

EN

EIC Work Programme 2021

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DISCLAIMER

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This document represents a working draft of the EIC Work Programme for the purpose of feedback and comments from members of the expert group acting as a shadow Horizon Europe Programme Committee for the EIC and European Innovation Ecosystems. All parts are subject to review and further development, notably concerning evaluation criteria and transition activities.

This draft has not been adopted or endorsed by the European Commission. Any views expressed are the preliminary views of the Commission services and may not in any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the Commission. The information transmitted is intended only for the Member State or entity to which it is addressed for discussions and may contain confidential and/or privileged material.

Who should read this document

The EIC aims at **identifying and supporting breakthrough technologies and innovations** with the potential to scale up internationally and become market leaders. It supports all stages from R&D on the scientific underpinnings of breakthrough technologies, to validation and demonstration of breakthrough technologies and innovations to meet real world needs, to the development and scaling up of start-ups and small and medium enterprises.

This document is the annual Work Programme for the European Innovation Council (EIC) funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. It is the legal document which sets out how the EIC will allocate its funding for the corresponding year. It is prepared following the advice of the EIC Board and adopted by the European Commission.

Financial support is provided through two main instruments: the 'Pathfinder' for advanced research on breakthrough technologies; and the 'Accelerator' for individual companies to develop and scaleup breakthrough innovations with high risk and high impact. In addition 'Transition' funding provides a bridge between advanced research outputs, their application and market and user needs. All EIC supported projects and companies have access to a range of Business Acceleration Services providing access to leading expertise, corporates, investors and ecosystem actors. The EIC also provides additional activities such as prizes.

Potential applicants, and those interested in more information on the EIC in general can find out more, including the background to the EIC's mission, organisation and practical guidance at the EIC website:

[<http://ec.europa.eic.eu> – *INSERT NEW WEBSITE URL*]

Potential applicants who wish to apply for EIC funding will need to apply through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal. This contains all the information necessary as well as details of your **National Contact Point** who can provide information and personalised support in your native language at:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

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I - Introduction

Main funding opportunities in 2021¹

	Who can apply	What for	When	Total budget
Open calls (Section II) <i>This funding has no predefined thematic priorities and are open to applications in any field of science, technology or application</i>				
Pathfinder	Consortia (e.g. research organisations, universities, SMEs, industry) involving at least 3 different countries	Grants of up to €[3]m to achieve the proof of principle and validate the scientific basis of breakthrough technology (TRL 1-4)	[]	[xx]
Transition	Single applicants (SMEs, spin-offs, start-ups, research organisations, universities) or small consortia (max 5 partners). Applications must build on results from eligible Pathfinder or ERC Proof of Concept projects	Grants of up to €[]m to validate and demonstrate technology in application-relevant environment (TRL 4-6) and develop market readiness	[]	[xx]
Accelerator	Single SMEs (including spinouts and start-ups) and in exceptional cases small mid-caps (less than 500 employees)	Blended finance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - From €0.5 to €15 million equity investment - Up to €2.5 million grant funding technology development and validation (TRL 5-8) <i>Grant component only under certain conditions.</i>	Short applications at any time. If successful, full applications by [list of cutoffs]	[xx]
Strategic challenges (Section III) <i>This funding is targeted at specific technologies or applications</i>				
Topic 1				

¹ This table provides a simplified overview. All applicants need to read the relevant sections for the full information on eligibility and conditions for funding.

Topic 2				
etc				
TOTAL				[xx]

Specific objectives

Following the recommendations of the EIC pilot Advisory Board, EIC support aims to achieve a number of Key Performance Indicators, including:

[KPIs and description of specific measures in support of female innovators and applicants from widening countries]

Relevant organisations and terminology

[short descriptions of relevant organisations and terms to be added]

Relevant organisations

- EIC Board. []
- EIC Executive Agency
- EIC Fund
- EIC website
- Tenders and Funding Portal
- National Contact Points (NCPs)
- European Enterprise Network (EEN)
- []

Specific terms

- Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs)
- Market Readiness Level
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- Blended finance
- EIC Programme Managers
- Bankability
- Milestones
- []

II - Open Funding

1. EIC Pathfinder (Open)

- Do you have a vision for a future technology that could make a real difference to our lives?
- Do you see a plausible way of achieving the scientific breakthrough that will make this technology possible?
- Can you imagine collaborating with a team of likeminded researchers and innovators to realise the proof of principle and validate the scientific basis of the future technology?

If the answer to each one of these questions is “yes”, then EIC Pathfinder Open may be the right call for you.

Why should you apply?

You should apply if you are looking for support from EIC Pathfinder Open to realise an ambitious vision for radically new technology, with potential to create new markets and/or to address global challenges. EIC Pathfinder Open supports early stage development of such future technologies, based on high-risk/high-gain science-towards-technology breakthrough research (‘deep-tech’). This research must provide the foundations of the technology you are envisioning.

EIC Pathfinder Open may support your work, especially if it is highly risky: you may set out to try things that will not work; you may be faced with questions that nobody knows the answer to yet; you may realise that there are many aspects of the problem that you do not master. On the contrary, if the path you want to follow is incremental by nature or known, EIC Pathfinder Open will not support you.

EIC Pathfinder Open encourages interdisciplinary research and development. By bringing diverse areas of research together, often with different perspectives, terminologies and methodologies, really new things can be generated and entirely new areas of research can be opened up. It is up to you to compose the team that you need, that you can learn from, and that you can move forward with.

The expected outcome of your project is the proof of principle that the main ideas of the envisioned future technology are feasible, thus validating its scientific basis. Project results must include top-level scientific publications. While your vision is expected to be worthwhile because of its potential for future impact, for instance to create new markets, improve our lives, or address global challenges, these are not expected to be addressed or achieved in the course of your Pathfinder Open project. However, you are expected to take the necessary

measures to allow future exploitation to take place, for instance through an adequate formal protection² of the generated intellectual property (IP).

Can you apply?

EIC Pathfinder Open supports collaborative research. Your project proposal must be submitted by the coordinator, on behalf of a consortium that includes at least three independent legal entities, each one established in a different Member State [or associated country and with at least one of them established in a Member State.] The legal entities may for example be universities, research organizations, SMEs, start-ups or natural persons. See Annex 2 on eligibility of associated countries and third countries.

Your proposal will only be evaluated if it is admissible and eligible. Check the standard admissibility and eligibility conditions in Annex 2 before you apply.

What support will you receive if your proposal is funded?

You will receive a grant with an EU contribution of up to € 3 million (or a larger amount, if properly justified) to cover the eligible costs, necessary for the implementation of your project. The funding rate of this grant will be 100% of the eligible costs.

The EIC takes a pro-active approach to the management of funded projects. It is assisted by EIC Programme Managers, whose task is to identify and develop long-term technology and innovation perspectives. Your project may be integrated in one or more portfolios of related projects, providing you with a productive setting, in which to advance your ideas. In such a case you will have specific rights and obligations related to the activities of the portfolios.

Pathfinder projects are eligible to receive additional grants of up to € 50 000 to undertake complementary activities to explore potential pathways to commercialisation or integration in a portfolio. The decision on whether to allocate this additional grant will be taken during the implementation of the grant and subject to a project review.

In addition to funding, successful applicants will receive free access to a wide range of Business Acceleration services and partnering events. You can find out more about these in Section IV of this work programme.

How do you apply; how long does it take?

You must submit your application via the European Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal: [APPLY HERE \[hyperlink\]](#).

² Formally protected IP gives the IP owner exclusive rights to utilise and or commercialise their innovation or brand. Formal IP includes industrial property (patents, trademarks, designs and geographic indications of source) and copyright.

[Page limits]

How does the EIC decide if your proposal will be funded?

[Description of the evaluation process]

Applications will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

Evaluation criteria for Pathfinder	
Excellence (Threshold: 4/5)	
<u>Long-term vision</u>	How convincing is the vision of a radically new deep-tech that has the potential to have a transformative effect to our economy and society?
<u>Science-towards-technology breakthrough</u>	How concrete, novel and ambitious is the proposed scientific breakthrough with respect to the state-of-the-art? What advancement does it provide towards realising the envisioned technology?
<u>Objectives</u>	How concrete and plausible are the proposed objectives? To what extent are research approach and methodology appropriate for achieving them?
<u>Interdisciplinarity</u>	How relevant is the interdisciplinary approach from traditionally distant disciplines for achieving the proposed breakthrough?
Impact (Threshold: 3.5/5)	
<u>Innovation and technology uptake</u>	How suitable and effective are the proposed measures for taking up of the project's innovations by entrepreneurs and innovators for developing them further and for performing initial steps towards commercialisation, including formal protection of the generated IP and, where relevant, establishing start-ups or spin-offs?
<u>Building European R&I capacity</u>	How appropriate and concrete are the proposed measures and plans for building world-leading R&I capacity across Europe?
<u>Communication and Dissemination</u>	How convincing and wide reaching are the proposed measures and plans for public/stakeholder engagement and for raising awareness about the project outcomes, including through Open Science, with respect to their potential to establish new markets and/or address global challenges?
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Threshold 3/5)	

Quality of the consortium: To what extent do the consortium members have all the necessary high quality expertise for performing the project tasks?

Work plan: How coherent and effective are the work plan (work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, time-line, etc.), and risk mitigation measures, in order to achieve the project objectives?

Allocation of resources: How appropriate and effective is the allocation of resources (person-months and equipment) to tasks and consortium members?

For applications with the same score a priority order will be determined according to Annex 2.

What are the main terms and conditions of EIC support?

The terms and conditions related to the EIC financial contribution can be found in the Model Grant Agreement [\[hyperlink\]](#)

Members of consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement, in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement.

[Add here specific IPR provisions related to the obligation to exploit the results and that beneficiaries might be required to provide additional access rights to other beneficiaries of Transition activities]

The total indicative budget for this call is € XXX million.

2. EIC Transition (Open)

- Did your Pathfinder or ERC Proof of Concept project produce results that could be the basis for ground-breaking deep-tech innovations and new businesses?
- Is your novel technology ready for the next steps towards its validation in some relevant application environments?
- Do you envisage building a motivated entrepreneur-lead team to develop the technology maturity and attract investment?

If the answer to each one of these questions is “yes”, then EIC Transition may be the right call for you.

Why should you apply?

EIC Transition funds innovation activities that go beyond the experimental proof of principle in laboratory. It supports both the validation of your novel technology in the lab and in some relevant application environments (by making use of prototyping, formulation, models or other validation tests) as well as the business modelling towards the innovation’s future commercialisation.

Your proposed activities must include further research and development on the results achieved in your previous project and follow user-centric methodologies to increase chances of the innovation’s future acceptance by the market. EIC Transition projects should address, in a balanced way, both technology and market/business dimensions, possibly including iterative learning processes based on early customer or user feedback. These activities should include a suitable mix of research, technology development and validation activities to increase the Technology Readiness Levels³ (TRL) beyond proof of principle to viable demonstrators of the technology in the intended field of application (i.e. up to at least TRL5). It is important to address also commercialisation (market research, business case, prospects for growth, competitive edge, positioning towards potential competitors etc.) and other relevant aspects of regulation, certification and standardisation (if relevant), aimed at getting both the technology and the business idea investment-ready.

EIC Transition aims at maturing both your technology and business idea thus increasing its technology and market readiness. The expected outcomes of your EIC Transition project are investment-ready innovation and a business plan. You must also ensure that the intellectual property generated by your project is formally protected⁴ in an adequate way.

³ Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs) are indicators of the maturity level of particular technologies. See Annex 2 for a full description of TRLs.

⁴ Formally protected IP gives the IP owner exclusive rights to utilise and or commercialise their innovation or brand. Formal IP includes industrial property (patents, trademarks, designs and geographic indications of source) and copyright.

At the end of your Transition project, you should be ready for the next stage which can be to apply for EIC Accelerator or licensing or customer trial or other path to sustainability which should be made clear.

EIC Transition can support a number of different pathways between research, technology development, innovation and the market. Some illustrative examples are:

- Transition to Technology pathway to further develop strategic and high impact technologies that need more time to mature and advance while improving also the market readiness, This pathway may require a collaborative approach between SMEs (including start-ups, spin-offs and entrepreneurs), research performers (e.g. universities, research organisations, industry) and potential users/customers (e.g. hospitals, utilities, industry, regulatory and standardization bodies, public authorities).
- Transition to Market pathway where a SME (including start-ups, spin-offs) takes the lead to take the result of a successful Pathfinder project towards market. The goal is to further mature both the technology and market-readiness. The start-up/spin-off can also be created (e.g. through venture building or not) for the same purpose and include some of the project members.
- Transition to Entrepreneurship pathway to quickly commercialise some of the results from Pathfinder projects, often with higher TRLs. This would require "seed financing" to innovative researchers who have worked on a Pathfinder project and want to become entrepreneurs and turn selected project results into a viable product quickly by looking for a suitable business model.
- Transition via Licensing pathway where an existing SME or company further develops the technology in order to create new or significantly improved products and services.

Can you apply?

As Transition funding is a new scheme, it is currently restricted to applications based on results generated by:

- An EIC Pathfinder project (including grants resulting from EIC pilot Pathfinder, FET-Open and FET-Proactive calls)⁵
- European Research Council (ERC) Proof of Concept grants

In both cases, the project must have its end date between [12] months before the call deadline and [18] months after the call deadline, and must have been running for at least 12 months at the date of the call deadline.

⁵ The eligible calls are: FETOPEN-RIA-2014-2015; FETOPEN-01-2016-2017; FETOPEN-01-2018-2019-2020; H2020-FETPROACT-2014; FETPROACT-01-2016; FETPROACT-01-2018; FETPROACT-EIC-05-2019; FETOPEN-04-2016-2017; FETOPEN-03-2018-2019-2020.

Your proposal must build on results (demonstrated proof of principle) achieved within an eligible Pathfinder or ERC Proof of Concept project. Participation to this call is not restricted to beneficiaries of previous projects, on the contrary new participants are welcome and encouraged to apply. You can apply provided you are owner or IP right holder of the linked Pathfinder or ERC Proof of Concept project results to be further developed. Otherwise, you shall include in your proposal a letter from the relevant grant holder(s) of the linked project that own the result, which confirms the existence of the necessary agreements with you, including on Intellectual Property Rights⁶ (IPR).

You can apply for EIC Transition either as:

- A single legal entity, including SMEs (including start-up or spinout) or a research performing organisation (university, research and technology organisation). Larger companies are not eligible to apply as a single legal entity; or
- A small consortium of maximum five independent legal entities that may for example include universities, research organisations, SMEs or other companies, user/customer organisations or potential end-users.

See Annex [] on eligibility of associated countries and third countries.

Your proposal will only be evaluated if it is admissible and eligible. Check the standard admissibility and eligibility conditions in Annex 2 before you apply.

What support will you receive if your proposal is funded?

You will receive a grant to cover the eligible costs, necessary for the implementation of your project of up to a maximum of € [X] million (or a larger amount, if properly justified). The funding rate of this grant will be 100% of the eligible costs.

EIC takes a pro-active approach of management of funded projects to develop long-term business- and technology-based vision. In your application, you will be asked to define a number of milestones which will be used to review progress. Such progress reviews will be used to assess whether your project should continue on the same basis, whether it should be re-orientated, or if it has lost economic or technological relevance in which case it may be terminated.

EIC Programme Managers are expected to take part in the management of Transition projects. Your project may also be included in one or more portfolios of projects overseen by Programme Managers and you may be requested to participate in relevant portfolio activities together with other projects or contacted by an EIC Programme Manager to discuss your project and possible links to other projects or initiatives.

⁶ Further details on the IPR requirements to submit your EIC Transition proposal are published on the FAQ with link xxx.

In addition to funding, projects will receive free access to a wide range of Business Acceleration Services and partnering events. You can find out more about these in Section IV of this work programme.

How do you apply; how long does it take?

You must submit your application via the European Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal: [APPLY HERE](#) [hyperlink]

The call deadline for submitting your full proposal is [xx/yy/2021]. Sections 1 to 3 of part B of your proposal must consist of a maximum of [25] A4 pages. See Annex 2 for further details.

If your proposal successfully passes the remote evaluation phase, you will be invited for a face-to-face interview, which will be organised approximately [8-9] weeks after the call deadline. At the interview you will be assessed by a panel of jury members. More detailed information about the format of the face-to-face interview will be communicated to you in advance of interview. You will be informed about the result of the interview within [2-3] weeks.

You will be informed about the outcome of the evaluation on [5 months after call deadline] (indicative), and your grant agreement may be signed by [8 months after call deadline] (indicative).

How does the EIC decide if your proposal will be funded?

Independent experts will evaluate and score your proposal against each evaluation criterion. The overall score for each evaluation criterion will be the median of the corresponding scores attributed by the individual evaluators. The total score of your proposal will be the sum of the three median scores from the three evaluation criteria.

Starting with the highest-scoring proposal and in descending order, applicants are invited to a face-to-face jury interview in Brussels until either the total cumulative amount of EU funding requested is as close as possible to twice the call budget available, or all proposals that passed the evaluation criteria thresholds have been accounted for. You may be represented by a maximum of [five] persons. Only staff mentioned in the proposal and involved in the future project implementation can represent your proposal at the interview. Representation by other persons is not allowed.

EIC Programme Managers may participate in the interviews. The jury will be composed of a maximum of six jury members and may include an EIC Programme Manager. During the interview you should convincingly pitch your proposal to the jury, which may ask you questions aimed at clarifying various aspects of your proposal, in particular those indicated below under the evaluation criteria. The jury will recommend your application for funding or not ('Go' or 'No-Go') and will not provide a separate scoring against the criteria.

Applications will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria:

Evaluation criteria for Transition
Excellence (Threshold: 3.5/5)
<u>Technological breakthrough</u> : Does the technology have a high degree of novelty compared to other technologies available or in development; to what extent does this novelty create the potential for new applications and functionalities?
<u>Technology feasibility and objectives</u> : Do the results of the technology demonstration and validation so far indicate the potential for application; how appropriate are the objectives for the planned technology development and validation of the innovation in relevant application environments?
<u>Business and market fit</u> : How well do the proposed business model and product features address commercialisation and other relevant aspects (intellectual property rights, regulation, certification and standardisation)? How will potential users or customers be involved to test potential demand and acceptability?
Impact (Threshold: 3.5/5)
<u>Economic and/or societal benefits</u> : How effectively can the proposed innovation and its related activities create substantial demand and create new European/global markets? To what extent is the proposed innovation expected to generate other positive impacts (employment, societal, environmental, scientific, etc.)?
<u>Entrepreneurship</u> : How suitable are the proposed measures to build a strong and motivated entrepreneur-lead team with necessary competences in technology, product engineering, and business development to bring the innovation to the market?
<u>Partnerships and investment-readiness</u> : How effective are the proposed measures to facilitate the pathways towards attracting investment and commercialisation of the project outcomes (including through IP management and Open Science); have key partners willing to be involved been identified?
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Threshold 3/5)
<u>Quality of the team</u> : To what extent do the applicant(s) bring the necessary high-quality expertise, capabilities and motivation to create a unique commercial value from the emerging technology, move decisively towards innovation and attract investment?

Milestones and Work plan: Are a number of milestones defined to track progress towards objectives? How coherent and effective are the work plan (work packages, tasks, deliverables, time-line, etc.), the innovation methods and the risk mitigation methods, in order to reach the milestones and to achieve the project objectives?

Allocation of resources: How appropriate and effective is the allocation of resources (person-months and equipment) to tasks and partners?

Each evaluation criterion holds the same weight for the calculation of the overall score attributed to the proposal.

For applications with the same score a priority order will be determined according to Annex 2.

You will receive as feedback of the evaluation an evaluation summary report (ESR) from the remote phase. If you have been invited for an interview, you will also receive a report by the evaluation committee.

[Proposals meeting all evaluation criteria thresholds but not retained for funding by the EIC may receive a Seal of Excellence allowing Member States' funding bodies and innovation programmes to provide you with a grant for your innovation activities, whether out of national budget or of Structural Funds appropriations. To be eligible to receive a "Seal of Excellence" you must give consent in your application that your data can be shared with other funding bodies. If your proposal receives a Seal of Excellence, you will be eligible to resubmit your proposal to next EIC Transition call in 2022.]

What are the main terms and conditions of EIC support?

The terms and conditions related to the EIC financial contribution can be found in the Model Grant Agreement [\[hyperlink\]](#).

Members of consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement, in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement.

To enable greater flexibility, the implementation of the support awarded under the EIC Transition will be reviewed periodically against predefined milestones. The reviews will assess whether the activities foreseen to reach the milestone have been completed and will consider the results and outputs against the overall objectives for the EIC support. The reviews may be undertaken by EIC Programme Managers as well as by independent experts. Following the reviews against milestones, the EIC support may be suspended, reoriented or, if duly justified, terminated. Reviews may also result in changes to ongoing or planned milestones. In addition to the reviews, you will be expected to keep the EIC regularly informed of progress and pre-alerted in case of difficulties.

[Add here specific IPR provisions related to the obligation to exploit the results and that beneficiaries might be required to provide additional access rights to other beneficiaries of Transition activities]

The total indicative budget for this call is € XXX million.

3. EIC Accelerator (Open)

- Do you have a high-impact innovative product, service or business model that could create new markets or disrupt existing ones in Europe and worldwide?
- Are you a start-up or a small and medium size enterprise (SME) with the ambition and commitment to scale up?
- Are you looking for substantial funding but the risks involved are too high for private investors alone to fund?

If your answers to the above questions are “yes”, then the EIC Accelerator may be for you.

Why should you apply?

The EIC Accelerator supports companies (principally start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises - 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 €0.5 to 17.5 million and Business Acceleration services (see Section IV).

The EIC Accelerator focuses in particular 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”). Such innovations often struggle to attract financing because the risks and time period involved are too high. Funding and support from the EIC Accelerator is designed to enable such innovators to attract the full investment amounts needed for scale up in a shorter timeframe.

The EIC Accelerator is open to innovations **in any field of technology or application**. However, innovations that harm the environment or social welfare or that are designed primarily for military applications will not be supported.

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 or higher).

Can you apply?

In order to apply you must meet the following **eligibility** conditions.

- You must apply as a single company classified as a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) meaning in particular fewer than 250 employees, and not a subsidiary of or majority-owned by a larger company (see Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC6 for the full definition of SME). In exceptional cases and for rapid scale-up purpose only (TRL 9) and without any grant support, small mid-cap companies with up to 500 employees may apply.

- Your company must be established within an EU Member State or eligible Associated Country. A list of eligible Associated Countries for the EIC can be found at Annex [XX]

Check the standard admissibility and eligibility conditions in Annex 2 before you apply.

Limitations apply if you who have **previously submitted an unsuccessful application** to the EIC Accelerator. You may submit a second application without restriction, but will be expected to have made improvements compared to your first application. However, should your application be rejected a second time, you will not be allowed to apply again for a period of 24 months from the date of your last submission.

If you are currently a participant in an eligible project funded by Horizon Europe or Horizon 2020 then you may be able to apply through your existing project under the “Fast-track” scheme. At a first stage, this scheme applies to grants under the EIC Pathfinder and Transition (including EIC pilot); ERC Proof of Concept; and certain Knowledge and Innovation Communities supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). Details are provided in Annex [...].

What support will you receive if your proposal is funded?

The EIC Accelerator provides **blended finance** which is composed of:

- An **“investment” component** in the form of equity⁷ or guarantee⁸ (e.g. for bank loan, investors). The minimum investment component is €0.5 million and the maximum is €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). The specific terms of investment will be considered on a case-by-case basis and negotiated with your company in the course of the due diligence process performed by the EIC Fund. In the case of equity, investments should not exceed 25% of the voting shares of the company, and will be made with a long average perspective on return on the investment (7-10 years) with a maximum of 15 years (‘patient capital’). The Fund’s main guiding principles are described in the [Investment Guidelines].
- 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

⁷ Equity investment includes direct equity and quasi-equity investment. Quasi-equity is a repayable instrument combining debt and equity, linked to future revenues. For example, the EIC Fund may invest using convertible debt type of instruments, like convertible loans. A convertible loan is debt that converts into equity at a specific milestone, typically the valuation at the next investment round. It bears a lower interest rate and postpones valuation and dilution.

⁸ Guarantees are not available at the application stage, but may be offered for successful projects as a result of the jury interviews.

standardisation requirements, intellectual property management, and marketing approval (e.g. Technology Readiness Levels 6 to 8). Eligible costs are reimbursed up to a maximum of 70 percent. 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 equity investment. Applicants are not required to request a grant component and small mid-caps (i.e. companies that do not comply with the definition of an SME but have less than 500 employees) are not eligible to receive grants. The grant component should normally not exceed €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.

By derogation, you may request a **“grant component only”** (i.e. maximum €2.5 million to cover TRL 5/6 to 8 and without requesting an investment component for TRL 9) under the following conditions:

- You can 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 TRL 9 expenditures normally covered by the “investment component”.
- Your innovation is based on a scientific discovery or novel technology and still requires significant work to validate and demonstrate in relevant environments (e.g. TRLs 5-6) in order to properly assess its commercial potential. Such innovations may include, but are not limited to, those based on research results from the EIC Pathfinder and Transition, as well as European Research Council.
- Your company has not previously received grant-only support under the EIC Accelerator.

In both cases, your application will have to include a milestone at mid- term, for the EIC to assess deployment perspectives and capabilities. At that stage, if milestone assessment concludes that your innovation activities are well under way and that your innovation has thus the potential for deployment, you will be asked to a) demonstrate that you have procured the necessary resources from third parties to provide for any remaining innovation activities and deployment activities including scale-up or b) accept an EIC “equity” investment, including to complement any other third party investments if insufficient. Such support will be awarded directly, based on the milestone review and due diligence by the EIC Fund, and without having to resubmit a proposal.

In addition to funding, successful applicants will receive free access to a wide range of Business Acceleration services and partnering events. You can find out more about these in Section IV of this work programme.

If your application is evaluated positively but not funded you may be awarded a **Seal of Excellence** allowing Member States' funding bodies and innovation programmes to provide you with a grant for your innovation activities under the same conditions as the "grant component" of the blended finance, whether out of national budget or of Structural Funds appropriations. To be eligible to receive a "Seal of Excellence" you must give consent in your application that your data can be shared with other funding bodies.

How do you apply; how long does it take?

The application process consists of a number of steps:

- Short applications which may be submitted at any time and which will be evaluated on a first come, first served basis;
- If successful, you will be invited to prepare a full application, where you will have access to support through a dedicated platform and independent experts and coaches;
- Full applications will first be assessed through a remote evaluation. If successful, you will be invited to a face to face interview as the final step in the selection process.

You may submit a **short application** at any time via the [European Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal: [APPLY HERE](#) hyperlink]. The short application consists of:

- A 5-page form where you must respond to set questions on your innovation, your potential market and your team;
- A pitchdeck of up to 10 slides following a set format;
- 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 [4] weeks, you will receive the result of your short application specifying whether or not your application met the criteria to proceed to a full application. In both cases, you will receive feedback from the independent evaluators.

If your short application is unsuccessful, you may resubmit a revised short application one further time in which you are expected to make significant improvements in line with the feedback. If your application is assessed to not meet the criteria on the second time, then you will not be able to submit again for [24] months from the date of the second submission.

If your application is successful then you will be invited to prepare a **full application** 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 2021 are:

- [xxx]

- [xxx]
- [xxx]

The cut-off dates for 2022 will be published in Autumn 2021.

You must prepare your full application on the [EIC online platform] which includes a number of automatic checks and feedback to guide you through the process. The full application consists of a full business plan and full information on your company's finances and structure. You will also need to propose a set of milestones to be used as a basis for the EIC to manage the funding for your innovation.

To support the development of your full application, you will receive a voucher for [3] days of coaching from one of the business coaches from the EIC Business Acceleration Services.

The automatic checks and feedback and coaching advice are designed to help you prepare your application. However, it is your decision how to respond to the feedback and advice, **and the content of your application is your sole responsibility.**

All personal data and information in your application will be kept strictly confidential. However, before submitting your full application, you will be offered the opportunity to share certain data and information with investors who have undergone a prior EIC Fund due diligence process and who may wish to invest in your company. You will also be asked for consent to share your data with other funding bodies in case your application is awarded a Seal of Excellence.

Once you **submit your full application**, it will be assessed against the criteria by independent experts. Within [5-6] weeks you will be informed whether your application meets the criteria, in which case you will be invited to attend a face to face interview. If your application does not meet the criteria, you will be allowed to resubmit a revised full application to one of the [2] following cut-offs. You may also be awarded a Seal of Excellence if your application met the excellence and impact criteria.

Face-to-face interviews will be organised approximately [8-9] weeks after the cut-off date. At the interview, you will be assessed by a panel of a maximum of jury members. EIC Programme Managers and representatives from the EIC Fund may participate as observers in the, but with no voting rights. More detailed information about the format of the face-to-face interview will be communicated to you in the invitation. You will be informed about the result of the interview within [2-3] weeks.

If you are successful at the interview, you will be invited to negotiate and then sign an initial agreement for the grant component, which will include a first pre-financing payment. At the same time, your company will be subject to a due diligence process by the EIC Fund in order to proceed with the negotiation of the investment component (i.e. terms and milestones). During this stage, the EIC Fund will also look for other investors. At the end of this process, which should take between [2 and 6] months, an investment agreement will be concluded

with the EIC Fund and relevant corresponding changes will be incorporated in the agreement on the grant component.

How does the EIC decide if your proposal will be funded?

The EIC Accelerator is highly selective and only the very best proposals can be funded. Your proposal will be assessed on its merits by leading experts and the Commission will ensure open and fair competition to all eligible proposals submitted.

Short applications will be assessed as soon as they are submitted. A first check will be made against the eligibility conditions set out in Section 2. Your short application will then be sent to two external and independent experts who will be matched against the area of technology and application of your innovation. Evaluators will look at different aspects of your proposal: the technology, market knowledge, commercialisation plan, and the financial angle. They will assess your application against the criteria specified below.

Each expert will assess whether your short application meets each of the evaluation criteria and give a 'Go' or 'No Go'. If both experts give a 'Go' for all the criteria, then your short application will be successful and you will be invited to prepare a full application.

If both experts give a 'No Go' for at least one of the evaluation criteria, then your application is considered unsuccessful.

If one expert gives a 'Go' against all of the evaluation criteria and the other expert gives a 'No Go' for at least one of the criteria, then your application will be sent to two additional external experts from a dedicated pool. If at least one of the two additional experts gives a 'Go' then the proposal will be allowed to prepare a full proposal.

Full applications will be assessed following the cut-off dates listed above. Your full application will then be sent to [two] external and independent experts who will be matched against the area of technology and application of your innovation who will assess your application against the criteria set out below.

Each expert will assess whether your full application meets each of the criteria and give a 'Go' or 'No Go'. If both experts give a 'Go' for all the criteria, then your full application will be successful and you will be invited to a face to face interview.

If either of the experts give a 'No Go' for at least one of the criteria, then your application is considered unsuccessful. You may resubmit your full application one further time, but you will be expected to make significant improvements in particular for the criteria for which your initial application was assessed to have not met. If you are rejected a second time you will not be allowed to resubmit for 24 months and must start with a short application.

If your application meets the first 2 criteria but does not pass the criterion 3 'Financial risk', you may be awarded a Seal of Excellence provided that you have agreed that your data be made available to other funders.

At the face-to-face interviews, the jury members will have prior access to your full application and may also have access to an initial opinion from the EIC Fund on the equity component and an opinion by a specific expert on the technological or scientific basis of your innovation. Jury members will make a collective vote based on their assessment against the criteria for your proposal to be funded or not.

In recommending your application for funding, the jury may propose another combination of components, including substitution of grant by reimbursable advance.⁹ The jury may also make recommendations to be taken into account when negotiating the grant or investment component, including on the milestones and the valuation. You will be invited to conclude the initial agreement on the grant component and start the full due diligence for the investment component and finalisation of the grant component.

If your proposal is not recommended for funding, the jury will decide whether:

- a) Your proposal should be awarded a Seal of Excellence on condition that you have agreed that your data be made available to other funders. The jury may also decide that you would benefit from some EIC Business Acceleration Services.
- b) You should be allowed to resubmit your application directly to the next set of face-to-face interviews. In this case, you will receive an additional voucher for [xx] days of coaching. Such a resubmission will only be permitted once.
- c) You should not be allowed to resubmit your application. In this case, your company will not be able to submit a new short application for the following [24] months.

Applications will be assessed according to the following evaluation criteria.

Evaluation criteria for Accelerator
Excellence
<u>Breakthrough and market creating nature:</u> Does the innovation have a high degree of novelty – compared to existing products, services and business models – to create a new market or significant impact existing market? <i>(Also assessed for short applications)</i>

⁹ In cases where the amount at stake is rather low and the innovation cycle (market deployment) is short, the jury may offer you a "reimbursable advance" rather than a grant, which will also be up to €2.5 million and will reimburse up to 70 percent of the eligible costs of innovation activities. The reimbursable advance will have to be paid back to the EU on an agreed schedule as an interest-free loan. In case you are not able to reimburse or do not want to reimburse, the reimbursable advance shall be transformed into equity. In case of bankruptcy, the reimbursable advance will be considered as a grant and hence written off.

<p><u>Timing:</u> Is the timing right for this innovation in terms of market, user, societal or scientific of technological trends and developments?</p> <p><i>(Also assessed for short applications)</i></p>
<p><u>Technological feasibility:</u> Is the innovation based on a technology or technologies that have been adequately assessed at least in a laboratory environment and relevant environments to characterise the potential and assess the level of risk (at least TRL 5/6)?</p>
<p><u>Intellectual Property:</u> Does your company have the necessary Intellectual Property Rights to ensure freedom to operate and adequate protection of the idea?</p>
<p>Impact</p>
<p><u>Scale-up potential:</u> Does the innovation have scale up potential, including the potential to develop new markets and impact on the growth of the company? Are the associated financial needs well assessed and realistic?</p> <p><i>(Also assessed for short applications)</i></p>
<p><u>Broader impact:</u> Will the innovation, if successful commercialised achieve broader societal, economic, environmental or climate impacts?</p> <p><i>(Also assessed for short applications)</i></p>
<p><u>Market fit:</u> Has the potential market for the innovation been adequately assessed, including conditions and growth rates, identification of potential customers and users, and definition of unique selling points and key differentiation from competitors?</p>
<p><u>Commercialisation strategy:</u> Is there a convincing and well thought-through strategy for commercialisation, including regulatory approvals/compliance needed, time to market/deployment, and business and revenue model?</p>
<p><u>Key partners:</u> Have the key partners required to develop and commercialise the innovation been identified and engaged, including their roles/competences and a sufficient level of commitment and incentivisation?</p>
<p>Implementation and Financial Risk</p>
<p><u>Team:</u> Does the team have the capability and motivation to implement the innovation proposal and bring it to the market? Is there a plan to acquire any critical competencies which are currently missing?</p> <p><i>(also assessed for short applications; this aspect will be assessed in depth in the jury interviews)</i></p>

Milestones: Is there a clear implementation plan with defined milestones, work packages and deliverables, together with realistic resources and timings?

Non-bankability: Does the nature and level of risk of the investment in your innovation mean that market actors are unwilling to commit the full amount alone? Is there evidence that market actors would be willing to invest, either alongside the EIC or at a later stage?

Risk mitigation: Have the main risks been identified, together with measures to take to mitigate them?

What are the main terms and conditions of EIC support?

Model agreements for both the grant component and investment component can be found on the EIC website. You should note in particular, the following specific conditions of EIC Accelerator funding:

- The initial agreement for the grant component will be in force on a temporary basis, and will be modified to integrate any relevant changes concluded in the agreement on the investment component, in particular milestones and related activities and budget. In case no agreement is reached on the investment component for reasons which adversely affect the agreement on the grant component, the agreement for the grant component may be terminated.
- To enable greater flexibility, the implementation of the support awarded under the EIC Accelerator will be reviewed periodically against predefined milestones. The reviews will assess whether the activities foreseen to reach the milestone have been completed and will consider the results and outputs against the overall objectives for the EIC support. The reviews may be undertaken by EIC Programme Managers as well as by independent experts. Following the reviews against milestones, the EIC support may be suspended, reoriented or, if duly justified, terminated. Reviews may also result in changes to ongoing or planned milestones. In addition to the reviews, you will be expected to keep the EIC regularly informed of progress and pre-alerted in case of difficulties.
- For the investment component, you will enter into legal negotiations to structure the contractual agreement at the end of a process initiated and conducted by the EIC Fund (e.g. pre-due diligence, due diligence, parallel market test to seek for co-investors, etc.). The size of the equity investment may be changed (and the conditions of the contract adjusted), should there be other investors willing to substitute fully or partially to the EIC Fund. You will be asked for your consent before other investors are contacted or engaged in negotiations.

III – EIC Strategic challenges

EIC Pathfinder Challenges

EIC Pathfinder Challenges aim to establish a solid basis for a new or emerging technology area by supporting high-risk/high-gain research and development on such future technologies ('deep-tech'). They pick up on weak signals from science and technology areas, and turn ideas for new technological possibilities into real opportunities for innovation. EIC Pathfinder Challenges establish a global reference of excellence and become a source of inspiration for young researchers and entrepreneurs, willing to go into something completely new.

Each EIC Pathfinder Challenge is overseen by a dedicated EIC Programme Manager that develops and manages the portfolio of projects based on a technology-based strategic plan towards achieving the full research and innovation potential of the Challenge.

The concept of active portfolio management by EIC Programme Managers is key to the success of EIC Pathfinder Challenges. Through such a call, the EIC aims to establish a group of projects that explore different perspectives, competing approaches or complementary aspects of the Challenge's technological vision. Together they create the scientific and technological building blocks of a radically new technology. While doing so, they also build new bridges between a wide range of relevant disciplines, if relevant including from the social sciences and humanities. The projects within the portfolio of the Challenge are expected to interact and exchange in order to learn from each other, progress together towards common goals, discover new territories and create new opportunities. The whole will be bigger than the sum of its parts.

1. EIC Pathfinder Challenge – [title] call text

The challenge - [title]

[An introductory paragraph on the Challenge including specific objectives, scope and expected outcomes, identification of any specific expertise needed and a clear vision of why the topic is worth pursuing and its overall potential impact]

With this Pathfinder [title] Challenge the EIC seeks to [overall goal of the Challenge].

Why should you apply?

If you have an ambitious idea to contribute to realising the vision of Pathfinder Challenges then this call may be for you. In this Challenge the EIC is particularly interested in your ideas

for new deep-tech: technology that becomes possible thanks to cutting edge science in the area of [...].

You should apply if you have a potential project that would contribute to the specific objectives of the Challenge].

Specifically, your project must aim to deliver, by its end, at least one of the *specific outcomes defined for this challenge*.

With projects funded under this Pathfinder [...] Challenge, the EIC aims to build a portfolio in [...] with a medium to long-term business goal and a technology-based strategic plan under the supervision of the EIC Programme Manager.

You should apply if you are also highly motivated to co-create a vibrant and impactful innovation community to lead the [...] technological and market development with an EIC Programme Manager and the other projects in the [...] portfolio. Your project must also plan for innovation community-building activities to be carried out with other projects of the [...] portfolio and the EIC Programme Manager.

Project outcomes must also include top-level scientific publications as well as an adequate formal protection¹⁰ of the generated intellectual property (IP).

Before you decide to apply, you are strongly encouraged to read the [Challenge Guidance] of the Pathfinder [...] Challenge that will be published at least [4] months before the call deadline on the EIC website and the European Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal. This [Challenge Guidance] will provide you more information about the technical and scientific specifications that relate to the specific objectives of this Challenge; a detailed assessment of the state of the art and related projects in the field; potential societal, economic, environmental impacts if the objectives are achieved; as well as relevant references.

Can you apply?

In order to apply, your proposal must [*any eligibility requirements specific to the Challenge incl. elements (specific application focus or technology, etc..) of interest or not*]

This Pathfinder [...] Challenge supports [*collaborative research and innovation or mono beneficiary*]. Your proposal must be submitted by the coordinator on behalf of the consortium [(if applicable)] that includes at least [*specific to the given challenge*] independent legal entities, each one established in a different Member State [or associated country and with at least one of them established in a Member State.] The legal entities may for example be

¹⁰ Formally protected IP gives the IP owner exclusive rights to utilise and or commercialise their innovation or brand. Formal IP includes industrial property (patents, trademarks, designs and geographic indications of source) and copyright.

universities, research organizations, SMEs, start-ups, natural persons. [*or requirement for a mono beneficiary*]. See Annex 2 on eligibility of associated countries and third countries.

Your proposal will only be evaluated if it is admissible and eligible. Check the standard admissibility and eligibility conditions in Annex 2 before you apply.

What support will you receive if your proposal is funded?

You will receive a grant with an EU contribution of up to [€ X million *specific to the given Challenge*] (or a larger amount, if properly justified) to cover 100% of the eligible costs necessary for the implementation of your project. The funding rate of this grant will be 100% of the eligible costs.

The EIC takes a pro-active approach to the management of funded projects to develop long-term business- and technology-based vision. Your project will be part of a portfolio of projects related to the theme of the present call and it might be added to others. Therefore, you will be requested to participate in relevant portfolio activities.

[Pathfinder projects are eligible to receive additional grants of up to €50 000 to undertake complementary activities to explore potential pathways to commercialisation. The decision on whether to allocate this additional grant will be taken during the implementation of the grant and subject to a project review].

In addition to funding, successful applicants will receive free access to a wide range of Business Acceleration Services and partnering events. You can find out more about these in Section IV of this work programme.

How do you apply; how long does it take?

[Expression of Interest

You can submit an Expression of Interest, but you are not obliged to. You can [download or filled online] the maximum 2-page Expression of Interest template from the [European Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal] and submit it by [XX]] via the [EIC Community IT Platform]. The Expression of Interest requires the description of the following:

- the overall goal and specific objectives of the project;
- the potential innovation(s) and how they go beyond the state of the art;
- how the overall goal, the specific objectives and the potential innovation(s) are responding to those of the Pathfinder [] Challenge.

Proposal submission

You must submit your proposal via the European Funding & Tender Opportunities Portal: [APPLY HERE](#) [hyperlink]. The call deadline for submitting your proposal is [call deadline].

Sections 1 to 3 of the part B of your proposal, corresponding respectively to the evaluation criteria Excellence, Impact, and Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation, must consist of a maximum of [25] A4 pages. See Annex 2 for further details.

You will be informed about the outcome of the evaluation on [5 months after call deadline] (indicative), and your grant agreement may be signed by [8 months after call deadline] (indicative).

How does the EIC decide if your proposal will be funded?

Your proposal will be evaluated in two steps:

- a remote evaluation by independent experts who will assess each application separately against the defined evaluation criteria;
- an evaluation committee who will consider all proposals passing the first step together in order to assess the best portfolio of projects in order to achieve the specific objectives of the Challenge. The evaluation committee will be composed of independent experts and EIC Programme Managers.

As a first step, your proposal will be evaluated by independent experts on each of the following evaluation criteria:

Evaluation criteria for Pathfinder Challenge – [title]
Excellence (Threshold: 4/5)
<u>Goal and Objectives</u> : How relevant and effective [is / are] the project's deliverables in contributing to the overall goal and the specific objectives of the Challenge? How concrete and plausible are the proposed objectives?
<u>Breakthroughs</u> : How novel and ambitious are the proposed technological breakthroughs with respect to the state-of-the-art? How relevant and effective are they in achieving the expected outcomes of the Challenge?
<u>Methodology</u> : To what extent is the Research, Development & Innovation methodology described in the proposal appropriate to reach its objectives? How effective is the range of interdisciplinarity in the planned research activities to achieve the proposal objectives?
Impact (Threshold: 3.5/5)
<u>Community Building</u> : How suitable and effective are the proposed measures and plans to build a vibrant and impactful European innovation community in the field? To what extent

the proposed community building activities contribute to the innovation community objectives of the Pathfinder Challenge's portfolio?
<u>Exploitation</u> : How appropriate and effective are the proposed measures for taking up of the project's outcomes by innovators and SMEs, and performing the initial steps to bring them closer to the market, including IP formal protection? How innovative are the expected outcomes of the project to build the basis of economic or social potential impacts of the Challenge?
<u>Communication and Dissemination</u> : How convincing and wide-reaching are the proposed measures and plans for public/stakeholder engagement and for raising awareness about the project outcomes, including through Open Science, with respect to their potential to economic or social impacts of the Challenge?
Quality and efficiency of the implementation (Threshold 3/5)
<u>Quality of the applicant/consortium</u> [<i>depends if mono or multi-beneficiaries</i>]: To what extent do(es) the applicant(s) have all the necessary high-quality expertise for performing the project tasks?
<u>Work plan</u> : How coherent and effective are the work plan (work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, time-line, etc.), and the risk mitigation measures in order to achieve the project objectives and impacts? To what extent are all the tasks/activities needed and there are no duplications?
<u>Allocation of resources</u> : How appropriate and effective is the allocation of resources (person-months and equipment) to tasks and consortium members?

The score for each evaluation criterion will be the [average or median] of the individual evaluators' scores. The overall proposal score will be calculated as the [sum of the average or median scores] from the evaluation criteria, all having the same weight.

All proposals that meet the thresholds defined in the evaluation criteria will be considered in the second step.

As a second step, the evaluation committee will establish a list of proposals to be funded, based on the evaluation scores and on each proposal's contribution to the setting up of a consistent portfolio of projects. Your proposal should therefore specify which objectives, or aspects of objectives, it addresses taking into account the technical specifications in the Challenge Guidance (e.g., potential applications, range and expected outcomes of the

projects, and the associated risks for achieving them, TRLs of the different tools and technologies proposed).

The evaluation committee may also propose adjustments to the proposals in as far as needed for the consistency of the portfolio approach. These adjustments shall be in conformity with the conditions for participation and comply with the principle of equal treatment.

As a feedback, all applicants will receive a collation of the comments from the individual reports or excerpts from them. Applicants of proposals above threshold assessed further by the evaluation committee will also receive summary comments of the committee's assessment.

What are the main terms and conditions of EIC support?

The terms and conditions related to the EIC financial contribution can be found in the Model Grant Agreement [\[hyperlink\]](#)

Members of consortium are required to conclude a consortium agreement, in principle prior to the signature of the grant agreement.

[Add here specific IPR provisions related to the obligation to exploit the results and that beneficiaries might be required to provide additional access rights to other beneficiaries of Transition activities]

[Other specific conditions of the given Challenge]

The total indicative budget for this call is € XXX million.

2. EIC Transition Challenges

[To be inserted]

3. EIC Accelerator Challenges

[To be inserted]

4. EIC Prizes

EIC Prizes aim to help develop novel and breakthrough solutions to global challenges, bring in new actors and develop new communities. The EIC Prizes are particularly ambitious concerning the societal problems to be addressed and their scope is also linked to strategic policies of other parts of the EU Framework Programme, including missions and other relevant funding bodies. Moreover, they call for breakthrough solutions from innovators, aiming to demonstrate the feasibility or potential of particular technologies and promote uptake.

The objectives of the prize contests are to solve a problem, without prescribing a specific solution to be implemented. The contests are built on simple, clear, comprehensive and objective targets that must be reached to win the contest. Opportunities for cooperation with organisations able to provide complementary support (such as enterprises, universities, research organisations, business accelerators, charities and foundations) will be explored.

Specific characteristics for each Prize will be defined in the individual rules of contest, which lay down conditions for submission and participation, detailed award criteria (scoring and the weighting methodology), and the evaluation process.

IV – EIC Community and Business Acceleration Services

1. EIC Business Acceleration Services Global offer

Why these activities?

The EIC support goes far beyond funding and it aims at accelerating EIC innovations and growth of top deep tech companies. In order to further leverage EIC investments, as EIC supported researcher, innovator or entrepreneur you will be provided with access to a range of tailor-made business acceleration services (BAS). The EIC uses its Pan-European reach to connect you with partners from all around Europe, across borders and will also contribute to further develop the Innovation Ecosystem in Europe.

Who can benefit from the offer?

All the EIC supported beneficiaries (EIC Accelerator, Transition to Innovation Activities and EIC Pathfinder). Some of the Business Acceleration Services could also be made available to the EIC Accelerator applicants (invited to prepare a full application), Seal of Excellence companies¹¹ as well as innovators and companies coming from other European or national initiatives that are connected to the EIC. All of the above become members of the EIC Community.

What is offered?

The EIC Business Acceleration Services are structured around three main pillars:

- ***Access to coaches, mentors, expertise and training***

EIC researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs will be able to benefit from tailor-made coaching, mentoring, expertise and training delivered by specialised providers and adapted to their innovation stage.

Business coaching focuses on providing tailor made insights on business development shortcomings and guidance to improve the performance. Coaching topics cover the entire entrepreneurial and innovation endeavour from challenging the value proposition and business model, improving strategy and investor business case, building the team and leadership, to international expansion. **Mentoring** aims to develop fit-for-purpose business and leadership skills such as resilience, tenacity and strategic insight of the individual founders and CEOs. The impact is especially high when mentors share their own experience with business innovation and fundraising.

¹¹ Seal of Excellence companies will have access to all BAS services except those linked to the direct management of the project like investor mentoring provided alongside management of the EIC equity and access to expertise through vouchers.

Coaching and Mentoring are delivered by qualified, experienced business coaches, entrepreneurs, investors. Specific mentoring will be provided for blended finance beneficiaries of the EIC Accelerator along the management of the equity part by the EIC Fund. When looking for co-investors, the EIC Fund will also incentivise investors to provide mentoring tasks and independent advice to the company on existing co-investment opportunities.

As part of the proactive portfolio management by Programme Managers, **access to specific expertise, trainings, incubation or acceleration** can be provided to meet individual needs of the EIC beneficiaries and their innovations. Such services provided by professional service providers could include: expertise in the area of IP and IPR, legal & financial advisory, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), certification and standardisation, assistance in negotiations, access to entrepreneurial and innovation/IP strategy trainings, prototyping workshops, business plan development oriented summer schools, boot camps, or incubators and accelerators.

This service offer would complement the Programme Managers' toolkit to effectively equip deep tech researchers, innovators and founders, nurture entrepreneurship, lead towards commercialisation, incubate and scale-up new ventures. The deployment of such services will be subject to recommendation from the Programme Manager/EIC Fund Investment Manager, if a similar service can't be provided by national or European initiatives, eg. EEN or IPR Helpdesk.

Access to specific expertise and training or acceleration services will mainly be provided through vouchers which are linked to a pool of certified ecosystem actors and service providers managed by the European Commission. In case of coaching, EIC Accelerator applicants invited to submit a full application, would receive a voucher for [3] days of coaching and Seal of Excellence companies for an additional 3 days. Coaching days for funded EIC beneficiaries would depend on the input from Programme Managers.

- ***Access to global partners (leading corporates, investors, procurers, distributors, clients)***

The Business Acceleration Services facilitate cooperation and co-creation with international business partners: leading corporates, investors, procurers, distributors, clients. This includes exploration of commercialisation potential with industry, dedicated and impact focused matching events (e.g. Corporate Days, Procurers Days), venture client model, structured pilot & trials collaborations with corporates and private and public innovation procurers.

SME beneficiaries will be offered a specific support when expanding to new markets within Europe and abroad in form of participation to global business trade fairs, visiting major European innovation hubs and specific soft landing programmes.

The EIC with support of the EIC Fund will facilitate collaboration with (co-) investors for the EIC Community. The service will be supported through a dedicated matching platform, for both investments and tailor-made services including mentoring, strategic advice, curated presentation to investors' networks as well as investment readiness preparation and pitching sessions.

The most mature and promising EIC companies will be able to benefit from curated services, tailor made to their needs connecting them to top level corporates and investors, supporting them to raise further funding or succeed in an IPO.

Unless specified otherwise, all above services are open to all EIC beneficiaries and other member of the EIC Community based on an application and selection process for each event or service. Depending on the type of service, a pre-selection by business partners/experts can be applied.

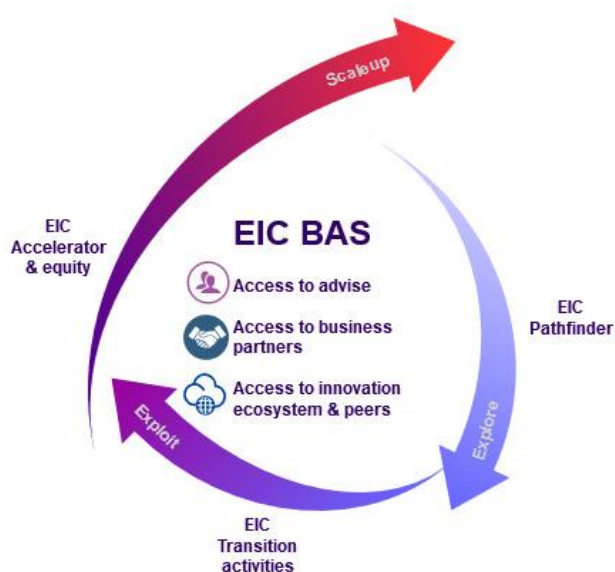
- ***Access to innovation ecosystem and peers***

The EIC ambition is to engage partners from across the European innovation ecosystem within the EIC Community, in order to benefit from cross-fertilisation and diversity inspiring innovation and creativity. It aims to stimulate unprecedented and unforeseeable encounters between peer inventors, researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs as well as other actors from the ecosystem, including corporates, investors, business angels, mentors and coaches, innovation procurers, innovation agencies, business associations, accelerators, incubators, technology transfer offices and many more.

The EIC Community rely on the **EIC Community business platform**: an exclusive, virtual meeting place, where beneficiaries can connect with their peers and leverage potential business partnerships complemented by Community activities. It hosts matching and

collaboration features including partner search, groups as well as stories and event calendars. New features would consist on:

EIC Marketplace that exposes EIC results and IP in a pro-active way to potential partners but also investors and other entrepreneurs that could take it further or incorporate in their innovations and the **challenge based platform** where any EIC Community member can post a challenge and ask the Community to provide solutions. The EIC Community platform is based on individual membership access rights but has a public page enhancing the overall EIC branding and visibility. To further strengthen the Business Acceleration



Services' scope and provide even more tailored services EIC also seeks for **partnerships with ecosystem partners** bringing in specific experience, specific expertise or access to a specific networks in certain innovation areas. Such collaboration could include exchange of information, co-organisation of specific EIC events (e.g. pitching events or specific trainings, bootcamps, summer schools), data mining or mapping service e.g. of tech infrastructure, piloting plants and test-beds. It also aims to extend, in a cost-efficient manner, the support for EIC beneficiaries to a range of existing and effective services, implemented by the European Commission and also by specific entities at Member States level; In particular the EIC will seek for operational synergies with EEN, IPR Helpdesk, Start-up Europe, EIT KICs, national innovation agencies, NCPs networks, top European Accelerators and Incubators, business and investors associations.

Potential partnerships can take the form of a win-win collaboration or in some specific cases directly being made via (co)funding to the organisers.

Overall, a specific focus will be given to support **promising green innovations** as well as EIC funded SMEs **reducing greenhouse gas emissions**. **Women innovators** will be offered a targeted leadership and development programme.

How to get access?

The services described above are available through the EIC Community or provided throughout EIC Fund. Also, the EIC beneficiaries may access the available services directly through the relevant partner(s), when applicable.

Budget

The overall budget for the EIC BAS in 2021 is € [x]M for coaching, € [x]M for investor mentoring and € [x]M for other services mentioned above.

The services will be implemented through public procurements using either calls for tenders or specific contracts under Framework agreements.

V – Other Actions

1. EU Prize for Women Innovators

Objectives and scope

Women are underrepresented in terms of creating innovative enterprises. This is an untapped potential for Europe, which needs to optimise all available resources to remain competitive and find solutions to our societal challenges. This award scheme recognises the role of women in bringing about game-changing innovations to market honouring the outstanding achievements of women running innovative companies.

The "EU Prize for Women Innovators" will be awarded to women innovators who have created the largest impact on the innovation ecosystem by transforming ideas into new and advanced products and/or services for the benefit and wealth of the European citizens.

All eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent jury appointed by the European Commission. The jury will be made up of independent experts from business, finance and academia. The prize(s) will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestants who in the opinion of the jury best address a series of predefined cumulative criteria. These criteria will look at *inter alia* the nature of the innovation, its impact on society, and the candidate's role in the success of the company and beyond.

The specific rules of the contest will be published each year by the European Commission (on the Funding and Tenders Portal but also actively publicised elsewhere to maximise participation), which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prize based on the judgement of independent experts.

The prize will boost public awareness of the potential, importance and contribution of women to the innovation ecosystem and create strong role models inspiring other women to become innovators themselves.

Essential eligibility and award criteria: []

Type of Action: Recognition Prize

Indicative Timetable: []

Indicative Budget: []

2. The European Capital of Innovation Awards (iCapital)

Objectives and scope

Cities are faced with most severe societal and sustainability challenges, but do also have the means to develop and apply effective innovative solutions. They are the place where ideas, people, public and private actors meet and engage among themselves to improve the quality of citizens' lives. They are the natural playground where breakthrough innovation flourish and nourish. They provide ground to experiment new technologies and products in real environment, their interaction with people and their added-value.

The traditional city innovation ecosystem is opening up to new models of innovation engaging citizens. An increasing number of cities are acting as test-beds for innovation and run citizens-driven initiatives to find solutions for their relevant societal challenges.

The public domain is particularly challenged with finding effective ways to ensure the mainstreaming of these practices into the ordinary urban development process. Successful practices are particularly crucial to enhance the city's capacity to attract new resources, funds and talents to stimulate the growth of breakthrough innovations. Moreover, collaboration and strengthening synergies among innovation ecosystems boost cities' development and resilience to tackle urban challenges.

For this reason, the European Capital of Innovation Awards will recognise the cities' role as catalysers of the local innovation ecosystem; their efforts on stimulating innovation within their citizens and their societal structures; and will stimulate new activities aimed at boosting game-changing innovation.

All eligible applications will be evaluated by an independent jury appointed by the European Commission. The jury will be made up of independent experts from different backgrounds, representatives of national and international public administration, private sector and academia, who are knowledgeable of the latest state of play in urban innovation and have vast competences in relevant areas such as social innovation, citizens' engagement, smart specialization, entrepreneurship, urban design, etc.

Essential eligibility and award criteria:

The specific rules of the contest will be published each year by the European Commission (on the Funding and Tenders Portal but also actively publicised elsewhere to maximise

participation), which will directly launch and manage the contest and award the prize based on the judgement of independent experts. []

Type of Action: Recognition Prize (tbc)

Indicative Timetable: []

Indicative Budget: []

3. The European Innovation Procurement Awards

Objectives and scope

The European Innovation Procurement prize aims to recognize public and private buyers across Europe in their efforts to innovate in their procurement procedures. It also aims to emphasize the importance of a close buyer – supplier cooperation in bringing the innovative solutions to market. This prize complements other EIC initiatives aimed at promotion and fostering the innovation procurement in the European Union as a tool to develop, invest and scale up highly innovative technologies and companies.

Public procurement represents an untapped potential to stimulate the demand of innovation. The public and private sectors could offer new opportunities for suppliers, and provide better and more efficient public services. Therefore, it would boost transforming research into innovative solutions targeted at public demand, and support innovative companies to commercialize their ideas.

The awards should stimulate innovation procurement; acknowledge and support the efforts done by procurers, SMEs and start-ups to bring innovative products to the market in the innovative way; and build a community of European procurers to share, work together and inspire each other in the design of innovative procurement processes, and the delivery of public services.

Essential eligibility and award criteria: []

Indicative timetable: []

Type of Action: Recognition prize

Indicative budget: []

4. Communication, outreach, events

Objectives and scope

The success of the EIC lies in attracting highly innovative companies and researchers that can generate fast and high growth, as well as co-investors and global corporates that can further maximise the impact of EIC support. To achieve this, we need to strengthen the reputation of the fully-fledged EIC in Horizon Europe through an ambitious strategy for outreach and stakeholder engagement. As well as the design of the strategy itself, this budget will allow for the development and maintenance of the EIC website and other information channels, generation of relevant content and material of interest to our target audiences, allow for EIC participation in key events as well as the hosting of a dedicated annual EIC Event, among other outreach and stakeholder engagement actions.

Type of action: Public Procurements (including use of Framework contracts)

Indicative timetable: 2021

Indicative budget: € [XX] million

5. Honoraria and expenses of the European Innovation Council (EIC) Board

As highly qualified, specialised, independent advisors appointed following an open and transparent procedure, members of the EIC Board shall be remunerated for the services they offer.

Remuneration is justified on the grounds of members' personal commitment and their work providing high-level strategic advice to the Commission and bringing prestige and visibility to the EIC.

Remuneration will be proportionate to the specific tasks to be assigned to Board members and it will closely mirror compensation schemes for other EU, international or national entities of similar nature. Remuneration will take the form of honoraria for their effective participation at the Board's plenary meetings. It will be accompanied by a compensation for travel and other expenses ("per diem").

The concrete form of remuneration and the method for its calculation will be regulated in the corresponding Commission decision. It will be charged to the operational budget allocated to the EIC.

Type of action: Experts.

Indicative budget: € [XX] from the 2021 budget.

6. EIC Impact Evaluations

6.1. Impact of EIC funding on disruptive and breakthrough technologies

The objectives of the EIC require new data and methodologies to assess different impacts and routes to impact, using a combination of tools, including but not limited to: analysis of internal data; tracing of the trajectory of firms financed by the EIC with the use of external databases on follow-on funding, start-up ranking lists and competitions; benchmarking the progress of the EIC financed firms with a control group of counterfactuals; case studies on best practice on EIC support. The methodology should also bring together data analysis and modelling, aggregating firm level data and zooming in on the highest performers through case studies, to draw conclusions on the economic, societal and environmental impacts achieved. In addition, specific thematic analysis of the impacts of EIC funding are needed in areas such as Green Deal objectives and the response to the COVID crises. The outputs of the study will feed into the interim evaluation of Horizon Europe programme.

Type of action: Public Procurement.

Indicative timetable: Q1 2021.

Indicative budget: €[] million from the 2021 budget

6.2. Horizon scanning and data mining to detect early signals of emerging trends in technology and innovation

In order to stay on the cutting edge and to make informed choices regarding priority areas, the EIC needs to possess strong capacity for detecting early signals of emerging trends in technology and innovation, and for positioning its portfolio with regard to the current context. The present study should reinforce the capacity for tracking key emerging trends in technology and innovation. It should develop and apply a methodology for scanning the horizon of science and innovation in order to identify the upcoming trends, and test out a variety of data mining tools to pick out early signals of emerging scientific and technological developments. .

Type of action: Public Procurement.

Indicative timetable: [].

Indicative budget: €[] million from the 2021 budget

7. EIC Data management and Information systems

Objective and scope

Implementation of EIC activities calls for dynamic, flexible and reactive management, based on high quality and real time data in support to the decision making through effective strategic, tactical, and operational insights.

To achieve its objectives the EIC needs to rely on advanced Data management and Information systems built to collect, consolidate, curate and contextualise key data and information coming from various sources, in support to daily operations, data-driven decision-making processes and the business intelligence strategy of the EIC.

Furthermore these information systems combined with existing corporate platforms will become key to the efficient and effective delivery of services to EU beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The Data management and Information systems and tools will build on, and further expand the existing EIC platform.

The future EIC Data management and Information systems will respond to a dual need: (i) support the service offering to beneficiaries and key stakeholders, (ii) provide the necessary tools for staff to support the service delivery and informed decision-making processes.

In this respect, the future developments will focus on the following key components.

- Improve and expand the IT tools and interfaces built to support the daily operations management of EIC stakeholders.
- Expand the integration of EIC IT tools with other relevant IT systems, including those of the European Commission, EIT KICs, EU MS and regional ecosystems and other relevant EU programmes and third parties.
- Further improve and expand the matching tools developed to support the beneficiaries in finding partners and relevant support to their activities and projects.
- Update and improve the EIC online community platform in support to the beneficiaries and their business development and networking activities and the establishment of communities of practice.
- Further develop and expand the event management tools as a critical component of effective events for beneficiaries and stakeholders (including Corporates, public procurers)
- Further improve expert management tools in support to the services to the beneficiaries (incl. coaches, mentors, experts etc.)
- Support capacity development and learning for SMEs on-line and through academy training events.

- Further expand the existing back-office IT tools and improve the EIC data collection and transformation capabilities ensuring higher quality and reliability of data made available across all the above mentioned systems.
- Ensure continuous access to relevant, accurate and fresh data sources for the systems above, connecting to high quality data services from EU Institutions, EU Member States and third parties.
- Acquire data from external sources to improve intelligence on relevant scientific, technological and market trends
- Improve integration and seamless user experience across all the above tools.
- Ensure proper user support for all the tools made available

The above developments will follow, as much as possible, the principles of open source code and open data standards ensuring that both the tools and data generated can be reused by other institutions, EU Member States and relevant third parties.

Type of action: Public procurements, including through use of existing IT framework contracts.

Indicative budget and timetable: €[xx] million for 2021.

8. Expertise for evaluations, monitoring and policy advice

Objectives and scope

The EIC uses appointed independent experts during the evaluation of proposals and the preparation of the EIC calls, for ethics review and for the monitoring of ongoing projects. The EIC also has the need for experts to advice on policy matters relevant to the optimal achievement of the EIC objectives. The EIC also reimburses the costs of applicants invited to attend interviews during the evaluation of their proposals.

Type of action: Experts.

Indicative budget: €[] from the 2021 budget.

9. Capacity-building and transnational cooperation for National Contact Points (NCPs)

Objectives and scope

National Contact Points (NCPs) provide information and on-the ground advice to Horizon Europe potential applicants and beneficiaries. This grant aims at improving the general standard of support provided by the European Innovation Council and European Innovation Ecosystems National Contact Points (EIC-EIE NCPs) to applicants and beneficiaries.

The action will help NCPs to accomplish their core functions in a consistent and professionalised manner across eligible countries. In particular, the action will help lowering the entry barriers to all potential applicants.

The activities should deliver tangible benefits to potential applicants and beneficiaries and in particular:

- Outreach and provided further support to NCPs and potential applicants in countries that participate at lower levels in the share of proposals and projects.
- Increase the participation of women.
- Assist in developing a pan-European Innovation Ecosystem.

Various mechanisms may be proposed, such as benchmarking, specific training, networking activities, supporting tools and guidelines, etc.

The action will involve one consortium of formally nominated EIC-EIE NCPs. The proposal will appropriately:

- address the diversity of the EIC-EIE stakeholders (researchers, innovators, SMEs, start-ups, investors) and support schemes;
- capitalise on relevant work of previous or ongoing NCP network projects, including the NCP Academy;
- enhance synergies across different parts of the framework programme, for instance with the ERC, the EIT and InvestEU;
- support collaboration with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) and European Innovation Ecosystem stakeholders;
- ensure participation for NCPs opting not to be part of the beneficiary consortium (e.g., making costs for such participation eligible).

Type of action: CSA.

Indicative timetable: Q3 2021.

Indicative budget: € [] from the 2021 budget.

Annex 1 Budget table

Annex 2 Standard admissibility and eligibility

Annex 3 Eligible Associated Countries and Third Countries

Annex 4 ‘FastTrack’ scheme to apply for the EIC Accelerator

Annex 5 Pilot ‘Plug-in’ scheme to apply for the EIC Accelerator