among participants. These sessions are led by experts and tailored to address the challenges and opportunities specific to the internships. In addition, InnoNext offers one-to-one mentoring sessions for companies, helping them maximise the impact of their participation in the initiative. Expert mentors lead these personalised sessions and focus on the company's unique needs, such as optimising collaboration with the intern, aligning the internship with organisational goals, or addressing innovation challenges. This tailored support ensures that companies derive tangible benefits from the plan while contributing meaningfully to the interns' development.

3.2.5. Evaluation and Monitoring

As stated, InnoNext exploits the platform to facilitate matchmaking and monitor the process to implement a continuous improvement model. During the process, the platform will ask the beneficiaries to provide contextual feedback after major events, like matches or interviews. Logs and data automatically gathered, combined with surveys automatically sent and collected during the workshops, are the qualitative and quantitative data sources that will allow us to track **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) throughout the project lifecycle** and single experiences.

KPIs discussed with the EU PPs include:

- Number of registered companies
- Number of registered researchers
- Number of posted internship vacancies
- Number of received applications per vacancy
- Number of interviews performed for activated internships
- Number of successful matches
- Time (in weeks) from the application to the internship activation
- Time (in weeks) from the vacancy creation to the internship activation
- Time (in weeks) from the application to the internship completion
- Time (in weeks) from the vacancy creation to the internship completion
- Number of completed internships per affiliated EU PPs



- Satisfaction of Researchers and Companies Assessment

Behavioural data will be automatically collected and analysed to assess the platform's user-friendliness. Key metrics include **user interaction data, such as time spent on the platform, drop-out rate, and inactive users**, which will be used to fine-tune the user experience.

The iterative analysis will allow to assess InnoNext under various aspects and improve it accordingly. Periodical reports will inform the EU PPs invited to continue supervising and providing feedback, helping to keep InnoNext able to contribute to overarching EU objectives and create a long-term impact.



4. Conclusion

The initial design of the InnoNext scheme marks a significant milestone in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship across Europe. The project aligns its objectives with existing frameworks and stakeholder needs by integrating insights from a co-design process with diverse EU Partner Programmes. The envisioned hybrid matchmaking platform, supported by AI and expert supervision, ensures tailored opportunities for researchers and hosting companies in a scalable digital environment. At the same time, the comprehensive mentoring plan promotes skill development and entrepreneurial growth.

The iterative approach adopted in designing and implementing the scheme has created a dynamic framework capable of evolving to address emerging challenges and opportunities. Key elements such as structured engagement strategies, transparent eligibility processes, and proactive feedback mechanisms ensure a responsive and inclusive system. The project's commitment to excellence is further demonstrated through its evaluation framework, which monitors performance and continuously gathers qualitative insights to refine the scheme.

Looking ahead, the InnoNext initiative is poised to activate 600 innovation internships, bridging the gap between research and market needs. By fostering collaboration, enhancing skills, and addressing skill gaps, InnoNext contributes to the EU's innovation ecosystem and sets a strong foundation for impactful transitions from research to industry. These deliverable underscores the consortium's initial effort to create a focused, scalable and sustainable model for innovation-driven talent development across Europe.



5. ANNEXES

5.1. The involved EU Partner Programmes

In nine meetings organised from September to November 2024, **17 representatives** were involved from the following Partner Programmes:

- **The EIC Pathfinder:** the European Innovation Council funding programme aiming at supporting visionary research and breakthrough innovations in science and technology. It specifically targets the earliest and most crucial stages of scientific discovery and technological development, actively seeking to foster breakthrough technologies that can fundamentally reshape both scientific fields and market landscapes. This programme promotes early-stage development for radically new technologies, fostering collaboration between multidisciplinary teams, including academia, research organisations, and industry partners, offering challenge-driven calls, and encouraging pioneering ideas that push beyond current scientific and technological boundaries within the EU.
https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-pathfinder_en
- **The EIC Transition:** as part of the European Innovation Council (EIC), the EIC Transition supports the maturation and commercialisation of promising research results. It bridges the gap between laboratory-based innovation and market-ready solutions by funding projects demonstrating advanced technology readiness. Aimed at building on outcomes from Pathfinder or European Research Council (ERC) projects, EIC Transition helps develop business models, validate technology in real-world conditions, and explore pathways for scaling. It encourages collaboration between researchers, businesses, and investors to accelerate high-impact innovations toward commercial viability in the EU market.
https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-transition_en
- **The EIC Accelerator:** funding programme under the **European Innovation Council (EIC)** that supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups, and innovators with groundbreaking, high-risk ideas with potential for significant market impact. The programme offers a mix of **grant funding** and **equity investments** to help companies scale their innovations from prototype to commercialisation. Key focuses include deep tech, disruptive technologies, and addressing strategic challenges in areas like green energy and digital transformation.
https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-accelerator_en
- **The EIC Seal of Excellence:** quality label awarding proposals submitted to EIC funding schemes that meet high-quality standards but are not funded due to budget limitations. It acknowledges the potential of these proposals and helps them attract funding from other sources, including regional, national, and private investors. It serves as a mark of credibility and excellence, enhancing the visibility and attractiveness of the projects for alternative support.
https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/seal-excellence_en
- **The MSCA:** the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) is a European funding programme that supports research, training, and career development for researchers at all career stages. It promotes international, intersectoral, and interdisciplinary mobility, enabling researchers to work on projects across countries and sectors, including academia, industry, and non-profits.



MSCA aims to enhance researcher skills, foster collaboration, and boost innovation by funding doctoral and postdoctoral programs, research networks, and staff exchanges.

<https://marie-sklodowska-curie-actions.ec.europa.eu/>

- **The ERC:** the European Research Council (ERC) is a prestigious funding organisation under the EU's Horizon Europe programme, supporting groundbreaking research across all scientific fields. It supports early-career and established researchers through various grant schemes that encourage scientific breakthroughs. It focuses on scientific excellence and funds pioneering projects led by exceptional researchers, fostering discoveries and pushing the frontiers of knowledge. ERC grants are highly competitive and provide substantial funding to individual researchers or teams based in Europe, enabling them to pursue ambitious, high-risk, high-reward research.

<https://erc.europa.eu/homepage>

- **The EIT:** the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is an EU organisation that drives European innovation and entrepreneurship to address significant societal challenges. It fosters collaboration among leading companies, universities, and research centres by creating dynamic partnerships known as Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs). These KICs focus on climate, energy, digitalisation, health, and food, supporting startups, education programs, and research projects bridging the gap between academia and industry. The EIT provides resources and training to help innovators turn ideas into commercialised products and services, boosting Europe's competitiveness and economic growth while promoting sustainable solutions to global challenges.

<https://eit.europa.eu/>

- **The Horizon Europe Research Infrastructures:** The HE Research Infrastructures programme supports the development, accessibility, and sustainability of top-tier research facilities across Europe. It aims to provide researchers access to cutting-edge tools, data, and services that are essential for high-impact science and innovation. This programme funds the creation, upgrading, and networking of research infrastructures across various fields such as health, climate, and technology, from physical laboratories to digital data repositories. By fostering collaboration across national and disciplinary borders, Horizon Europe Research Infrastructure strengthens Europe's scientific capabilities, enables breakthrough discoveries, and supports a resilient, integrated European Research Area. https://rea.ec.europa.eu/funding-and-grants/horizon-europe-research-infrastructures_en

5.2. Script of questions for requirements and suggestions collection from EU PPs

The semi-structured interview is the approach chosen for conducting the meetings with the EU PPs with flexibility and effectiveness. This qualitative method is based on a predefined script of predetermined questions that can be flexibly adapted to the specific conversation and interviewees, allowing us to explore emerging information deeply. The InnoNext team collaboratively defined a script, presented in the following, to gather detailed information while maintaining consistency across multiple meetings. The script comprehends essential topics ranging from the target beneficiaries' understanding to the content of the calls and supporting materials to the collaboration mechanisms and preferences to communicate with and through the



EU PPs during the initiative. The script was shared in advance with the interviewees and sent via email to allow them to complete the information further.

Script of questions for EU PPs

Introduction

- Meeting objectives
- Participants introduction
- InnoNext overview (with supporting presentation)

Topic 1) Eligibility Criteria: how to correctly identify the beneficiaries.

- What is the specific **target of your Programme**?
- Are there **unique identifiers** that we can provide to facilitate the eligibility check? (e.g., any ID)
- Which **is the best solution for you** (EU PP) to check and validate the eligibility of the researchers and companies' profiles? (e.g., direct access in the InnoNext platform; self-declaration)
- Are there any specific procedures for this section that you would like to highlight?

Topic 2) Agreements

- In this initiative, InnoNext plays a support role. So, in other similar projects, are there any **fixed elements**, models, or habits that could guide us along the agreement writing?
- Are there any **contractual elements** that must be included in the Innovative Internship agreements?
 - If any, what is already provided by the existing agreement model?
- Do you have any **specific requirements** about what should be considered in the agreements? (e.g., work conditions, workspace definition, ...)
- Are there any specific procedures for this section that you would like to highlight?

Topic 3) Communication and Dissemination

- Which **platforms or channels** are currently used by the Programme to reach your targets?
- What **frequency** do you update/we can refresh the information on the InnoNext call?
- What are your **deadlines** or lead times for scheduling content to be published on your channels?
 - We also consider **events** useful communication touchpoints to inform target beneficiaries about InnoNext. If possible, how could we do it?
- Do you have specific **guidelines or branding requirements** for content creation to be shared on your platforms?
- We would like to create interest before the launch of the call. Can we have communication support in the **teasing phase** (before the call launch)?
- Are there any specific procedures for this section that you would like to highlight?

Topic 4) Workshops and Mentorship



- Do the Programmes already provide mentoring/workshop activities on entrepreneurship?
- What **content** do you suggest including/focusing on describing the added value of the mentoring offer and avoiding overlapping with other PP training activities?
- Is it possible, and if so, how can we coordinate with EISMEA?
- Considering the beneficiaries' audience, what type of **support** would be most suitable and engaging in your opinion?
 - For instance, do they prefer webinars? Are there preferred tools that encourage active participation?
- Are there any specific procedures for this section that you would like to highlight?

Topic 5) Monitoring and Evaluation

- As an InnoNext Partner Programme, do you need to collect some **specific information** about the beneficiaries for monitoring purposes?
- Are there any specific procedures for this section that you would like to highlight?

Conclusion

- Possible additional information
- Next steps
- Thanks, and contacts.

5.3. Visual analysis board and InnoNext call web design

A visual analysis for comparing user interfaces and learning about specific design elements to shape the InnoNext call for application and supporting materials was carried out starting from the websites of the EU PPs. The process begins with **comprehensive documentation of the EuPPs website interface's visual elements**, including layout grid, navigational hierarchy, colour schemes, and typography. The comparative analysis mapped similarities and differences across interfaces while maintaining specificities focusing on **structural, thematic, and linguistic patterns**.

Visual annotations were taken on a board during the analysis, highlighting relevant spatial solutions, recurring topics/sections, information density, and semantic coherence. The analysis is grounded on an interpretive description from examining the visual design elements' meaning and functions. The activity generated insights concerning the underlying conceptual, meaningful content architecture and navigation that were then converted into design recommendations, communication strategy, and user experience of the InnoNext website and elements of the Starter kit. The annotated screenshots (Figures 5 to 9) and the InnoNext call's early sketch are shown in the following (Figures 10 and 11).

The **application forms complete the InnoNext calls**. Included on the same page of the call, after the essential information on internships and the overall journey, Talents and Companies can apply directly, providing the data to comply with the eligibility criteria.

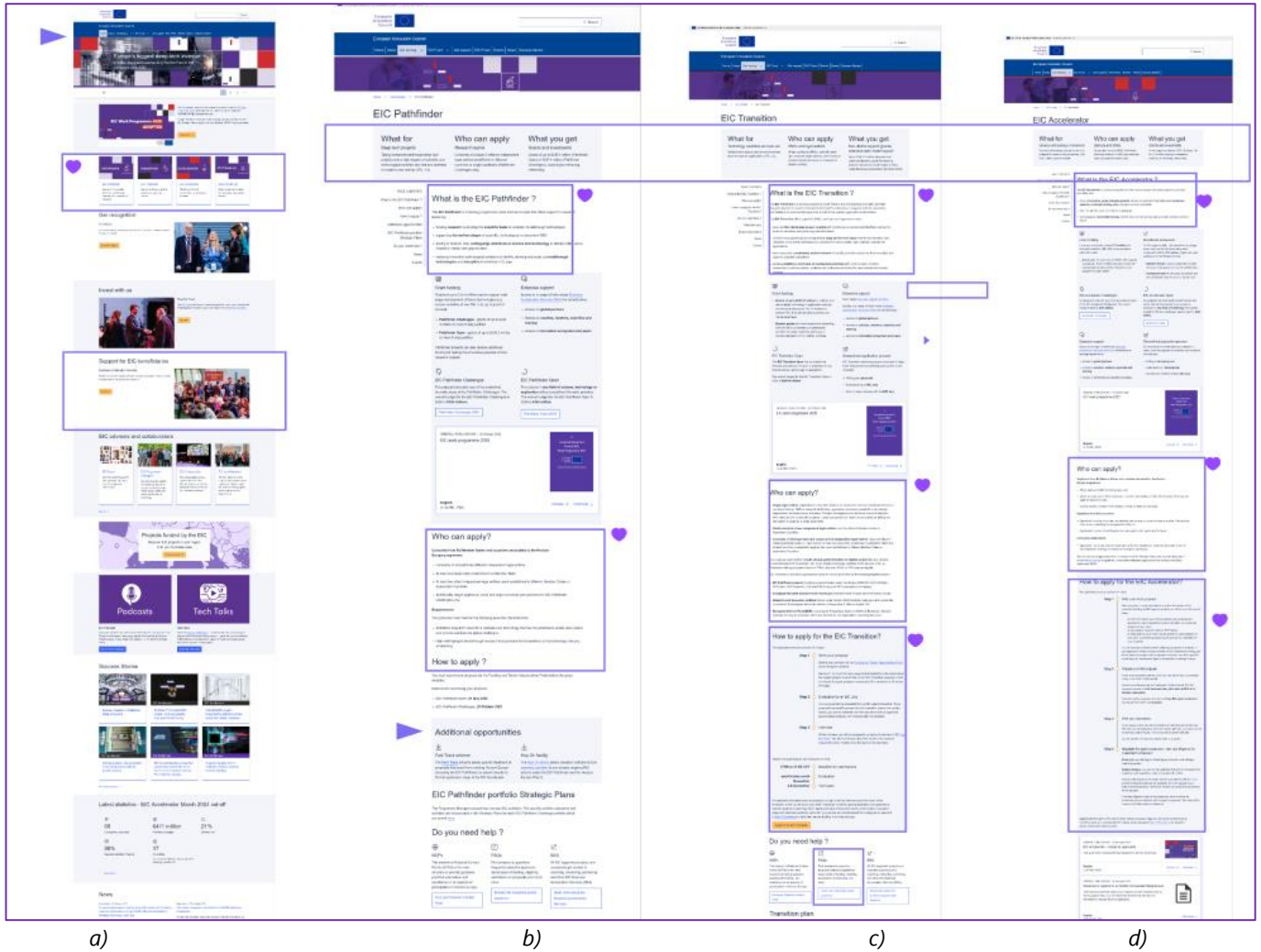


Figure 5 – Visual analysis of the EIC programmes websites

a) <https://eic.ec.europa.eu>; b) https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-pathfinder_en; c) https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-transition_en; d) https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/eic-accelerator_en

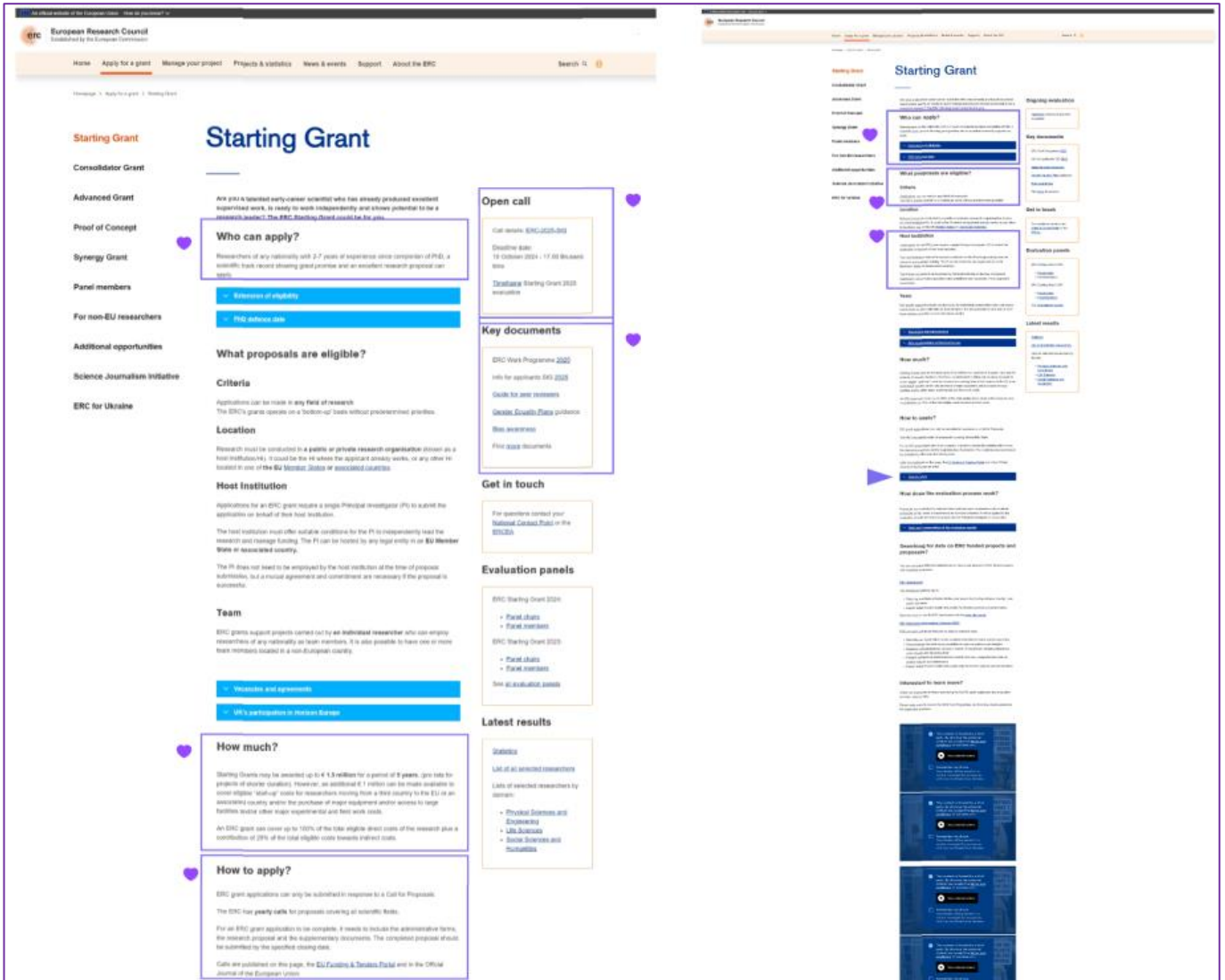


Figure 6 – Visual analysis of the ERC programmes website <https://erc.europa.eu/apply-grant/starting-grant>

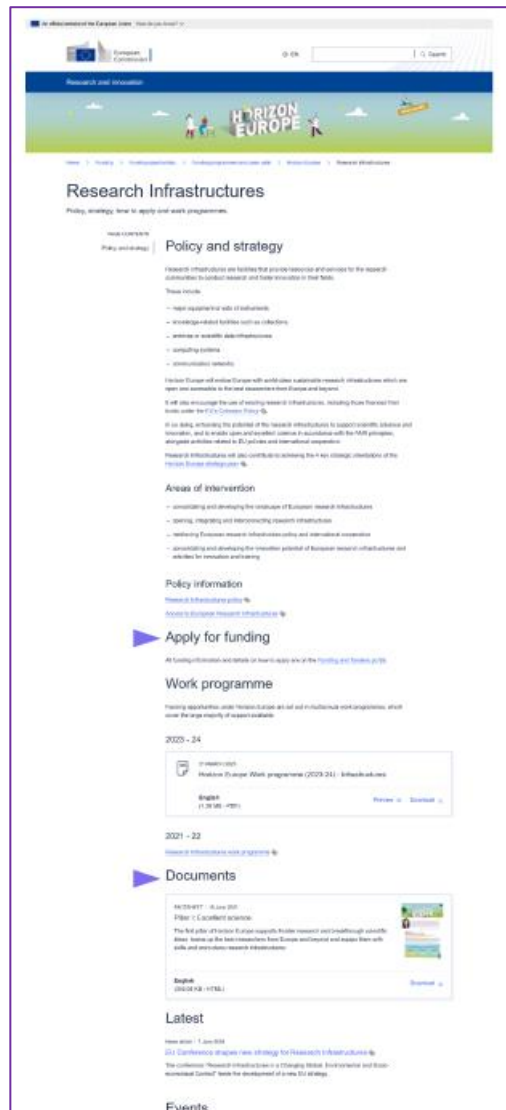
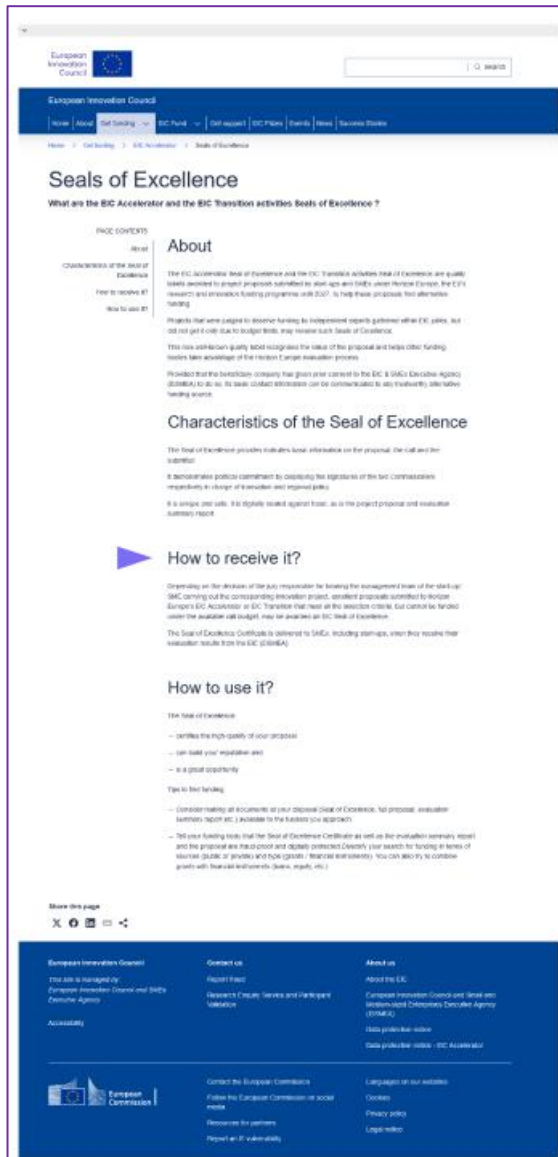
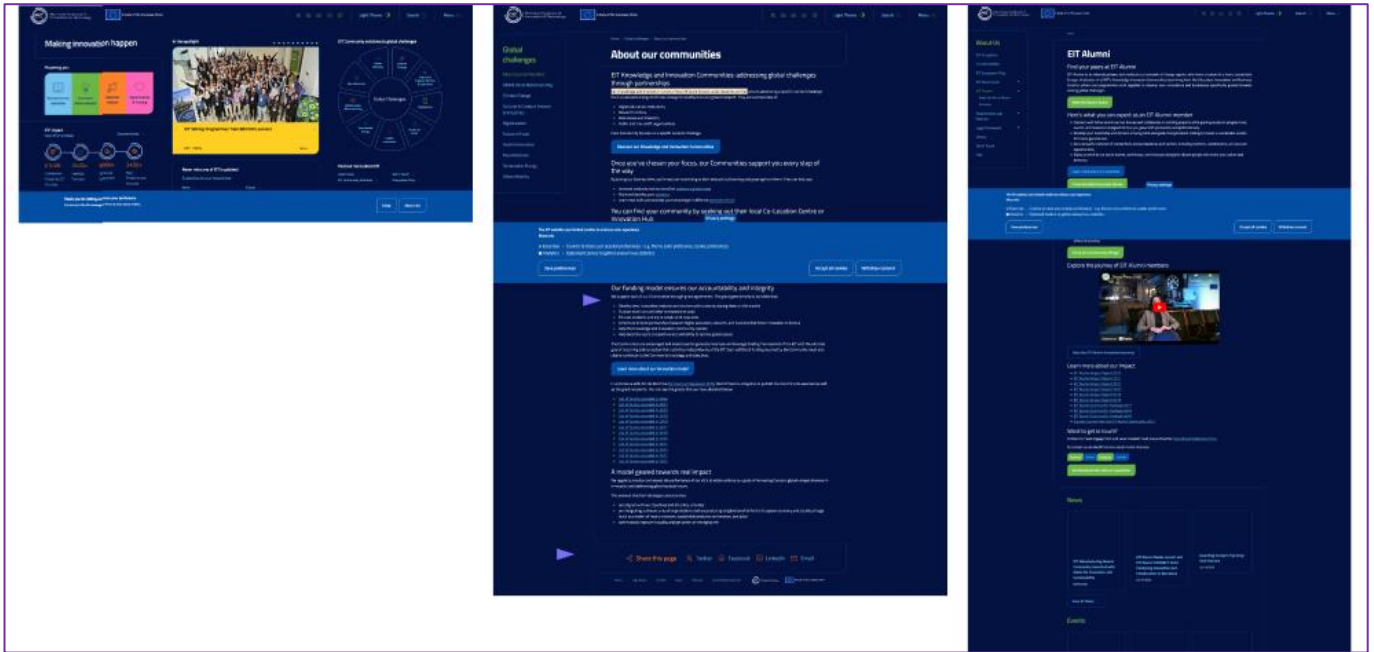


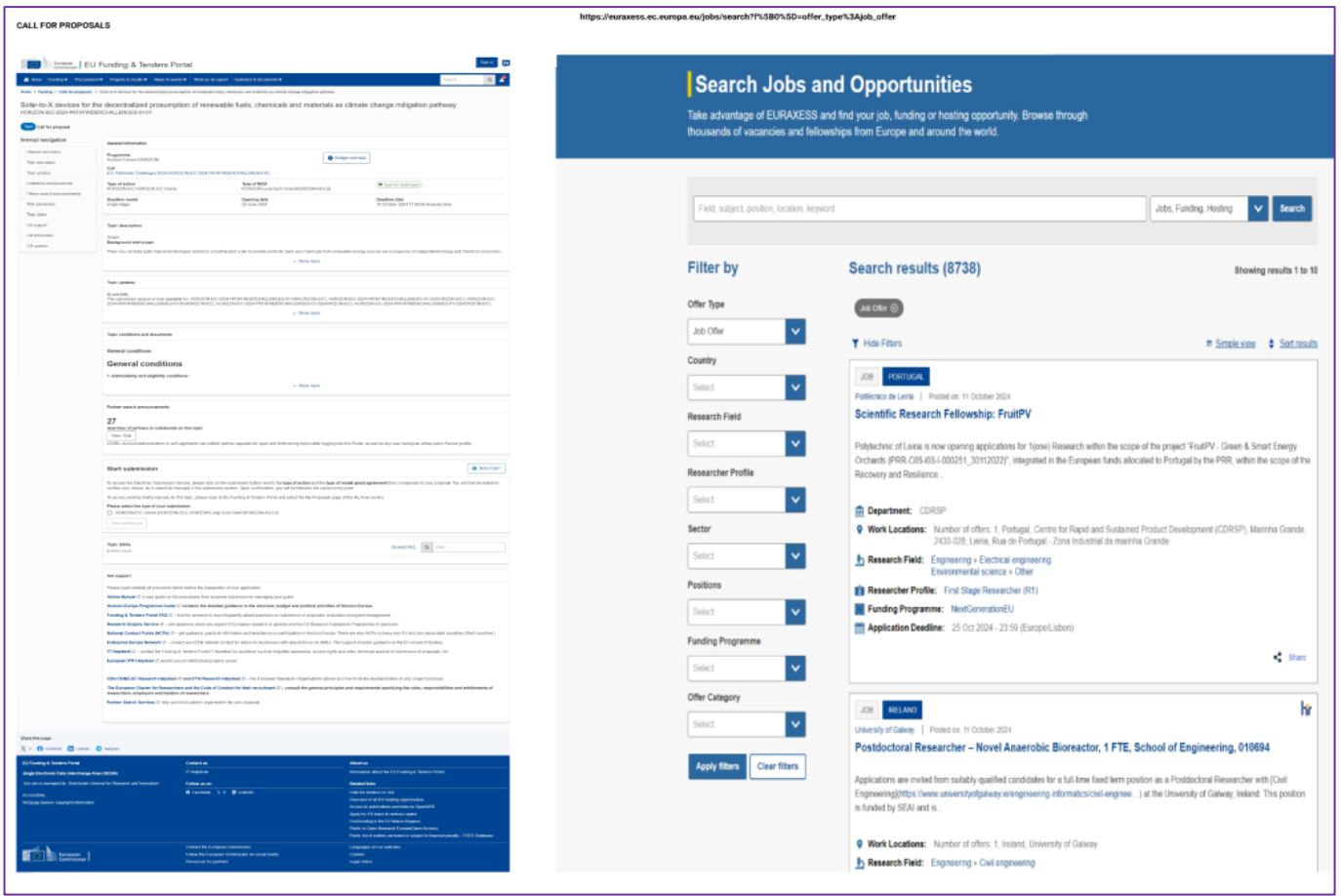
Figure 7 – Visual analysis of the SoE and HERI programmes website



a) b) c)

Figure 8 – Visual analysis of the EIT programme website

- a) <https://eit.europa.eu>; b) <https://eit.europa.eu/global-challenges/about-our-communities>
- c) <https://eit.europa.eu/our-communities/eit-alumni>



a) b)

Figure 9 – Visual analysis of a European call for proposals (a) and job positions offered on the website <https://euraxess.ec.europa.eu/jobs/search>

After having identified structural relationships between visual elements, information hierarchy, and semantic coherence, design components that interact to facilitate user comprehension and engagement have been selected and sketched. Iterative wireframing (Figure 10) of the call was created to inspire the development of the website and the online call (**Errore. L'origine riferimento non è stata trovata.**).

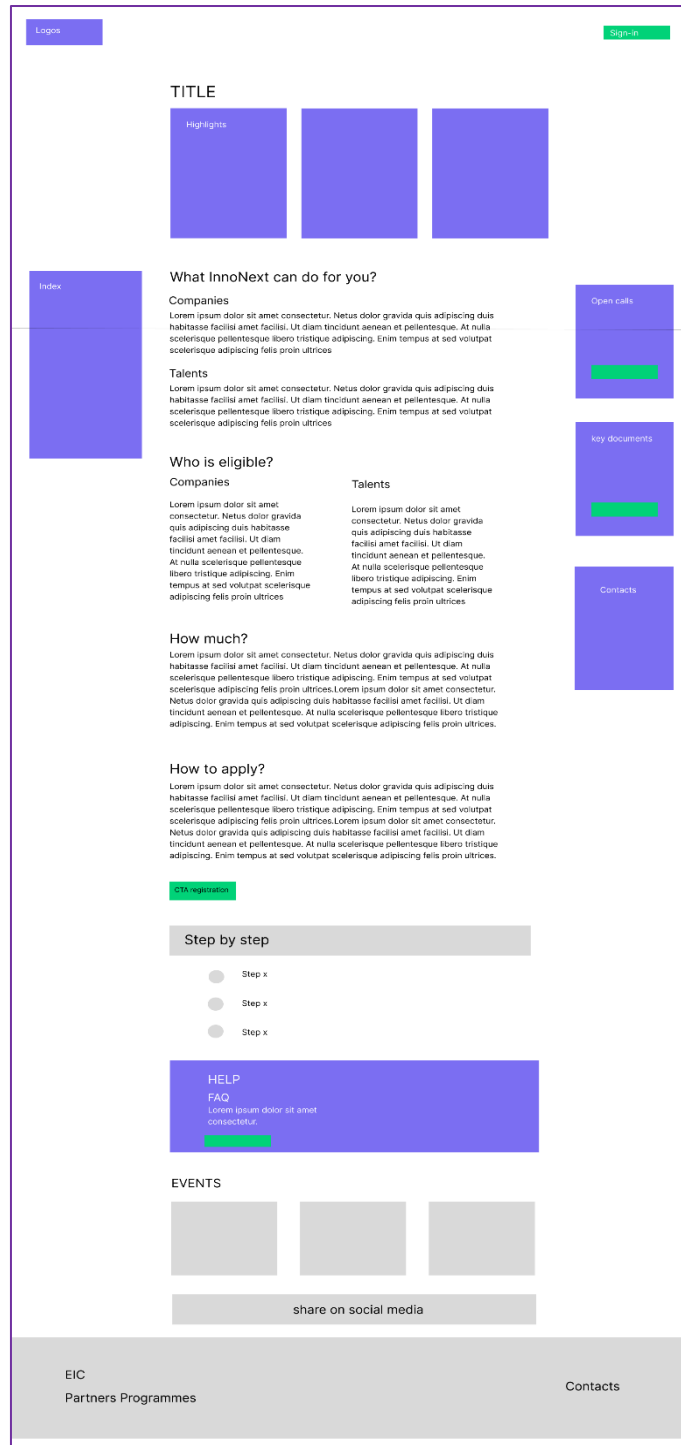
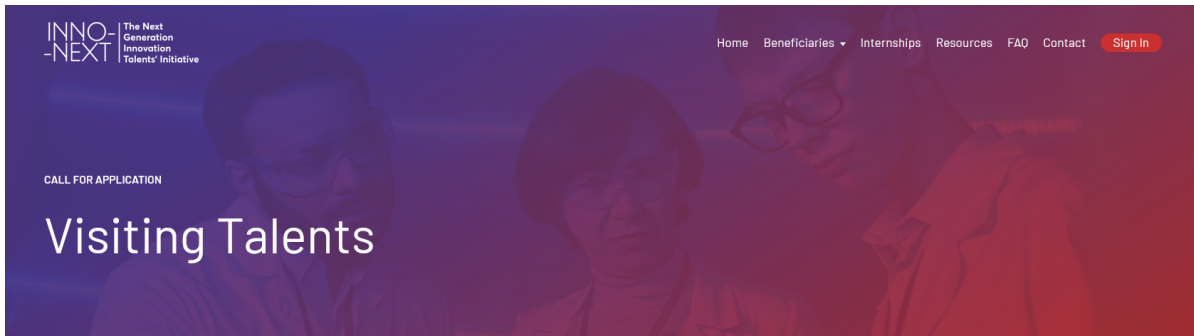


Figure 10 – Early sketch of the InnoNext call for application layout



InnoNext identifies, facilitates and supports internships proposed by Hosting Companies committed to pushing boundaries and willing to collaborate to translate research advancements into innovations, accelerating your journey from research to real-world application.

[Sign up](#)

[Guide for Visiting Talents \(.pdf\)](#)

[Declaration of Honour \(.pdf\)](#)

[-> Resources](#)

[-> FAQ](#)

[Sign up](#)

Innovation Internship organized by InnoNext will be across two specialized streams:

DEEP TECH TALENTS: Research-focused internships offering hands-on experience with advanced projects, where interns work closely with the hosting company to address complex technical challenges. Eligible applicants include PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers currently involved in ERC, EIC Pathfinder, EIT EU Research & Infrastructure actions, and MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships, Doctoral Networks and COFUND project. Duration: 3-6 months.

ASPIRING INNOVATORS: Entrepreneurship-focused internships where aspiring innovators develop business attitude and competences through expert mentoring, while gaining practical insights into innovative companies. Open to students in and graduates from EIT Label Masters and Doctoral programs, EIT Alumni, EIT Jumpstarter. Duration: up to 6 months.

Until July 2026, InnoNext implements an enduring open call, where companies and researchers can apply at any time to find their ideal match and begin an Innovation Internship. Visit the website to explore new vacancies, additional resources, and upcoming updates.

The costs of the Innovation internships will be covered either by the EU partner programmes in which the researchers are involved or by InnoNext.

The path to get an Innovation Internship?

Step 1 - Create your profile
Complete the form on the InnoNext website to set up your profile. Ensure all required information is filled out, and upload your CV.

Step 2 - Explore the Innovation Internship Vacancies
Explore the Innovation Internship opportunities posted by Hosting Companies and take a closer look at those recommended for you through the matchmaking process.

Step 3 - Apply
Once you have identified internship opportunities that align with your interests, proceed to submit your application. As part of this process, you are required to complete and upload the Declaration of Honour (.pdf), confirming that you have informed and received the consent from your employer as well as your Project Coordinator, Principal Investigator, or Activity Leader. To ensure transparency and facilitate communication, you are encouraged to share the internship details along with the InnoNext Letter of Commitment (find the template on the Resource page).

Step 4 - Attend the Interview
Join the interview(s) to learn more about the Hosting Company and the specific activities involved in the Innovation Internship.

Step 5 - Get ready for the Innovation Internship
Once you and the company agree on the internship details, InnoNext will provide you with the legal support and logistical assistance, if applicable, to start the collaboration.

Step 6 - Start the Innovation Internship
Get settled, know the Hosting Company, and make the most of InnoNext's mentoring resources and workshops. Share your feedback to help improve the experience for future interns.



Sign up to become a Visiting Talent

<small>FIRST NAME *</small>	<small>SURNAME *</small>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<small>E-MAIL *</small>	<small>CONFIRM E-MAIL *</small>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Demographics

<small>GENDER *</small>	<small>DATE OF BIRTH *</small>
<input type="text" value="Select"/>	<input type="text" value="Date of Birth* (dd-mm-yyyy)"/>
<small>RESIDENCE *</small>	<small>MOBILE PHONE NUMBER</small>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="312 345 6789"/>

Work Experience

<small>COUNTRY OF EMPLOYER / RESEARCH INSTITUTION *</small>	<small>UNIVERSITY OR RESEARCH ORGANIZATION *</small>
<input type="text" value="Select"/>	<input type="text"/>
<small>AFFILIATE PROGRAM *</small>	<small>PROJECT ACRONYM *</small>
<input type="text" value="Select"/>	<input type="text"/>
<small>PROJECT ID *</small>	<small>ORCID ID *</small>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Internship Desiderata

<small>GEOGRAPHY</small>
<input type="text" value="Select"/>

CV *

[Click here \(or drag and drop\) to Upload a file](#)

doc, docx, txt, rtf, pdf, odt (Max. 2 MB)

PRIVACY POLICY OF THE WEBSITE Inno Next *

PRIVACY POLICY OF THE WEBSITE Inno Next

This page describes how the site is managed with regard to the processing of personal data of users who consult it, as well as how and for what purpose personal data is processed. This information is provided pursuant to Articles 13-14 of

I declare that I have read and understood the information
(If you do not accept, your request cannot be processed)

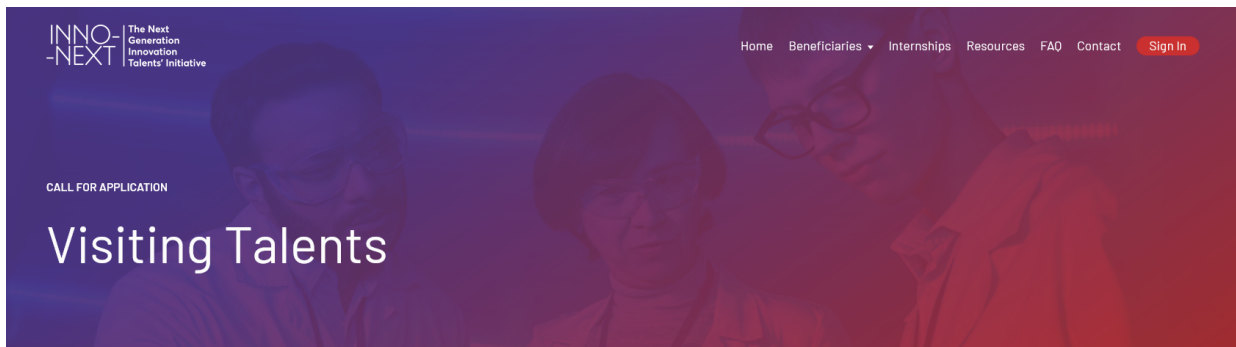
[Submit](#)

Have questions?

We're here for you! Read the FAQs to know more.

[Read the FAQ](#)

Figure 11 – Web page of the call for application for Visiting Talents, <https://innonext-project.eu/en/talents>.



CALL FOR APPLICATION

Visiting Talents

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Sign up to become a Visiting Talent

FIRST NAME *

SURNAME *

E-MAIL *

CONFIRM E-MAIL *

Demographics

GENDER *

DATE OF BIRTH *

RESIDENCE *

MOBILE PHONE NUMBER

Work Experience

COUNTRY OF EMPLOYER / RESEARCH INSTITUTION *

UNIVERSITY OR RESEARCH ORGANIZATION *

AFFILIATE PROGRAM *

PROJECT ACRONYM *

PROJECT ID *

ORCID ID *

Internship Desiderata

GEOGRAPHY

CV *

Click here (or drag and drop) to Upload a file

doc, docx, txt, rtf, pdf, odt (Max: 2 MB)

PRIVACY POLICY OF THE WEBSITE Inno Next *

PRIVACY POLICY OF THE WEBSITE Inno Next

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I declare that I have read and understood the information

(If you do not accept, your request cannot be processed!)

Figure 12 – Web page of the call for application for Hosting Companies, <https://innonext-project.eu/en/companies>. –



5.4. EU PPs requirements and InnoNext solutions

The following tables collect the requirements and suggestions received during the co-design phase of InnoNext. Per each raised point, the solutions to implement it have been proposed, discussed to evaluate them and prioritised⁶. The tables present the early requirement. It is noteworthy to highlight that the initial recommendations have been further described as UX and technical specifications to support the implementation of the service, the platform and the communication tools.

Table 3 – Requirements and Recommendations - Eligibility Criteria

TOPIC	EU PPs REQUIREMENTS	InnoNext DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY
Applicants unique ID	The projects are uniquely identifiable through the PIC Number, the 9-digit number that every organisation involved in an EU-funded project must have.	This information will be required as a mandatory field in the application form for the Hosting companies.	Must
Applicants unique ID	The mean to identify the funded project the researchers refer to shall be the link to CORDIS, where a detailed fact sheet is available to the public.	This information will be required as a mandatory field in the application form for the Visiting Talents.	Must
Required Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Researchers will need the approval of the Principal Investigator/ Project Coordinator to start the internship; this will be demonstrated with a Declaration of Honor signed by the PI/Project Coordinator - A self-declaration including the researcher and project details and the approval letter of the PI is the suggested solution to streamline eligibility checks. - The PI must authorise the internship. A Declaration of Honor from the host institution or the PI will be enough as an eligibility mean. The Declaration of Honor from the Project Coordinator must be submitted by the researcher on the platform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext must inform the applicants about the details of the internship application and operation from the beginning on the Call for Application online page. - InnoNext will provide a template of the Declaration of Honor to help Talents prepare and upload it. during the application. With this document, Talents declare that they have informed their Employer and the Principal investigator/ Project Coordinator/ Activity Leader and obtained their consent to do the internship. Only by uploading these documents will Talents be considered eligible. - In addition, a template with the prefilled internship information will be provided to facilitate the applicants' production. 	<p>Must</p> <p>Must</p> <p>Should</p>

⁶ **MUST:** priority actions of features required to accurately achieve the goal.

SHOULD: actions or features that should be implemented to refine the process/experience

COULD: desirable actions or features to increase the quality of the experience



TOPIC	EU PPs REQUIREMENTS	InnoNext DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY
Type of Agreement	<p>EIC Accelerator: Agreements should follow Horizon 2020/Europe templates and include clauses for intellectual property, roles, and remote work.</p> <p>EIC Pathfinder: Amendments are recommended to reflect researcher additions, funding reductions, and project delays. Agreements must clarify researcher tasks, IP ownership, and NDAs. Host companies should add clear value to the consortium.</p> <p>ERC suggested an agreement with the university where the PI is working and the hosting company.</p> <p>MSCA: Agreements include amendments to add companies as associated partners. Define researcher tasks and IP ownership clearly. Use MSCA-provided templates for consistency.</p> <p>RI: the agreement should be between the researcher's employer and the Hosting company.</p>	<p>InnoNext will provide each hosting Company with a template of a "Letter of Commitment" regulating general conditions of participation, terms and obligations. This will be finalised with two annexes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The agreement between the Hosting Company and visiting talents, regulating working conditions and period, IP (both outcomes and background knowledge) and confidentiality. - The financial agreement is only for ERC and EIC Pathfinders researchers. 	Must
Elements to Include	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Besides the contract, there should also be a mobility declaration. - It's important to regulate the IP rights of the researcher/employer, including the background knowledge. - Design agile internship processes, including minimal setup agreements and relocation logistics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext will provide a legal kit, including the IP regulation (background knowledge and outcomes) and privacy terms. - The agreement will describe the working conditions and, when needed, the financial agreement and mobility allowance 	Must Must

Table 5 - Communication and Dissemination

TOPIC	REQUIREMENTS per PROGRAMME	InnoNext DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY
Support to promote the InnoNext calls	<p>Programme-specific channels available to promote the InnoNext calls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EIC Accelerator: use platforms like Horizon Results, EIC websites, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext will provide curated content adapted to specific targets and media to be easily published by the Programmes. 	Must Must



TOPIC	REQUIREMENTS per PROGRAMME	InnoNext DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY
	<p>and social media. Content updates should be quarterly; teasers for upcoming calls can use email campaigns and social posts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EIC Pathfinder: Platforms include the EIC Community Platform and Participants' Portal. Communication plans should adhere to branding guidelines. - ERC: social media, newsletter - MSCA: Leverage the Euraxess portal, MSCA alumni network, and newsletters. Confirm teaser content deadlines early to ensure visibility at events like the MSCA Doctoral Networks. - RI: no programme channels, all the communications are in the EU funding portals. - SoE: Broaden outreach through the community of practice and direct contact with SoE awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext will share the initiative materials with Ewa, clarifying opportunities for SoE companies 	
Direct contacts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EIC Pathfinder: Administrators of the EIC Community Platform and the EIC website - MSCA: communication team in EAC and REA - RI: central communication unit: EISMEA - SoE: ensure clear communication with BAS services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext will send the communication materials as required by each EU Programme - InnoNext will the Communication and Dissemination plan details with the Programmes reference contacts 	Must

Table 6 - Workshops and Mentorship



TOPIC	REQUIREMENTS per PROGRAMME	InnoNext DESIGN RECOMMENDATIONS	PRIORITY
Existing Mentorship programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EIC Accelerator: Focus on innovation management and scaling-up. Suggested additional topics include market entry and investment strategies. Interactive workshops are more engaging than webinars. - EIC Pathfinder: Highlight entrepreneurship training, offering boot camps and in-depth sessions on IPR and fundraising. Workshops should align with current Tech2Market services to avoid redundancy. - MSCA: Complement existing soft skills training with practical entrepreneurship methods for consortium-wide benefits. - ERC: they do not have mentorship programmes but some of the POC grantees are mentored by EIC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext will define the mentoring methodology, plan and resources, complementing actual Programmes' activities with practical entrepreneurial methods and tools. 	Must

Table 7 - Monitoring and Evaluation



TOPIC	REQUIREMENTS per PROGRAMME	InnoNext RECOMMENDATIONS DESIGN	PRIORITY
Interesting indicators and metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EIC Accelerator: Collect demographic, financial, and performance data. Use quarterly reporting and post-implementation surveys. - EIC Pathfinder: Design evaluation metrics from the start, focusing on researchers' tasks and project impacts (e.g., IP and tech developments). Add specific information about the impact of the EIC Pathfinder on the project and satisfaction. - MSCA: Periodic reports should include secondments, satisfaction interviews, and success stories. IPR is handled in consortium agreements. Researchers will fill out their secondment form. From InnoNext, they would like to receive interviews with success stories and satisfaction data. - RI: Determine whether the secondment involves technology or experiments funded by the RI programme that the company specifically seeks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - InnoNext will conduct surveys throughout the process to assess the key stages, including matchmaking and internship performance. - Information about the companies, the researchers and their respective programmes will be gathered and collected in the InnoNext DB - Periodic reports can be shared with programme stakeholders at various stages and upon the completion of each internship cycle. 	<p>Must</p> <p>Must</p> <p>Could</p>



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