



Commission funds Regional Innovation Valleys with €116 million to strengthen competitiveness and promote innovation

Brussels, 19 June 2024

The Commission has identified [151 regions](#) in the EU as Regional Innovation Valleys (RIVs), as part of the [New European Innovation Agenda \(NEIA\)](#). By bringing together a range of regions across Europe with different innovation levels and linking up their key innovation actors, RIVs aim to strengthen regional innovation ecosystems, bridge the innovation gap in Europe and improve Europe's overall innovation performance.

The EU will support this initiative with €116 million under the [European Innovation Ecosystems](#) (EIE) programme of [Horizon Europe](#), the EU research and innovation programme, and the [Interregional Innovation Investments \(I3\) Instrument](#) of the [European Regional Development Fund](#). 72 regions with different levels of development and innovation performance are on track to become Regional Innovation Valleys, subject to the signature of the grant agreements.

These regions are committed to strengthening their innovation policies and investments, focusing on challenges faced by the EU as outlined in the NEIA. These include reducing dependence on fossil fuels, increasing global food security, mastering the digital transformation (including cybersecurity), improving healthcare and increasing circularity.

An additional 79 regions are identified following a call for expression of interest to become the next RIVs, based on their commitments to enhance the coordination and direction of their innovation investment and policies, engage in interregional collaboration to further develop innovation, and to strengthen and connect their regional innovation ecosystems.

In addition to funding, the Commission will also support these regions through community building activities, matchmaking events and targeted communication actions.

Background

New European Innovation Agenda (NEIA)

Innovation is a cross-cutting priority contributing to both the green and digital transition, European competitiveness, economic security and open strategic autonomy. In July 2022 the Commission launched the NEIA to position Europe at the forefront of the new wave of deep tech innovation. The 25 actions put forward in the NEIA, grouped under five flagship areas, aim at 1) improving funding for deep-tech scale-ups, 2) enabling deep-tech innovation through experimentation spaces and public procurement, 3) accelerating and strengthening innovation in European innovation ecosystems across the EU and addressing the innovation divide, 4) fostering, attracting and retaining deep-tech talents and 5) improving policy-making tools.

A [2024 report on the implementation of NEIA](#) found that 13 of the actions have been completed and 12 are ongoing.

Regional Innovation Valleys

RIVs are an action under the NEIA flagship 3. The initiative builds on the European Innovation Ecosystems Work Programme under Horizon Europe and Interregional Innovation Investments (I3) Instrument under European Regional Development Fund.

It focuses on connecting regions across the EU and beyond that are committed to strengthening their innovation ecosystem and creating new EU value chains to contribute to key EU priorities. The resulting connected RIVs systematically involve regions with a lower innovation performance in order to further reduce the innovation gap.

For More Information

[New European Innovation Agenda](#)

[Factsheet](#)

[List of Regional Innovation Valleys](#)

[Map of selected Regional Innovation Valleys](#)

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Quotes:

"The Regional Innovation Valleys announced today exemplify European added value and demonstrate the strengths of place-based innovation to address the burning challenges of our time. By expanding their cooperation based on Smart Specialisation, the interconnected regions, including less developed ones, will be better equipped to strengthen Europe's overall innovation performance while bridging the existing innovation divide."

Elisa Ferreira, Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms - 19/06/2024

"It's heartening to see the commitment of many regions in Europe to build on their strategic specialisations and enhance the coordination of their research and innovation investment and policies. Through Regional Innovation Valleys, we will help turn the diversity of the EU's territories into a strength and facilitate collaboration to foster new EU value chains for Europe's home-grown innovation. This marks a significant milestone in the progress of the New European Innovation Agenda."

Iliana Ivanova, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth - 19/06/2024

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