

Building Innovation Ecosystems for Sustainable and Inclusive Transformation

While Europe's innovation leaders continue to set the pace in technology and research, many regions still struggle to fully leverage their innovation potential. INFIMO—Innovation for Modest Innovator Regions—is an ambitious European project that aims to change this. Its mission is clear: support the innovation ecosystems in modest innovator regions to help them catch up, adapt, and thrive in the era of green and digital transformation.

At the heart of INFIMO is the understanding that innovation capacity is not built overnight, nor does it emerge from technology alone. It requires human capital, collaborative networks, and systemic change. To address these interconnected dimensions, INFIMO focuses on developing and testing three key solutions that together form a roadmap for empowering regions left behind in the innovation race. The first building block of INFIMO's approach addresses one of the most overlooked levers of innovation: diversity. The 'Women in Tech' initiative seeks to increase the participation of women, particularly in deep tech and AI-driven sectors, which remain male-dominated across much of Europe. INFIMO believes that by bringing more women into these fields, not only will equality advance, but so will innovation itself. Diversity brings new ideas, perspectives, and problem-solving approaches that are essential for driving transformative change.

However, talent alone is not enough. It needs channels and structures through which it can flow and generate impact. This is where INFIMO's 'Generic Collaboration Model' comes in. Designed as an adaptable framework, it offers regions a blueprint for fostering cross-sector, cross-region, and cross-stakeholder partnerships. The model encourages experimentation with new forms of cooperation, enabling actors from research, business, public institutions, and civil society to come together around common goals. For modest innovator regions, where fragmented networks often limit progress, this model becomes a crucial tool to build the social fabric that underpins innovation ecosystems.

The third piece of INFIMO's puzzle takes collaboration a step further. The 'Advanced Collaboration Model' builds on the lessons of the Generic Collaboration Model but focuses on embedding these practices into the regional innovation systems themselves. It offers strategies for aligning local innovation ecosystems with EU priorities, creating governance models that foster openness, leadership, and long-term commitment to innovation-led transitions. In other words, it ensures that collaboration moves beyond individual projects and becomes part of how regions work, plan, and innovate.



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What makes INFIMO's approach powerful is not the individual solutions, but how they work together. The 'Women in Tech' initiative strengthens the human layer of innovation by broadening participation. This diversity then feeds into the 'Generic Collaboration Model,' making partnerships more inclusive, creative, and dynamic. Finally, these strengthened networks and partnerships are scaled up and integrated into the region's innovation systems through the 'Advanced Collaboration Model.'

In this way, INFIMO's three solutions create a seamless flow from empowering people, to fostering collaboration, to achieving systemic transformation. Together, they offer modest innovator regions a practical, human-centered, and sustainable path to become active players in Europe's green and digital future.



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