

REGULATION

Interdisciplinary Energy Research & Innovation Initiative

NOVA Interdisciplinary Research Community in Sustainable Energies Systems

Preamble

The *Interdisciplinary Energy Research & Innovation Initiative* (hereinafter referred to as the “*Initiative*”), within the scope of the NOVA Interdisciplinary Research Community (NIRC) in Sustainable Energies Systems, aims to provide funding to help the transformation of the best ideas from the community into ambitious projects for further implementation and/or submission to international funding agencies, contributing to the transition to a greener and more sustainable economy. This Initiative is promoted by NOVA University Lisbon (NOVA) (hereinafter referred to as the “Organizer”) with the support of Galp Energia, S.A. (Galp) and is open to the faculty and researchers of all Academic Units of NOVA. NOVA has launched its first NIRC on Sustainable Energy Systems to establish a community of individuals affiliated with NOVA, from different academic disciplines and backgrounds, eager to tackle the complexity of energy systems and address specific challenges, with interdisciplinary and sustainability lenses. Researchers within this NIRC may include individuals from topics such as science and technology, social sciences and humanities, to legal and politics of energy, economy, and finance, all to develop innovative and impactful solutions for real-world applications, aligned with the principles of sustainable development.

Article 1

Object

The present Regulation defines the terms and rules of participation in the *Initiative*, which is organized by the NOVA, through the Rectorate’s Research Support Office, and supported by Galp.

Article 2

Scope

1. The *Initiative* aims to provide funding to help transform the best ideas from the Sustainable Energy Systems community into ambitious projects for further implementation or submission to international funding agencies.

2. The *Initiative* is composed of two independent funding tracks:
 - i. one to provide funding to the development of interdisciplinary innovative and disruptive ideas in merging at least two distinct, yet interconnected areas related to Sustainable Energy Systems, denominated as **Synergy Grant**.
 - ii. other to provide support for the implementation of already-developed high-quality interdisciplinary projects, with Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and/or Social Readiness Level (SRL) between 3 and 5, in line with the thematic research lines of the NIRC, denominated as **Ignition Grant**.
3. The *Initiative*, including both funding tracks, was designed for teams of at least 2 researchers from the NOVA community, experts in different scientific fields.
4. All science-based projects or initiatives, within the thematic research lines promoted at the NIRC in Sustainable Energy Systems (and specified in Article 3 of this Regulation) are admitted, provided they meet the admission conditions described in this Regulation and the specificities of its funding track.

Article 3

Thematic Research lines (“challenges”)

The proposals should be within the following thematic research lines:

- i. Biomethane production and deployment;
- ii. Energy Communities;
- iii. Renewables Value Chain;
- iv. Leveraging Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) for Sustainable Leadership;
- v. Sustainable Energy Systems.

Article 4

Funding Tracks

1. The *Initiative* has a total budget allocation of up to €120.000 (one hundred and twenty thousand euros), divided into two funding tracks as follows:
 - a. The **Synergy Grants**: up to €40,000 per project for one year, based on the proposed budget and its adequacy to the activities planned.
 - b. The **Ignition Grants**: €20,000 to €30,000 per project for one year. The funding value for each selected project will depend on the proposed activities.

2. The number of projects to be funded will vary depending on the amount allocated per project.
3. The amount allocated to each project may be increased through additional funding provided by Galp following assessments of specific milestones/deliverables (as defined in the criteria of number 2 of article 9), depending on the potential of preliminary results, the quality of the projects, and their alignment with the company's strategy and needs.
4. The funding referred to in paragraph 1.a. of this clause could also be renewed for additional twelve months, within the scope of the protocol signed between NOVA and Galp, based on an excellent performance to be assessed by NOVA and Galp.

Article 5

Conditions of Admission

To be admitted to the competition, applications must abide by the following conditions:

1. Researchers from all Academic and Research Units within the NOVA R&I ecosystem are allowed to participate.
2. Each application must be composed of a team of at least two lead researchers from different scientific domains, ensuring the necessary interdisciplinarity underlying the Initiative.
3. Applicants must be active members of the NIRC on Sustainable Energy Systems. If not already registered, applicants must complete their registration via the provided [registration form](#) before the submission deadline. However:
 - i. Registrations solely to meet the conditions of admission of this Regulation will not be accepted.
 - ii. The commitment and engagement to the NIRC must be demonstrated, and in the case of a project being funded, an effective return to the community must be shown according to the explicit requirements of this Regulation, as defined in article 7.
4. Each lead applicant can only submit one application at each funding track but can participate in more than one proposal submitted as a team member if the ideas/projects are distinct and meet the admission conditions.
5. Each lead applicant can submit one proposal for each of the two funding tracks if the ideas/projects are distinct and meet the admission conditions.
6. The Application Form must be completed in English. It can be [downloaded](#) and submitted via email to nova.research@unl.pt.

7. The Application Form will have to be completed with the following information:
 - i. Identification details: proponents' names, NOVA affiliation (Academic and Research Units).
 - ii. Project information: title, objectives, description of innovative & interdisciplinary nature, research plan with associated budget, and a description of specific deliverables for evaluation.
 - iii. CVs of the proponents
 - iv. Added value of the idea/project to the NIRC on Sustainable Energy Systems.
8. It is the lead applicant's responsibility to ensure that the research team and all its collaborators (involved in the research) are recognized in the proposal and are informed of their application to this competition.
9. It is the responsibility of candidates to be aware of all the competition requirements.

Article 6

Deadlines

1. The call for the submission of applications to the *Initiative* will run between April 29 and May 31, 2024.
2. The evaluation and selection of applications will take place until June 28, 2024.
3. The communication of the results to the candidates will be made until July 05, 2024.
4. Awarded projects are intended to start on September 01, 2024.

Article 7

Conditions for active participation in the NIRC

1. Belonging to the NIRC and being an active member of the community (or in the case of new members, having a real intention of becoming active in the community) is an admission condition to participate in this competition and have a project funded.
2. Even though registration in the community can be done at any time before the submission deadline, this registration should be taken seriously and reveal intent to participate in the community beyond the application for funding. Registrations solely to meet the minimum requisites for funding will not be accepted.
3. Forms of added value to the community may include:

- i. Seminars and Workshops: one oral presentation every 6 months within the project's theme, given by the community member or a guest speaker.
- ii. State-of-the-art systematic review of the project's topic to be shared among all NIRC members and Galp.
- iii. Bring to the community relevant key players from NOVA who could participate in the different activities.
- iv. Organize activities for the whole community.

Article 8

Jury

1. The Jury of the competition will be made up of two members of the NOVA Rectoral team, one being the President, two members of Galp, and one external member to the Organizers.
2. The Jury of the competition might be advised by a group of Galp and/or NOVA experts in the different thematic research lines as a technical committee.
3. The President of the Jury is responsible for coordinating the work of the Jury, as well as ensuring its representation and announcing of selected candidates.
4. The Jury will decide on the admissibility of the applications received.
5. The deliberations of the Jury are taken by a simple majority of the present members, with the President having the tie-breaking vote, if needed.
6. Jury decisions are not subject to appeal.

Article 9

Assessment

1. Only eligible applications (c.f. Article 5) will be considered for evaluation.
2. Eligible applications are scored from 1 to 5 (highest best) considering the following criteria:

For the **Synergy Grant**:

- a. Applicants' profile, including team's complementarity from an interdisciplinary perspective (15%)
- b. Quality and relevance of the innovative and interdisciplinary nature of the project (30%)
- c. Quality and feasibility of the research plan (30%)
- d. Adequacy of the associated budget (10%)

- e. Adequacy of the specific deliverables for evaluation at M6 and M12 (5%)
- f. Quality and relevance of the proposed activities of added value for the interdisciplinary research community (10%)

For the Ignition Grant:

- a. Applicants' profile, including team's complementarity from an interdisciplinary perspective (15%)
 - b. Quality and relevance of the Proof-of-Concept (PoC) implementation idea, including the adequacy of the project objectives (30%)
 - c. Feasibility of the PoC plan with concrete examples of Technology Readiness Level (TRL) and Social Readiness Level (SRL) enhancement (30%)
 - d. Adequacy of the associated budget (10%)
 - e. Adequacy of the specific deliverables for evaluation at M6 and M12 (5%)
 - f. Quality and relevance of the proposed activities of added value for the interdisciplinary research community (10%)
3. Funding will be awarded to the projects that obtain the highest sum of scores, up to the funding limits described in Article 4.
 4. The Jury reserves the right not to award any prize if none of the submitted projects meet the quality requirements or comply with the rules of this Regulation.

Article 10

Funded projects

1. The number of projects funded will vary depending on the amount allocated per project and based on the overall quality and merit of the applications in competition, taking also into consideration what is described in paragraph 3 of Article 4.
2. An active membership in the NIRC on Sustainable Energy Systems is mandatory for participation, as stated in Article 5 of this Regulation.
3. Funded projects will receive up to 70% of the total amount at the beginning of the project and the remaining budget after the evaluation of predefined deliverables.

4. The predefined deliverables of the funded projects will be audited after six months. If the interim evaluation is not satisfactory, NOVA reserves the right to suspend the awarded funding.
5. The funding will be awarded in the form of research grants to the Academic Unit of the lead applicant, and all necessary costs to perform the research activities within the framework of the proposed projects will be eligible.

Article 11

Disclosure

NOVA will ensure that the funded projects are publicized as widely as possible on the institutional website and social media.

Article 12

Final dispositions

1. This Regulation is in force until the end of the awarded projects within the Initiative.
2. The Organizers and the Jury will make every effort to ensure that this Initiative meets the highest standards of quality and accuracy, namely regarding reliability and objectivity of the information and the respective selection, evaluation, and awarding process.
3. Personal data involved in the prize will be collected and processed following the General Data Regulation (Regulation (EU) No. 2016/679 of the European Parliament and the Council, of April 27, 2016).
4. All the applicants and results generated within the Initiative are subject to the Intellectual Property Regulation of NOVA (Regulation No. 1104/2020, of December 22, 2020).
5. Applications must not contain technical, scientific, or other information that may be considered confidential.
6. This Regulation may be revised when necessary.

Article 13

Doubts and Omissions

Doubts and omissions resulting from the application of this Regulation will be submitted to the Jury for consideration.

Lisbon, April 29, 2024.