



[www.innonext-project.eu](http://www.innonext-project.eu)  
[info@innonext-project.eu](mailto:info@innonext-project.eu)

# Impact Assessment and Feedback from EC

**Deliverable D4.3**

Due date of the deliverable: 30/04/2025  
Actual submission date: 28/05/2025





## Document Information

Deliverable	D4.3	Title	Impact Assessment and Feedback from EC
Work Package	WP4	Title	Promotion and Impact Assessment

Dissemination level <sup>1</sup>	PU	Nature <sup>2</sup>	R
Copyright	© INNONEXT Consortium		

Responsible partner	Réseau Entreprendre Piemonte <b>(RES)</b>
Responsible author:	Lisa Orefice, RES
Co-authors	Negar Mokarram Dorri, RES Simone Foglia, RES Maria Elisabetta Migoni, RES

Deliverable abstract	<p>The present deliverable describes the conceiving and the achieving of the Impact Assessment Plan (D4.3), which outlines the methodology, tools, and evaluation strategy used to assess the interim and final impacts of the project, with a particular focus on WP2 and WP3 activities. It provides an overview of the continuous assessment activities conducted within the InnoNext initiative and incorporates feedback from the EU Commission as part of a dynamic process of improvement and alignment with project goals.</p> <p>The deliverable describes the methodology applied to the impact assessment, including the tools used for data collection and analysis and the indicators monitored. The deliverable will be updated every three months. The current document is the first release planned for the M9. The further updates are foreseen at M12, M15, M18, M21, and M24.</p>
----------------------	--

## Version History

Version no.	Date	Modified by	Actions <sup>3</sup>
V0.1	27/03/2025	Maria Elisabetta Migoni	Creation and outline
V0.2	30/04/2025	Carmine Cinquegrana, Angelo Schiavone	Section 4.2
V0.3	30/04/2025	Lisa Orefice	Review and Update
V0.4	02/05/2025	Maria Elisabetta Migoni	Review and Update
V0.5	05/05/2025	Mario Chiesa	Review

<sup>1</sup> 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

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

<sup>3</sup> Creation, modification, final version for evaluation, revised version following evaluation, final.





## Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	5
1.1. InnoNext overview.....	5
1.2. Purpose of the Document.....	7
2. Impact Assessment Overview .....	8
2.1. Relation to other WPs.....	8
2.2. Evolution of the document.....	8
2.3. Methodology.....	8
3. InnoNext Impact Assessment Framework.....	11
3.1. Specific Objectives, Outcomes and Impacts.....	11
3.2. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL).....	13
3.3. Main Tools for Achieving the Impact .....	17
3.4. Target Groups .....	19
4. Evaluation of objectives and impacts achieved.....	20
4.1. Objective 1 - The InnoNext Scheme: innovative internship scheme to boost entrepreneurship through a competency-based talent methodology .....	20
4.2. Objective 2 - Perform automatic talent discovery and matchmaking with innovative businesses, leveraging top-notch AI algorithms .....	23
4.3. Objective 3 - Support entrepreneurship through internships .....	25
4.4. Objective 4 - Increased visibility of EU funding programmes .....	35
5. Qualitative feedback .....	38
6. Annexes .....	41
6.1. Annex 1 – InnoNext Dashboard.....	41
6.2. Annex 2 – InnoNext Skills Self-Assessment.....	42
6.3. Annex 3 - Database of Q&A form beneficiaries collected through the Communication Channels.....	43

## List of Figures

Figure 1 – The InnoNext schema .....	7
Figure 2 - Registered Talents over time (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025) .....	29
Figure 3 - Talents Gender (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025).....	30
Figure 4 - Talents usual place of work (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025).....	30
Figure 5 - Companies registered over time (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025).....	32
Figure 6 - Companies size (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025) .....	33
Figure 7 - Positions Published over time .....	33
Figure 8 - Position Published per programme (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)....	33
Figure 9 - Application received (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025).....	34
Figure 10 - Published Position Location (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025).....	34
Figure 11 - Most requested competences in the published positions (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025) .....	35
Figure 12 – Connection Among Programmes (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025).....	35





## List of Tables

Table 1 - InnoNext beneficiaries .....	5
Table 2 - List of open access and key exploitable results .....	12
Table 3 - Objective 3 Indicators (Data source: InnoNext Platform, April 2025) .....	27
Table 4 - Talents per Country (Data source: Dashboard, April 2025).....	30
Table 5 - Open Position per Country (Data source: Dashboard, April 2025) .....	34

## Acronym List

<b>EIC</b>	European Innovation Council
<b>EIT</b>	European Institute of Innovation & Technology
<b>ERC</b>	European Research Council
<b>EU PP</b>	European Partner Programme
<b>HC</b>	Hosting Company
<b>HE</b>	Horizon Europe
<b>IN</b>	InnoNext
<b>MSCA</b>	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions
<b>PO</b>	Project Officer
<b>VT</b>	Visiting Talent





## Executive summary

This document represents the first release of Deliverable D4.3 “Impact Assessment and Feedback”, dedicated to evaluating the impact of the InnoNext initiative. Its structure is designed to support iterative updates every three months, in line with the project's development and in response to feedback gathered from beneficiaries and stakeholders. This dynamic approach enables continuous tracking of the initiative’s effectiveness, supporting improvement actions and ongoing learning.

It is structured around the **four specific objectives** identified during the proposal phase. This structure allows for a direct alignment between the monitoring indicators (KPIs), the expected outcomes, and the overarching project impacts, facilitating the traceability of results and the timely adaptation of strategies. For each objective, data collected, actions taken, and tools used to ensure effective implementation are presented.

The impact assessment is based on a Theory of Change methodology (see section 2.3) and integrates both quantitative tools (platform, dashboard, surveys) and qualitative approaches (1-to-1 feedback, mentoring, workshops). The data and analyses provided in this first release form the basis for a progressive narrative of the project, supporting both the consortium and EU Partner Programmes involved in the process.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. InnoNext overview

InnoNext is an 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
Including <b>PhD candidates, and postdoctoral researchers</b> participating in projects funded by the following EU Partner Programmes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EIC Pathfinder and Transition</li> <li>• ERC</li> <li>• MSCA Postdoctoral Fellowships</li> <li>• MSCA Doctoral Networks</li> </ul>	Including <b>startups and SMEs</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supported by EIC Accelerator</li> <li>• Supported by EIC Transition</li> <li>• Supported by EIC Pathfinder</li> <li>• Awarded by EIC Seal of Excellence</li> <li>• Supported by EIT Community and its business creation services</li> </ul>



- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MSCA COFUND</li> <li>• Research Infrastructures</li> </ul> <p>Students or graduates from EIT Label Master's or Doctoral programmes<br/>EIT Alumni members<br/>Participants from other postdoctoral training programmes supported by the EIT Community</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Created as a result of / receiving support from Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs)</li> <li>• Partnered with KICs for innovation activities</li> <li>• With at least one co-founder who is an EIT Alumni member</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

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 access<sup>4</sup> 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.

---

<sup>4</sup> 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,

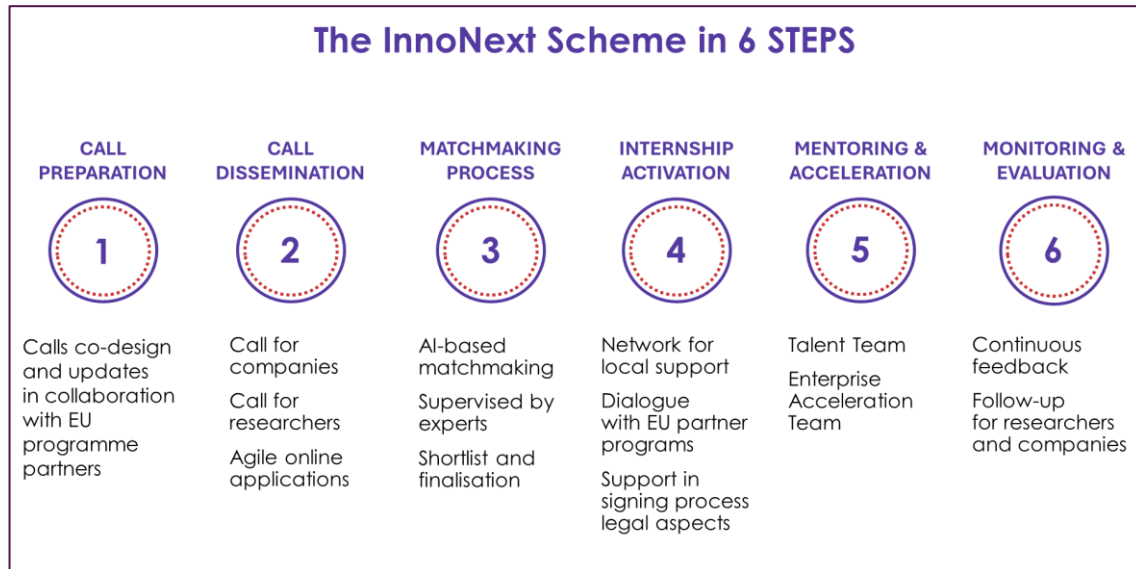


Figure 1 – The InnoNext schema

## 1.2. Purpose of the Document

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the InnoNext Impact Assessment Activity, detailing its methodological approach, data collection strategy, evaluation indicators, and reporting templates. The document will undergo iterative updates to reflect ongoing learning and refinement throughout the implementation of the initiative.

The objective of this document is to present the Impact Assessment by outlining the key evaluation components developed by the InnoNext team and informed by the experiences and feedback of beneficiaries and stakeholders. This continuous feedback loop supports the dynamic evolution of the assessment strategy, ensuring it remains relevant, evidence-based, and capable of capturing both expected and emergent impacts. The iterative nature of the document facilitates the tracking of changes, insights, and challenges, contributing to a shared roadmap for evaluating the effectiveness and long-term value of the InnoNext Initiative.



## 2. Impact Assessment Overview

### 2.1. Relation to other WPs

The Impact Assessment document provides a cross-cutting overview of the project's various Work Packages (WPs), with particular focus on WP1, dedicated to defining the framework and the InnoNext Scheme; WP2, focused on structuring the technological infrastructure; WP3, concerning the actual implementation of the InnoNext Scheme and its continuous iteration; and WP4, centered on communication and dissemination activities for the Initiative. The project's effectiveness and its potential to generate impact are closely tied to a balanced and coordinated management by the Consortium, which falls under WP5. Although WP5 is not addressed in this document, it significantly influences the project as a whole.

### 2.2. Evolution of the document

The document is designed as an interactive and evolving tool, to be progressively updated to track the project's development in terms of outputs and expected impacts. It will include in its final version the results of both the interim and final impact assessments, incorporating feedback from the European Commission.

It details the methodology applied, the tools used, the outcomes achieved, and the recommended actions to support ongoing integration and improvement, particularly within WP2 and WP3 (as outlined in T4.3 and T4.4).

The document will be **updated every three months**, with the first release scheduled for M9, followed by updates at M12, M15, M18, M21, and M24.

This first version is structured to enable the tracking of progress and trends within the InnoNext initiative and to support the development of a final report that provides a narrative overview of the project's evolution and helps identify the impact generated step by step.

### 2.3. Methodology

The Theory of Change (ToC) is a methodology originally developed in the field of international development to support planning, evaluation, and communication of **complex interventions**. It emerged in the 1990s as a response to the need for more transparent and participatory approaches to programme design, especially **in contexts where change depends on multiple actors and conditions**. At its core, ToC helps organizations map out the pathway from their actions to the desired long-term change, explicitly identifying intermediate outcomes, underlying assumptions, and external factors that can influence success.



By breaking down the process into a logical sequence of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes, the ToC helps clarify how each component of the project contributes to its overarching goals.

In the Theory of Change framework, **outputs**, **outcomes**, and **impacts** represent different levels of results that together describe the pathway of change. **Outputs** are the direct products or services delivered through project activities, for example, training sessions held, or tools developed. **Outcomes** are the short- to medium-term changes resulting from the use of these outputs, such as increased knowledge, changed behaviors, or improved collaboration among stakeholders. **Impacts** refer to the broader, long-term changes that occur at a systemic or societal level, such as enhanced innovation capacity, reduced inequalities, or stronger research ecosystems. This layered structure helps track how concrete actions lead to meaningful, lasting transformation.

The expected impacts and outcomes of the InnoNext project were defined using the ToC methodology, which enabled the Consortium to identify the methods and practices needed to **map the pathway of change** the initiative aims to foster among its beneficiaries. Building on the foundations laid out in the project proposal, a coherent monitoring and evaluation plan was developed to collect the necessary information and track progress towards the achievement of KPIs.

InnoNext is an iterative initiative that requires constant and careful data collection to effectively steer strategic decisions and support the achievement of its intended impacts. Through bi-weekly meetings, the InnoNext Consortium monitors the overall progress of the various work packages (WPs) in relation to the expected impacts, allowing for the timely identification of actions to address project challenges that emerge from an increasingly deep understanding of the ecosystem in which the initiative operates.

In this context, the Theory of Change serves not only as a methodological tool but also as a strategic approach that enables the Consortium to maintain a **shared and dynamic vision of the objectives**, fostering a culture of continuous learning and adaptability. This approach is especially relevant in a constantly evolving environment, where the ability to critically reflect on ongoing change and to realign project actions accordingly is essential to maximise the relevance and effectiveness of the intervention.

A visual representation of the expected outputs, outcomes, and impacts of the InnoNext project is presented below.



Output (Objectives)	(Expected) Outcomes	Impact
<p><b>O1 - The InnoNext Scheme: innovative internship scheme to boost entrepreneurship through a competency-based talent methodology</b></p> <p><b>O2 - Perform automatic talent discovery and matchmaking with innovative businesses, leveraging top-notch AI algorithms</b></p> <p><b>O3 - Support entrepreneurship through internships</b></p> <p><b>O4 - Increased visibility of EU funding programmes</b></p>	<p><b>EO1 - Support for at least 600 internships</b></p> <p><b>EO2 - Replication and upscaling toolkit</b></p> <p><b>EO3 - Increased visibility of EU funding programmes</b></p>	<p><b>I1 - Develop Entrepreneurial Mindset</b></p> <p><b>I2 - Facilitate Knowledge Transfer</b></p> <p><b>I3 - Enhanced and Equal Access to Research Talent</b></p> <p><b>I4 - Increased Awareness and Knowledge</b></p>

Figure 2 - InnoNext Output, Outcomes and Impacts



### 3. InnoNext Impact Assessment Framework

#### 3.1. Specific Objectives, Outcomes and Impacts

InnoNext’s mission is to foster the development of an entrepreneurial mindset by welcoming talented researchers and innovators to work with startups of member states operating in their areas of expertise. The project provides incubators, acceleration programs, and policy-makers with a methodology and set of tools that leverage EC resources to empower them to contribute to the achievements of goals reported in the European Innovation Council work program.

InnoNext is designed to achieve measurable objectives, each of which is structured according to the SMART criteria (**S-specific, M-measurable, A-achievable, R-relevant, and T-time-bound**) and is associated with a set of results capable of addressing all the topic expected outcomes and lead to a wider impact.

The **four objectives** are the following:

Table 2 - List of Objectives

Objectives	
OB1	The InnoNext Scheme: innovative internship scheme to boost entrepreneurship through a competency-based talent methodology
OB2	Perform automatic talent discovery and matchmaking with innovative businesses, leveraging top-notch AI algorithms
OB3	Support entrepreneurship through internships
OB4	Increased visibility of EU funding programmes

These objectives were defined during the proposal phase with the aim of ensuring the measurability of the project's progress and supporting, through selected indicators, the tracking of the achievement of the Expected Outcomes and overall project Impacts.

Given this close connection with impact, the document is structured into sections, each corresponding to the specific objective. Within each section, the KPIs are monitored and updated every three months until the end of the project.

Below the Expected Outcomes and Impacts are briefly described:

Table 3 - List of Expected Outcomes and Impacts

Expected Outcomes		
<b>EO1</b>	<b>Support for at least 600 internships</b>	It allows eligible researchers (Ph.D. candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and relevant students) to undertake Innovation Internships in hosting companies, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange. Over the duration of the action, the scheme aims to support a minimum of 600 internships, encompassing both deep tech talents and aspiring innovators.



<b>EO2</b>	<b>Replication and upscaling toolkit</b>	Delivered at the end of the project, this toolkit will promote the replication and upscaling of the InnoNext scheme, boosting future impacts at the EU scale.
<b>EO3</b>	<b>Increased visibility of EU funding programmes</b>	The communication and promotion activities performed within the project will provide better visibility and perception of EU-funded partner programmes, fostering the sense of belonging of EU citizens.
<b>Impact</b>		
<b>I1</b>	<b>Develop Entrepreneurial Mindset</b>	Enable researchers and aspiring innovators to gain practical experience and understanding of the processes required to take research ideas beyond invention, fostering an entrepreneurial mindset;
<b>I2</b>	<b>Facilitate Knowledge Transfer</b>	Provide innovative startups and SMEs with access to cutting-edge research insights and ideas, thus accelerating the development of their breakthrough products and services.
<b>I3</b>	<b>Enhanced and Equal Access to Research Talent</b>	Innovative startups and SMEs supported by EU-funded programmes (e.g., through EIC and EIT initiatives) will have improved access to research talent, potentially leading to more innovative products and services. This support.
<b>I4</b>	<b>Increased Awareness and Knowledge</b>	Researchers will gain greater awareness and knowledge about potential career paths in startup companies or entrepreneurship, broadening their career horizons.

In order to facilitate a clearer and more complete reading of the analyses made within the document, the Open Access (OA) and Key Exploitable (KER) are also listed below:

**OA1 The InnoNext scheme** aimed to boost entrepreneurship and fuel a transformative societal change by leveraging advanced talent management and internships;

**OA2 Talents database** containing the complete list of talents that worked within a project funded under the EC partner programs, linking talents with projects and publications, including patents. This database will include talents only upon their explicit consent and will be publicly released to facilitate the talents discovery by innovative startups and companies beyond the project lifespan;

**KER1 AI-based automatic discovery** of "deep tech talents" and "aspiring innovators" leveraging on existing databases of EU funding programs, as well as of companies (SMEs and startups);

**KER2 AI-based automatic matchmaking** between talent profiles and job opportunities, including internships;

**KER3 ICT platform to manage open calls and matchmaking for innovators**, SMEs, and startups (it can integrate KER1 and KER2);

Table 4 - List of open access and key exploitable results

Results #	Result Description (Tasks; owners for KERs)	Expected outcomes			Impacts			
		1	2	3	1	2	3	4



<b>OA1</b>	The InnoNext Scheme (T1.1, T1.3, T3.3, T5.3)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
<b>OA2</b>	Talents database (T2.1)	.		.			.	
<b>KER1</b>	AI-based automatic discovery of candidates and companies (T2.1, T2.3; LKS)	.	.				.	.
<b>KER2</b>	AI-based automatic matchmaking (T2.2, T2.3; LKS, ZUC)	.	.				.	.
<b>KER3</b>	ICT platform to manage open calls and matchmaking for innovators (T1.2, T2.3; ZUC)	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

### 3.2. The Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (MEL)

The InnoNext initiative includes a continuous Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) process aimed at improving the Scheme and addressing the emerging needs of Initiative beneficiaries. This iterative process is based on collecting and analysing feedback and evidence from beneficiaries and project stakeholders, aiming to improve the Scheme of the project over time.

The Plan encompasses both quantitative and qualitative data collection activities through the InnoNext platform and website, as well as direct feedback collection from participants. There are two primary feedback collection processes:

1. **Monitoring Activities:** These involve gathering feedback and comments through targeted surveys that help understand the beneficiaries' experience, their interaction with the platform, and their expectations from the Innovation Internship.
2. **Tutoring & Mentoring Activities:** This includes dedicated one-on-one support for InnoNext beneficiaries, available upon request when needed.

#### Monitoring Activities

The monitoring process includes three key activities:

1. **Experience Surveys:** Beneficiaries will be required to complete two surveys—one at the beginning and one at the end of the internship. These surveys will be differentiated between Visiting Talents (VTs) and Hosting Companies (HCs) and will cover various topics, including user experience with the platform, the matching process, and qualitative insights on their overall experience. This helps track changes in participants and assess the impact of the internship.

Below are the main themes of the surveys:

- **Visiting Talents - Pre-Internship:** Collects some more information about the talents, their expectations about the project, reasons for participating and an evaluation of the experience with the platform and the matching process.



- **Hosting Companies - Pre-Internship:** A short survey to gather expectation about the project, reasons for participating in InnoNext and an evaluation of the platform.
  - **Visiting Talents - Post-Internship:** Overall satisfaction rate and evaluation of different aspects such as the experience with the company, the support received, and the mentoring programme offered by InnoNext team. Includes some of the same questions from the pre-survey to assess changes over time and professional growth.
  - **Hosting Companies - Post-Internship:** Collects feedback on different aspects of the experience such as the support received, the mentoring programme to improve the internship program for future participants. And an evaluation of the satisfaction about the InnoNext project.
2. **Self-Assessment on the EntreComp Framework:** To assess and enhance participants' entrepreneurial skills, we will adopt the EntreComp framework as a reference model. At the beginning and end of the internship, participants will complete a self-assessment form evaluating 15 key competences covering 3 areas: Ideas and Opportunities, Resources and Into Action. This evaluation will allow us to measure both their initial skill levels and the progress achieved through the practical experience of the internship and the mentoring program offered by InnoNext.
  3. **Internship Report:** The reporting activity consists in two parts:
    - a. **Monthly reports** to be sent at the beginning of each month of the internship (starting from the second) where the talent will briefly describe the activities carried out during the reporting period and indicates the amount of time worked, specifying the hours per day worked. This monthly report **must be signed from both the HC and VT**, and it will demonstrate that planned activities have been conducted.
    - b. **Report** to be submitted at the end of the Internship detailing the activities carried out with the HC. While it will partially cover the technical aspects, the focus will be on skills learned, knowledge developed, and the overall impact of the experience, particularly in fostering entrepreneurial interest.

The InnoNext team will provide a standardized template to ensure consistency across reports and facilitate comparative analysis for monitoring and evaluation purposes.

### **Tutoring and Mentoring Activities**

The activity is managed mainly by RES and it is structured into two phases:

- **Before the Internship: Tutoring**
- **During the Internship: Mentoring**

All Tutoring and Mentoring interventions aim to support VTs and HCs throughout the application process, platform access, and the overall program.

### **Before the Internship: Tutoring**



**Tutoring 1-to-1:** All registered participants on the platform can request support for navigating different InnoNext Scheme steps. Support requests can be made via direct contact with the InnoNext team and will be provided through various formats depending on the complexity of the request.

**One-to-One Support for Companies**

- Creating and optimizing the vacancy
- Support in the selection process
- Guidance until the internship conversion

**One-to-One Support for Talents**

- Support for uploading the Letter of DoH
- Suggesting vacancies aligned with their profile
- Assistance throughout the application process

Beneficiaries can contact the team via email at [info@innonext-project.eu](mailto:info@innonext-project.eu). To streamline the process, dedicated email addresses have been set up:

- [talents@innonext-project.eu](mailto:talents@innonext-project.eu): For Visiting Talents
- [companies@innonext-project.eu](mailto:companies@innonext-project.eu): For Hosting Companies
- [administration@innonext-project.eu](mailto:administration@innonext-project.eu): For FSTP-related inquiries

Participants, in agreement with the InnoNext Team, may also request a one-to-one online meeting for direct assistance during critical stages.

**Collective Tutoring Webinars:** The InnoNext team will conduct online workshops covering key aspects of the process, addressing complex steps for beneficiaries.

A webinar will be organized and divided into two sessions, each tailored to a specific target audience: **Talents** and **Companies**. Both sessions are scheduled to take place **on 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> May**.

Each webinar will follow a structured agenda that includes the following key parts:

**1. General Presentation of the Initiative**

An introduction providing an overview of the InnoNext project, its goals, and its relevance for the participants.

**2. Target-Specific Focus**

- a. For **Visiting talents**: A deep dive into the talent journey, the opportunities offered, and how they can participate and benefit from the initiative.
- b. For **Hosting Companies**: A focused explanation of how companies can get involved, what kind of talent profiles are available, and the value the program brings to their innovation processes.

**3. Technology and AI Integration**



A general session explaining the technological framework behind the initiative, with a special focus on the role and practical use of Artificial Intelligence.

#### 4. Final Q&A Session

A live Q&A session where participants can interact, ask questions, and receive clarifications from the organizing team.

The goal is to **record both webinars**, make **minor edits** to improve flow or clarity if needed, and then **publish the final versions on the main page of the InnoNext website**, making them accessible to all interested users.

### During the Internship: Mentoring

**Mentoring 1 to 1:** During the internship, both HCs and VTs can request direct support from the InnoNext team. A direct relationship will be established with participants to address potential challenges and enhance the overall experience. The InnoNext team also supports beneficiaries throughout the internship journey, helping them to **capitalise on the experience** and to fully absorb the insights emerging from the interaction between the two ecosystems — research and entrepreneurship.

The InnoNext team is made up of experienced professionals in the field. In particular, RES (who is in charge of managing the mentoring activity) specialises in supporting entrepreneurs and early-stage founders. The support offered is consistent and adaptable for both companies and talents. If a participant — whether a talent or a company — raises a question regarding the programme, a specific topic, or even a vertical, the team steps in directly to provide guidance. When the need arises for a more targeted or highly specialised intervention, InnoNext is also able to **engage an expert** for an initial consultation.

**Collective Mentoring InnoNext Workshop:** Designed to engage the community of Talents and Companies to share Innovation Internship experiences and reflect on key themes for testing entrepreneurship innovation processes.

InnoNext's Academy is based on a careful analysis of the coaching and support offerings already available within the EU Programmes network, with the aim of:

- Avoid overlaps with other programs
- Prevent overloading Talents—who are already engaged in internships
- Enhance the innovation experience for Talents within Companies
- Accelerate innovation within Companies
- Inspire Talents toward entrepreneurship
- Create a Community of Talents and Companies within InnoNext
- Consider the introduction of Learning Materials from stakeholders

A series of **four dedicated webinars** has been designed to support the continuous learning and development of both **Talents and Companies**.



These sessions will begin in **May 2025**, with each webinar scheduled to take place approximately **every two months**, concluding by **November–December 2025**.

The webinars are **open to all eligible participants**, not only those currently enrolled in the internship program. The goal is to provide broader access to practical knowledge and strategic insights that support innovation and growth.

### 3.3. Main Tools for Achieving the Impact

Within the InnoNext project, the monitoring and evaluation strategy is structured across two complementary levels: on one hand, the tools used to achieve the intended impact; on the other, those dedicated to the collection, visualisation, and management of data, information, and feedback from beneficiaries and project stakeholders.

#### Tools for achieving impact

A central role in generating impact is played by the *Tutoring and Mentoring* activities, designed to support beneficiaries throughout the Innovation Internship journey. These activities facilitate the consolidation of skills and the capitalisation of the know-how acquired during the experience. During the internship, both Hosting Companies (HCs) and Visiting Talents (VTs) can request direct support from the InnoNext team. A close relationship is established with participants to address emerging challenges and enhance their experience. The team provides consistent support throughout the internship, helping participants to reflect on their path and make the most of the interactions between research and entrepreneurship ecosystems.

To further support the quality of the matching process between applicants and opportunities, an *Artificial Intelligence (AI)*-based solution is employed. InnoNext facilitates the connection between Hosting Companies and Visiting Talents through a hybrid matching system that combines automated data analysis with human supervision. It includes two parallel AI-based mechanisms: *job matching* and *competency-based matching*.

The position matching process works bidirectionally, matching internship vacancies to talents and vice versa. The competency-based system, meanwhile, focuses on the content and skills demonstrated by candidates, prioritising thematic alignment and relevant experience to strengthen the quality of the match (see D2.1 – AI algorithms and the ICT Platform).

*Communication and dissemination* activities also play a key role in reaching the project's target audience and in building a coherent and compelling narrative around the initiative. The Communication and Dissemination plan is fully described in D4.1.

#### Tools for data collection and management

For tracking and visualising progress, InnoNext relies on an *interactive dashboard* that aggregates data from the InnoNext platform. This tool offers real-time visibility into the number of VTs, HCs, and active vacancies. Users can filter by programme and monitor the flow of beneficiaries across



different ecosystems. The dashboard serves both as a strategic analytical tool for the Consortium and as a communication asset, supporting the visual storytelling of project progress. It is also accessible to EU Partner Programmes, who can monitor the performance of their respective VTs and HCs.

*Surveys and self-assessments* are used at key stages of the beneficiary experience—before the internship begins and at its conclusion. These tools are designed to track the evolution of participants' interests, motivations, and learning outcomes, helping to measure both qualitative and quantitative changes brought about by the project. These surveys provide valuable insights into how beneficiaries interact with the platform, how their expectations are shaped, and how their experiences evolve over time.

Finally, an *internal tracking database* is used to collect and monitor questions and feedback from potential beneficiaries, received via official communication channels (e.g., email, LinkedIn, the "Contact Us" section of the website). Systematic analysis of these inquiries allows the team to continuously improve its support services and to build and update a comprehensive FAQ section aligned with the actual informational needs of the community.

## **Tools for qualitative feedback collection**

To understand how the scheme works, the InnoNext team has defined a process for collecting **qualitative feedback** related to the two main stages of the pathway for VT and HC:

- **Pre-Internship Feedback Collection**
- **Post-Internship Start Feedback Collection**

The process of collecting beneficiaries feedback is related and aligned with the Tutoring and Mentoring activity which provides 1to1 support when request and an collective interaction through workshops.

### **1. Pre-Internship Feedback**

Individual Interactions

To gather qualitative feedback from the candidate Talents and HCs, a pilot activity was launched on an initial sample during the period from December 2024 to April 2025. This action was based on individual interactions with candidates, managed by the InnoNext team, in order to support and guide Talents and Companies throughout the application process, while **emphasizing the importance of maintaining a "human" component within the InnoNext matchmaking process**. The tool used during this initial phase consisted of one-to-one email exchanges followed by individual calls.

Tracking metrics are reported under Objective 3 – *Support entrepreneurship through internships*.

### **2. Post-Internship Start Feedback**



A similar approach will be adopted after the internship has started. During this phase, one-to-one feedback exchanges with both VT and HC are planned, aimed at gathering overall impressions and user perceptions of the experience.

### 3.4. Target Groups

This document, dedicated to assessing the impact generated by the InnoNext Initiative, aims to monitor the effects produced on different types of beneficiaries and stakeholders, briefly outlined below:

**InnoNext Beneficiaries (VT & HC)** – These are the direct beneficiaries, for whom most of the expected impacts of the InnoNext project are designed. They represent the main source of user experience feedback, making it possible to assess how agile and approachable the Scheme is for individuals without a comprehensive view of the entire Initiative. It is essential to collect and enhance the value of feedback received from this category of beneficiaries.

**InnoNext EU Partner Programmes** – These partners play a key role, as they provide both an internal and external perspective on the initiative and offer feedback based on their deep knowledge of EU initiatives and the EU Innovation Ecosystem. Activating exchange opportunities, such as co-design activities, and maintaining a structured interaction are crucial to allow the Consortium to gather strategic information to guide the InnoNext approach.

**InnoNext Consortium** – The consortium holds an internal perspective on the project's progress and has control over emerging dynamics and strategies to be implemented in order to improve the experience of the Initiative's end users. The monitoring activity allows the consortium to track progress and observe the effects produced in both the short and long term, following an iterative approach aimed at continuous improvement and learning.



## 4. Evaluation of objectives and impacts achieved

### 4.1. Objective 1 - The InnoNext Scheme: innovative internship scheme to boost entrepreneurship through a competency-based talent methodology

**Objective 1** of the **InnoNext Initiative** focuses on the implementation of the InnoNext framework, which includes the development of a comprehensive **toolkit** designed to foster connections between the research community and the entrepreneurial sector. It aims to promote the **acquisition and exchange of skills, knowledge, and know-how** between these two worlds. The methodology adopted by InnoNext is the result of a **co-design process** carried out in collaboration with EU programmes. This approach enabled the identification of the specific needs, requirements, and expectations of each target group. As a result, the **operational flow** of InnoNext was designed to encourage agile and accessible collaboration between research and business.

The **Tutoring and mentoring activity** have been structured to be simple and approachable for all participants. The support provided not only assist beneficiaries at the start of their **Innovation Internships**, but also guide both talents and companies in the elaboration on the experience. This reflection process helps to **capitalize on the skills** applied by talents in new contexts, while encouraging companies to **accelerate and strengthen their innovation strategies**.

The tools developed within the InnoNext Initiative follow an **iterative development process**: through continuous testing and ongoing feedback collection from stakeholders and beneficiaries, the tools are regularly refined to align with the evolving needs and objectives of the project.

Objective 1 represents the **core pillar** of the InnoNext Initiative and provides the foundation for achieving the **expected impacts** over the two-year implementation period. Specifically, impacts **I1, I2, and I3** relate to:

- The **promotion of new skill development** among talents;
- The **acceleration of innovative ideas** within companies;
- The **creation of meaningful and mutually enriching exchanges** between research and business.

<b>S</b>	Design a methodology to mobilise individuals with specific skills, knowledge, and competencies developed in the excellence EU programmes to boost the competitiveness of startups while learning by doing an entrepreneurial mindset. This methodology focuses on practical, real-world skills that entrepreneurs can immediately apply to start, grow, and manage their businesses effectively. The methodology will maximise the peculiarities of each EU excellence programme, and it will be provided together with a replication toolkit for its subsequent upscaling.
<b>M</b>	KPI1.1: 1 methodology; KPI1.2: 1 replication and upscaling toolkit;



<b>A</b>	<p>The InnoNext interdisciplinary consortium possesses all the competencies and experience to release a groundbreaking methodology. It will ground on the Researcher Career Development Scheme and on the knowledge and the mentoring practises put in place by RES.</p> <p>This objective is also achieved through the following results:</p> <p><b>OA1 The InnoNext scheme</b></p> <p><b>OA3 Replication and upscaling toolkit</b></p>
<b>R</b>	<p>The methodology design will involve the project partners, the EU programme representatives, and incubators to maximise the uptake, replicability, and export. This objective contributes to reach the expected outcomes: <b>E02 Replicability and upscaling</b>, as well as the impacts: <b>I1 Develop Entrepreneurial Mindset, I2 Facilitate Knowledge Transfer, I3 Enhanced and Equal Access to Research Talent, I4 Increased Awareness and Knowledge.</b></p>
<b>T</b>	<p>Starts at M0 in T1.1 "Needs Consolidation and Scheme Co-Design (with EC)", and ends at M21 in T3.3, "Continuous InnoNext Scheme Improvement".</p>

### Action performed

The table below shows the **main actions implemented** by InnoNext to achieve Objective 1. It also shows the most relevant documents and resources produced to which reference can be made in order to know the progress of the project.

Action Performed	Relevant Output
<b>Co-Design activity</b> and needs collection with EU Programmes	The Co-Design activity is described in D3.1 - The InnoNext Scheme
<b>Visiting Talents and Hosting Companies Toolkit</b> creation to support the beneficiaries in the understanding of the InnoNext Initiatives and Procedures. The toolkits are periodically updated and uploaded in the Resources Page	The toolkits are described in D1.2 – Starter Kit
<b>InnoNext Agreement Kit</b> defined according to the requirements identified during the co-design activity; the kit is subject to continuous and constant iteration to answer to the emerging needs and feedback from the beneficiaries and stakeholders. The Agreements consider and illustrate the role and responsibilities of the parties in terms of Intellectual Property	The Kit is fully described in D3.1 and is periodically updated; the Agreements are available on the <a href="#">Resources Page</a> of the InnoNext Website
Launch of the two <b>Calls for Interests</b> for the beneficiaries, both VT and HC	See D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme & D4.1 – Communication and Dissemination Plan
<b>Integrated Financial Support for Third Parties Call</b> which facilitate the access to the FSTP for the eligible beneficiaries	The FSTP procedures is fully described in D3.1 – The



	InnoNext Scheme; the call is published on the <a href="#">EU Funding&amp;Tenders Portal</a>
Definition of an <b>agile application process</b> and an active supervision of the process by InnoNext experts	See D2.1 - AI algorithms and the ICT platform & D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme
Definition of the <b>Tutoring and Mentoring</b> activities and the InnoNext Team support to the beneficiaries	Website page under development
Definition of the <b>Communication and Dissemination Plan</b> and activation of the main official Channels (website, social media, e-mail)	See D4.1 - Communication and Dissemination Plan; <a href="#">InnoNext Website</a> ; InnoNext Social Networks ( <a href="#">LinkedIn</a> ; <a href="#">X</a> )
Launch of <b>InnoNext Website</b> , where the Beneficiaries find all the information about the Initiative, access to the InnoNext Platform and have at their disposal the frequently updated FAQ	<a href="#">FAQ Page</a> on the <a href="#">InnoNext Website</a>
<b>Vacancy Guide and Tooltip</b> on the InnoNext Platform to help the HC in the Vacancy definition and writing	See D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme (Vacancy Guide)
Definition of the <b>Monitoring and Evaluation Tools</b> to track the feedback and level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries.	See D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme
Definition of the <b>Privacy Policy</b> to regulate the data management of the beneficiaries	See D5.1 – Data Management Plan

### Relevant indicators

The indicators listed below are closely linked to the achievement of the following KPIs:

**KPI1.1: 1 methodology**

**KPI1.2: 1 replication and upscaling toolkit**

These documents **will be the result of the full implementation of the project**. For this reason, the main components that are progressively developed and will contribute to the finalisation of the methodology and the toolkit are outlined below.

Indicator	M9	M12	M15	M18	M21	M24
Meetings with EU Programmes	14					
HC Call Launch and iteration of the communication	1 (launched on 02/12/2024)					
VT Call Launch and iteration of the communication	1 (launched on 13/12/2024)					
InnoNext Agreement Kit	1					
Communication and Dissemination Plan	1 (launched on 13/12/2024)					



## 4.2. Objective 2 - Perform automatic talent discovery and matchmaking with innovative businesses, leveraging top-notch AI algorithms

The platform is fully operational and ready to support the registration process for both HCs and VTs. It enables HCs to publish available positions (Innovation Internships) and leverages AI-based matchmaking to suggest the most suitable candidates for each role, based on multiple compatibility criteria.

At the current stage, two distinct algorithms have been developed to support this matchmaking functionality (as detailed in Deliverable 2.1). These algorithms rely on different data sources: the first focuses on skills and experiences explicitly listed in the candidate's CV, while the second utilizes AI-based automatic discovery to extract relevant competencies from publicly available academic publications and research outputs of the VTs.

However, as previously reported (see Deliverable 5.3), delays in the onboarding of both VTs and HCs have impacted the project timeline. The current number of active users is not yet sufficient to fully demonstrate the added value and effectiveness of our AI-driven solution.

Consequently, since no internships have been initiated to date, we are not yet in a position to assess some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) initially forecasted. We will continue to monitor the situation closely and provide data-driven insights as soon as the implementation phase progresses and participation rates increase. Where possible, we will also refine and adapt our evaluation strategy to align with the projected targets.

<b>S</b>	Based on the Inrecruiting platform brought by ZUC, a significant improvement will be realised to aggregate data from EU RI, enabling talent discovery and providing SMEs and startups an easy way to join the InnoNext scheme, inserting their profile and internship proposals. The platform database will enable the execution of matchmaking, bridging the expertise and willingness of talents with the needs of startups as, expressed within the internship proposal. The platform will also allow the manual browsing and selection of internships, and it will support the entire internship process, including the collection of feedback.
<b>M</b>	<p>KPI2.1: 3000+ number of talents/businesses discovered</p> <p>KPI2.2: perform matches with internships in less than 1 second</p> <p>KPI2.3: ≥90% top-5 accuracy of the matches proposed against manually selected options</p> <p>KPI2.4: the time required to join the InnoNext scheme through the platform: &lt;10 min for both talents and companies</p> <p>This objective is also achieved through the following results:</p> <p><b>KER1 AI-based automatic discovery</b></p>



	<b>KER2 AI-based automatic matchmaking</b> <b>KER3 ICT platform to manage open calls and matchmaking for innovators</b>
<b>A</b>	ZUC brings the technology for professional advertisements and career development, resulting in the base platform used in the project. LKS has matured experiences in artificial intelligence technologies. The discovery of candidate matches is implemented at the early stage of the project allowing the use of this technology integrated in the InnoNext platform.
<b>R</b>	This objective addresses the expected <b>outcome EO1 Support for at least 600 Internships, EO2 Replicability and upscaling</b>
<b>T</b>	It is achieved by WP2 "Iterative Technology Implementation" from M4 to M21.

**Action performed**

Action Performed	Relevant Output
InnoNext Platform Launch	<a href="https://innonext-project.eu/en/">https://innonext-project.eu/en/</a>
Sign In Flow definition for both talents and companies	The InnoNext schema for both VTs and HCs is explored in the D1.1.
ICT platform definition and setting	This action focuses on configuring the platform in accordance with the designed workflow that VTs and HCs will follow throughout their participation in the project. An overview of the platform and its functionalities is provided in the D2.1.
AI algorithms integrated into the platform	First version the AI-powered matchmaking process has been released; details are provided in the D2.1.
Definition of the Data Management	The D5.1 outlines the Data Management Plan and details the measures implemented to ensure compliance with the human-in-the-loop principle, with particular emphasis on ethical AI considerations and adherence to GDPR regulations.



## **Relevant indicators**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>M9</b>
KPI2.1 - Number of talents/businesses discovered	248 total users*
KPI2.2 - Time required to perform matches with internships (on average)	0.5ms
KPI2.3 - Top-5 accuracy of the matches proposed	n/a**
KPI2.4 - Time required to join the InnoNext scheme through the platform	less than 10 min***

\* Data at 01/05/2025

\*\* At this stage, it is not yet possible to assess the accuracy of the matchmaking system, as we currently lack a real ground truth (i.e., activated internships) that would allow us to perform a reliable evaluation of the matching outcomes.

\*\*\* The registration phase, which formalizes the participation of either VTs or HCs in the initiative, has been designed to be efficient and user-friendly. The entire process takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Forms and procedures have been carefully structured to collect participant data swiftly and effectively, minimizing any potential barriers to entry.

### **4.3. Objective 3 - Support entrepreneurship through internships**

**Objective 3** is closely linked to **Objective 1** and is crosscutting across all WPs, as the implementation of the InnoNext Scheme is instrumental in reaching the targeted number of beneficiaries. Specifically, this objective focuses on monitoring the progress of internships and evaluating their impact on participants.

Objective 3 aims to ensure the effective achievement of the project's target, as defined in the proposal phase: the reach of **600 internships over 2 years**.

From the launch of the project until **Month 9 (M9)**, several actions have been undertaken to engage as many users as possible on the platform. These efforts support the growth of the InnoNext ecosystem and facilitate matchmaking through a diversified pool of participants.

The InnoNext project has made steady progress in its initial phase, laying essential foundations such as the launch of the platform, the publication of the Calls for Interest, the configuration of the applicant tracking system, and the early development of AI-powered tools for talent discovery and matchmaking. The project is advancing in line with its objectives, although certain challenges have emerged that require targeted solutions.



Additionally, a **dedicated workshop program** for InnoNext participants is being finalized, along with the planning of **informative webinars** aimed at facilitating interaction with potential beneficiaries and clarifying the registration process.

The implementation of the InnoNext methodology required the execution of a series of activities, both of a technical and strategic nature, prodromal to the launch of the initiative: co-design, gathering the needs of VTs and HCs, refining the process, creating the platform and a communication plan, which required, in order for the process to be functional, **a testing phase** characterized by a strong effort, flexibility and readiness to take on board continuous feedback to transform it into improvement actions.

Thanks to this monitoring activity and continuous feedbacks from the programmes, the Consortium is now able to communicate the InnoNext opportunity more effectively.

A key milestone in M9 has been the **involvement of the EU EIT Program**, which has formalized an agreement to include its talents and companies within the InnoNext project. This collaboration is expected to significantly boost both visibility and participant engagement.

To address the current challenges, specific measures are being applied, including **direct follow-ups with applicants, enhanced communication strategies, and streamlining of administrative procedures**. Feedback collected thus far is proving instrumental in refining these processes and improving platform accessibility, ensuring the project remains adaptable to participants' needs.

**Next steps** will focus on increasing visibility, strengthening stakeholder engagement, and optimizing the internship activation process to enable a smoother and more effective implementation of the InnoNext initiative.

<b>S</b>	Allow eligible researchers (PhD candidates, postdoctoral researchers, and relevant students) to undertake innovation internships in hosting companies, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange.
<b>M</b>	KPI3.1: 600+ internships in 2 years KPI3.2: 150+ interns from EIC Pathfinder KPI3.3: 300+ deep tech internships KPI3.4: 300+ aspiring innovator internships KPI3.5: ≥50% of the InnoNext budget allocated to support internships KPI3.6: Intern Satisfaction (on a Likert scale) at least 75% express 4 out of 5 KPI3.7: Company Satisfaction (on a Likert scale) at least 75% express 4 out of 5
<b>A</b>	Companies are subsidised to welcome highly qualified talents. The best match from what companies need and what talents can offer grants paves the way for a successful collaboration between talents and companies.
<b>R</b>	This objective addresses the expected outcome: <b>EO1 Support for at least 600 Internships, EO3 Increased visibility of EU funding programmes, and contributes to all impacts (I1, I2, I3, I4)</b>
<b>T</b>	It is achieved by WP3 "Iterative Scheme Implementation" from M4 to M21.



## Action performed

Action Performed	Relevant Output
<b>Launch of the InnoNext Platform</b>	<a href="#">InnoNext Platform Log In</a>
<b>Dashboard</b> to visualize and monitor the quantitative trend of beneficiaries engaged in the InnoNext Platform	Annex 1 – The dashboard is an Internal Instrument accessible only by the Consortium and the EU Program Partners. The main Aggregated Indicators will be used in the Communication Activity
<b>Database</b> to track queries collected via official e-mails and Communication Channels	Annex 4 – Database of Q&A form beneficiaries collected through the Communication Channels
<b>Beneficiary satisfaction tracking systems</b> including surveys, self-assessment and tracking systems through 1to1 support by the InnoNext team	The tools are described in the D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme; Annex 2 – InnoNext Skills Self-Assessment Annex 3 - Database of Q&A form beneficiaries collected through the Communication Channels
Definition of an <b>Integrated Call for the FSTP</b> procedure and publication in the EU Funding and Tenders Portal	The FSTP procedures is fully described in D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme; the call is published on the <a href="#">EU Funding&amp;Tenders Portal</a>
Engagement of the <b>EIT Program</b> from April 2025	

## Relevant indicators

The indicators listed below are closely linked to the achievement of the following KPIs:

**KPI3.1: 600+ internships in 2 years**

**KPI3.2: 150+ interns from EIC Pathfinder**

**KPI3.3: 300+ deep tech internships**

**KPI3.4: 300+ aspiring innovator internships**

**KPI3.5: ≥50% of the InnoNext budget allocated to support internships**

**KPI3.6: Intern Satisfaction (on a Likert scale) at least 75% express 4 out of 5**

**KPI3.7: Company Satisfaction (on a Likert scale) at least 75% express 4 out of 5**

Table 5 - Objective 3 Indicators (Data source: InnoNext Platform, April 2025)

Indicator	M9
<b>Visiting Talents</b>	
Visiting Talents Signed on the Platform	185
EIC Pathfinder signed on the Platform	17**
ERC signed on the Platform	86
MSCA signed on the Platform	33



EIT signed on the Platform	41
RI signed on the Platform	8
ERC beneficiaries of the FSTP Procedure	0
EIC Pathfinder beneficiaries of the FSTP Procedure	0
EIT Beneficiaries of the FSTP Procedure	0
DoH signed	28
<b>Hosting Companies</b>	
Hosting Companies signed on the Platform	63
EIC signed on the Platform	41
EIT signed on the Platform	22
LoC Signed (Client)	32
Open Positions	23
<b>Matching Indicators</b>	
Interview Activated	9
n. call/1to1 to beneficiaries	15
n. mail (info@)	230 ca.
<b>Survey Indicators</b>	
VT Survey Pre Internship Compiled (the survey will be send when the Innovation Internship Agreement will be signed)	0
HC Survey Pre Internship Compiled (the survey will be send when the Innovation Internship Agreement will be signed)	0
<b>Talents 1to1 Contacts (Dec 24–Apr 25)</b>	
Total Received Emails	165
Total Sent Emails	132
Topics:	
Technical Issues	25%
Application Processing	35%
Program Information	20%
Administrative	20%
Average response time (business days)	1-2 dd
Query resolution rate	80%
<b>Companies 1to1 Contacts (Dec 24–Apr 25)</b>	
Total Received Emails	210
Total Sent Emails	113
Topics:	
Technical Issues	25%
Application Processing	40%
Interview Coordination	20%
Administrative	15%
Average response time (business days)	1-2 dd



Query resolution rate	85%
-----------------------	-----

\*\*From the table, referencing the KPIs established during the proposal phase, a discrepancy is highlighted between the proportion of EIC Pathfinder beneficiaries signed on the platform (17 out of 185) and the proportion set as the project target (150 out of 600). The InnoNext Consortium is planning to identify, through a **co-definition activity with the EIC Pathfinder program** representatives, communication enhancement actions that will allow for a more widespread reach to a greater number of potential beneficiaries, highlighting the opportunity related to the Mobility allowance for the EIC Pathfinder beneficiaries, assured through FSTP procedure.

### Dashboard Overview

The following sections present excerpts from the **Dashboard** developed by the InnoNext Consortium, which provides a visual representation of trends related to the platform's beneficiaries. The dashboard is available to both EU Programmes and the InnoNext Team to monitor progress and identify strategic actions aimed at improving the overall performance of the Scheme.

### Talents

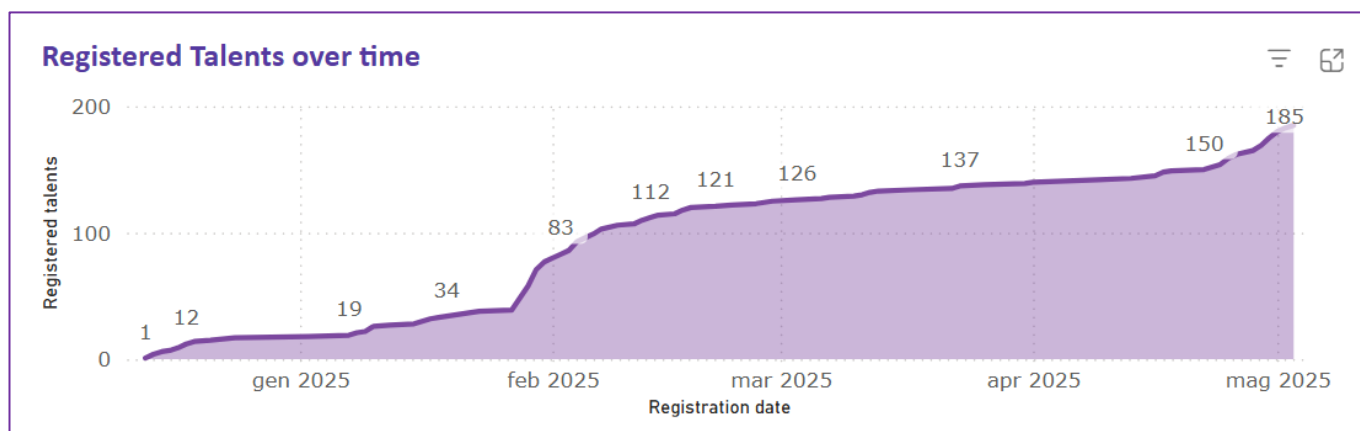


Figure 3 - Registered Talents over time (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

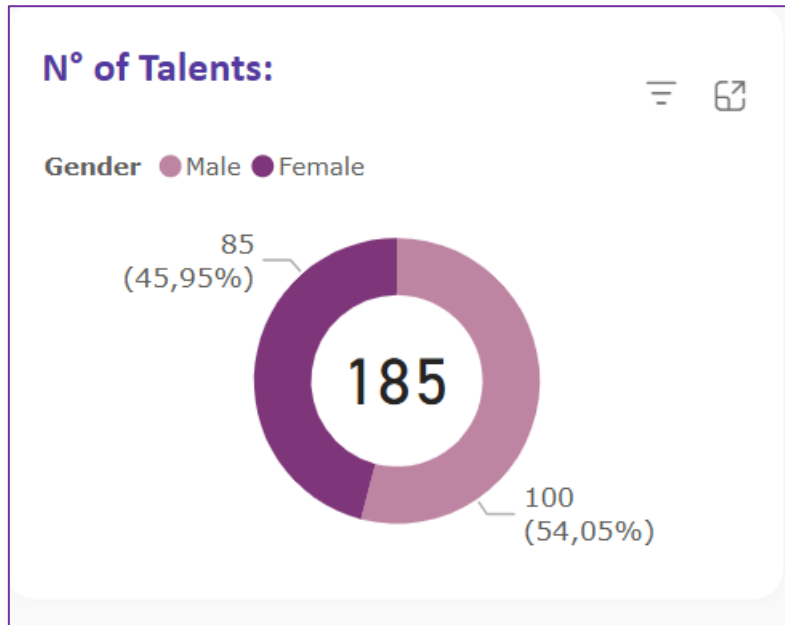


Figure 4 - Talents Gender (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)



Figure 5 - Talents usual place of work (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

Table 6 - Talents per Country (Data source: Dashboard, April 2025)

Country	M9
Austria	4
Belgium	5
Cyprus	1
Czech Republic	3
Denmark	3
Estonia	1
Finland	5
France	8
Germany	12
Greece	5



Hungary	1
Ireland	3
Italy	13
Lithuania	1
Luxembourg	2
Netherlands	7
Norway	2
Poland	1
Portugal	7
Spain	15
Sweden	7
Switzerland	4
Turkey	1
United Kingdom	9

**Talents' main competences.** Competences are mapped through the taxonomy of the ERC Evaluation Panels and Keywords, which includes a total of 337 competencies.

**Talents' main competences\***

- Engineering of biomaterials, biomimetic, bioinspired and...
- Molecular electronics
- Surface science and nanostructures
- Transcriptomics
- DNA and RNA biology
- Electronic properties of materials, surfaces, interfaces, na...
- Solid state materials chemistry
- Ecotoxicology, biohazards and biosafety
- Microbiome and host physiology
- Molecular mechanisms of signalling processes
- Nanomedicine
- Photochemistry
- Applied plant sciences, plant breeding, agroecology and...
- Biogeochemistry, biogeochemical cycles, environmental ...
- Biological basis of prevention and treatment of infection
- Chemical reactions: mechanisms, dynamics, kinetics and ...
- Electrochemistry, electrodialysis, microfluidics, sensors
- Engineering of metal oxides



## Companies

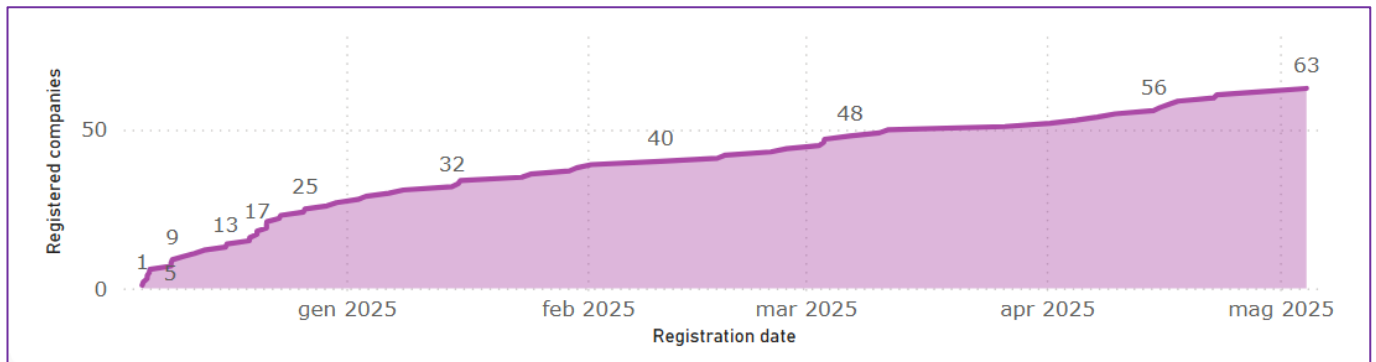


Figure 6 - Companies registered over time (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

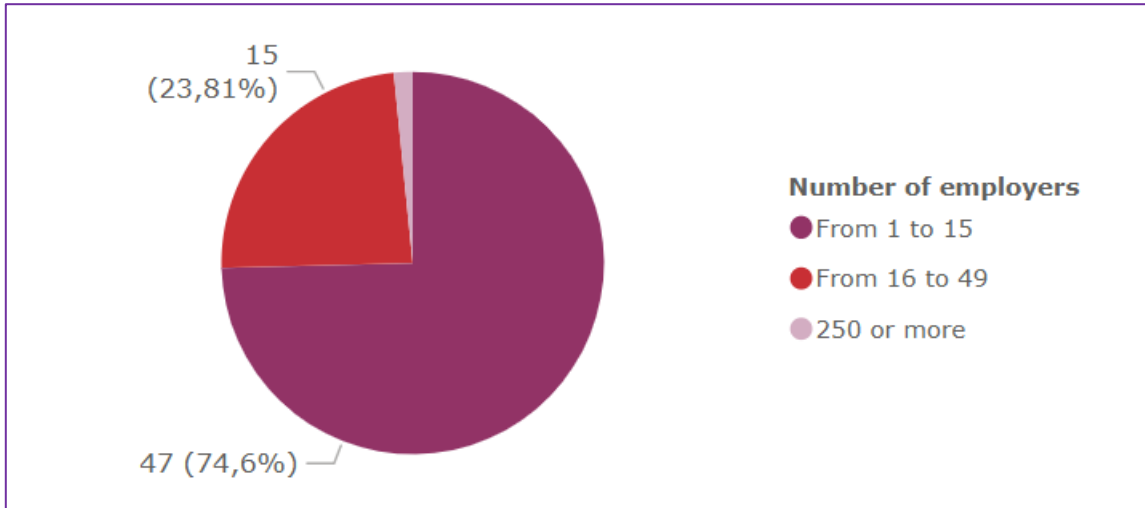


Figure 7 - Companies size (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

### Positions

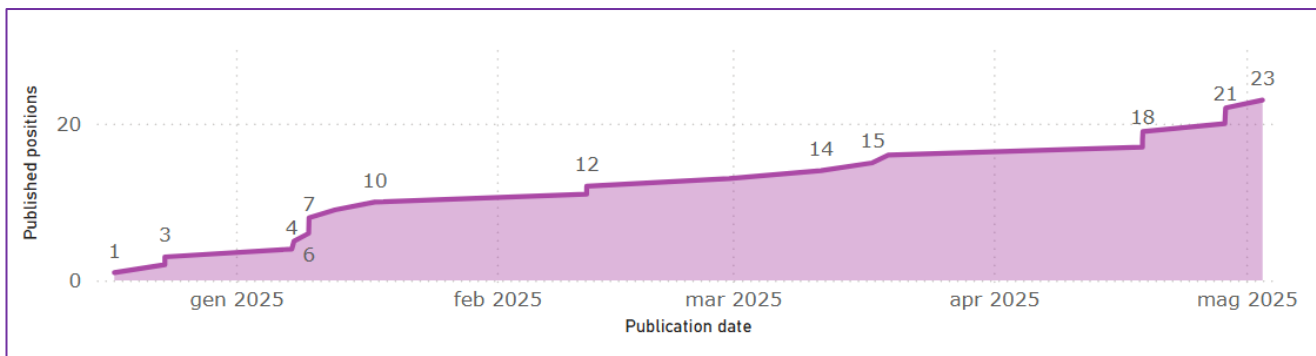


Figure 8 - Positions Published over time

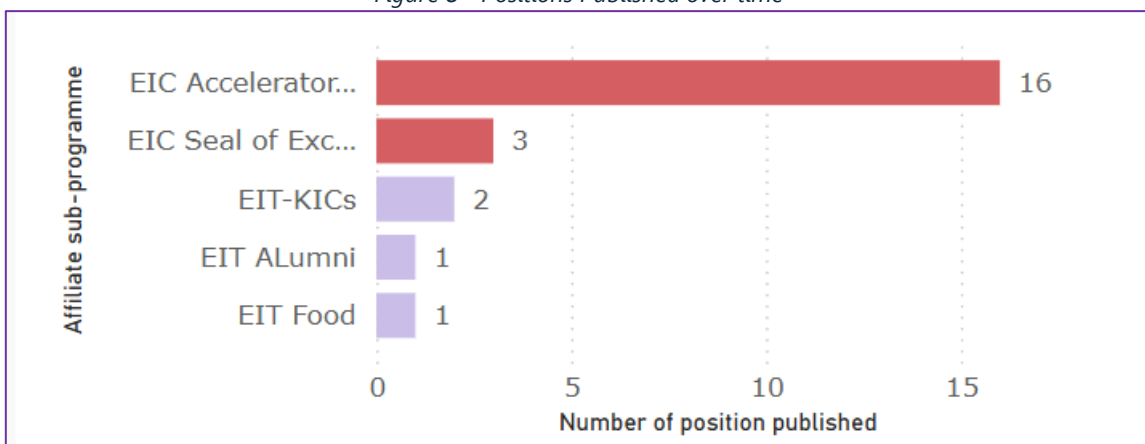


Figure 9 - Position Published per programme (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

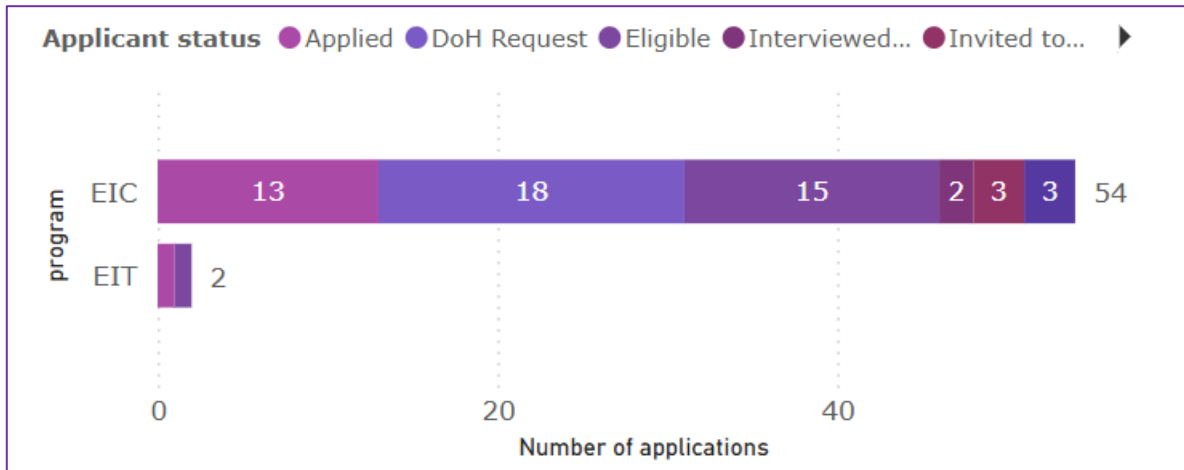


Figure 10 - Application received (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)



Figure 11 - Published Position Location (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

Table 7 - Open Position per Country (Data source: Dashboard, April 2025)

Country	M9
Austria	1
Belgium	2
Denmark	1
Finland	1
France	1
Germany	3
Greece	4
Israel	1
Italy	2
Luxembourg	1
Portugal	3
Slovakia	1
Spain	1
Sweden	1



Figure 12 - Most requested competences in the published positions (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

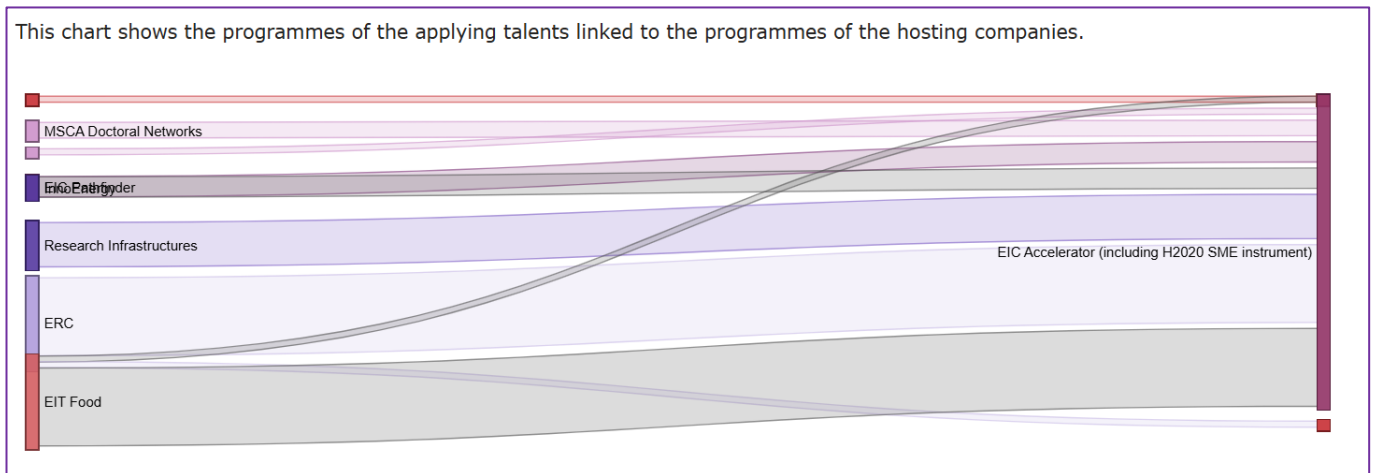


Figure 13 – Connection Among Programmes (Data source: InnoNext dashboard, April 2025)

## 4.4. Objective 4 - Increased visibility of EU funding programmes

### Objective 4 – Increased Visibility of EU Funding Programmes

Objective 4 is closely linked to Work Package 4 (WP4), which focuses on Communication and Dissemination. It is primarily through communication activities that the visibility of EU funding programmes can be increased.

As part of the promotion and dissemination of the InnoNext Initiative, a series of communication actions have been designed and are currently being implemented, including the goal of increasing awareness of European programmes and related funding opportunities.

The actions undertaken can be summarised as follows:

#### Mapping of key actors in the Italian and European innovation ecosystem

The InnoNext team is mapping the Italian and European innovation ecosystem (NCPs, accelerators, research centres, universities, etc.) with the aim of building direct relationships to present InnoNext. During these meetings, special attention is given to highlighting the opportunities offered by EU programmes by including a dedicated section in the presentation



pitch, featuring EU programmes and accelerators involved in InnoNext, along with links to their websites for further details.

### One-to-one meetings and presentations within the Italian innovation ecosystem

- Webinar with the Italian contact point of the Innovation Alps Unit – Enterprise Europe Network coordinator, followed by the publication of an information piece promoting InnoNext on the official website ([Post Link](#))
- Webinar with the Italian Horizon contact point at APRE – Agency for the Promotion of European Research ([Post Link](#))
- Webinar with Invitalia, the national agency supporting public administrations in managing national and EU funds. A dedicated post was published following the meeting ([Post Link](#))

### Presentations of InnoNext to qualified and targeted networks across Europe

- 14–15 November 2024: Presentation of InnoNext in Paris at the forum of Presidents and Directors of Réseau Entreprendre (countries involved: France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, Belgium)
- An event is currently being planned to present InnoNext to the startups accelerated by STATIONF in Paris

### Creation of relevant content in the communication materials

The Communication include general posts and articles published on the events attended (e.g. EIC Summit 2025), through the official InnoNext and Consortium Partners channels.

### Forms and Surveys

A form was also distributed to the entire Réseau Entreprendre network across Europe to map all startups supported at the European level and funded by the EU programmes involved in InnoNext. (D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme)

<b>S</b>	Within the 24-month project period, achieve increased visibility of EU funding programmes among research talents (deep tech talents and aspiring innovators) through comprehensive communication and promotion activities, and linking to innovative but small companies such as SMEs and startups. This initiative aims to enhance the perception and understanding of EU-funded partner programmes among these entities, fostering greater participation and engagement and European leadership.
<b>M</b>	Attain a 20% increase in awareness and recognition of EU funding programmes by research talents and hosting companies compared to the baseline measurement. This will be measured through a pre-post survey. KPI4.1: +20% awareness of EU funding programmes KPI4.2: +20% appreciation of EU funding programmes This objective is also achieved through the following results: <b>OA1 The InnoNext scheme</b> <b>OA2 Talents database</b> <b>OA3 Replication and upscaling toolkit</b>
<b>A</b>	Implement tailored communication strategies and campaigns to effectively reach and inform research talents and hosting companies within the project's scope.



<b>R</b>	This objective supports the achievement of the call's expected outcome: <b>E03 Increased visibility of EU funding programmes</b>
<b>T</b>	It is achieved by WP4 " <b>Promotion and Impact Assessment</b> " from M4 to M21.

**Action performed**

Action Performed	Relevant Output
Meeting with the InnoNext Network to present the Initiative	D3.1 – The InnoNext Scheme  D4.1 – Communication and Dissemination Plan
Communication and Dissemination Plan which provide the strategy to communicate and reach the project objectives	
Creation of a dedicated media kit	
Creation of email templates for EU Programmes and Stakeholders	
Creation of digital flyer	
Mapping of key actors in the Italian and European innovation ecosystem	

**Relevant indicators**

The Indicators listed below are closely related to reach and inform talents and hosting companies during the implementation of the Initiative.

Indicator	M9
Events in which the InnoNext Initiative has been presented	6
Articles published on EIC Community Platform;	2
Posts on EISMEA channels (LinkedIn & X);	2
Articles published on the EIT Official Website	1
Posts on EIT Channels (LinkedIn & X)	2
InnoNext LinkedIn Posts	22
InnoNext X Posts	7



## 5. Qualitative feedback

The following are some of the Lessons Learned from Qualitative Feedback Collected Through One-to-One Interactions

1. Improve clarity of some of the content included in the supporting documents used in the final stages of the application process.

**Action Taken by the InnoNext Team:** Development of detailed FAQs published on the website ([FAQ Page](#)) and organized according to each phase of the process. Launch of an internal review process focused on document consistency and the overall quality of the applicant experience.

2. Strengthen promotion of the Call through a targeted editorial plan addressing the initiative's two main audiences: VT and HC.

**Action Taken by the InnoNext Team:** Creation of tailored communication materials for talents and companies, with a particular focus on eligibility requirements and the application process.

### Feedback Gathered Through Stakeholder Events and EIC Summit Participation

Participation in events dedicated to presenting the InnoNext Initiative to relevant stakeholders provided an additional opportunity to gather valuable qualitative feedback. Below is a summary of the key meetings held between December 2024 and April 2025:

EU PP involved	Event Name	Date	Type of Participation
MSCA	MSCA DN 2023 Coordinators Info event on	12/11/2024	Indirect
MSCA	Meeting with national contact points	27/11/2024	Remote
EIC	EIC BAS (business Acceleration Service) - Contractors Day	30/02/2025	In person
EIC	Quantum Technologies Portfolio	05/02/2025	In person
MSCA	Cafè Curie	12/02/2025	In person
EIC	EIC Summit 2025	02-03/04/2025	In person

### EIC Summit 2025

On April 2–3, 2025, the InnoNext team participated in the EIC Summit, where they had the opportunity to present the initiative during the panel ***InnoNext | The Next Generation Innovation Talents Initiative. An EU Funded Initiative.***

During the event, the team engaged in an extensive qualitative feedback collection activity, made possible by their presence at a dedicated stand within the Business Acceleration Services area of the EIC. These two days of interactions at the stand allowed the InnoNext team to gather feedback from a variety of stakeholders attending the event, including companies, talents, and other key players in the EIC ecosystem.

These were valuable days that highlighted the following insights – particularly from Host Companies (HCs) – which in turn led to the implementation of several improvements to the scheme by the InnoNext team:



### Beneficiaries Insights:

- The opportunity of free access to talents with experience in European projects/programmes is perceived as very attractive.
- Companies highlight the need to consider the time required to train and onboard even highly skilled Talent on the project/entrepreneurial activity in which will be inserted.
- Start-ups with small structures may find it difficult to manage the Talent onboard effectively, especially if they do not have dedicated resources.
- It is essential to keep the bureaucratic flow as streamlined and accessible as possible to avoid it becoming an obstacle for smaller companies in particular.

### InnoNext Insights:

- Consider, at least in the initial phase, to orient the selection of companies towards those which already have experience with European funded projects; have a minimum organisational structure (e.g. number of employees); have not been founded too recently; have investors or a certain degree of solidity behind them.
- It is useful to strengthen communication towards Principal Investigators/Project Coordinators, who are unfamiliar with the Initiative: each project has budget and time constraints (Gantt) that may limit the possibility of releasing PhDs candidates for the duration of the Internship; PhD students also have academic deadlines (papers, conferences) that impact on their availability.
- Administrative simplification of the overall InnoNext process, from application to agreement signature.
- Simplification of InnoNext-related content on the official website.
- Integration of tailored communication content into the editorial plan, targeting both main audiences: Visiting Talents (VT) and Host Companies (HC), with a focus on the specific application processes.
- Organization of informative webinars to explain the application process and address specific questions from VTs and HCs (May 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup>).

### Next Step

This section outlines a set of strategic actions planned to enhance the potential impact of the specific objective under analysis. These operational steps, identified based on the outcomes achieved and the qualitative feedback gathered, represent an initial level of planning and can be further detailed in future updates of the document.

Action	Description
<b>A1.1</b>	Continuous implementation and adaptation of the InnoNext Scheme
<b>A1.2</b>	Continuous revision of the InnoNext Kits (Agreement, Toolkit)
<b>A1.3</b>	Relaunch of both Calls of Interest
<b>A1.4</b>	Launch of the Mentoring Workshop on May
<b>A2.1</b>	Revision of the InnoNext Beneficiaries Journey on the Platform and eventual upgrade

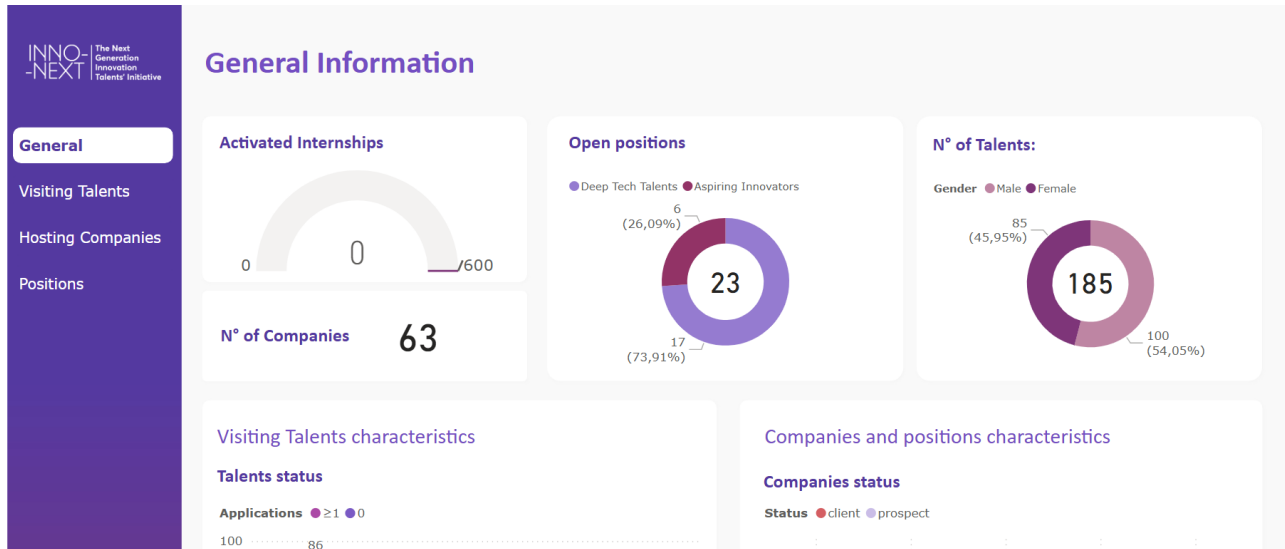


<b>A3.1</b>	Increase Visibility of the InnoNext Initiative through the official InnoNext Channels and through the active support of the EU Programmes
<b>A3.2</b>	Strengthening Stakeholder Engagement and the InnoNext networks with the aim to disseminate the opportunity through different channels
<b>A4.1</b>	Participation in sectorial Events of EU Innovation Ecosystem with the aim to present InnoNext and its opportunities.
<b>A4.2</b>	InfoSession Webinars to present InnoNext to potential beneficiaries




## 6. Annexes

### 6.1. Annex 1 – InnoNext Dashboard





## 6.2. Annex 2 – InnoNext Skills Self-Assessment



### InnoNext skills self-assessment

Hello, and thank you for taking part in this self-assessment for the InnoNext members.

This tool is based on the European Entrepreneurship Competence Framework (<https://entrecomp.eu>), a widely recognised model that defines and supports you in self-assessing entrepreneurial skills across different domains\*. It is intended to offer you as individuals, teams, and organisations a model to explore and monitor your competences over time.

**InnoNext adopts EntreComp** as a tool to keep track of your skill growth throughout the innovation internship.

Moreover, the collected data will be also use for the InnoNext monitoring activities towards the European Partner Programmes.

**This form is mandatory for the beneficiaries that applied for the financial support.** The payment is conditional upon the completion of this form at the beginning and the end of the internship.

-----\* Bacigalupo, M., Kampylis, P., Purie, Y., Van den Brande, G. (2016). *EntreComp: The Entrepreneurship Competence Framework*. Luxembourg: Publication Office of the European Union; EUR 27929 EN; doi:10.2791/593884.

-----

**What areas does this assessment cover?**

The form focuses on three key areas of entrepreneurial competence:

- Ideas and opportunities, concerning the abilities to identify, develop, and act on opportunities.
- Resources, regarding the effective management and mobilisation of resources.
- Into Action, about the capacities to turn ideas into reality.

**How to use this tool**

Whether you are a Talent or a Company representative, we recommend completing this self-assessment twice:

- At the beginning of your InnoNext experience, right after the registration.
- At the end of your journey, to measure the skill growth within InnoNext.

**Privacy and Data Protection**


Your responses will remain confidential and will only be used within InnoNext for...

We adhere to GDPR and all relevant data protection regulations to ensure your privacy and security.

**Let's begin!** \*

\* Obbligatoria

**Your email:** \*





### 6.3. Annex 3 - Database of Q&A form beneficiaries collected through the Communication Channels

The database is an **internal tool** to monitor and track the inquiries from the potential beneficiaries and the applicants. The scope of the tool is to collect and cluster the recurrent questions to standardize and assure quality in the answers flow and activate the specialist of each section of the InnoNext Initiative (Technical, AI, Administrative, FSTP experts, etc..).

Moreover, the systematic collection of the beneficiaries feedbacks is an important element to determine and guide the strategic approach through the iterative process of the InnoNext Scheme shape.

#	Questions	Date	Channel	Writer rol	Program	Topic
3	Hello, We are considering signing up as a hosting company for the program. However, the <b>optimal time for the intern would be 6-12 months from now.</b> Would it make the most sense to sign up now or to wait? Is there an end to the program or does it continue until the funds run out?	30.01.25	Email	Company	-	Application period
11	Hi there, Our company, <b>received a Seal of Excellence some years ago for a project.</b> This project has not proceeded or been funded by another organisation. Can I please check if we would be eligible to apply for an alternative project to that of the project we received the Seal of Excellence for. Or does is it only for the specific project that the seal of excellence was received for? Many thanks Fiona	23/01/25	Email	Company	SOE	Elegibility of expired grants SoE
27	Participation process: What specific <b>documents or requirements are necessary for registration and</b>		Email	company		application



European  
Innovation  
Council



*InnoNext is an initiative funded by the European Union  
(call HORIZON-EIC-2023-TALENTS-01-01) under grant agreement n. 101160467.*

[www.innonext-project.eu](http://www.innonext-project.eu) | [info@innonext-project.eu](mailto:info@innonext-project.eu)

InnoNext Consortium:

