

EVALUATION TEMPLATES

Guidelines for evaluators of ECIV Open Call 1 including: Evaluation templates (annex 1), Memorandum of understanding between ECIV partners (annex 2), Governance evaluation and ethics assessment document (annex 3)

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EU Project officer	Christina Nanou
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CONSORTIUM PARTNERS

	Name of the Entity	Acronym	Role	Country	ORG Type
1	Government of Navarra	GN	C	ES	PB
2	Development Agency of Navarra	SODENA	B	ES	SME
3	Northern Netherlands Alliance	SNN	B	NL	PB
4	Province Groningen	GRO	B	NL	PB
5	Province Fryslan	FRY	B	NL	PB
6	Province Drenthe	DTH	B	NL	PB
7	University of Groningen	UGRO	B	NL	UNI
8	Fryslan Innovation Foundation	IPF	B	NL	NGO
9	Region Dalarna	DAL	B	SE	PB
10	Region Värmland	VÄR	B	SE	PB
11	Region Gävleborg	GÄV	B	SE	PB
12	Region Normandie	NOR	B	FR	PB
14	Public Service of Wallonie	SPW	B	BE	PB
15	Innovation Agency Lithuania	IAL	B	LT	PB
16	Helsinki-Uusimaa Regional Council	HURC	B	FI	PB
17	Scottish Enterprise	SE	B	UK	PB
18	University of Strathclyde	IBioIC	B	UK	UNI
19	Association of Cities and Regions for Sustainable Resource Management	ACR+	B	BE	OTH

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WORK PACKAGES AND LEADERS

Work Packages Name		WP Leader
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WP 2	Design of transformative innovation program and regional action plans for circular for interconnected Regional Innovation Valleys	DAL
WP 3	Creation of the Circular Economy “Dance Floor” (Regional Ecosystems’ mobilisation, dynamization, connection)	SNN
WP 4	Competitive selection and funding of interregional innovation projects	NOR
WP 5	Innovation Valley Results sustainability and replication. Roadmap for the future and outreaching of new Circular Valleys	ACR+
WP 6	Dissemination and Communication	IAL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This deliverable compiles key materials related to the ECIV (European Circular Innovation Valley) Open Calls evaluation process. It is designed to guide evaluators and inform applicants. It ensures transparency and consistency throughout the selection and funding phases. The documentation includes:

1. Memorandum of Understanding – joint statement of intent among funding organizations,
2. Governance, evaluation and ethic assessment documents – detailed instructions and rules for the call, including the evaluation and selection process and project monitoring,
3. Evaluation instructions and templates – instructions for independent evaluators on how to assess ECIV applications,

Together, these elements support a clear, fair, and accessible evaluation process for potential candidates and evaluators of ECIV Open Calls.

RELEVANT TERMINOLOGY

Term	Definition
Funding organisation	Funding Organisation is a national or regional organisation responsible for providing the relevant share of funding for the Interregional Projects.
ECIV funding organisation	ECIV consortium partner that dedicates a budget for the funding of third parties after the process of selection in the Open Calls.
ECIV funding territory	ECIV funding territories for Open Call 1 are: 1. Comunidad Foral de Navarra (of Spain); 2. Noord Nederland comprising Groningen, Friesland and Drenthe (of the Netherlands); 3. Norra Mellansverige comprising regions of Värmland, Dalarna and Gävleborg (of Sweden); 4. Normandie (of France); 5. Scotland (of United Kingdom)
Expert Panel	Expert Panel is the board of independent experts evaluating proposals of the Joint Calls.
Granting Authority	Granting Authority means the body awarding the grant for ECIV.
Effective collaboration	Effective collaboration means collaboration between at least two independent parties to exchange knowledge or technology, or to achieve a common objective based on the division of labour where the parties jointly define the scope of the collaborative project, contribute to its implementation and share its risks, as well as its results. Contract research and provision of research services are not considered forms of collaboration.
Experimental development	Experimental development means: • acquiring, combining, shaping and using existing scientific, technological, business and other relevant knowledge and skills, • with the aim of developing new or improved products, processes or services, including digital products, processes or services, • in any area, technology, industry or sector (including, but not limited to, digital industries and technologies, such as for example super-computing, quantum technologies, block chain technologies, artificial intelligence, cyber security, big data and cloud or edge technologies).

	This may also encompass, for example, activities aiming at the conceptual definition, planning and documentation of new products, processes or services. Experimental development may comprise: • prototyping, demonstrating, piloting, testing and validation of new or improved products, processes or services in environments representative of real-life operating conditions • where the primary objective is to make further technical improvements on products, processes or services that are not substantially set. This may include the development of a commercially usable prototype or pilot which is NOT necessarily the final commercial product. Such a prototype/pilot may be too expensive to be produced and as such be used only for demonstration and validation purposes. Experimental development does not include routine or periodic changes made to existing products, production lines, manufacturing processes, services and other operations in progress, even if those changes may represent improvements.
Knowledge transfer	Knowledge transfer means any process which has the aim of acquiring, collecting and sharing explicit and tacit knowledge, including skills and competence in both economic and non-economic activities such as research collaborations, consultancy, licensing, spin-off creation, publication and mobility of researchers and other personnel involved in those activities. Besides scientific and technological knowledge, it includes other kinds of knowledge such as knowledge on the use of standards and regulations embedding them and on conditions of real-life operating environments and methods for organisational innovation, as well as management of knowledge related to identifying, acquiring, protecting, defending and exploiting intangible assets.
Open Call (OC)	Open Call means each of the two co-funded calls for collaborative innovation projects around circular (TRL over 6-8) areas which are organised by participating Funding Organisations in ECIV, based on the thematic areas and topics identified in different value chains and industrial sectors of the respective regions. There will be a first open call opening in December 2025 and closing on the 16th of March 2026 and another one opening in September 2026 and closing in December 2026, as well as a continuous open call for experimentation. These calls will mobilise €16.3M of funds available.

Call secretariat (CS)	ECIV primary helpdesk for applicants, addressing all aspects of proposal creation and submission, i.e., in supporting the technical follow-up and facilitating communication related to the calls.
Call Steering Committee (CSC)	ECIV Call Steering Committee monitors all actions taken by the Call Secretariat, as well as makes decisions regarding the design of the calls.
Technology Readiness Level (TRL)	ECIV Open Calls support interregional projects with a TRL between 6 and 8, or its equivalent if it is not based on technology. The following definitions apply, unless otherwise specified (see Communication from the Commission, 'A European strategy for Key Enabling Technologies – A bridge to growth and jobs', COM(2012) 341 final, 26 June 2012): TRL 6 – Technology demonstrated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies) TRL 7 – System prototype demonstration in an operational environment TRL 8 – System complete and qualified
Research and knowledge dissemination organisation	'Research and knowledge dissemination organisation' or 'research organisation' means an entity: 1. such as universities or research institutes, technology transfer agencies, innovation intermediaries, research-oriented physical or virtual collaborative entities, 2. irrespective of its legal status (organised under public or private law) or way of financing, 3. whose primary goal is to independently conduct fundamental research, industrial research or experimental development or to widely disseminate the results of such activities by way of teaching, publication or knowledge transfer. Where such an entity also pursues economic activities, the financing, the costs and the revenues of those economic activities must be accounted for separately. Undertakings that can exert a decisive influence upon such an entity, for example in the quality of shareholders or members, may not enjoy preferential access to the results generated by it.
Consortium Agreement	Legal contract through which multiple entities – whether businesses, research organizations, or public institutions – agree to collaborate on a joint project.

Bilateral subgrantee Agreements	Bilateral Subgrantee Agreement means an agreement between the ECIV funding organisation and a Beneficiary, providing for a Subgrant to the Beneficiary for the purpose of financing a collaborative project.
Subgrant Commitment	Subgrant Commitment means a binding agreement to pay grant funds to an eligible applicant at some future time.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Abbreviation	Description
CE	Circular economy
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
MS	Member State
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OC	Open Call
RIV	Regional Innovation Valleys
SMEs	Small and Medium-sized enterprises
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
WP	Work Package
ECIV	European Circular Innovation Valley
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
OC1	1 st Open Call
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
9R's	9Rs stands for Refuse, Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Refurbish, Remanufacture, Repurpose, Recycle and Recover
EEE	Electrical and Electronic Equipment
ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
ESFI	European Structural and Investment Funds
PIC	Participant Identification Code

SME	Small and Medium Enterprise
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
GBER	General Block Exemption Regulation
EEA	European Economic Area
HE	Horizon Europe
PRP	Peer Review Pannel
CS	Call Secretariat
CSC	Call Steering Committee



European
Circular
Innovation
Valley

EVALUATION INSTRUCTIONS

Guidelines for evaluators of ECIV Open Call 1

Région Normandie (lead)



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This document provides independent evaluators with instructions on how to assess ECIV applications received in its first open call.

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1. Overview of ECIV evaluation context

1.1 ECIV summary

The ECIV (European Circular Innovation Valley) project **connects innovation ecosystems across Europe to develop and scale sustainable solutions for circular economy**. Funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe programme (European Innovation Ecosystems Work Programme) ECIV responds to the call for Interconnected Innovation Ecosystems.

ECIV mobilizes a budget of €27.16M, with **€16.3M** allocated to local stakeholders in ECIV funding regions through two Open Calls for interregional circular innovation projects and one experimentation open call. ECIV's mission is to drive the creation of a more sustainable and prosperous Europe by **transforming traditional EU value chains into interconnected, innovative, and circular systems**, ultimately establishing a thriving circular economy ecosystem by 2050.

ECIV aims to **encourage innovation in circular economy in Europe and transform industrial value chains**.

1.2 ECIV objectives

ECIV General Objective is to **create the European Circular Innovation Valley (ECIV), which will connect different EU territories/regions with two interrelated aims (environmental & economic)**:

1. **Making a significant advance in the transition towards a circular economy** of the participating regions (and of Europe as a whole). The project seeks to make different EU value chains more innovative and circular and will turn these regions and Europe a better place to live.
2. **Generating sustainable growth and development** in the participating regions (and in Europe as a whole). The project will take advantage of the economic opportunities offered by the transition to a circular economy, creating new markets and new businesses.

The specific objectives associated to the project main objective are:

1. **To mobilise, energize and connect 8 regional circular economy innovation ecosystems**, increasing connections and fostering cooperation to work in common challenges and missions related to circularity topics.
2. **To increase the innovation activity and foster innovation and experimentation in circular industrial value chains**. The project has ambitions to generate up to 35 collaborative innovation projects and up to 30 smaller "collaboration experiment" projects in value chains of up to 10 industrial sectors (including energy, automotive, agro-food, machinery, construction, biotech).

3. **To increase innovation knowledge and capabilities** of the regions, facilitating innovators to find the necessary technology and financial elements to bring their ideas to the market and fostering the collaboration among regions (including the interaction and knowledge transfer between more advanced regions with less advanced regions)
4. **To mobilise public funding and private investments for innovation in circularity.** The project will dedicate 60% of its budget to Open calls, and mobilises:
 - €16.3M of funding. 50% is provided by ECIV funding organisations;
 - Up to €7M of private investment, provided by the private entities participating in the open calls for innovation projects' development.
5. **To generate common knowledge assets and regional policies and strategies related to circularity.**

1.3 ECIV first open call

The general objective of ECIV first open call (OC1) is to support **interregional innovation projects of circular economy** (Technology Readiness Level or equivalent in the range 6–8), based on the specific objectives, priorities and topics identified in different value chains and industrial sectors of the ECIV regions. Project proposals are made by consortia of partners.

The application process consists of a single stage, with an online application form available on ECIV project proposal submission platform and accessible via the ECIV project website. [ECIV guidelines for applicants](#) provide comprehensive information on the call rules and instructions on how to submit applications.

ECIV 1st Open Call (OC1) for interregional circular innovation projects mobilises €9,129,770, co-funded by ECIV funding partners and Horizon Europe.

1.4 ECIV evaluation process

ECIV evaluation process is composed of **two phases**: eligibility and evaluation.

1. **Eligibility** – ECIV Call Secretariat (CS) checks all proposals to ensure that they meet the call's **formal criteria** (Eligibility Criteria). In parallel, the CS forwards the proposals to the ECIV funding organisations, which perform a check for compliance with their **regional or national specifications**.
2. **Evaluation** – After passing the eligibility check, eligible proposals are sent to at least 3 independent evaluators for the evaluation: **2 external and 1 representative from the Call Secretariat (CS)**. The evaluators, with no conflict of interest, assess the proposal and complete a written evaluation form with scores and comments for the evaluation criteria (see [Annex 1: Evaluation templates](#)). The evaluators meet in a **Peer Review**

Panel (PRP) to discuss all proposals to produce a **joint assessment report** for each proposal as well as a **ranking list**.

The evaluation process is followed by the final decision of funding by the **Call Steering Committee** and the **commitment of funding by the funding organisations**. Once this done, the ranking list of the proposals recommended for funding is then sent by the CS to the project coordinators.

1.5 ECIV timeline

The following timeline outlines the key phases and expected milestones of the ECIV evaluation process, from the opening of the call to the start and completion of funded projects.

- **Call opening:** 22nd of December 2025
- **Call closure:** 16th of March 2026 (3 months later)
- **Evaluation period:** March to May 2026 (3 months)
 - **Evaluators' briefing and calibration session:** Early March
 - **Eligibility check** at ECIV level (Call Secretariat): 16th to 20th of March
 - **Evaluation and scoring** of the applications: 23rd of March to 10th of April
 - **Review** of evaluations (consensus group meetings): 13th to 17th of April
 - **Peer Review Panel and Call Steering Committee:** 21/22 April (online)
 - **Closure of regional eligibility** checks: 31st May
- **Announcement of results:** from June 2026
- **Projects starting date:** from the 1st of July 2026
- **Projects end date:** until December 31st, 2028

1.6 ECIV governance

The governance of the call is the following:

- **CSC (Call Steering Committee)** – Monitors all actions taken by the CS, as well as making decisions regarding the design of the calls.
- **CS (Call Secretariat)** – Helpdesk for applicants, oversee the execution of the call, manage and implement the evaluation process.
- **CAB (Call Advisory Board)** – Provides advice on refining the themes and scope of the call.
- **PRP (Peer Review Panel)** – Independent experts evaluate projects and independent observer to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation.
- **Coordinator of external experts** – Subcontractor of Région Normandie, this third party is in charge of the organisation of the external evaluations and of its observation.

[Annex 3: Governance evaluation and ethic assessment document](#) provides further details to bear transparency on processes, guarantee independence and ensure respect of ethics.

2. Your role as evaluator

Your role is to perform the evaluation of the assigned proposals. namely:

- Participate in the online briefing for evaluators (awareness raising session).
- Assess the proposal on the basis of ECIV evaluation criteria following the scoring grid set down in [Annex 1: Evaluation templates](#), and report the results via [ECIV platform](#).
- Provide comments for each criterion and score them on a scale from 0 to 5 (half point scores may be given), supporting the score given.
- Provide comments on the whole proposal, highlighting: Strengths and Positive Aspects, Shortcomings.
- Carry out ethics screening to detect if the proposed projects entail ethically sensitive activities, such as processing of personal data, the use of AI-based applications and interactions with human subjects.
- Participate in individual consensus group meetings involving three evaluators assigned to the same proposal when a minimum 5-point difference between the total score given by the lowest and highest evaluation is detected for the proposal.
- Submit the evaluation within 15 working days commencing from the date the application is assigned to you.
- Participate in the online meeting for evaluators (PRP – Peer Review Panel).

You are expected to conduct the evaluation with your deep understanding of circular economy principles, strategies, and practices, along with your technical and business expertise, and deliver objective assessments with well-reasoned scores and justifications.

Your assessment must be reflected and aligned with the objectives of ECIV and the criteria of the call. Understanding these objectives and criteria is a prerequisite for starting your work.

An online briefing will be held to provide evaluators with detailed information about the call objectives and evaluation process, including a Q&A session. Your participation in this briefing is crucial to ensure a consistent and comparable evaluation of proposals. The session will be recorded and made available to evaluators who are unable to attend.

3. ECIV evaluation process

The Call Secretariat will manage and implement the evaluation process, constituting a specific international PRP (Peer Review Panel) comprising independent experts with significant standing in the circularity field and recognized scientific, technical, or circular economy-specific expertise. An Independent Observer is appointed to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation.

3.1 Phase 1: Call for experts

You are encouraged to apply to ECIV [call for experts](#) that was launched by the ECIV partnership and Région Normandie to create an external pool of evaluators.

Experts are sought in circular economy innovation in the following areas (non-exhaustive list):

- **Food and Agro-Food Systems:** minimize food waste, valorise by-product, develop sustainable food products.
- **Textiles and Fashion:** reduce waste and pollution, innovation in sustainable fibers, encourage repair, resale, rental, and recycling.
- **Circular and sustainable bioeconomy:** use renewable biological resources, develop bio-based products.
- **Electrical and Electronic Equipment (EEE):** innovate in e-waste management (reuse, refurbishment, repair, recycling, and remanufacturing), promote modular and repairable design.
- **Circular and sustainable packaging:** reduce the use of packaging, industrialize sustainable recyclable, compostable, biobased or reusable packaging, increase the use of secondary raw materials, reduce waste, recover materials.
- **Energy Systems:** reuse components (e.g., batteries, solar panels, turbines) and materials, enhance the energy efficiency of industrial processes and buildings, support the development of renewable energy linked to resource loops.
- **Steel, Metals, and Mining:** valorise industrial by-products, promote urban mining recovering metals, increase the use of secondary raw materials in manufacturing.
- **Water and Wastewater management:** reduce freshwater use in industry, implement water recirculation/recharge and closed-loop systems, wastewater treatment and nutrient recovery.
- **Construction and Built Environment:** use circular or sustainably produced bio-based and recycled materials, implement design-for-disassembly and material recovery strategies in architecture and urban planning, reduce construction and demolition waste through reuse, modular building systems, and material passports.

They are expected to have expertise in (non-exhaustive list):

- **Circular and sustainable new Materials**, including new plastic solutions, green steel, critical raw materials, chemistry and biobased materials, new textile solutions, construction and demolition waste.
- **New Industrial Processes**, including strategies and processes supporting the 9 R's of circularity, like Ecodesign and lifestyle thinking, Product R's, Industrial Symbioses, maximum valorisation of waste and by-products and renewable energy.
- **New Business Models**, including circular supply models, extended product lifecycle models, sharing models and product service models

Evaluations must be conducted in English. Experts should demonstrate experience and possess a proven track record in their expertise.

Members of board or staff of ECIV partner organisations are not eligible to this call for experts.

3.1.1 Renumeration

For each completed evaluation estimated to 1.25 days of work between the 23/03/2026 and the 16/04/2026, you are entitled to the following compensation:

- €562.5 (VAT excluded)

Please note that reimbursement will only be processed after the evaluation period has ended. You will receive an email with a payment request form at that time.

3.2 Phase 2: Eligibility check

The Call Secretariat (CS) will check all proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (Eligibility Criteria). In parallel, the CS will forward the proposals to the ECIV funding organisations, which will perform a check for compliance with their regional or national specifications.

3.2.1 Eligibility criteria at ECIV level

Eligibility criteria checked by the Call Secretariat are the following:

- The proposal must be submitted in English via the ECIV platform before the deadline.
- All participating entities must be eligible (according to **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**)
- The project must involve effective collaboration.
- The consortium must include at least 3 independent partners from 3 different eligible countries (EU Member States and the United Kingdom).
- At least 2 partners must be from two different ECIV funding territories.
- The project leader must be from an ECIV funding territory.
- The consortium must include at least one company.

- Each applicant requests a minimum of €50,000.
- Each applicant's budget must not exceed 70% of the total project budget.
- The total project budget is comprised between €500,000 and €3,000,000.
- The cumulative funding across all ECIV calls is capped to €600,000 per applicant.
- The applicant must meet the regional requirements

3.2.2 Eligibility criteria at regional level

Eligibility criteria checked by ECIV funding organisations include the following:

- The applicants have not received any other European Union funding to carry out the action and commits to declare immediately to the Contractor any other such European Union funding it would receive until the end of the action.
- The applicants are not subject to EU administrative sanctions (i.e., exclusion) or are not in one of the following exclusion situations (Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation):
 - Bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
 - In breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
 - Guilty of grave professional misconduct (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
 - Guilty of fraud, corruption, having links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
 - Has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement or grant decision (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
 - Guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Additional eligibility determination will be conducted at national or regional level and depends on regional specificities, such as funding rates, state aid regime and other regional conditions such as the request for a quotation to secure/reliable the budget estimates.

3.3 Phase 3: Selection of the external evaluators

The selection of the experts to support Normandie and ECIV partners in the evaluation of the open calls will be done after the eligibility at ECIV level has been determined and depends on the number of received proposals.

Eligible applications will be matched with potential evaluators through the Project platform by the coordinator of external experts. Selection criteria of external experts are a balance between criteria such as gender, background, affiliation type and expertise. The Call Secretariat will constitute the international PRP (Peer Review Panel).

The number of applications assigned to each evaluator will depend on several factors, including availability, the total number of submitted applications, and the number of evaluators selected during the open call.

If you are selected, you will be contacted to confirm your availability to evaluate applications. If you accept, you will be added to the list of evaluators.

You will receive an email confirming the assignment and inviting you to access the project documentation via the project platform. You will then have the option to accept or decline the assignment, in particular if you happen to be in a situation of conflict of interest (refer to 4.2 Conflict of interest). The deadline to accept or reject assignments will be specified in the invitation email.

If you accept your assignment(s), you must complete your evaluation within the specified timeframe of working 15 days. The deadline for submission will be communicated in your invitation email.

Assignments are made on a rolling basis, and timely submission of evaluations is essential to ensure a consistent and efficient review process.

3.4 Phase 4: Evaluation of the applications

After passing the eligibility check, eligible proposals are sent to at least 3 independent reviewers for the evaluation: 2 external and 1 representative from the Call Secretariat (CS). External evaluators are selected through the call for experts, and representative from the CS are selected from the region of the project proposal coordinator.

Call Secretariat representatives will nominate an expert from their region for each proposal whose coordinator is coming from. The Call Secretariat experts will have the possibility to contact Call Secretariat representatives of Regions where partners of the evaluated project

are from, in order to assess regional impact across their regions. Evaluation by Call Secretariat will be weighted at 40%.

The reviewers, free of any conflict of interest shall assess the proposal and complete a written evaluation form, including scores and comments against the evaluation criteria.

3.4.1 Evaluation criteria

You are expected to evaluate each proposal against the following three evaluation criteria and subcriteria:

- **Impact** (credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts).
 - Environmental and social impact
 - Economic and broader impact
 - Replicability potential
- **Excellence** (clarity, pertinence, and ambition of the project's objectives, and how well it advances the state of the art).
 - Relevance
 - Novelty
- **Quality and efficiency of implementation** (quality and effectiveness of the work plan, risk assessment, and effort).
 - Workplan and budget
 - Team and network
 - Risk analysis

Please refer to [Annex 1: Evaluation templates](#) for key subquestions and detailed scoring grid.

3.4.2 Scoring scale

To perform an evaluation, you must carefully read the application and rate each of the three criteria – impact, excellence and quality and efficiency of implementation – by using a scale from 0 to 5 points (half point scores may be given):

- 0 = The proposal fails to address the criteria, or it cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 = Poor – The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 = Fair – The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 = Good – The proposal addresses the criterion well but there are a certain number of shortcomings.

- 4 = Very good – There is a small number of shortcomings but overall, the proposal addresses the criterion very well.
- 5 = Excellent – The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion with minor or no shortcomings.

3.4.3 Scoring thresholds

The maximum overall score is 15. The standard threshold for individual criteria is 3, and the standard overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, is 10. The average of the 3 scores and total will be calculated for each proposal. In order to rank applications with same scores, priority will be given to applications that achieve higher scores in the Impact criterion. Additionally, second priority will be assigned to projects with a higher ranking in terms of concept, while third priority will be given to projects based on the time of submission of the proposal. Proposals failing to achieve the threshold score per individual criteria or the overall threshold will be rejected.

3.4.4 Scoring weights

The overall score will be calculated with the following weightings: 30% for impact, 30% for excellence, and 30% for quality and efficiency of the implementation. Please carefully consider your scores, particularly when distinguishing between good (3), very good (4), and excellent (5) scores, as these decisions directly impact which applicants receive funding. If you are uncertain between two scores, you may use half-point increments to refine your evaluation.

3.4.5 Evaluation comments

You are required to provide comments on all three criteria as well as on the overall proposal. Your comments should highlight:

- Strengths and Positive Aspects
- Shortcomings

In your evaluation, it's important to consider focus and objectives, expected output and funding allocation of interregional circular innovation projects. In principle, as the financial scope of a project proposal increases, the evaluation process should become more rigorous to ensure thorough risk management, assumption validation, and overall project viability.

3.4.6 Ethics screening

All the proposals will undergo an ethics check carried out by the CS supported by external experts in case it is needed. This includes verification of compliance with EU ethics standards (e.g. Data protection, environmental and safety regulation, permitting requirements, and avoidance of prohibited practices). Where necessary, applicants may be requested to provide additional documentation (e.g. permits, risk assessments, GDPR compliance statements).

In case ethically sensitive activities are detected, applicants will be obliged to take measures to ensure compliance with ethical principles, the applicable international and national law, and to include details about ethics compliance into their reporting.

3.5 Phase 5: Consensus groups

Individual consensus group meetings involving up to three evaluators assigned to the same proposal will be initiated by ECIV Call Secretariat if a substantial difference in scoring is detected for the proposal. Substantial difference in this context refers to a minimum 5-point difference between the total score given by the lowest and highest evaluation.

3.6 Phase 6: Peer review panel

The written statements from the reviewers will be collected by the CS. The reviewers will meet in a Peer Review Panel (PRP) to present evaluations of all proposals. Proposals will be ranked according to the overall scores in descending order.

An independent expert will be invited to the PRP meeting as an observer to evaluate the general implementation of the call with EC rules, specifically the proper execution of the international peer review process and the creation of the proposal ranking list.

3.7 Phase 7: Ethics assessment

After the PRP meeting, an Ethics assessment will take place for the proposals which are recommended for funding by the PRP to verify alignment with ethical norms and regulations. The PRP list will be accompanied by an ethical review of the selected projects.

Only those proposals approved by ethical assessment, complying with the central Horizon Europe and regional/national ethical requirements, will be funded.

3.8 Phase 8: Final decision on funding

Based on the ranking list established by the peer review panel (PRP), the ethical clearance and on available funding, the call steering committee (CSC) will recommend those projects to be funded to the ECIV funding organisations.

Based on the ranking list and the CSC recommendations, final decisions will be made by the ECIV funding organisations, subject to budgetary considerations. The ECIV funding organisations will follow the ranking list established by the PRP members.

The project proposal coordinators will be informed by the CS of the decision. The project partners should be informed by their project coordinator.

3.9 Phase 9: Commitment of funding

To formalize the financial support and ensure a clear framework for collaboration, selected applicants will be required to enter into specific agreements with the ECIV funding organisations and their consortium partners.

1. Selected applicants will be invited to prepare the **Consortium Agreement** and **Bilateral subgrantee Agreements** (or ask for subsidy commitment documents), based on the standard templates for financial support to third parties.
2. The **Consortium Agreement** will be signed between the project coordinator and all beneficiaries.
3. Each consortium member will sign a **Bilateral subgrantee Agreement** or will receive a **Subgranting Commitment** from the correspondent ECIV funding organisation.

The list of the members of the Peer Review Panel will be communicated through the ECIV website at the end of the entire review process.

The anonymised written evaluations of reviewers will be sent to the project coordinators to allow them to respond to the evaluators.

The observer's assessment will be presented in a report to the EC.

The final funding list will be prepared by the CS and disseminated via platform, website and newsletter, the relevant EC portals as well as further suitable dissemination channels.

4. Applicable conditions

Evaluators are required to treat information contained within applications with the strictest confidentiality and to declare any potential conflict of interest.

4.1 Confidentiality

Evaluators are responsible for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality of any data, documents or other material related to the evaluation process, during and after completion of the evaluation. In the case of a breach of those obligations, ECIV partners and subcontractors reserves the right to suspend any payment or compensation, and in serious cases, to undertake legal action.

4.2 Conflict of interest

Evaluators must inform the Contractor immediately when recognizing potential conflict of interest in the assessment of assigned proposals, in particular if:

- You have been involved in the preparation of an application.
- You would benefit either directly or indirectly from the eventual selection of an application.
- You have a close family or personal relationship with any person representing the applicant.
- You are a director, trustee or partner or are in any way involved in the management of the applicant.
- You are employed or contracted by one of the applicant legal entities or any named subcontractors.
- You are an employee of any of the ECIV consortium partners.

Should a conflict of interest during the evaluation be discovered and confirmed by the Contractor, you will be withdrawn from the evaluation.

4.3 Ethical clearance

Notably, the impartiality and assurance that no conflicts of interest exist will be guaranteed for each proposal and the consortium will assure that the experts in the evaluation will:

- Act in their own capacity (not representing company or country);
- Be external to the beneficiaries and/or third parties.

After receiving the proposals, the independent reviewers are requested to indicate whether there is a conflict of interest with any of the applicants in the proposals for review. Reviewers will be asked to declare that they will not participate in the call, nor have any conflicting interests regarding the applicants participating in the projects that are reviewed.

The reviewers will be required to formally declare that no conflict of interest exists at any point in the evaluation process and to declare confidentiality concerning all documents and the entire review process.

The evaluators will adhere to Horizon Europe standards regarding evaluation, conflict of interest and confidentiality and will sign a declaration certifying:

- (i) that they will perform a confidential, fair and equitable evaluation;
- (ii) their independence from affiliation;
- (iii) confidentiality and absence of conflict of interest (disqualifying or potential);
- (iv) that they will not discuss the proposals with others during the process;
- (v) strictly, that they will not get in contact with applicants;
- (vi) compliance with EC rules.

Non-compliance with the terms and conditions on the documentation as well as the criteria of the evaluation defined in the guidelines will immediately terminate the contract with the evaluator, who will be obliged to return the paid amounts for the evaluation process, if any. Projects assigned to that reviewer will be assigned to another reviewer.

A report on the respect of ethical principles will be done to the European Commission.

5. Enquiries and complaints

For questions related to the guidelines for evaluators, please contact the Call Secretariat at: info@eciv.eu

5.1 Complaints Procedure

To submit a formal complaint regarding the call process, evaluation, or communication, please send a written statement to info@eciv.eu with the subject line: "Complaint – ECIV Open Call". Include your name and organisation name, application ID (if applicable), and a clear description of the issue.

5.2 Resolution process

The following actions will be taken towards complaints:

1. **Acknowledgment of Receipt:** Each complaint will receive an acknowledgment of receipt within **5 working days**.
2. **Initial Review:** The ECIV Call Secretariat will examine the complaint and verify its admissibility (complete information, relevance).
3. **Internal Investigation:** If necessary, the complaint will be forwarded to the Project Coordinator and the relevant responsible parties for analysis.

4. **Formal Response:** A written response will be sent to the complainant within **30 calendar days**, specifying the conclusions and any corrective measures.
5. **Escalation:** If the response is not considered satisfactory, the complainant may request a review by the **Call Steering Committee**.
6. **Traceability:** All complaints and responses will be documented and archived to ensure transparency and continuous improvement.

All resolutions are governed by Belgian law, as stated in ECIV Consortium Agreement.

Back cover page



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European
Circular
Innovation
Valley

ANNEX 1: EVALUATION TEMPLATES

Scoring grid of ECIV interregional innovation projects



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This annex recaps the scoring matrix for each criterion of ECIV first open call.

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ECIV scoring matrix is an Excel file that consists of three tabs: the instructions tab, the evaluation grid tab, and the summary tab. Evaluators only need to complete the evaluation grid tab, the summary tab is completed automatically.

To completing the evaluation, evaluators must enter a grade between 0 and 5 for each of the criteria listed. The average for each dimension and the overall average for the project are calculated automatically. A “comments” box is available for each of the three evaluation dimensions.

Key criteria, questions of evaluation and respective weights and threshold are the following:

1. Impact

Weight: 40%

Threshold: 3/5

Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts.

Key factor	Criteria	Weight
Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts	Does the project have the potential to significantly contribute to enhancing circularity of the Regions and European Union?	1
	To what extent does the proposed project bring new value and benefits to the Regions' circularity, compared to their current operations?	2
	Does the proposal describe and quantify the impact in terms of future investments, future products and services, jobs creation, market creation or growth, etc.?	1,5
	Does the proposal describe the positive or negative social, economic, environmental, safety, impacts that the project or the solution may cause?	1,5
	Does the proposal define and quantify the impact through specific, appropriate, quantifiable and realistic KPIs?	1
Environmental and social impact	How will the project impact on the circularity of organisations?	1
	How will the project impact circularity in regions and Europe?	1
	Have the potential environmental and social impacts been quantified using clear and sound Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)?	1,5
	Are the baseline and target values for the selected KPIs clearly calculated, realistic and justified?	1,5
	Are the social aspects of the project sufficiently described, and especially how different groups in society are included and how the project will work towards equality?	1,5
Economic and broader impact	What is the expected economic impact of the project on the organisations and regions?	2
	Has the potential economic impact been quantified using clear and sound Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)?	1,5
	What is the anticipated regional economic impact outside of the regions of the project?	1
	To what extent will the project lead to impact on the local economy and businesses in the regions, particularly in terms of job creation, income growth, attracting investment, and developing services and infrastructure?	2
Replicability potential	Beyond the environmental, social and economic impact of the project in itself, does the project have the potential and/or adaptability to act as a «multiplier effect» and be replicated in other EU regions?	3
	Does it have the potential to engage and integrate actors across the entire value chain (ex. from raw material suppliers to end-users) in order to maximise systemic impact?	1

2. Excellence

Weight: 30% Threshold: 3/5

Clarity, pertinence, and ambition of the project's objectives, and how well it advances the state of the art.

Key factor	Criteria	Weight
Clarity, pertinence, and ambition of the project's objectives, and how well it advances the state of the art.	Does the project clearly align with the objectives of ECIV?	2
	Is this a research and innovation project of TRL 6-8?	1
	Does the project provide a significant advance compared with the State of the Art?	2
Relevance	Does the project contribute to identified missions and to one or more submissions? To what extent does it enhance the level of circularity?	1
	Are the project objectives clearly defined?	1
Novelty	To what extent does the proposed project introduce original and distinctive ideas, methods, or technologies that go beyond the current state-of-the-art, offering clear scientific, technological, or societal advancements?	2
	Does the project integrate advanced technologies and/or social innovation to increase the Region's and European Union circularity?	1
	To what extent does this new development imply a novelty on the value chain at the European level?	1

3. Quality and Efficiency of implementation

Weight: 30% Threshold: 3/5

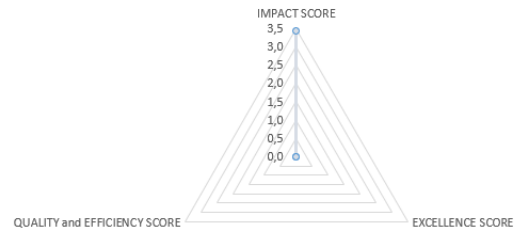
The quality and effectiveness of the work plan, risk assessment, and effort.

Key factor	Criteria	Weight
Workplan and budget	Does the work plan provide a clear and achievable timeline with a detailed monthly breakdown of main activities, key milestones, and deliverables?	1
	Is the work plan sufficiently detailed to ensure effective implementation?	1,5
	Are the planned activities aligned with the identified problem and the project's objectives?	2
	Is the proposed budget appropriate and consistent with the planned activities and expected deliverables?	2
Team and network	How does the composition of the team and network demonstrate the necessary expertise and resources to achieve the project objectives?	2
	If subcontracting is involved, is it sufficiently explained how the internal team and subcontractors will collaborate to execute core project tasks and deliverables?	1
	How does the applicant plan to address any gaps in the current team's expertise?	1
	How does the consortium ensure complementarity among its partners, and what strategies are in place for sharing the results of the project? How will each partner contribute to and disseminate the outcomes?	2,5
	Does the consortium demonstrate balanced representation of ECIV partner regions and active involvement of regional stakeholders in project activities? (Consortia that ensure meaningful participation and engagement of partners from ECIV regions throughout the project lifecycle will be evaluated more positively.)	1,5
	To what extent does the project team promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, ensuring balanced representation across gender, background, and expertise to foster a collaborative environment that reflects the values of Horizon Europe and enhances innovation through diverse perspectives.	1
Risk analysis	Are the identified technical and business risks relevant and proportionate to the scale of the project, and are the proposed mitigation measures sufficient to address these risks and ensure successful implementation.	1,5

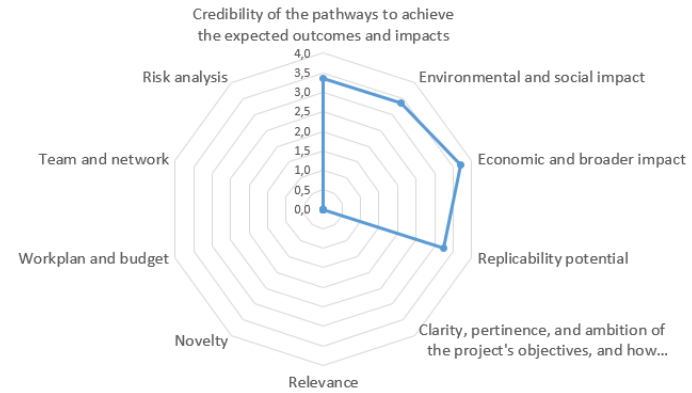
4. Summary tab

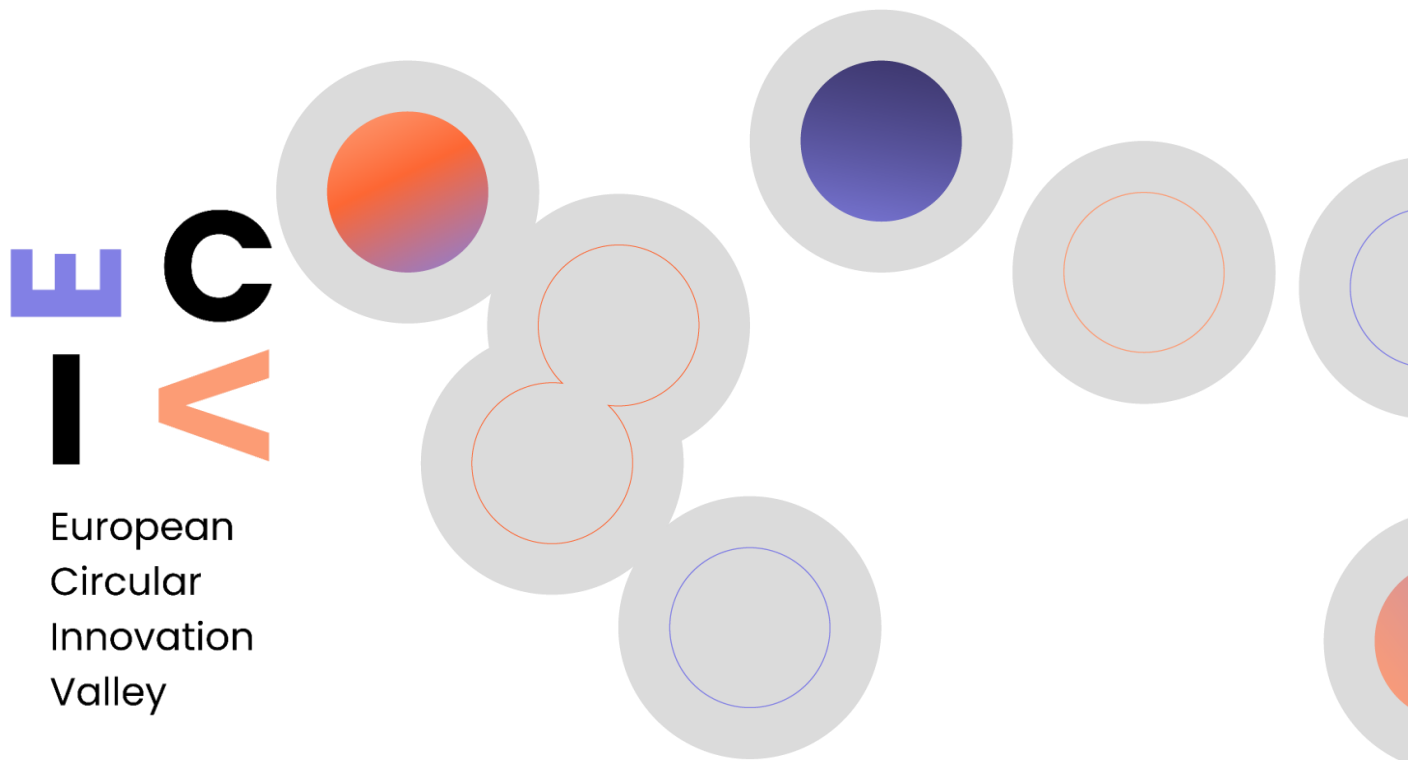
IMPACT SCORE	3,4
EXCELLENCE SCORE	0,0
QUALITY and EFFICIENCY SCORE	0,0
Overall score (out of 15)	4,1

Project grades on the three dimensions of assessment



Project grades on the key factors





ANNEX 2: MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
Between ECIV funding partners for ECIV first Open Call

This document acts as a joint statement of intent among funding organizations in the consortium. It signifies the commitment of partner organizations to make every reasonable effort to fulfil the intentions expressed in the calls and allocate the earmarked budget.

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1. Established between the following Parties

1. COMUNIDAD FORAL DE NAVARRA – GOBIERNO DE NAVARRA [GN] by Departamento de Industria y de Transición Ecológica y Digital Empresarial
2. GEMEENSCHAPPELIJKE REGELING SAMENWERKINGSVERBAND NOORD-NEDERLAND [SNN]
3. LANDSTINGET DALARNA [DAL]
4. REGION VÄRMLAND [VÄR]
5. LANDSTINGET GÄVLEBORG [GÄV]
6. REGION NORMANDIE [NOR]
7. SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE [SE]

2. Introduction

ECIV (European Circular Innovation Valley) project connects innovation ecosystems across Europe to develop and scale sustainable solutions for circular economy.

ECIV's mission is to drive the creation of a more sustainable and prosperous Europe by transforming traditional EU value chains into interconnected, innovative, and circular systems, ultimately establishing a thriving circular economy ecosystem by 2050.

ECIV aims to encourage innovation in circular economy in Europe and transform industrial value chains. Funded by the European Union under Horizon Europe, it brings together 18 partners from 8 countries and mobilizes a budget of 27.16 million euros. A significant portion (16.3 million euros) is allocated to local actors through 2 collaborative Open Calls and 1 call for experimentations.

ECIV Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) acts as a joint statement of intent among funding organizations in the consortium. It signifies the commitment of partner organizations to make every reasonable effort to fulfil the intentions expressed in the call and allocate the earmarked budget.

3. Definitions

3.1 Circular economy

The circular economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. In a circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting. The circular economy tackles climate change and other global challenges, like biodiversity loss, waste, and pollution, by decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources.

The circular economy is based on three principles, driven by design:

- Eliminate waste and pollution
- Circulate products and materials (at their highest value)
- Regenerate nature

Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy and materials, the circular economy is a resilient system that is good for business, people, and the environment.

Source: WP2 – Ellen MacArthur Foundation Digital Workshop: Preparing Missions 25/03/12

3.2 Open call

In the European sense, an open call for projects can be defined as an open call for project proposals, in which any individual or organisation meeting the eligibility criteria can submit an application.

The term is commonly used in EU funding programmes, such as Horizon Europe, and is used to promote transparency, inclusiveness and access to a wide range of participants.

According to Regulation (EU) 2021/695 establishing Horizon Europe, open calls for proposals are designed to:

1. Respect the principles of equal access and transparency (Article 18 of the Horizon Europe Regulation).
2. Allow broad and unrestricted participation in predefined or non-predefined subjects (Article 2: general rules for calls).

In ECIV, open calls are an element of cascade funding, where ECIV funded partners manage open calls to redistribute European funds to selected third parties.

Source : Horizon Europe Regulation (EU) 2021/695

3.3 Mission oriented approach

EU Missions are designed to align research and innovation policies with other sectoral policies, ensuring a coordinated effort to tackle pressing societal challenges. What sets mission-oriented innovation policy (MOIP) apart is its cross-sectoral and cross-policy approach. This framework aims to help the EU, its Member States and associated Countries setting ambitious, targeted, measurable, and time-bound goals by applying knowledge and innovation to solve urgent challenges.

ECIV project aims to achieve this by building a connected interregional ecosystem that combines participating regions' strengths and challenges.

The ECIV project's mission is to create a more sustainable and prosperous Europe by transforming traditional EU value chains into more connected, innovative, and circular value chains.

This collaborative effort will help develop and deliver new circular solutions for the market with a mission-oriented approach, ultimately fostering sustainable growth and development in Europe.

Sources: Factsheet – Moving forward on the implementation of EU missions at national level; WP2 –Digital Workshop: Preparing Missions – 25/03/12

4. Contents of the first Open Call

ECIV 1st Open Call (OC1) for interregional circular innovation projects mobilises €9,129,770, co-funded by ECIV funding partners and Horizon Europe. Call information can be found on the [page dedicated to the first Open call](#) on the ECIV website.

The general objective of ECIV first open call (OC1) is to support **interregional innovation projects of circular economy** (Technology Readiness Level or equivalent in the range 6-8), based on the specific objectives, priorities and topics identified in different value chains and industrial sectors of the ECIV regions.

ECIV first Open Call will concentrate on efforts in promoting following stage of innovation process covering various industrial value chains: (non-exhaustive)

- **Circular and sustainable new Materials**, including new plastic solutions, green steel, critical raw materials, chemistry and biobased materials, new textile solutions, construction and demolition waste.
- **New Industrial Processes**, including strategies and processes suppering the 9 R's of circularity, like Ecodesign and lifestyle thinking, Product R's, Industrial Symbioses, maximum valorisation of waste and by-products and renewable energy.
- **New Business Models**, including circular supply models, extended product lifecycle models, sharing models and product service models.

5. Governance of the Calls

The call is managed and facilitated by the:

- CSC (Call Steering Committee) – Monitors all actions taken by the CS, as well as making decisions regarding the design of the calls.
- CS (Call Secretariat) – Helpdesk for applicants, oversee the execution of the call, manage and implement the evaluation process.
- CAB (Call Advisory Board) – Provides advice on refining the themes and scope of the call.
- PRP (Peer Review Panel) – Independent experts evaluate projects and independent observer to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation.

5.1 Call Steering Committee

DEFINITION

The CSC monitors all actions taken by the CS, as well as makes decisions regarding the design of the calls.

COMPOSITION

The CSC members are representatives from each participating regional funding agencies.

OPERATIONS

- The CSC takes the final decision on the call scope.
- The CSC performs eligibility check and address questions specific to their agency's funding regulations.
- The CSC attends the PRP meeting as observers.
- The CSC discusses and agrees the final distribution of the EC top-up funding.
- The CSC takes final funding decision within 2 months after call closure.
- The CSC discusses steps to be taken to find solutions in case of obstacles and assist the entities involved in the respective project.

Composition of Call Steering Committee (19/01/26)

Organisation		CSC member
Government of Navarra		Delia Sola
Scottish Enterprise		Morag Clark
Normandy		Romuald Glowacky
Lithuanian innovation agency		Viktorija Šimanauskienė
North Middle Sweeden	Värmland	Katarina Nordmark
	Dalarna	Helena Enochsson
	Gävleborg	Moniqa Klefbom
Northern Netherlands		Luc Hulsman

5.2 Call Secretariat

DEFINITION

Primary helpdesk for applicants, addressing all aspects of proposal creation and submission
le in supporting the technical follow-up and facilitating communication related to the calls.

COMPOSITION

Each participating funding organization will designate a regional contact point to assist applicants with advice specific to their organization's rules and regulations, such as guidance on eligibility criteria and financial budget regulations.

OPERATIONS

- The CS oversees the execution of the call and provide administrative support for the funded projects.
- The CS supports the technical follow-up and facilitate communication related to the calls.
- The CS manages and implements the evaluation process, constituting a specific international PRP.
- the CS members nominate internal experts to evaluate projects from the region whose the coordinator of a third party project are from. These internal experts are encouraged to contact other CS members from the regions whose partners of a third party project are from.
- The CS collects the call specific mandatory documents to be provided by the funded projects.
- The CS follows-up and collects data of the funded projects, identifying any obstacles to the smooth running of funded projects at any stage.
- Reports are made available by CS to the CSC in case of obstacles in the implementation of a project.

Composition of Call Secretariat (19/01/26)

Organisation		CS member(s)	
Government of Navarra		Maite Martín	
Scottish Enterprise		Morag Clark	
Normandy		Florian Guillotte	Mathilde Yver
Lithuanian innovation agency		Audronė Janulaitytė	
North Middle Sweeden	Värmland	Emma Andersson	Emma Mattson
	Dalarna	Joel Norrgo	Eva Lundin
	Gävleborg	Ulrika Brandt	Gunilla Norrman
Northern Netherlands		Joep Hoveling	

5.3 Call Advisory Board

DEFINITION

The primary role of the CAB is to provide advice in refining the call topics and scopes to ensure they align with ECIV project relevance, and feasibility in the circularity field.

COMPOSITION

The selection of CAB members will be proposed by ECIV partners, with the final number and specific expertise determined based on the unique scope of each call.

OPERATIONS

- Importantly, CAB members will not be allowed to participate in the respective call as applicants.
- CAB members operate remotely, with the option of organizing virtual CAB meetings if needed.
- CAB meeting happens when demanded by CSC on particular subjects when need be.

Composition of Call Advisory Board (19/01/26)

Organisation		CAB member
Gouvernement de Navarre		Delia Sola
Scottish Enterprise		John Hand
Normandy		Magali Kerdreux
Lithuanian innovation agency		Viktorija Šimanauskienė
North Middle Sweeden	Värmland	Angelica Jacobo
	Dalarna	Eva Lundin
	Gävleborg	Monika Klefbom
Northern Netherlands		Luc Hulsman
Service public de Wallonie		Giulietta D'Ugo
Helsinki Uusimaa Regional Council		Christine Chang

5.4 Peer Review Panel

DEFINITION

PRP is responsible for evaluations of full proposals, with independent observer to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation.

COMPOSITION

The Call Secretariat constitutes a specific international PRP composed of independent experts with significant standing in the circularity field and recognized scientific, technical, or circular economy-specific expertise. CSC members attend PRP meetings as observers.

OPERATIONS

- The PRP meetings permits to discuss the proposals and to establish a ranking list.
- The PRP assesses proposals and provides a written statement of remote evaluations to the CS.
- An independent observer is appointed to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation and provide a written summary of panel discussions.

6. Confidentiality and prevention of conflict of interest

For the qualitative assessment of applications, it is of great importance that the confidentiality, impartiality and independence of all committee members and evaluators are ensured.

Call Secretariat is committed to confidentiality and prevention of conflict of interest by ECIV Grant Agreement and ECIV consortium agreement. External evaluators' contracts embed a non-disclosure agreement and a commitment concerning conflict of interest.

Any member of a committees shall withdraw from the meeting for the duration of discussion and assessment of an application in which they have direct or indirect interest.

The ECIV partnership ensures confidentiality of all application data and shall treat such data as strictly confidential. In particular, it shall ensure that sensitive information contained in the applications is not disclosed or disseminated beyond the evaluation process.

Prior to each assessment, issues related to conflict of interest shall be addressed, and a check will be made for possible issues concerning conflict of interest. In addition, all members are required to proactively disclose any such situations to one another and the Call Secretariat.

Evaluators are required to treat information contained within applications with the strictest confidentiality and to declare any potential conflict of interest. Evaluators are responsible for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality of any data, documents or other material related to the evaluation process, during and after completion of the evaluation. In the case of a breach

of those obligations, the partnership reserves the right to suspend any payment or compensation, and in serious cases, to undertake legal action.

7. Evaluation procedure

The evaluation process is composed of two phases: eligibility and evaluation.

1. **Eligibility** – The Call Secretariat (CS) will check all proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (Eligibility Criteria). In parallel, the CS will forward the proposals to the ECIV funding organisations, which will perform a check for compliance with their regional or national specifications.
2. **Evaluation** – After passing the eligibility check, eligible proposals will be sent to at least 3 independent reviewers for the evaluation: 2 external and 1 representative from the Call Secretariat (CS). The reviewers, with no conflict of interest, will assess the proposal and complete a written evaluation form with scores and comments for the evaluation criteria. The reviewers will meet in a Peer Review Panel (PRP) to discuss all proposals to produce a joint assessment report for each proposal, to be sent by the CS to the project coordinators, and a ranking list of proposals recommended for funding. The composition of the PRP is communicated through the ECIV website at the end of the entire review process.

Projects are evaluated and scored following 3 criteria:

- **Impact:** Project's potential to create measurable benefits (KPI).
- **Excellence:** Alignment with ECIV's 1st Open Call objectives, topics and priorities.
- **Quality and efficiency of implementation:** Clarity and feasibility of proposed activities – scientific and technical quality.

Each criterion is weighted (impact 40%, excellence 30% and quality 30%). Each criterion is scored: 0–5 (decimal steps of: 0.1) and has a selection threshold of 3. In case one criteria do not reach the minimum threshold, the project will be rejected.

8. Final decision on funding

Based on the ranking list established by the peer review panel (PRP), the ethical clearance and on available funding, the call steering committee (CSC) will recommend those projects to be funded to the ECIV funding organisations.

Based on the ranking list and these recommendations, final decisions will be made by the ECIV funding organisations, subject to budgetary considerations. The ECIV funding organisations will follow the ranking list established by the PRP members.

The third-party project coordinator will be informed by the CS of the decision. The project partners should be informed by their project coordinator.

9. Commitment of funding

To formalize the financial support and ensure a clear framework for collaboration, selected applicants will be required to enter into specific agreements with the ECIV funding organisations and their consortium partners.

1. Selected applicants will be invited to prepare the **Consortium Agreement** and **Bilateral subgrantee Agreements** (or where applicable, subsidy commitment documents), based on the standard templates for financial support to third parties.
2. The **Consortium Agreement** shall be signed between the project coordinator and all beneficiaries.
3. Each consortium member shall either sign a **Bilateral subgrantee Agreement** or will receive a **Subgranting Commitment** from the correspondent ECIV funding organisation.

10. Budgets of ECIV calls

Funding partners of ECIV 1st Open Call (OC1) for interregional circular innovation projects mobilises €9,129,770 co-funded from Horizon Europe (HE), European Regional Development Funds (ERDF) and own funds.

ECIV funding partner	OC1 budget	Co-funding
Government of Navarra (Spain)	€2 522 500	HE; Regional funds
Northern Netherlands Region Alliance (Netherlands)	€1 200 000	HE; ERDF
Region of Dalarna (Sweden)	€444 444	HE; Regional funds
Region of Värmland (Sweden)	€444 444	HE; Regional funds
Region of Gävleborg (Sweden)	€444 444	HE; Regional funds
Region of Normandy (France)	€2 073 938	HE; Regional funds
Scottish Enterprise (United Kingdom)	€2 000 000	HE; Own funds
Total	€9 129 770	

11. ECIV calls regulatory framework

ECIV calls are regulated by:

- [General Block Exemption Regulation](#) (Commission Regulation (EU) No 651/2014 of 17 June 2014 declaring certain categories of aid compatible with the internal market in application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty Text with EEA relevance),
 - And in particular its Article 25.
- [Horizon Europe Work Program 2023-2025](#) (European Commission Decision C (2025) 2779 of 14 May 2025),

- And in particular conditions for 'innovation actions' set in General Annexes.

Some of the listed territories indicate specific conditions for funding depending on the typology of beneficiary (large enterprises, SMEs, research organisations, etc.). See annex 3 for regional specificities.

The bodies mentioned in Article 25 of [Model Grant Agreement](#) (e.g. granting authority, OLAF, Court of Auditors (ECA), etc.) can exercise their rights also towards the applicants and beneficiaries.

**COMUNIDAD FORAL DE NAVARRA – GOBIERNO DE NAVARRA [GN] by Departamento de
Industria y de Transición Ecológica y Digital Empresarial**

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

GEMEENSCHAPPELIJKE REGELING SAMENWERKINGSVERBAND NOORD-NEDERLAND [SNN]

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

LANDSTINGET DALARNA [DAL]

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

REGION VÄRMLAND [VÄR]

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

LANDSTINGET GÄVLEBORG [GÄV]

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

REGION NORMANDIE [NOR]

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

SCOTTISH ENTERPRISE [SE]

Signature(s)

Name(s)

Title(s)

Date

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European
Circular
Innovation
Valley

ANNEX 3: GOVERNANCE EVALUATION AND ETHIC ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT



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This document provides detailed instructions and rules for the call, including the evaluation and selection process and project monitoring. Its purpose is to bear transparency on process, guarantee independence and ensure respect of ethics.

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1.4 Call Secretariat.....	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
1.5 Peer Review Pannel.....	Erreur ! Signet non défini.
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1. Governance

The governance of the calls is the following:

- CAB (Call Advisory Board) – Provides advice on refining the themes and scope of the call
- CSC (Call Steering Committee) – Monitors all actions taken by the CS, as well as making decisions regarding the design of the calls
- CS (Call Secretariat) – Helpdesk for applicants, oversee the execution of the call, manage and implement the evaluation process
- PRP (Peer Review Panel) – Independent experts evaluate projects and independent observer to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation

1.2 Call Advisory Board

DEFINITION

The primary role of the CAB is to provide advice in refining the call topics and scopes to ensure they align with ECIV project relevance, and feasibility in the circularity field.

COMPOSITION

The selection of CAB members will be proposed by ECIV partners, with the final number and specific expertise determined based on the unique scope of each call.

OPERATIONS

Importantly, CAB members will not be allowed to participate in the respective call as applicants.

CAB members operate remotely, with the option of organizing virtual CAB meetings if needed.

CAB meeting happens when demanded by CSC on particular subjects when need be.

1.3 Call Steering Committee

DEFINITION

The CSC monitors all actions taken by the CS, as well as makes decisions regarding the design of the calls.

COMPOSITION

The CSC members are representatives from each participating regional funding organisations.

OPERATIONS

The CSC takes the final decision on the call scope.

The CSC performs eligibility check and address questions specific to their agency's funding regulations.

The CSC attends the PRP meeting as observers. Discuss and agree the final distribution of the EC top-up funding. Take final funding decision within 2 months after call closure.

The CSC discusses steps to be taken to find solutions in case of obstacles and assist the entities involved in the respective project. Reports are made available by CS to the respective CSC.

1.4 Call Secretariat

DEFINITION

Primary helpdesk for applicants, addressing all aspects of proposal creation and submission in supporting the technical follow-up and facilitating communication related to the calls.

COMPOSITION

Each participating funding organization will designate a regional contact point to assist applicants with advice specific to their organization's rules and regulations, such as guidance on eligibility criteria and financial budget regulations.

OPERATIONS

The CS oversees the execution of the call and provide administrative support for the funded projects.

The CS supports the technical follow-up and facilitate communication related to the calls.

The CS manages and implements the evaluation process, constituting a specific international PRP.

The CS collects the call specific mandatory documents to be provided by the funded projects.

The CS follows-up and collects data of the funded projects, identifying any obstacles to the smooth running of funded projects at any stage.

1.5 Peer Review Pannel

DEFINITION

PRP is responsible for evaluations of full proposals, with independent observer to ensure compliance with the joint call's implementation.

COMPOSITION

The Call Secretariat constitutes a specific international PRP composed of independent experts with significant standing in the circularity field and recognized scientific, technical, or circular economy-specific expertise.

OPERATIONS

The PRP assesses proposals and provides a written statement of remote evaluations to the CS.

The PRP meetings permit to discuss the proposals and to establish a ranking list.

Independent Observer is appointed to ensure compliance with the call's implementation and provide a written summary of panel discussions.

1.6 Impartiality and confidentiality

A member of the abovementioned ECIV committees is in no way involved in advising on (draft) applications in which this member has any personal interest. Any form of conflict of interest and the appearance thereof is avoided.

A member of the abovementioned ECIV committees is obliged to keep confidential the data, in particular personal data, which it obtains in the context of its advisory tasks.

A member of the abovementioned ECIV committees shall immediately report any form or appearance of conflict of interest to the official secretary of the committee.

1.7 Procedure

The chairman determines the order of the meeting.

The chairman shall decide if the members arrive at a different weighting on the same point.

The members present at the meeting shall jointly award points to the applications before them.

2. Evaluation process

The evaluation process is composed of two phases:

2.1 Eligibility check

The Call Secretariat (CS) will check all proposals to ensure that they meet the call's formal criteria (Eligibility Criteria). In parallel, the CS will forward the proposals to the ECIV funding organisations, which will perform a check for compliance with their regional or national specifications.

2.1.1 Eligibility criteria at ECIV level

Eligibility criteria checked by the Call Secretariat are the following:

- The proposal must be submitted in English via the ECIV platform before the deadline.
- All participating entities must be eligible (according to **Erreur ! Source du renvoi introuvable.**)
- The project has to involve effective collaboration.
- The consortium must include at least 3 independent partners from 3 different eligible countries (EU Member States and the United Kingdom)..
- At least 2 partners must be from two different ECIV funding territories.
- The project leader must be from an ECIV funding territory.
- The consortium must include at least one company.
- Each applicant requests a minimum of €50,000.
- Each applicant's budget must not exceed 70% of the total project budget.
- The total project budget is comprised between €500,000 and €3,000,000.
- The cumulative funding across all ECIV calls is capped to €600,000 per applicant.
- The applicant must meet the regional requirements

2.1.2 Eligibility criteria at regional level

Eligibility criteria checked by ECIV funding organisations include the following:

- The applicants have not received any other European Union funding to carry out the action and commits to declare immediately to the Contractor any other such European Union funding it would receive until the end of the action.
- The applicants are not subject to EU administrative sanctions (i.e., exclusion) or are not in one of the following exclusion situations (Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation):

- Bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- In breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- Guilty of grave professional misconduct (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- Guilty of fraud, corruption, having links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- Has shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement or grant decision (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- Guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Additional eligibility determination will be conducted at national or regional level and depends on regional specificities, such as funding rates, state aid regime and other regional conditions

2.2 Independent evaluation

After passing the eligibility check, eligible proposals will be sent to at least 3 independent reviewers for the evaluation: 2 external and 1 representative from the Call Secretariat (CS) (see evaluation criteria below). The reviewers, with no conflict of interest (Col) will assess the proposal and complete a written evaluation form with scores and comments for the evaluation criteria.

Evaluation by Call Secretariat will be weighted at 40%.

The reviewers will meet in a Peer Review Panel (PRP) to review and evaluate all proposals to produce a joint assessment report for each proposal, to be sent by the CS to the project coordinators, and a ranking list of proposals recommended for funding. The composition of the PRP is communicated through the ECIV website at the end of the entire review process.

2.2.1 Evaluation criteria

You are expected to evaluate each proposal against the following three evaluation criteria and subcriteria:

- **Impact** (credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts).
 - Environmental and social impact
 - Economic and broader impact
 - Replicability potential
- **Excellence** (clarity, pertinence, and ambition of the project's objectives, and how well it advances the state of the art).
 - Relevance
 - Novelty
- **Quality and efficiency of implementation** (quality and effectiveness of the work plan, risk assessment, and effort).
 - Workplan and budget
 - Team and network
 - Risk analysis

2.2.2 Scoring scale

To perform an evaluation, you must carefully read the application and rate each of the three criteria – impact, excellence and quality and efficiency of implementation – by using a scale from 0 to 5 points (half point scores may be given):

- 0 = The proposal fails to address the criteria, or it cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 = Poor – The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 = Fair – The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 = Good – The proposal addresses the criterion well but there are a certain number of shortcomings.
- 4 = Very good – There is a small number of shortcomings but overall, the proposal addresses the criterion very well.
- 5 = Excellent – The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion with minor or no shortcomings.

2.2.3 Scoring thresholds

The maximum score is 15. The standard threshold for individual criteria is 3, and the standard overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, is 10. The average of the 3 scores and total will be calculated for each proposal. In order to rank applications with same scores, priority will be given to applications that achieve higher scores in the Impact criterion. Additionally, second priority will be assigned to projects with a higher ranking in terms of concept, while third priority will be given to projects based on the time of submission of the proposal. Proposals failing to achieve the threshold score per individual criteria or the overall threshold will be rejected.

2.2.4 Scoring weights

The overall score will be calculated with the following weightings: 30% for impact, 30% for excellence, and 30% for. Please carefully consider your scores, particularly when distinguishing between good (3), very good (4), and excellent (5) scores, as these decisions directly impact which applicants receive funding. If you are uncertain between two scores, you may use half-point increments to refine your evaluation.

2.2.5 Evaluation comments

You are required to provide comments on all three criteria as well as on the overall proposal. Your comments should highlight:

- Strengths and Positive Aspects
- Shortcomings

In your evaluation, it's important to consider focus and objectives, expected output and funding allocation of interregional circular innovation projects. In principle, as the financial scope of a project proposal increases, the evaluation process should become more rigorous to ensure thorough risk management, assumption validation, and overall project viability.

2.2.6 Ethics screening

All the proposals will undergo an ethics check carried out by the CS supported by external experts in case it is needed. This includes verification of compliance with EU ethics standards (e.g. Data protection, environmental and safety regulation, permitting requirements, and avoidance of prohibited practices). Where necessary, applicants may be requested to provide additional documentation (e.g. permits, risk assessments, GDPR compliance statements).

In case ethically sensitive activities are detected, applicants will be obliged to take measures to ensure compliance with ethical principles, the applicable international and national law, and to include details about ethics compliance into their reporting.

3. Ethics

3.1 Ethics assessment in applications

It is mandatory for applicants to ECIV calls to complete an “Ethical self-assessment”:

3.1.1 Ethics Self-Assessment

- ☐ Does your project involve processing of personal data?
- ☐ Does your project involve human participants (with or without consent)?
- ☐ Does your project present a risk to the environment or society?
- ☐ Does your project involve the use of AI-based applications?
- ☐ Does the activity involve the use of animals in any capacity?
- ☐ Does the activity include the use of human or other biological tissues?
- ☐ Does the activity relate to defense or military applications?
- ☐ Does the activity provide instructions designed to facilitate harmful, illegal, or otherwise unethical uses?¹
- ☐ Are there any other ethical issues that should be taken into consideration?

In their application form, applicants will be asked to indicate how they plan to address an ethical issue if any of the box is ticked.

All the proposals will undergo an ethics check carried out by the CS supported by experts in case it is needed. This includes verification of compliance with EU ethics standards (e.g. Data protection, environmental and safety regulation, permitting requirements, and avoidance of prohibited practices). Where necessary, applicants may be requested to provide additional documentation (e.g. permits, risk assessments, GDPR compliance statements).

After the PRP meeting, an Ethics assessment will take place for the proposals which are recommended for funding by the PRP and selected for funding by the CSC, to verify alignment with ethical norms and regulations. Only those proposals approved by ethical assessment, complying with the central Horizon Europe and regional/national ethical requirements, will be funded.

¹ In reference of [COUNCIL DECISION \(EU\) 2021/764](#) of 10 May 2021 establishing the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, and repealing Decision 2013/743/EU, p. 36 “: Programme will have an exclusive focus on civil application.”

3.2 Evaluators

3.2.1 Declaration of non-conflict of interest

Evaluators shall immediately inform the Contractor if they become aware of any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest in relation to the evaluation of an assigned proposal, if:

- They have been involved in the preparation of an application.
- They would benefit either directly or indirectly from the eventual selection of an application.
- They have a close family or personal relationship with any person representing the applicant.
- They are a director, trustee or partner or are in any way involved in the management of the applicant.
- They are employed or contracted by one of the applicant legal entities or any named subcontractors.
- They are an employee of any of the ECIV consortium partners.

Where a conflict of interest is identified during the evaluation and confirmed by the Contractor, the evaluator shall be withdrawn from the evaluation process.

3.2.2 Confidentiality and independence

Evaluators are required to treat information contained within applications with the strictest confidentiality and to declare any potential conflict of interest. Evaluators are responsible for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality of any data, documents or other material related to the evaluation process, during and after completion of the evaluation. In the case of a breach of those obligations, the contractor reserves the right to suspend any payment or compensation, and in serious cases, to undertake legal action.

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