

European Innovation Council (EIC)

Work Programme 2023

1. Introduction

The purpose of this Programme is to provide integrated, agile support across the full innovation spectrum from early-stage research to start-up and scale-up. The funding and support are organised into three main funding schemes: the **EIC Pathfinder** for advanced research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies; the **EIC Transition** to validate technologies and develop business plans for specific applications; and the **EIC Accelerator** to support companies (SMEs, start-ups, spin-outs and in exceptional cases small mid-caps) to bring their innovations to market and scale up. In each case, the direct financial support to innovators is augmented with access to a range of Business Acceleration Services.

The EIC Schemes are divided in two calls:

- i. EIC Open Call: it is designed to enable support for any technologies and innovations that cut across different scientific, technological, sectoral and application fields or novel combinations
- ii. EIC Challenges Call: it provides funding to address specific technological and innovation breakthroughs. The challenges addressed take into account EU priorities for transitioning to a green, digital and healthy society and the overall strategic planning for HORIZON Europe.

2. EIC Pathfinder

The overall objective is to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies. It provides support for the earliest stages of scientific, technological or deep-tech research and development. The project's aim needs to build on new, cutting-edge directions in science and technology to disrupt a field and a market or create new opportunities by realizing innovative technological solutions.

More information can be provided upon request.

3. EIC Transition

3.1 Objectives

- The objectives of the EIC Transition are to mature both the technology and business idea to increase the project's technology and its market readiness. By doing this, the EIC Transition offers its applicants a solid support to deliver on the market a technology that is effective for its intended application, as well as a successful business model and business plan for its development to the market.

3.2 Description

- The EIC Transition aims at funding innovation activities that go beyond the experimental proof of principle in laboratory. The scheme supports the maturation and validation of novel technology from the lab stage to application as well as explorations and development of sustainable business case and business model towards commercialization. The proposed projects should address in a balanced way both technology and market/ business development.
- The EIC Transition Open Call has no specific thematic priorities and is open to proposals in any field of science, technology or field of application.
- The EIC Transition Challenges Call has three thematic challenges:
 1. Full scale Micro-Nano-Bio devices for medical and medical research applications.
 2. Environmental intelligence
 3. Chip-scale optical frequency combs

3.3 Beneficiaries

- **Single legal entity** established in a Member State or an Associated Country ('mono-beneficiary') if you are an SME or research performing organisation (university, research or technology organisation, including teams, individual Principle Investigators and inventors in such institutions who intend to form a spinout company). Larger companies (i.e. which do not qualify as SMEs) are not eligible to apply as a single legal entity; or
- **A small consortium of minimum two and maximum five independent legal entities** from two different Member States or Associated Countries
or
- A consortium of minimum three and maximum five independent legal entities ('multi-beneficiary') following standard rules i.e. must include at least one legal entity established in a Member State and at least two other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries

Consortia may for example include start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, or larger companies, user/customer organisations or potential end users (e.g., hospitals, utilities, industry, regulatory and standardisation bodies).

3.4 Specific Participation Restrictions and Conditions

- The applicants should have sufficient preliminary business case/business model and market analysis for the application area(s) they have in mind at the proposal stage. The Transition projects should advance both the technology and business aspects. The business case and business model will be refined during the project duration as to become a credible basis for entrepreneurship, business creation and investment.

3.5 The proposal must build on results of at least experimental proof of concept TRL3, ideally validated in the lab TRL4. Budget and Funding

- Total EIC Transition Budget: €128.36 million

- EIC Transition Open call: €67.86 million
- EIC Transition Challenges call: €60.5 million
- If successful, you will receive a grant for a Research and Innovation Action to cover the eligible costs, necessary for the implementation of your project up to a **EUR 2.5 million** and duration between 1 and 3 years as appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not preclude you to request larger amounts, if properly justified. The funding rate of this grant will be **100%** of the eligible costs.
- The projects funded through EIC Transition are eligible:
 - to receive additional grants with fixed amounts of up to EUR 50 000 to undertake portfolio activities.
 - to submit an Accelerator proposal via the Fast Track scheme.
- In addition to funding, projects will receive free access to a wide range of Business Acceleration Services and matchmaking events.

3.6 Deadline

- The cut-off dates for 2023 are:
 - 12 April 2023 at 17h00 Brussels local time
 - 27 September 2023 at 17h00 Brussels local time

Deadlines are the same for both Open call and Challenges call

4. EIC Accelerator

4.1 Objectives

- The main objective is to support companies (principally start-ups and SMEs) to **scale up high impact innovations** with the potential to create new markets or disrupt existing ones. The EIC Accelerator provides a unique **combination of funding from EUR 0.5 to EUR 17.5 million** and Business Acceleration Services.

4.2 Description

- The EIC Accelerator focuses on innovations building on **scientific discovery or technological breakthroughs ('deep tech')** and where significant funding is needed over a long timeframe before returns can be generated ('patient capital').
- Funding and support from the EIC Accelerator are designed to enable such innovators to attract the full investment amounts needed for scale up in a shorter timeframe.
- The EIC Accelerator supports the later stages of technology development as well as scale up. The **technology component of your innovation must therefore have been tested and validated in a laboratory or other relevant environment** (e.g. at least Technology Readiness Level 5/6 or higher). The EIC Accelerator looks to support companies where the EIC support will act as a catalyst to crowd in other investors necessary for the scale up of the innovation.
- The EIC Accelerator Open call has no predefined thematic priorities and is open to proposals in any field of technology or application.

- The EIC Accelerator Challenges call has seven thematic challenges:
 1. Novel biomarker-based assays to guide personalised cancer treatment
 2. Aerosol and surface decontamination for pandemic management
 3. Energy storage
 4. New European Bauhaus and Architecture, Engineering and Construction digitalisation for decarbonization
 5. Emerging semiconductor or quantum technology components
 6. Novel technologies for resilient agriculture
 7. Customer-driven, innovative space technologies and services

4.3 Beneficiaries

- **A single company classified as a SME** and established within a Member State or an Associated Country;
- **A single company classified as a ‘Small mid-cap’** (up to 499 employees) established in a Member State or an Associated Country, but your application can only be for rapid scale up purposes (e.g. Technology Readiness Level 9) and only for the investment component; or
- **One or more natural persons (including individual entrepreneurs) or legal entities**, which are either:
 - a. from a Member State or an Associated Country *intending to establish an SME or small mid-cap* (as defined above) in a Member State or Associated Country by the time of signing the Accelerator contract or, in the case blended finance is awarded, at the latest when agreeing on its investment component;
 - b. *intending to invest in an SME or small mid-cap* in a Member State or an Associated Country and who may submit a proposal on behalf of that SME or small mid-cap, provided that a prior agreement exist with the company. The contract will be signed with the beneficiary company only;
 - c. from a non-associated third country intending to establish an SME (including start-ups) or to relocate an existing SME to a Member State or an Associated Country. Your company must prove its effective establishment in a Member State or an Associated Country.

4.4 Budget and Funding

The EIC Accelerator provides blended finance (Innovation and Market Deployment Action) which is composed of:

- An **investment component** usually in the form of direct equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans. The **minimum investment component is EUR 0.5 million and the maximum is EUR 15 million**. It is intended to finance market deployment and scale up but may also be used for other purposes (including co-financing or even fully financing innovation activities). Within the maximum budget awarded by the Commission to the EIC Fund, the terms of investment will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the EIC Fund. The investment component of the EIC is designed to fill the funding gap for high-risk innovations

to a stage where they can be co-financed or financed under the InvestEU programme or by private investors alone. When implementing investments approved by the Commission, the EIC Fund will ensure that supported companies keep most of their value, including their IP, in the EU or in the Associated Countries in order to contribute to their economic growth and job creation.

- **A grant component to reimburse eligible costs incurred for innovation activities, including demonstration of the technology in the relevant environment, prototyping and system level demonstration, R&D and testing required to meet regulatory and standardization requirements, intellectual property management, and marketing approval (e.g. at least Technology Readiness Levels 5/6 to 8).** Eligible costs are reimbursed up to a maximum of **70%**. The 30% co-financing of these activities and the costs incurred for the commercial introduction of the product or service and full scale up operations (e.g. Technology Readiness Level 9 or above) will not be reimbursed by the grant but can be financed by the investment component. The grant component should normally **not exceed EUR 2.5 million** but may be for a higher amount in exceptional and well justified cases. The innovation activities to be supported should normally be completed within 24 months but may be longer in exceptional and well justified cases. The grant component may be used for subcontracting including, only if justified, for activities which are essential for the objectives of the project. **The proposed duration should genuinely reflect your current TRL and the nature of the technology to be developed and demonstrated.** The grant component may be used for subcontracting including, only if justified, for activities which are essential for the objectives of the project.

Applicants may request a Grant Only or Grant First support under the following conditions:

- *Grant Only:* You must provide evidence that you have sufficient financial means (e.g. revenue flow, existing investors or shareholders) to finance the deployment and scaling up of your innovation. In such a case, you will have to detail in your proposal all elements demonstrating that you possess or are in the process to obtain those necessary resources and financial means to provide for necessary expenditures normally covered by the investment component.
- *Grant First:* Your innovation is based on a scientific discovery or novel technology and still requires significant work to validate and demonstrate in relevant environments to properly assess its commercial potential. Such innovations may include, but are not limited to, those at relatively early stage (e.g. TRL 5 -6) or based on research results from the EIC Pathfinder and EIC Transition, as well as from the European Research Council. Grant-first companies are eligible for a follow-on equity component subject to a milestone assessment attesting that the innovation activities are well under way and that the innovation has the potential for deployment or the interest shown by potential strategic/lead investor(s) in co-investing with the EIC into the company, as a sign of maturity of the innovation and of deployment perspective.

4.5 Deadline

Short applications: You may submit a short application **at any time** via the Funding and Tender Opportunities Portal that will direct you to the EIC artificial intelligence-based IT platform. The short application consists of:

- **A 5-page form** where you must summarise your proposal and respond to a set of questions on your innovation, your potential market and your team;
- **A pitch-deck of up to 10 slides** following a set format;
- **A (link to a) video pitch of up to 3 minutes** where the core members of your team (up to three people) should provide the motivation for your application.

Within approximately 4 weeks, you will receive the evaluation result of your short application specifying whether your application met the award criteria and can therefore proceed to a full proposal. In both cases, you will receive feedback from the expert evaluators.

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Full applications: If your short application is successful then you will be entitled to receive coaching support to prepare a full proposal which can be submitted to one of the cut-off dates within the next 12 months from the date of the response to your short application. You may decide which cut-off to apply to. The cut-off dates for 2023 are:

- ✔ 11 January 2023 at 17h00 Brussels local time (Accelerator Open only)
- ✔ 22 March 2023 at 17h00 Brussels local time (Accelerator Open and Challenges)
- ✔ 7 June 2023 at 17h00 Brussels local time (Accelerator Open and Challenges)
- ✔ 4 October 2023 at 17h00 Brussels local time (Accelerator Open and Challenges)

5. More information

- ✔ More information about the programme and the next steps after the submission of your proposal can be found on the links provided below:
 - https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-2023-work-programme_en
 - [EIC Work Programme 2023 F&T.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)
- ✔ You can also watch the European Innovation Council Online Info Day [here](#)