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# **GÉANT Innovation Programme Guide for Applicants**

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Contact details Further information is available on [www.geant.org/innovationfund](http://www.geant.org/innovationfund)

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## Summary

The GÉANT Innovation Programme invites proposals from eligible organisations and research teams for research projects. The programme offers researchers flexibility to focus on any subject area or topic providing that it falls within GÉANT's Community remit. Proposals can, for example, draw from networking, cloud, security, trust & identity and education, but the primary focus and impact must benefit the GÉANT European Research and Education community.

We particularly encourage ambitious and novel research proposals addressing new concepts and techniques and those with the potential for significant scientific or societal and economic impact. Our funding decisions are based on a number of criteria, including: quality, innovation, potential impact and value for money. The call for proposals is for project funding of up to EUR30k, for a duration of 5 - 6 months (with possible extensions up to 9 months).

Proposals must be submitted according to the timetable of a given call.

## Introduction

The needs of research and education users are continuously evolving, and for NRENs and the GÉANT Community it is important to identify innovative ideas to support technological evolution, new use cases, and help to accelerate and to expand these ideas into new services or tools.

GÉANT Association has reserved EUR300k to support an Innovation Fund for specific projects to be carried out by members of the GÉANT Community i.e. GÉANT member NRENs, universities, research institutions/institutes or other such legal entities to which a GÉANT Association member NREN provides services. Projects benefiting from this funding are selected by means of a competitive call for projects and funding by the Innovation Programme.

This document contains the basic information needed to prepare a proposal to the Innovation Programme. It also describes how the proposal should be submitted, and the criteria on which it will be evaluated.

A successful applicant will sign an agreement with the GÉANT Association, which will outline the work to be done, the likely outcomes and results, as well as the conditions under which their projects will be carried out.

## Scope and Contents of Proposals

The scope of the GÉANT Innovation Programme is to support innovative ideas coming from the GÉANT Community. This enables innovators to develop their ideas and perform proof of concept in a real environment. Examples of previous innovation developed within the GÉANT Community include widely adopted services, such as eduroam, eduVPN and eduMEET.

It is expected that programme participants will propose concrete and specific plans that enable them to achieve specific results during the given timeframe. Selected projects may be invited to refine and implement the plan during the proposal evaluation process. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) will be managed according to the corresponding funding agreement which the beneficiaries shall adhere to.

For further details on how to submit proposals, visit the GÉANT website <https://community.geant.org/community-programme-portfolio/innovation-programme/>. In particular, potential applicants should consult the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ). Note that the FAQ page will be regularly updated with responses to questions received.

## Eligibility

Member NRENs from the GÉANT Association or legal entities from one of its 'connected institutions'. i.e. any organisation recognised as a member of the GÉANT community (excluding GÉANT Association industry associates) are eligible to submit proposals. This means that applications from universities, research or education institutes or institutions, where they are connected to an NREN, are welcomed and eligible for funding under this programme.

## Funding of Participation

An indicative maximum budget of up to a maximum of EUR30K will be assigned to selected projects for the purpose of carrying out the work. We expect projects to be up to 5 – 6 months in duration (with possible extensions up to 9 months). Work will need to be completed, final report and invoices submitted according to the timetable of a given call. In case of justified delays, derogations may be accepted, however all work needs to be completed, final report and invoices submitted no later than by the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2022.

Match funding is not required, however, those projects that have already secured match funding may be given priority.

Proposals may be submitted by a single organisation or by a small consortium. Large consortia are not expected to submit proposals. However, only the lead partner organisation will receive funding and will be responsible for assigning a budget to any other partners within their project. GÉANT will not ask for a detailed declaration of expenditure, however, participants should be able to provide this information in the event of an audit, so will need to maintain the project's supporting documentation.

## How to Prepare and Submit a Proposal

Proposals can be submitted via GÉANT's Indico system as described in this document. Documents will be submitted by Indico at <https://events.geant.org/event/350/>

All applications must be prepared using the current Application Form template available at <https://community.geant.org/community-programme-portfolio/innovation-programme/>. The list of headings is designed to highlight those aspects that will be assessed against the evaluation criteria as

set out in the Application Form template. It covers, among other things, the concept and objectives of the proposed work, the participants and their roles, the implementation details and the impact that is expected to arise from the proposed work.

Applicants must:

- Download and complete the application form.
- When completed, upload via the Indico system to <https://events.geant.org/event/350/>. Applicants must upload two documents:
  - 1) Signed and (if necessary) stamped PDF of the proposal – a scan
  - 2) Microsoft Word or PDF (not a scan) of the proposal

## Research Agreement

By submitting the proposal, the lead partner agrees to sign the GIP Research Agreement as it is. If in the project it is planned to process person related data, the version with the Data Processing Agreement section has to be chosen. If no person related data will be processed, the one without the Data Processing Agreement section has to be chosen. What is very important, before submitting a proposal, the lead partner has to make sure, that the legal department of his institutions accepts to sign the GIP Research Agreement as it is, as GÉANT will not accept any changes. The templates of both Research Agreements are available at the GÉANT Innovation Programme webpage at <https://community.geant.org/community-programme-portfolio/innovation-programme/>.

## Proposal Language

The proposal must be prepared in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will not be evaluated.

## Submission of Proposals

Proposals created according to the above instructions must be submitted electronically via Indico (<https://events.geant.org/event/350/>). Proposals sent to the Innovation Programme by any other means are regarded as “not submitted”, and will not be evaluated.

## Proposal Evaluation and Selection

The evaluation of proposals will take place according to the timetable of a given call. Eligible proposals will be evaluated, using the form shown in the Application Form template.

A minimum of three subject matter experts will be assigned to make an initial evaluation of each proposal received.

A final evaluation will then be completed by committee which may include:

- Members of the GÉANT Community Committee (GCC).
- Steering committees of GÉANT Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and Task Forces (TFs).
- Well recognised subject matter experts from the GÉANT Community.
- Ex officio members from the GÉANT Association.

All members will sign a conflict-of-interest form before taking part in the evaluation process and must be independent of any member of the consortium and of any applicant. In case one or more of the ex officio members are not independent, they shall abstain into the evaluation process in order to perform strictly administrative functions.

During the evaluation process, the lead partner in a proposal may be invited for a negotiation meeting with members of the evaluation committee - for example, in cases where further clarifications are required regarding the content, costs or outcomes of the project.

Once a proposal has been selected the lead partner (representing the consortium if several legal entities are involved) taking part in the project will enter into a Research Agreement with the GÉANT Association which makes clear the work that will be carried out and the outcomes and expected results of such work. Activities may only start upon signature of the Research Agreement.

## Timetable

The Innovation Programme calls for proposals will be announced at <https://community.geant.org/community-programme-portfolio/innovation-programme/> and the announcements will include a timetable of each call.

## Final Report

All successfully funded projects will submit a final report to the evaluation committee. The report shall include the results achieved, or the reason why they were not achieved and “lessons learned” during the activity. Upon acceptance of the evaluation committee of the final report, an interaction with the project coordinator will explore, if necessary, how to carry on further the obtained results. A template for the final report will be provided.

## Checklist

This section provides a list of points against which applicants are advised to check their proposals prior to submission.

- **Is your organisation eligible?**

If in doubt please check either with your local NREN or the Innovation Programme co-ordinator ([innovationfund@geant.org](mailto:innovationfund@geant.org))

- **Is the proposal eligible?**

Applicants must submit a complete proposal, using the Indico submission system. Any proposal not meeting the eligibility requirements will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.

- **Is the proposal complete?**

Proposals must comprise administrative information on standard forms as well as a description of the applicant's proposal as described in this Guide and the Application Form template. A proposal that does not contain both parts will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.

- **Does the legal department of lead partner institution accept the chosen Research Agreement?**

Before submitting the proposal, the lead partner has to make sure, that the legal department of his institutions accepts to sign the GIP Research Agreement as it is, as GÉANT will not accept any changes. There are two versions available, with and without a Data Processing Agreement section. The applicant needs to choose the correct version, taking into account, if in the project any personal data will be processed or not.

- **Do you need further advice and support?**

For further information and help please email [innovationfund@geant.org](mailto:innovationfund@geant.org). Answers to your question may be included in an FAQ section available on the Innovation Programme page on the GÉANT website.

## Support to Applicants

For further information and help, please consult the Innovation Programme web pages in the first instance <https://community.geant.org/community-programme-portfolio/innovation-programme/>.

If the information you require is not on the website, please contact: [innovationfund@geant.org](mailto:innovationfund@geant.org)

## FAQs

### **What is the maximum award one organisation can be granted?**

A single, eligible legal entity will be awarded up to EUR30,000 per project. One organisation can submit multiple applications, since each project will be judged separately on its merits.

### **What costs are eligible?**

Costs that are directly associated with undertaking the project are eligible, for example, manpower, travel, etc.

**Should project participants be located in an EU country? Does geographical location also apply to team members (EU nationals) and subcontractors?**

Project participants should be registered in a country where a GÉANT Association NREN is located. There are no restrictions on the nationality of team members, but they should be employed by a participant organisation. Similarly, there is no restriction on the nationality or location of subcontractors. Subcontracting needs to be explained in the application (purpose of subcontractor, input to the project, etc.).

**Is match funding needed?**

Projects that provide matching funding will be scored more highly than those without. Match funding may come either from internal funds of the organisation or external funding. In the latter case it is important to indicate the source, e.g. national or regional public funding, external investor, bank loan, etc.

**Are large/small companies eligible beneficiaries?**

The single legal entity applying should be part of the research and education community and have services provided to them by their local NREN. Therefore, it is unlikely that large or small businesses will be eligible to apply (except in circumstances where there is a clear link to the local NREN).

**For a multi-partner project, is all payment/justification handled via the lead partner?**

Payments will be made to the lead partner only.

**How will the funding be paid? Do milestones/deliverables justify the payment or is a detailed declaration of expenditures needed?**

GÉANT Association will provide a final payment at the end of the project, based on the acceptance of the final report. Interim payments will only be considered in exceptional circumstances.

A detailed declaration of expenditure is not required, however, in the event of an audit, the lead partner should be able to prove project spend, so it is necessary to maintain a full set of supporting documents.

**Does GÉANT pay any overhead (e.g. 25% as in H2020 calls/programmes) for costs that cannot be identified and calculated by the beneficiary as directly attributed to the project?**

The funding is provided as a lump sum contribution, there are no set rules for how organisations design their budget. The aim of the budget in the proposal is to demonstrate to the evaluators that the requested funding is consistent with the effort invested in producing the outcome the project aims to achieve. It should give GÉANT a 'value for money' perspective on the project.

**Is it possible to attach support letters e.g. from the local NREN?**

Letters of support may be included as part of the proposal in so far as they are relevant.