



ener2i – Energy Research to innovation:

Reinforcing cooperation with Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries on bridging the gap between energy research and energy innovation

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Innovation Voucher Competition Belarus 2016

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Document description	The ToR describe the requirements, submission and selection procedures for the ener2i Innovation Voucher Competition



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Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	3
2	COMPETITION FRAMEWORK	4
3	REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKING PART IN THE COMPETITION	5
3.1	ELIGIBILITY	5
3.2	APPLICATION FORM	5
4	SELECTION PROCESS	6
4.1	PRE-ASSESSMENT	7
4.2	FINAL ASSESSMENT	7
5	CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION	8
6	WINNERS OF COMPETITION	8
7	SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION	9

1 INTRODUCTION

Energy supply and usage and the stimulation of innovation activities are some of the most important challenges for the EU and for the Eastern European countries within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Increased resource efficiency and innovation in renewable and sustainable energy offers the best potential to solve the urgent, interrelated societal challenges of insecurity over energy supplies, growing energy demand, and looming climate change.

The ener2i project focuses on the need to find innovative and sustainable solutions to these challenges, directly addressing the gap between new energy research and business. Existing research results are not being sufficiently transferred into innovative processes and products, and in Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries cooperation among research institutes, universities, and the business sector are at an early stage of development. In order to bridge this gap and accelerate innovation performance, ener2i concentrates on the following main objectives:

- **Key Objective 1:** To enhance the innovation capacity and improve the innovation performance of manufacturers, energy service companies and industry in the field of energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy sources (RES).
- **Key Objective 2:** To improve knowledge transfer and innovation support in the field of EE/RES through a comprehensive trans-national cooperation.
- **Key Objective 3:** To stimulate effective linkages between research and innovation with effective knowledge transfer methods in the participating EaP countries Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, and Moldova.
- **Key Objective 4:** To strengthen cooperation between research and business actors in EE/RES in the participating countries and at the same time facilitating the cooperation between EU and participating EaP countries.

Further information about the project is available at its website:

<http://www.ener2i.eu/>

One of the tasks of the ener2i project, which is directly addressed by these Terms of Reference, is to organise an Innovation Voucher Competition (IVC) in Belarus. The aim of the competition is to initiate innovation projects in the field of EE and RES by providing direct financial support at an early stage of project development. Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), including start-ups and spin-offs will get the possibility to purchase research and development services from knowledge providers to realise their projects and to establish or intensify their relationship with research institutions.

The competition is organised by the ener2i project and consortium, in particular by ee – energy engineers (Germany - energy agency of North-Rhine Westphalia), Belarusian Innovation Fund (Belarus), Centre for Social Innovation (Austria), Belarusian Institute of System Analysis and Information Support of S&T Sphere (Belarus). The competition is managed in Belarus by the Belarusian Innovation Fund (BIF).

2 COMPETITION FRAMEWORK

Innovation Voucher Competition – framework	
Topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research topics/themes/challenges and project ideas in the field of EE and RES
Target country	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belarus
Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Innovation Vouchers, € 4,000 each
Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMEs, including start-ups and spin-offs, according to EU-definition • Registration of a business is a pre-condition at time of Innovation Voucher submission
Evaluation process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-assessment (checking eligibility criteria) • Final assessment (evaluation of application's content)
Evaluation (final assessment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consortium structure • Project outline (2 pages) • Implementation and Financial plan (3 pages)
Funding criteria (allowed purchases)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation-oriented research and development activities and services • Expenses for travel and accommodation
Competition's duration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition launch: 4 January 2016 • Competition closure: 29 February 2016 • Announcement of Winners by 21 March 2016 (indicative)
Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award ceremony of 3 winning teams
Web-presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.ener2i.eu • http://www.bif.ac.by/ • http://fp7-nip.org.by/en/ • Application submission electronic via ener2i website • Necessary documents available for download

Table 1: Innovation Voucher Competition - framework.

3 REQUIREMENTS FOR TAKING PART IN THE COMPETITION

3.1 ELIGIBILITY

Eligible to participate in the IVC are Belarusian Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), including start-up and spin-off businesses with energy related innovation targets. This may concern innovations in renewable energies, or the aim to improve energy efficiency performance. Project applicants have to meet the EU's definition¹ of small and medium sized enterprises stated in declaration (2003/361/EC).

Further, the following conditions must be met:

- SMEs have to be officially registered in Belarus at the submission deadline of the Innovation Vouchers.
- No tasks that have already been funded by another EU funding initiative will be funded.
- Beneficiaries have to be Small or Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), which are cooperating with a research partner.
- Project implementation (usage of voucher funds) has to be accomplished within 5 months after signature of the contract.

3.2 APPLICATION FORM

To take part in the ener2i IVC, please visit the project homepage, fill in the competition application form and submit your application via the website. The application form (see <http://www.ener2i.eu/>) must be completed in English and consists of the following parts:

PART A

Project Title

Details of applicant

¹ SME – definition: The category of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is made up of enterprises which employ fewer than 250 persons and which have an annual turnover not exceeding 50 million euro, and/or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding 43 million euro. European Commission - EN NB-60-04-773-EN-C 92-894-7909-4 – „The new SME definition – User guide and model declaration”. http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/sme-definition/index_en.htm

PART B**Innovation Voucher Consortium (max. 1/2 page)²**

1. Provide a short description of your company, including field of activity, company size (number of collaborators, turnover 2015), year of establishment.
2. Indicate contact details (including website if available), and information on experience and key personnel of the research partner involved.
3. Mention any international cooperation involved in this project (e.g. cooperation with a foreign research partner).

Innovation Voucher Project Outline (max. up to 1 page)

Describe the project objectives and expected results.

1. Explain which energy efficiency or renewable energy issue or problem in your company will be tackled in cooperation with a research partner.
2. Describe in which way your proposed product or service is novel/ innovative.
3. Outline the expected results to be achieved with the Innovation Voucher support, including the innovative solution, service or technology to be implemented.

Implementation plan (max. up to 1 page)

Provide a short implementation plan.

1. Describe how you are planning to implement the Innovation Voucher project, including management procedures and cooperation with the research partner.
2. Give a timeline of implementation (what is planned when) over the 5 months project period.
3. Outline the market potential, the market targeted and the market development strategy of your innovative solution, service or technology.

Financial plan (max. up to 1/2 page)

1. Indicate in which eligible cost categories (according to the ToR, page 8) you will spend the € 4,000 Innovation Voucher. Give the amounts and provide a short justification (explanatory text).
2. If applicable, mention also your own contribution to the project implementation.

4 SELECTION PROCESS

The evaluation of project applications is divided into two separate steps (pre-assessment and final assessment). During the final assessment, three applications will be selected by the jury to be awarded with a voucher. The Jury will be composed of at least 2 international experts nominated by ener2i partners from the EU (ee, eseia) and 2 local experts, nominated by the Belarusian Innovation Fund.

² Keep the text readable and use a font size not smaller than e.g. Arial 11 or Times New Roman 12.

4.1 PRE-ASSESSMENT

During the pre-assessment, the application's compliance with the general terms of participation (eligibility criteria) will be subject to appraisal. Whether an application is suitable for participation or not, will be based on adherence to the evaluation criteria. If an application does not match all criteria, it will be excluded regardless of the application's content and quality.

Evaluation criteria:

- General terms of participation
- On-time submission (by the fixed deadline)
- Application completeness (containing consortium information, project outline, implementation plan, financial plan, and other required information)
- Topic relatedness (research topic in the field of EE or RES)
- Language requirements (all components in English language)
- Applicant is an SME and will collaborate with a research organisation in the IV project
- Duration of Innovation Voucher project (5 months) is respected

4.2 FINAL ASSESSMENT

The final assessment (of positively pre-assessed applications) will be done by an international and independent jury of experts in innovation and EE/RES. The jury will evaluate the structure of the consortium, intended knowledge transfer, quality of innovative ideas, feasibility of project implementation, and the potential impact resulting from the voucher.

Evaluation criteria:

- General information/Consortium (20 %)
 - Quality of cooperation between SME and research organisation, true collaboration effort, track record of involved institutions
 - Cooperation with international partners, promotion of international networking
- Innovation idea/Project outline (40 %)
 - Quality and relevance of innovation, difference to existing technologies/solutions, expected impact
 - Possible transformation of project results into products or services

- Implementation and financial plan (40 %)
 - Quality of implementation planning, justification of usage of voucher budget
 - Market potential, market development strategy

5 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

The ideas and documents submitted will be treated as confidential and will be used exclusively for the purpose of the competition. The competition results (Name and Surname of the winners, Institution and the Title of the project) will be published on the ener2i website.

6 WINNERS OF COMPETITION

The applicants of the **three** best project ideas, with the highest evaluation score will be awarded with the Innovation Vouchers of € 4,000 each. The Voucher money should be spent on R&D related manpower needed for project implementation or travel arrangements facilitating knowledge transfer on an international level. Normally most of the voucher will be spent for acquiring services or technologies from an R&D partner.

Eligible services:

- R&D services, necessary to develop innovative products or services such as:
 - Technology and market surveys
 - Feasibility studies
 - Material and design studies, studies regarding manufacturing technologies
 - Studies and concepts addressing topics such as market access and distribution
 - Energy and innovation audits
- Implementation-oriented R&D activities such as:
 - Construction or engineering services
 - Build-up of prototypes (including material & equipment)
 - Environmental compatibility
 - Travel costs (e.g. for cooperation with international partners)

The above described services can be acquired from domestic and foreign research and development institutions.

Contract, payment scheme and reporting

A contract with the winning SMEs will be established by the Belarusian Innovation Fund. A prepayment of 60 % (€ 2,400) will be transferred to the SME after signature of the contract. The remaining 40 % (€ 1,600) will be transferred after the 5 month implementation period and upon acceptance of the project report. Beneficiaries have to report on project implementation, achieved results and impact of vouchers (project report of up to 3 pages, up to 1 page financial report on use of funds, plus annexes – e.g. photos).

7 SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

Please prepare and submit the completed IV application online via the ener2i-website (menu Innovation Vouchers): <http://www.ener2i.eu/>

In case of questions, please do not hesitate to contact:

Organisation: **Belarusian Innovation Fund (BIF)**

Name: **Alla Minko**

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In case of technical questions on the electronic submission of applications, please contact:

e-mail: office@ener2i.eu

Deadline for the submission of Applications is: 29 February 2016, 17:00 (FET, Minsk time, date of online submission)

Evaluation results will be communicated by: 21 March 2016 (indicative)

Important dates:

Innovation Voucher launch of competition / Kick-off	4 January 2016
Deadline for application submission	29 February 2016, 17:00 (FET, Minsk)
Evaluation results / Announcement of winners	By 21 March 2016 (indicative)
Award ceremony / presentation of projects	In the period 21-31 March 2016
Submission date of project implementation reports	16 September 2016

Table 2: Important dates.

THIS COMPETITION PROCEDURE DOES NOT FALL UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE AUSTRIAN, GERMAN OR OTHER EU COUNTRY'S PUBLIC PROCUREMENT LAW. NO LEGAL RIGHT SHALL BE CONSTITUTED BY THIS COMPETITION PROCEDURE. ANY RECOURSE TO COURTS OF LAW IS EXCLUDED.