

February 2021

GÉANT Innovation Programme Guide for Applicants

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Contact details Further information is available on 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 no longer than 9 months. Most projects will be a duration of 3-6 months.

Proposals may be submitted in response to the call at any time – there are no fixed closing dates.

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 GEANT 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 www.geant.org/innovationfund. 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 3-6 months in duration, up to a maximum of 9 months. Work will need to be completed and invoices submitted by December 2021.

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/>

Applicants should follow the structure outlined in Appendix A when presenting the content of their proposals. The list of headings is designed to highlight those aspects that will be assessed against the evaluation criteria as set out in Appendix B. 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, the applicants must ensure that proposals are saved as a Microsoft Word document or PDF and then upload via the Indico system to <https://events.geant.org/event/350/>. Applicants must upload two documents: 1) Signed and (if necessary) stamped PDF 2) Microsoft Word or PDF of the proposals

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.

Only accepted proposals will be made public.

Proposal Evaluation and Selection

The evaluation of proposals will take place on a monthly basis. Eligible proposals will be evaluated, using the form shown in Appendix B.

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 an 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 agreement.

Timetable

The Innovation Programme call for proposals will be open for the duration of the programme. Monthly reminders of the call will be issued, and evaluations will be called not later than four weeks after a proposal is received.

Activity/Milestone	Timing
Call for new proposals	From February 2021, with monthly reminders. Call open until further notice.
Evaluation of proposals	Proposals will be evaluated on a monthly basis
Final evaluation report sent to applicant	Within 5 weeks of proposal submission Within 6 weeks of proposal submission (if further clarifications or negotiations are required)
For accepted projects - GÉANT Association agreement sent out	Within 1 week of notification of success

Indicative timetable for the first Innovation Programme

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.

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)

- **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. A proposal that does not contain both parts will be considered ineligible and will not be evaluated.

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

For further information and help please email 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 www.geant.org/innovationfund.

If the information you require is not on the website, please contact: 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.

Appendix A **Proposal Template**

Proposals sent to the Innovation Programme must be submitted according to the procedure described in this guide.

Instructions are given in italicised text, which should be deleted from the final version of the proposal document. Apart from the front page of the proposal, applicants must fill in the set of forms provided.

A standalone electronic version of the application form can be obtained from the GÉANT website www.geant.org/innovationfund

Please note that in the case of proposals submitted by a consortium:

- The lead partner/coordinator fills in and submits the proposal.
- If the proposal is selected by the Innovation Programme and approved, the coordinator will sign an agreement with the GÉANT Association. The coordinator has sole responsibility for all activities performed also by any other partner within its consortium (if any).

Proposal Template

GÉANT Innovation Programme
(ref: GÉANT_Innovation)

February 2021

Please follow the structure of this template when preparing your proposal. It has been organised to ensure that the important aspects of your planned work are clearly measurable by and correspond to the evaluation criteria.

Please be aware that proposals will be evaluated as they were submitted, rather than on their potential, if certain changes were to be made. This means that only proposals that successfully address all the required aspects will have a chance of being funded.

Please contact the GÉANT Innovation team at innovationfund@geant.org if you have any questions before submitting your proposal to receive direct feedback on any questions you may have before submitting your proposal.

The **page limit for full proposals is 12 pages** (excluding cover page, table of contents, signature page, references and appendices). Please also respect the limits indicated in each section. All tables must be included within this limit. The minimum font size allowed is 11 points. The page size is A4, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) should be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers). Please do not consider the page limit as a target! **It is in your interest to keep your text as concise as possible**, since the evaluators rarely view unnecessarily long proposals in a positive light.

Please delete this page when submitting the proposal



GÉANT Innovation Programme (ref: GÉANT_Innovation)

Call for proposals from GÉANT to encourage new work in research, education, societal, environmental or technological topics

Acronym of your proposal

Full title of your proposal

Date of submission:

Logo of partners

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1 Overview

The Applicant(s)

Contact name of responsible person	
Contact e-mail	
Contact phone (format: +country code/number)	
Date of proposal preparation	

Table 1 Contact details

Participant No	Participant organisation name	Participant short name	Country
1 (Coordinator/Lead Partner)			
2 Participant			
3 Participant			

Add lines as required

Table 2 List of participants [consortia should list all partners; single organisations should fill in only Participant no. 1 (Coordinator)]:

2 Description of Work

This section should describe in particular:

- The problem you want to solve / the target group or area that will benefit and how.
- The innovative features of the project.
- The expected project results – what you will deliver.

2.1 Executive Summary

Maximum 300 words

2.1 Objective and Type of Project

State in **no more than 100 words** the overall objective (expected outcome) of the project as clearly and as simply as possible.

Describe the problem you want to solve and who will benefit from this work.

2.2 Project Innovation

Describe how your project/approach/method of serving target audience is new or different.

2.3 Expected Impact

*Describe how your activity will contribute towards innovation in the GÉANT Community (**300-500 words**). Mention the steps that will be needed to bring about these impacts. Mention any assumptions and external factors that may determine whether the impacts will be achieved.*

2.4 Management of Intellectual Property

If appropriate, describe your plans for the management of knowledge (intellectual property) generated in the course of the action

2.5 Participants

For each participant, please provide a brief description of the organisation, detailing relevant experience and team member profiles.

Participant 1: Description of organisation

Please provide a brief description of the organisation(s).

Previous experience relevant to the project tasks

Please note experience relevant to the tasks the participant will undertake.

List a short profile of project team members and their roles in the table below (add extra lines, as required).

Name	Organisation	Role in the project

Table 3 Team details

2.6 Project Planning and Budget

(Maximum 2 pages)

2.6.1.1 Main activities of the project

Please describe the main activities and steps to achieve the expected results and identify which partner will be responsible for specific activities. Describe how this plan will be executed throughout the duration of the project. Describe the key outputs/results/work that will be produced during this project

Note: Your project should finish within a 9-month time period – the average duration of projects is expected to be between 3-6 months.

Remember to also include the final project report as an output. ***Note this is the minimum requirement.**

2.7 Resources to be Committed

Describe how your organisation (and partners, if applicable) will contribute their own resources (person months or funding) to the activity, and detail the amount of these resources.

For example, indicate the number of person-months (full-time equivalent) of people involved in the project in the table below (add any additional lines you need).

Name	Organisation	Person months
TOTAL		

Table 4 Team Resources

Provide a description of expected costs and the requested total contribution in Table 5. When you complete budget information please make sure that:

- Numbers are always rounded to the nearest whole number.
- All costs are given in euros (not thousands of euros), and exclude value added tax (VAT).

Item	Lead Participant	Partner 2	Partner 3	Total
Personnel costs				
Travel expenses				
Other costs (describe)				
Total				
Requested contribution*				

Table 5 Total budget

* Up to €30,000 from the GÉANT Innovation Fund, no matching funds required.

Describe how your organisation (and in case partners) will contribute with their own resources to the activity, and the amount of these resources.

2.8 Ethical issues

Describe any ethical issues that may arise in the activity (e.g. does it involve children, patients, health, etc).

Please complete as necessary:

2.9 Signature

The application form may be digitally signed.

Coordinator/Lead Participant

Name of signatory _____

Signature _____

Place, Date _____

Appendix A Additional Bid Documentation

A.1 Non-Exclusion Declaration: Certification and Declaration of Honour (to be completed by coordinator/lead participant)

I certify that

- Our organisation is committed to participate in the GÉANT Innovation Programme
- The information relating to our organisation set out in this proposal is accurate and correct.
- The estimated costs meet the criteria for eligible costs and are calculated using our normal cost accounting principles, and that they reflect the estimated costs expected to be incurred in carrying out the work as per the description of work.

I declare on my honour that our organisation is NOT in any of the following situations:

- It is bankrupt or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- It has been convicted of an offence concerning its professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
- It has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- It has not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- It has been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the Community's financial interests;
- It is currently subject to an administrative penalty imposed by the European Community, consisting in the exclusion from contracts or grants financed by the Community budget, and/or the payment of financial penalties;

Signature:

Name First name(s):

Full legal name of organisation:

Date:

[Stamp of organisation and signature of the legal representative of the organisation]

A.2 Legal and Administrative Information

Proposal Title	
Date of Preparation of your Proposal	

Your Organisation	
Participant Legal Name	
Role in the Proposal (Coordinator; yes/no)	

Official Address	
Street Name	
Number	
Town	
Postal Code	
Country	
Web address (optional)	

Status of your Organisation (private limited company, public sector, etc)	
Non-Profit Organisation (yes/no)	
Public Body (yes/no)	
Research Organisation (yes/no)	
Higher or Secondary education Establishment (yes/no)	

Dependencies with another participant(s)	
Are there dependencies between your organisation and another participants in this proposal? (yes/no)	
If Yes:	
Participant Number	
Organisation Short Name	
Character of dependence (SG/CLS/CLB*)	
Contact Point (Coordinating person for the Proposal)	
Family Name	
First Name	
Position in Organisation	
Department Name	
Street Name	
Number	
Town	
Postal Code	
Country	
Phone Number	
Email	

*

SG: Same Group: If your organisation and the other participant are controlled by the same third party;
 CLS: Controls: If your organisation controls the other participant;
 CLB: Controlled By: If your organisation is controlled by the other participant.

Appendix B Evaluation Criteria and Form

1. Innovation and Excellence

- Clarity, pertinence, soundness of the concept and credibility of the proposed methodology
- Extent that the proposed work is beyond the state of the art, and demonstrates innovation potential (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models)

2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management

- Excellence/Capacity of the applicant
- Overall project implementation i.e. quality and effectiveness of the workplan including extent to which the resources assigned to the work are in line with its objective and deliverables

3. Expected impact and value for money

- Impact of the innovation on the European R&E community
- Quality of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), and to manage research data, services or outcomes where relevant.

Sample Evaluation Form

Proposal No.:		Acronym:
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<p>1. Innovation and Excellence of the proposal <i>Note: when a proposal only partially addresses the topics, this condition will be reflected in the scoring of this criterion</i></p>	<p>Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i></p>
<p>2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation and the management <i>For the evaluator: remember we are dealing with new ideas, which may be just a Proof of Concept, and are not intended to deliver a service or product, but to get a chance to be tested.</i></p>	<p>Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i> <i>For the purposes of any subsequent negotiation, an above-threshold score for this criterion is regarded as an indication that the proposer(s) has the operational capacity to carry out the work</i></p>

3. Potential impact	Score: <i>(Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)</i>
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Remarks	Overall score: <i>(Threshold 10/15)</i>
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Does this proposal contain ethical issues that may need further attention?	NO	YES
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I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, I have no direct or indirect conflict of interest in the evaluation of this proposal.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Name	
Signature	
Date	

^[1] **0** The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information;

1 Poor The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses;

2 Fair While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses;

3 Good The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary;

4 Very good The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible;

5 Excellent The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

Glossary

CLB	(organisation) Controlled By
CLS	(organisation) Controls
GCC	GÉANT Community Committee
H2020	Horizon 2020, EU programme for Research and Innovation
NREN	National Research and Education Network
R&E	Research and Education
RFP	Request for Proposal
SG	(organisation part of the) Same Group
SME	Small and Medium size Enterprise