

EN

E-001121/2023

Answer given by Executive Vice-President Vestager
on behalf of the European Commission
(25.5.2023)

1. The Commission adopted a Communication on a New European Innovation Agenda¹. One of the actions aims to increase innovation at regional level and select up to 100 regions committed to enhance the coordination and directionality of their Research and Innovation investment and policies.

On 28 March 2023, the Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth and the Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms, together with the European Committee of the Regions, launched a call for expression of interest² inviting European regions to become Regional Innovation Valleys. Responding to the call will enable regions to express their interest to become Regional Innovation Valleys by working together based on, but not limited to, their smart specialisation strategies, meeting specific local challenges and needs, whilst contributing to the EU's strategic priorities. The call for expression of interest is open until 18 September 2023. The region of Castile and Leon, as any other region, is encouraged to express its interest by replying to the call. Regions responding to the call for expression of interest will be assessed and the final decision on whether or not they will become Regional Innovation Valley will be taken by March 2024.

2. There is no budget allocated to the above call for expression of interests. However, the Commission launched two calls for proposals on 17 May 2023 under the European Innovation Ecosystems part of Horizon Europe³, and the Interregional Innovation Investments Instrument of the European Regional Development Fund⁴, to support the regions in their endeavour to become Regional Innovation Valleys⁵.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52022DC0332>

² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/news/all-research-and-innovation-news/call-expression-interest-regional-innovation-valleys-now-open-2023-03-28_en

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-eie-2023-connect-03-01;callCode=null;freeTextSearchKeyword=valleys;matchWholeText=true;typeCodes=1,0;statusCodes=31094501,31094502,31094503;programmePeriod=null;programCcm2Id=null;programDivisionCode=null;focusAreaCode=null;destinationGroup=null;missionGroup=null;geographicalZonesCode=null;programmeDivisionProspect=null;startDateLte=null;startDateGte=null;crossCuttingPriorityCode=null;cpvCode=null;performanceOfDelivery=null;sortQuery=sortStatus;orderBy=asc;onlyTenders=false;topicListKey=topicSearchTablePageState>

⁴ https://eisma.ec.europa.eu/programmes/interregional-innovation-investments-i3-instrument_en

⁵ A total of EUR 170 million is allocated, EUR 100 million and EUR 70 million respectively.