EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 29.1.2025
C(2025) 568 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 29.1.2025

on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2025 - Part 2 and amending Implementing Decisions C(2023) 2296 final and C(2024) 1702 final as regards financial support to third parties

(as amended by C(2025) 6767 final of 10.10.2025, C(2025) 8719 final of 17.12.2025 and C(2026) 690 final of 04.02.2026)

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on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2025 - Part 2 and amending Implementing Decisions C(2023) 2296 final and C(2024) 1702 final as regards financial support to third parties

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union[1] ('the Financial Regulation'), and in particular Article 110(1) thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092[2], and in particular Article 24 thereof,

Whereas:

(1) In order to ensure the implementation of the European Defence Fund for the year 2025, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing decision, which constitutes the annual work programme for 2025 in accordance with Article 110(2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 ('the Financial Regulation').

(2) The envisaged assistance is to comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

(3) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of the Financial Regulation.

(4) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the work programme, it is appropriate to determine the changes, which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation.

(5) Pursuant to Article 62(1), first subparagraph, point (c), of the Financial Regulation, indirect management is to be used for the actions specified in the work programme.

(6) The Commission is to ensure a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union with regard to persons and entities entrusted with the implementation of Union funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 157(3) of the Financial Regulation. To that end, and before a contribution agreement can be signed, such persons and entities are to be subject to an assessment of their systems and procedures in accordance with Article 157(4) of the Financial Regulation and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 157(5) of the Financial Regulation.

[1] OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI

[2] OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p.149

(7) In order to increase the opportunities for various smaller actors, including those not previously active in the defence sector, and in accordance with Article 207 of the Financial Regulation, financial support to third parties has been introduced in the European Defence Fund annual work programmes as from 2023, but only for third parties established in the Union or in European Defence Fund Associated Countries. However, in line with the general objective of the Fund as set out in Article 3 of Regulation (EU) 2021/697, it is considered that Ukrainian entities could also contribute to fostering the competitiveness, efficiency, and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB) throughout the Union, thanks to the battlefield experience gained by the Ukrainian defence industry in recent years. Subsequently, the European Defence Fund financial support should also be opened to third parties established in Ukraine. Commission Implementing Decisions C(2023) 2296 final and C(2024) 1702 final should therefore be amended accordingly.

(8) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the European Defence Fund Programme Committee.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
The work programme

The annual financing decision, constituting the annual work programme for the implementation of the European Defence Fund for 2025 – Part 2, as set out in the Annexes 1, 2 and 3 is hereby adopted.

Article 2
Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the European Defence Fund for 2025 – Part 2 is set at EUR 1 115 482 382, and shall be financed from the appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

(a) budget line 13.0201 - Capability development: EUR 745 076 448;

(b) budget line 13.0301 - Defence research: EUR 370 405 934.

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

In addition, administrative appropriations should be considered from the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

(a) budget line 13.010100 - Support expenditure for the European Defence Fund – Non-research: EUR 3 342 000;

(b) budget line 13.010203 - Other management expenditure for the European Defence Fund – Research: EUR 3 101 306.

Article 3
Flexibility clause

Cumulated changes to the allocations to specific actions not exceeding 20% of the maximum Union contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph of this Decision shall not be considered to be substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, where those changes do not significantly affect the nature of the actions and the objective of the work programme.

The authorising officer responsible may apply the changes referred to in the first paragraph. Those changes shall be applied in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Article 4
Methods of implementation and entrusted entities or persons

The implementation of the actions carried out by way of indirect management, as set out in Annex 1, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in that Annex.

Article 5
Financial instruments

An amount of EUR 20 000 000 from the European Defence Fund in 2024 shall be allocated to actions under blending operations as set out in Annex 1.

Blending operations shall be implemented under indirect management by the European Investment Fund.

Article 6
Amendments to Implementing Decision C(2023) 2296 final

Section 2.5.9 of Annex 3 to the Implementing Decision C(2023) 2296 final is amended as follows:

(1) The first bullet point of the "Conditions related to FSTP" is replaced by "Third parties must be established in the EU, in EDF associated countries, or in Ukraine."

(2) The second bullet point of the "Conditions related to FSTP" is replaced by "Third parties must be subject to control by EU, EDF Associated Countries or Ukraine or by EU, EDF Associated Countries or Ukrainian entities".

(3) The fourth bullet point of the "Conditions related to FSTP" is replaced by "A range of entities from different Member States, EDF Associated Countries or Ukraine, as well as different industry sectors, including those not active in the defence sector, should be involved".

Article 7
Amendments to Implementing Decision C(2024) 1702 final

Section 2.1.8 of Annex 3 to the Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 1702 is amended as follows:

(1) The first bullet point of the "Conditions related to FSTP" is replaced by "Third parties must be established in the EU, in EDF associated countries, or in Ukraine."

(2) The second bullet point of the "Conditions related to FSTP" is replaced by "Third parties must be subject to control by EU, EDF Associated Countries or Ukraine or by EU, EDF Associated Countries or Ukrainian entities".

(3) The fourth bullet point of the “Conditions related to FSTP” is replaced by “A range of entities from different Member States, EDF Associated Countries or Ukraine, as well as different industry sectors, including those not active in the defence sector, should be involved”.

Done at Brussels, 29.1.2025

For the Commission
Andrius KUBILIUS
Member of the Commission

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 29.1.2025
C(2025) 568 final

ANNEX 1

ANNEX

to the

Commission Implementing Decision

on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2025 - Part 2 and amending Implementing Decisions C(2023) 2296 final and C(2024) 1702 final as regards financial support to third parties

(as amended by C(2025) 6767 final of 10.10.2025)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is faced with increasing geopolitical instability and a complex set of conventional and new security threats while the defence sector is fragmented and lacks investments in important research and capability development projects. Therefore, the EU is taking steps to assume greater responsibility for its security and defence, including in its neighbourhood, to contribute to its strategic autonomy and freedom of action and to create a more competitive and integrated European defence technological and industrial base, thus reducing its dependencies.

Following the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), the European Defence Fund (EDF) has been created to foster competitiveness, efficiency and capacity for innovation in the defence technological and industrial base throughout the EU. The EDF should complement, leverage, and consolidate collaborative efforts and cross-border cooperation to develop defence capabilities that respond to security challenges, while strengthening and improving the agility of both defence supply and value chains.

There are significant shortfalls and unmet defence capability needs across the EU, in particular regarding the next generation of large-scale capabilities, but also in critical cross-cutting and enabling areas such as space and cyber. Tackling this issue includes making the best use of existing EU/European space systems by contributing to the development of their military applications. The EDF should also foster better exploitation of the industrial potential of innovation, research, and technological development at each stage of the industrial life cycle of defence products and technologies, including through cross-fertilisation with civilian innovations in various domains such as digital, artificial intelligence and cyber.

In addition, the green transition is likely to reshape geopolitics, including global economic, trade and security interests. State and non-state actors compete for the access to the scarce resources (e.g. critical raw materials). This affects the EU and requires a common response in order to avoid crises and conflicts. In this context, the EU has adopted the Circular Economy Action Plan (CEAP) as one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal, Europe's agenda for sustainable growth. The CEAP can deliver substantial material savings throughout value chains and production processes, generate extra value, and unlock economic opportunities. Therefore, defence activities, notably those supported by the EDF, need to address, wherever relevant, the reduction of waste by developing and integrating innovative technologies (e.g. waste management, safe use of chemicals, component tracing, environmental protection, water management) and green military components through design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing, and recycling.

In March 2024, the Commission launched the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) to boost investments in critical technologies in Europe. The three target investment areas are: digital technologies and deep-tech innovation, clean and resource-efficient technologies, and biotechnologies. STEP will mobilise funding from existing EU programmes to support the development and manufacturing of these critical technologies, while safeguarding and strengthening the respective value chains, as well as associated services critical for and specific to the development and manufacturing of the final products. In particular, the EDF benefits from EUR 1.5 billion of funding under STEP for 2024-2027, which will be used to fund research and development of critical technologies in the defence sector.

Published in March 2024, the EU Defence Industry Strategy (EDIS) aims to create the conditions for EU industry to meet Member States' needs in terms of time and volume, by ensuring the availability of defence products under all circumstances, as well as the longer-term competitiveness of the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB). To achieve the latter, EDIS calls for a sustained R&D effort, building on and strengthening existing instruments, e.g. the EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS) under the EDF, and proposes also to support the industrialisation of prototypes resulting from collaborative R&D efforts (e.g. the EDF) to bridge the commercialisation gap.

The EDF is being implemented through annual work programmes from 2021 to 2027. Priorities identified in the annual work programmes are in line with the EU capability priorities jointly agreed by Member States, in particular through the Capability Development Plan (CDP) [1]. Due consideration has been given to legacy PADR and EDIDP work programmes, to existing proposals from the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework, and to the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) capability shortfalls.

This work programme sets out in detail the actions to be financially supported by the EDF in 2025 (see table below) through calls for proposals.

- The work programme identifies 16 thematic categories of action, among which research and development topics are identified, where appropriate.
- The contribution of each category of action to the three fields defined in the EDF Regulation [2] is also indicated.

EDF thematic *categories of action*	***Fields* covered**		
	(a)	**(b)**	**(c)**
1.Defence medical response, Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN), biotech and human factors	X		
2. Information superiority		X	
3. Advanced passive and active sensors	X	X	
4. Cyber		X	
5. Space		X	
6. Digital transformation	X	X	
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	X		
8. Materials and components	X	X	X
9. Air combat	X		X
10. Air and missile defence	X	X	X
11. Ground combat	X	X	X
12. Force protection and mobility	X	X	
13. Naval combat	X	X	X
14. Underwater warfare	X	X	X

[1] The purpose of the CDP is to increase coherence between Member States' defence planning and to encourage European cooperation by looking at future operational needs and setting common Capability Development Priorities. The latest version of the CDP was endorsed in 2023.

[2] Pursuant to Article 24(3) the research topics and categories of actions shall cover products and technologies in the fields of: (a) preparation, protection, deployment and sustainability; (b) information management and superiority and command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR), cyber defence and cybersecurity; and (c) engagement and effectors.

15. Simulation and training	X		
16. Disruptive technologies	X	X	X

In addition to the calls for proposals addressing these thematic categories of actions, there are:

- Non-thematic calls for proposals focused on SMEs targeting research and development actions, to foster innovation as a key objective of the EDF. Successful SME beneficiaries in all EDF calls may be offered business coaching sessions.
- Calls for proposals targeting other types of actions.

Each category of action may be addressed through one or more calls for proposals, as described in Appendix 1. The list of calls for proposals and associated topics addressed in this annual work programme is set out in Appendix 3. Each topic targets one or more activities, in accordance with Article 10(3) of the EDF Regulation. The table below indicates which activities are eligible for research actions and which for development actions. A given topic can focus more specifically on one or more mandatory activities but can allow additional optional activities that would lead to (upstream activities) or result from (downstream activities) these activities.

Types of activities		**Short name**	**Coverage**	
			Research action	**Development action**
(a)	Activities that aim to create, underpin and improve knowledge, products and technologies, including disruptive technologies for defence, which can achieve significant effects in the area of defence	Generating knowledge	Eligible	Not eligible
(b)	Activities that aim to increase interoperability and resilience, including secured production and exchange of data, to master critical defence technologies, to strengthen the security of supply or to enable the effective exploitation of results for defence products and technologies	Integrating knowledge	Eligible	Eligible
(c)	Studies, such as feasibility studies to explore the feasibility of new or upgraded products, technologies, processes, services and solution	Studies	Eligible	Eligible
(d)	The design of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology as well as the definition of the technical specifications on which such a design has been developed, including any partial tests for risk reduction in an industrial or representative environment	Design	Eligible	Eligible
(e)	The system prototyping of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	System prototyping	Not eligible	Eligible
(f)	The testing of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	Testing	Not eligible	Eligible
(g)	The qualification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	Qualification	Not eligible	Eligible
(h)	The certification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	Certification	Not eligible	Eligible
(i)	The development of technologies or assets increasing efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies	Increasing efficiency	Not eligible	Eligible

2. LEGAL BASIS

All actions that will be funded under this work programme have their legal basis in Regulation (EU) 2021/697 (the EDF Regulation). In addition, some of the actions specifically identified in this work programme will contribute to the STEP objectives as defined in Regulation (EU) 2024/795 (the STEP Regulation).

3. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE WORK PROGRAMME IN 2025

This section lists the calls for proposals and their associated topics, together with their main characteristics. These calls for proposals and topics are the result of discussion with the EDF Programme Committee composed of representatives from the Member States and EDF Associated Countries (i.e. Norway).

Management mode:

As per Article 8(1) of the EDF Regulation and unless otherwise provided for in this work programme, the actions set out in this work programme shall be implemented under direct management by the Commission.

By way of derogation, in accordance with Article 8(2) of the EDF Regulation, specific actions may, in substantiated cases, be carried out under indirect management by bodies referred to in point (c) of Article 62(1) of the Financial Regulation. This could be the case, for example for complex actions where a project manager has been appointed by Member States, taking into account the complexity of the action and the experience of the proposed body.

The change of management mode set out in this work programme will be assessed after the selection of proposals retained for funding and be subject to the prior assessment of the bodies in accordance with Article 154 of the Financial Regulation to ensure that the financial interests of the EU are protected. The responsible Authorising Officer is authorised to conclude a contribution agreement with entities that have satisfactorily passed the priori assessment referred to in Article 154 of the Financial Regulation. If the terms of a contribution agreement cannot be successfully agreed with a pillar-assessed entity in due time, the concerned project(s) may be managed under direct management by the Commission.

Calls for proposals:

Six calls for proposals will be launched in 2025, covering the 16 thematic categories of actions, in addition to two calls for proposals not related to thematic categories of actions as set out in Section 3.2:

1) EDF-2025-RA:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions
   - **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals
   - **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
   - **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 182 000 000 for eight call topics addressing seven categories of actions.
2) EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions

- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation.
- **Specific provisions for the call:** The proposals must build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or more projects that have been funded under an EU programme call for proposals with a focus on civil applications. The previous project(s) may have finished or may still be active. The consortium submitting a proposal does not need to have been constituted or even to include a participant in the previous project(s) or the owner of its results. However, applicants must provide a confirmation that they have or will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results of the previous project(s).
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 40 000 000 for two call topics addressing two categories of actions.

3) EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS:

- **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions (dedicated to disruptive technologies for defence)
- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any consortium of eligible entities as defined in Article 9 of the EDF Regulation and involving at least two legal entities established in at least two different Member States or EDF Associated Countries. At least two of the eligible legal entities established in at least two Member States or EDF Associated Countries shall not, during the entire period in which the action is carried out, be controlled, directly or indirectly, by the same legal entity, and shall not control each other.
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 43 000 000 for two call topics addressing one category of actions.

4) EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE:

- **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions (technological challenges)
- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 27 000 000 for two call topics addressing one category of actions.

5) EDF-2025-DA:

- **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions
- **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation

- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 546 500 000 for 12 topics addressing 9 categories of actions.

6) EDF-2025-DA-SI

- **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions
- **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation.
- **Specific provisions for the call:** The proposals must build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or more projects that have been funded under an EU programme call for proposals with a focus on civil applications. The previous project(s) may have finished or may still be active. The consortium submitting a proposal does not need to be constituted or even to include a participant in the previous project(s) or the owner of its results. However, applicants must provide a confirmation that they have or will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results of the previous project(s).
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 98 000 000 for two call topics addressing two categories of actions.

STEP:

The work programme identifies 14 actions in support of STEP objectives, for which proposals meeting the minimum requirements indicated in the specific call conditions will receive a STEP Seal[3]. A summary table with these actions and the associated indicative budget can be found in Appendix 4.

3.1. Actions to be funded through grants and related to the categories of actions

3.1.1. Defence medical response, Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN), biotech and human factors (MCBRN)

This category of actions will be addressed through (i) the implementation of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) related to a defence medical countermeasures Alliance, as well as through (ii) one call for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-RA, with one topic.

3.1.1.1. EDF-2025-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP: Defence medical countermeasures Alliance – Research actions

Within the FPA following the call topic EDF-2022-FPA-MCBRN-MCM to establish and support the EU defence medical countermeasures Alliance, the selected consortium will be invited to submit a proposal that will implement the 2025 research actions contained in the action plan set out in the above-mentioned FPA.

The objectives and tasks to be performed will be as defined in the FPA.

[3] The STEP Seal is the Sovereignty Seal defined in Regulation (EU) 2024/795.

The standard EDF eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, thresholds and weighting applicable to EDF research actions will apply to this action.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of biotechnologies.

Type of action: Specific grant agreement awarded without a call for proposals in relation to a Framework Partnership Agreement.

Indicative budget: EUR 13 500 000 for this topic.

3.1.1.2. EDF-2025-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP: Defence medical countermeasures Alliance – Development actions

Within the FPA following the call topic EDF-2022-FPA-MCBRN-MCM to establish and support the EU defence medical countermeasures Alliance, the selected consortium will be invited to submit a proposal that will implement the 2025 development actions of the action plan defined in the above-mentioned FPA.

The objectives and tasks to be performed will be as defined in the FPA.

The standard EDF eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, thresholds and weighting applicable to EDF development actions will apply to this action.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of biotechnologies.

Type of action: Specific grant agreement awarded without a call for proposals in relation to a Framework Partnership Agreement.

Indicative budget: EUR 11 500 000 for this topic.

3.1.1.3. EDF-2025-RA-MCBRN-ATE: Autonomous triage and evacuation

Large-scale military conflicts between peer adversaries can result in mass casualties where the need for casualty care and evacuation dramatically outstrips available medical resources. Unmanned air, ground and sea vehicles could significantly increase casualty evacuation capacities and enable rapid automated or fully autonomous battlefield triage, thereby reducing the number of preventable deaths in the early stages of the medical chain.

This call topic therefore addresses the urgent need to develop and validate innovative autonomous capabilities that address the specific challenges of military battlefield triage and casualty evacuation in mass casualty scenarios, with a specific focus on two technologies: (i) robust automatic (robotic assisted) and autonomous (robotic) battlefield triage, and (ii) autonomous casualty evacuation and casualty extraction.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 10 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.2. Information superiority (C4ISR)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-RA, with the following topic:

3.1.2.1. EDF-2025-RA-C4ISR-MIDS-STEP: Multifunctional Information Distribution System

The Multifunctional Information Distribution System (MIDS) is an indispensable C4ISR capability to facilitate international conflict prevention and crisis management in all phases of operations. EU Member States and EDF Associated Countries have already used various types of MIDS in recent operations to provide tactical Link 16[4] interoperability between their major platforms (e.g. fighters, frigates, etc.).

This call topic aims to design, develop, and test a demonstrator of a European Fighter MIDS terminal with an innovative SCA (Software Communication Architecture) to exceed or be at least comparable to the systems and capabilities available at the time of its entry into service.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 39 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.3. Advanced passive and active sensors (SENS)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, EDF-2025-DA, with the following two topics:

3.1.3.1. EDF-2025-DA-SENS-MB4DR-STEP: Multi-band 4D Radar

The increasing complexity of the military theatre of operations demands more robust and capable sensors, specially adapted to a variety of threats in sea, land, air and space, and able to operate in electromagnetically congested scenarios.

Currently, different radar solutions partially cover these requirements and, as a result, a complex integration of different sensors, working in different radar frequency bands, is necessary to operate in practical situations.

This call topic focuses on the evolution and integration of technologies available from within the EU industry to obtain a more robust and capable operational radar system that can be adapted to ground and naval platforms. A multi-band 4D radar system is expected to provide intelligent management of the frequency spectrum to adapt to different environments, threats and jamming scenarios, including datalink capabilities to collaborate with other platforms and effectors that will enhance mission capabilities. The use of multi-band capabilities in these scenarios will represent a significant step forward compared to a multi-radar strategy,

[4] Link 16 is a military tactical data link network used by NATO members and other nations.

exploiting the synergies through centralised management and simplifying the cooperation between multiple platforms.

This call topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies, and design, not excluding downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 29 500 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.3.2. EDF-2025-DA-SENS-IRD-STEP: Technologies for optronic detectors

The field of infrared (IR) detectors encompasses a variety of technologies that detect in different spectral bands for a wide range of applications (land, air, naval, space, missile guidance, drones, etc.). IR detectors are a key factor in increasing the range of detection recognition identification (DRI), thereby improving the overall accuracy and effectiveness of situational awareness and targeting.

The objective of this topic is to increase the technological maturity of the advanced readout integrated circuits (ROIC) designs and to fully prepare the supply chain for advanced ROICs compatible with different IR technologies and 2D/3D architectures, as called for by the topic EDF-2021-SENS-R-IRD in 2021. The aim is to hybridise detection circuits with different cut-off wavelengths onto ROICs and to integrate the focal plan arrays into the first European demonstrators of large-format infrared detectors with a pitch of 5µm. In addition, 3D stacking developments are expected to be continued to achieve a feasibility demonstration level and have a first assessment of this disruptive structure.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 29 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.4. Cyber (CYBER)

Cyberspace is highly contested, and digitalisation brings new challenges. There is a growing collective need to strengthen the EU's resilience to emerging, growing and evolving cyber threats. While cyber is recognised as a military operational domain in its own right, it is also an integral and critical dimension of various key defence capabilities. The EU's Cyber Defence Policy (adopted in November 2022) emphasises the need to invest in our cyber defence capabilities, including the development of a full spectrum cyber defence capability. R&D activities on cyber security and cyber defence under the EDF will strengthen the EU's cyber resilience and cyber operational capabilities, as well as cooperation and joint capability building, thereby improving the interoperability and efficiency of military operations.

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI and EDF-2025-DA, with the following two topics:

3.1.4.1. EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-CYBER-3RAV-STEP: Risk, robustness and resilience for autonomous vehicles in military operations

Unmanned vehicles (UxV) such as drones, ground vehicles, and surface or underwater vessels are bound to become an integral part of military operations. Advanced autonomous capabilities are being developed for these systems to enable them to carry out different missions, both with or without human intervention, thereby increasing efficiency and minimising risk. From a security perspective, this raises several new challenges that need to be addressed in order to deploy these vehicles in real-world operations and realise their full potential.

To address these challenges, this call topic aims to bolster essential capability of unmanned vehicles to monitor, detect, react and reconfigure themselves, with a particular focus on the development of a risk-evaluation engine to generate alternative risk-based courses.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

In addition, to best complement R&D efforts already targeting civil applications and to encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge and innovative solutions to the defence sector, this topic also welcomes proposals for add-on research actions to adapt solutions originally developed for civil applications to defence requirements.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, integrating knowledge, studies, and design.

The proposals must build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or more projects funded following an EU programme call for proposals with a focus on civil applications and for which applicants will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded under this topic.

3.1.4.2. EDF-2025-DA-CYBER-CDOC-STEP: Improved cyber defence operations capabilities

The military domain of cyberspace is conceptualised as a dynamically distributed and networked domain where operations take place in an intangible and rapidly evolving landscape. This domain is conducive to distributed decision making, where actions taken within interconnected networks have effects across different domains. This can be seen as a challenge for decision makers, but also as an opportunity to explore the possibilities of warfare centred distributed decision.

The specific challenge of this call topic is to develop state-of-the-art, effective, and reliable solutions that operate and, where possible, automate larger parts of EU military cyberspace operations in a distributed manner, including the synchronisation of kinetic and cyber exercises across domains that present multiple dilemmas to adversaries.

Proposals must demonstrate the ability to develop such a capability in line with the needs of military users, particularly those associated with military cyberspace operations. Interfaces with EU, NATO and national systems, both existing and in development, must be substantiated to ensure future interoperability.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies, design, and system prototyping, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 34 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.5. Space (SPACE)

The EU is funding and running the space flagship programmes Galileo and Copernicus and is also developing new initiatives (EU-SST[5], GOVSATCOM[6], Secure connectivity), all of which are of dual-use interest. At the same time, the commercial sector is booming with a growing number of projects from both established actors and newcomers proposing disruptive concepts and services (e.g. constellations of small satellites). Their potential for defence applications has not yet been fully explored. Military operations rely heavily on space-based or space-enabled capabilities, including dual-use ones. Space capabilities provide fast, continuous, and discreet services for situational awareness worldwide (including in space itself), as well as support to decision making, the conduct of military operations and the assessment of their specific results. In particular, military-class space capabilities have to provide secure, readily available and high-performance services in an evolving threat environment. In the context of the EDF, joint R&D actions in the Space category will make it possible to consolidate the demand for improved capabilities, access to higher-performance services (e.g. increased bandwidth, increased areal-access, continuity of surveillance) and increased interoperability, while contributing to the development of a European space culture and the strengthening of the EU's strategic autonomy.

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-DA-SI and EDF-2025-DA, with the following two topics:

3.1.5.1. EDF-2025-DA-SI-SPACE-3OS: On-orbit operations and services

Given the evolving threat environment in space, defence users are likely to require tailored assets to conduct space-to-space operations in support of Space Domain Awareness, to protect and ensure the uninterrupted services of space systems used for defence applications, in particular to inspect, repair, update, maintain or deorbit military satellites. Although the European defence community recognises the strategic need for such capabilities in the medium term, no operational assets are currently available in the EU Member States' and EDF Associated Countries' armed forces to carry out such missions.

[5] EU Space Surveillance and Tracking.
[6] Governmental Satellite Communications.

This call topic therefore aims to focus on the development of a concept of operations (CONOPS) for on-orbit operations and services for all types of orbits, with a feasibility analysis that can provide defence capability planners with the information they need to develop future capabilities, as well as some initial design activities.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

The proposals need to build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or more projects funded following an EU programme call with a focus on civil applications and for which applicants will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results.

Indicative budget: EUR 49 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA-SI.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.5.2. EDF-2025-DA-SPACE-SBISR: Space-based ISR constellation

This topic aims to contribute to the development of an affordable constellation of small satellites, including its ground segments able to handle various types of innovative sensor payloads (optical, night vision, low light infrared, hyperspectral, RADAR, passive RF detection and video) for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) applications. Such a constellation would complement high-end existing military capabilities while allowing responsive and smart tasking and data collection for near real-time operational and tactical use.

The scope of the topic includes the development of the overall system (space and ground segments, including a federation layer) up to prototyping, in-orbit demonstrations of selected space component prototypes, and testing of the federation layer, allowing EU Member States and EDF Associated Countries to have early access to space data.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding upstream or downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 66 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.6. Digital transformation (DIGIT)

Digital transformation, due to the production and use of ever larger amounts of data and the increasing involvement of artificial intelligence (AI) in defence systems and decision-making processes, is becoming critical for defence operations. While AI is a technology with dual-use potential, defence application-driven R&D is essential to steer progress towards military needs and more generally to strengthen the innovation ecosystem.

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE, with the following two topics:

3.1.6.1. EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDP-STEP: Privacy-preserving human-AI dialogue systems – Participation in a technological challenge

The rapid developments in generative artificial intelligence (AI), large language models and dialogue systems (chatbots) are paving the way towards high-impact defence applications of these technologies in a wide range of domains including intelligence, strategic planning, tactical operations, and life-cycle support.

However, to use dialogue systems in defence-specific applications, which involves the management of classified information, it is necessary to ensure that the systems can properly handle and protect such information. This requires a form of learning that takes into consideration the 'need to know' associated with different sets of classified information, which will enable the systems to adapt their answers depending on the security context of the dialogue. The systems should also be able to justify their answers (explainable AI), and to adapt themselves under user supervision while avoiding any regression.

The performances of the systems should be evaluated in an objective and comparative way. For that purpose, each consortium supported through this call topic will benefit from a common testing environment set up by a third-party consortium (selected under topic EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDO) in the framework of a technological challenge and will have to participate in the evaluation campaigns organised in this framework. Systems should be integrated into demonstrators that can be tested by defence users.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating and integrating knowledge, not excluding downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE.

Range of the EU's financial contribution per proposal: The funding requested cannot exceed EUR 5 000 000.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded under this topic.

3.1.6.2. EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDO: Privacy-preserving human-AI dialogue systems – Organisation of a technological challenge

Human-AI dialogue systems offer impressive results but are still prone to errors of various types. Moreover, there are no established metrics to measure system performances. To ensure trustworthiness and steer progress, these systems should be submitted to common tests using shared data and clear metrics and protocols.

The goal of this call topic is therefore to set up a testing environment and organise a technological challenge to evaluate the performances of Human-AI dialogue systems for defence use cases, including their abilities to manage the need to know associated with classified information, justify their answers, and learn from users. This includes the elaboration of metrics, the collection, annotation and distribution of data, and the writing of the evaluation plans. The challenge should be open to research teams supported through another call topic (EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDP) and possibly other sources of funding. Representative defence users should be involved to contribute to the

definition of the use cases and associated data, and to test the demonstrators produced by the participating teams and provide feedback.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, not excluding downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 7 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic.

3.1.7. Energy resilience and environmental transition (ENERENV)

As stated in the EDF Regulation, the EDF should contribute to the mainstreaming of climate actions in EU policies and to the achievement of an overall target of 30 % of the EU budget expenditure supporting climate objectives. The EDF Regulation also states that relevant actions will be identified during the preparation and implementation of the EDF. The Commission is embarking on the twin environmental and digital transitions, which pose clear challenges in the conduct of defence affairs.

This category of actions will be addressed though three calls for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-RA, EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI and EDF-2025-DA, with the following three topics:

3.1.7.1. EDF-2025-RA-ENERENV-PSR: Propulsion system for next generation rotorcrafts

The objective of this call topic is to develop and bring to maturity the technologies required for a new state-of-the-art, breakthrough, affordable, efficient, and high-power (above 3000 horsepower/2.237kW) engine for the future generation of EU military rotorcraft systems.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, integrating knowledge, studies and design.

Indicative budget: EUR 25 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.7.2. EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NH2PS-STEP: Naval hybrid propulsion and power systems

To increase survivability, reduce noise, infrared, electromagnetic and radar cross section signatures for a wide range of naval vessels, and to significantly reduce their greenhouse gas and hazardous emissions, this call topic aims to explore future modular, scalable and hybrid propulsion systems. It also aims to explore hybrid direct current (DC) power systems for military naval applications, while performing systems integration in a combined digital and physical environment.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of clean technologies.

In addition, to best complement R&D efforts already targeting civil applications and to encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge and innovative solutions to the defence sector, this topic also welcomes proposals for add-on research actions to adapt solutions originally developed for civil applications to defence requirements.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

The proposals must build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or several projects funded following an EU programme call with a focus on civil applications and for which applicants will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.7.3. EDF-2025-DA-ENERENV-APEM: Aircraft propulsion and energy management systems

The objective of this call topic is to develop and bring to maturity a new suite of advanced technologies for propulsion, power and thermal management system for fighter aircraft that can be applied in a modular and flexible manner to different sizes and types of systems, operating within a system-of-systems configuration that will encompass various interconnected elements, including manned and unmanned systems, swarms of drones and auxiliary platforms.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping, testing, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 48 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.8. Materials and components (MATCOMP)

Materials and components are enablers for a large spectrum of solutions at the core of the development of military capabilities. Access to critical materials and components is a challenge common to the space, defence, and security sectors. This category supports technologies for a large spectrum of products and systems closely linked to other categories of the EDF work programme.

The sustainability of strategic supply chains in the fields of critical materials and components is challenging and new materials have been identified as one of the technologies able to influence the reshaping of defence markets.

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, EDF-2025-RA, with the following topic:

3.1.8.1. EDF-2025-RA-MATCOMP-CDA-STEP: Chiplets for defence applications

A new paradigm is proposed by the development of the ‘chiplet’ approach, where a chiplet is an integrated circuit block that has been specifically designed to work with other similar chiplets to form larger more complex chips – leading to more complex integrated systems. This approach can be used for System-in-Package (SiP) (heterogeneous integration), where the system is divided into functional circuit blocks.

Chiplets offer a new opportunity for defence electronics to overcome the limitations of generic components such as FPGAs (offering a single solution with limited performance) and ASICs (offering high performance but high development costs due to specific development). Chiplet architecture offers an interesting opportunity to reduce development costs by re-using existing blocks, and to reduce manufacturing costs by achieving higher yields compared to large monolithic dies. The use of off-the-shelf chiplets can limit development costs and increase supply chain resilience. In addition, chiplets-based architectures are scalable: adding or removing chiplets makes it possible to adjust the performance and/or functionality of the SiP.

Combining chiplet technology with heterogeneous packaging needs to be explored, as this could improve the performance of systems used by the armed forces for defence applications. For example, the combination of chiplets in different technologies (GaN[7], GaAs[8], Si[9], etc.) and with analogue, mixed analogue/digital and digital functions can lead to new possibilities in terms of processing power, while still achieving a reasonable level of cost and power consumption. New and/or improved devices can be produced by exploring the application of chiplet technology in different areas of defence applications.

This topic aims to explore the development and sharing of a common hardware library of chiplets and their military applications. This will require a thorough analysis of possible architectures, and the design of at least one military application.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating and integrating knowledge, studies and design.

Indicative budget: EUR 25 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded under this topic.

3.1.9. Air combat (AIR)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, EDF-2025-DA, with two topics:

3.1.9.1. EDF-2025-DA-AIR-CAC: Collaborative air combat

Highly integrated, multi-platform mission management capabilities have proven to be instrumental to air operations and missions. These are based on a networked, collaborative combat approach that ensures interoperability between the heterogeneous air combat systems that may be involved.

This call topic therefore aims at defining design rules and developing standardised solutions for future mission and collaborative air combat systems or for existing mission systems that are currently evolving.

[7] Gallium Nitride
[8] Gallium Arsenide
[9] Silicon

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions

Indicative budget: EUR 49 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.9.2. EDF-2025-DA-AIR-EPE: Enhanced pilot environment

Future warfare is likely to be largely characterised by the networking of combat systems, including unmanned autonomous assets, and a high degree of automation of many systems. As a result, many actors, sensors and effectors will be connected, generating an astonishing amount of information and data. This would make it gradually more challenging to provide pilots with accurate situational awareness and understanding of system modes and status to enable timely action and reaction for mission success.

The aim of this call topic is to develop and prototype new and increasingly sophisticated sets of equipment and associated software designed to free crew members from repetitive tasks, allowing them to focus their resources on high-value areas of action, thereby improving combat effectiveness.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, and system prototyping, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions

Indicative budget: EUR 54 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.10. Air and missile defence (AIRDEF)

This category of actions will not be addressed under this annual work programme.

3.1.11. Ground combat (GROUND)

This category of actions will be addressed through three calls for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-RA, EDF-2025-DA-SI and EDF-2025-DA, with four topics:

3.1.11.1.EDF-2025-RA-GROUND-CBC: Technologies for counter-battery capabilities

Given that artillery is still responsible for most of the losses suffered by armies facing each other on the battlefield, this call topic aims to explore and bring to maturity the technologies required to destroy or neutralise the artillery potential of all enemies, thereby ensuring the survival of own forces and safeguarding their operational capacity.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, integrating knowledge and studies, not excluding downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded under this topic.

3.1.11.2. EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-FM2LP: Future modular multifunctional land platforms and enabling technologies, including green technologies

The evolving operational environment requires land capabilities that can be scaled and tailored to different operations, including high-intensity operations. Armoured land platforms with increased modularity and multifunctionality for ground combat, combat support, and combat service support, including advanced infantry and troop-carrying platforms for medium combat forces, are essential to provide effective land capabilities for modern warfare.

This call topic therefore aims to further develop the technologies required to improve the performance and effectiveness of armoured land platform systems in high-intensity operations, making them more capable, modular, multifunctional and energy efficient by maximising synergies, standardisation and the interoperability of armoured land vehicle families.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping, testing, qualification, certification and increasing efficiency, not excluding upstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 79 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.11.3. EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-LCC-STEP: Land collaborative combat including air-land

Given the rapid evolution of threats on the battlefield, which make the environment more challenging, complex and contested, collaborative warfare aims to achieve and maintain superiority over the enemy through the networking of combat systems, including from a multi-domain perspective. In particular, the development of a common tactical picture and closely coordinated actions at the tactical level should impose a fast operational tempo on the adversary and make it possible to understand, decide and act faster than the adversary.

Against this background, and with a view to contributing to an overall collaborative, interconnected and digitised combat framework, this call topic aims to bring to greater maturity the required collaborative functions. It also aims to develop, up to system prototyping and demonstration, a wide range of new collaborative capabilities, such as, but not limited to, tactical information sharing, collaborative force protection including responsive actions, collaborative Threat Evaluation and Weapon Assignment (TEWA) to support decision-making, joint engagement and firing, unmanned systems supervision and coordination, and joint logistics.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies, design, system prototyping, testing, qualification, certification and increasing efficiency.

Indicative budget: EUR 44 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.11.4. EDF-2025-DA-SI-GROUND-DAMM: Drone-based affordable mass munitions

In current battlefield confrontations, loitering munitions have proven to be extremely effective in locating, detecting and engaging the enemy's high-value short- and medium-range targets (i.e. artillery, short- and medium-range air defence and mechanised units) within a range of 50-60 km, and in providing real-time battle damage assessment.

This call topic focuses on drone-based solutions, and in particular on the concept of the 'one-way attack unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)', with the aim of developing affordable and mass-produced UAVs that can be used against a conventional adversary to gain a decisive tactical advantage in future high-intensity ground combat scenarios. Particular emphasis will be placed on innovation in precision-guided and intelligent munitions systems and the associated targeting, guidance, control and electronic warfare navigation system countermeasures, with affordability and mass production as guiding principles.

In addition, in order to best complement R&D efforts already targeting civil applications and to encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge and innovative solutions to the defence sector, this topic also welcomes proposals for add-on development actions to adapt solutions originally developed for civil applications to defence requirements. The proposals should drive forward or integrate the results of projects funded under EU programme calls with a focus on civil applications and under the provision that the applicants have the necessary rights to access and commercialise the results of the precursor projects.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 49 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA-SI.

Range of financial contribution of the European Union per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 9 800 000.

This topic will also support innovation opportunities and enable small companies to demonstrate innovative technologies relevant to drone-based affordable mass munitions and receive limited acceleration support. To achieve this objective, financial support to third parties (FSTP, i.e. cascade funding) will be included as part of the grant. This should increase the opportunities for various smaller actors, including those not previously active in the defence sector, to adapt innovative technologies for drone-based affordable mass munitions and to identify potential business opportunities in the defence sector.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded under this topic.

Other information: The action is expected to be implemented within 24 months. However, other duration can be proposed.

3.1.12. Force protection and mobility (PROTMOB)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-DA, with the following topic:

3.1.12.1. EDF-2025-DA-PROTMOB-SS: Full-sized demonstrators for next generation soldier systems

This call topic aims to further develop the Next Generation Dismounted Soldier System (NGDSS), based on an updated open architecture, with advanced individual and networking

capabilities for protection, survivability, sustainability, accuracy, and C4ISTAR (Command, Control, Communication, Computing, Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Reconnaissance) in non-permissive, multi-domain environments". The NGDSS requires an increase in the maturity of system-of-systems solutions to enable testing and evaluation under representative conditions and demonstrating a further increase in innovative technologies and the ability to deal with new threats.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 35 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

As it is related to EUDIS and in addition to the development activities, this topic will support innovation opportunities and enable small companies to receive acceleration support and demonstrate innovative technologies relevant to soldier systems. To achieve this objective, financial support to third parties (FSTP, i.e. cascade funding) will be included as part of the grant. This should increase the opportunities for various smaller actors, including those not previously active in the defence sector, to adapt innovative technologies for soldier systems. These systems include a significant number of small elements such as for ballistic protection, load carrying systems, textiles and clothing, including smart textiles, light batteries, and electronic equipment (e.g. for communication, situational awareness, GPS, various sensors, etc.). The financial support will also help beneficiaries to identify other potential business opportunities in the defence sector.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.13. Naval combat (NAVAL)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-DA, with the following topic:

3.1.13.1.EDF-2025-DA-NAVAL-DSNCC-STEP: Digital Ship and Naval Combat Cloud

The adoption of a common ship digital architecture to underpin the operation of different systems on-board and off-board is essential to provide the required flexibility and facility to either incorporate new systems or improvements or to extend key functions where needed.

The goal is to build on the work done under the topics EDF-2021-NAVAL-R-DSSDA on *Digital ship and ship digital architecture*, EDF-2021-NAVAL-R-SSHM on *Ship Structural Health Monitoring* and EDF-2021-DIGIT-D on *Cloud technologies*, EDF-2022-DA-NAVAL-NCS on *Naval Collaborative Surveillance*, and EDF-2024-DA-NAVAL-FNP on *Functional smart system-of-systems under an integral survivability approach for future naval platforms*, with a view to design, prototype and test a digital platform, and launch the initial design of a multi-domain naval combat cloud which bridges the gap between the cloud at naval platform level and the global and joint inter-services combat cloud.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 54 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.14. Underwater warfare (UWW)

Recent hostile activities against critical underwater infrastructure have underlined that naval capabilities for the protection of seabed infrastructure and for freedom of action remain key aspects of naval capabilities and constitute a cornerstone of maritime security and freedom of movement for the EU. Improved maritime security, therefore, requires enhanced underwater situational awareness and engagement capabilities. Solutions utilising unmanned systems with autonomous features are foreseen to be a technological multiplier in this area. Such solutions include operational features that create significant synergies with the EU-wide need for enhanced protection of critical underwater infrastructure.

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-RA and EDF-2025-DA, with the following two topics, in addition to the topic addressed under the call EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS (see Section 3.1.16.1):

3.1.14.1. EDF-2025-RA-UWW-SOASW: Stand-off anti-submarine warfare engagement

Modern submarines are equipped with long-range heavyweight torpedoes or submarine-launched anti-ship missiles. Both effectors are typically beyond the range of surface ships' organic underwater sensors and effectors. In order to engage enemy submarines outside the torpedo danger zone, light-weight torpedoes are typically employed by air assets equipped with underwater sensors, such as organic anti-submarine warfare helicopters or maritime patrol aircraft. Alternatively, torpedoes may be equipped with a booster rocket to engage submarines at close range. The engagement capability must therefore be available at all times and at short notice, even outside the deck cycles of the organic aircraft or the availability of non-organic aircraft.

This topic aims to identify feasible common effector components, like V/ULW torpedoes or depth charges, which can be deployed by systems, and which are usable for other purposes or in other areas of warfare or even other warfare domains, such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and unmanned surface vehicles (USV) for reconnaissance and surveillance, affordable precision strike capability, or deploying sensors like sonobuoys, in a configuration similar to multiple launch rocket systems.

Targeted types of activities: Generating and integrating knowledge, studies, not excluding downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.14.2. EDF-2025-DA-UWW-AUWN-STEP: Advanced underwater networks

The aim of this topic is to design, develop and prototype a sophisticated, integrated network of sensors and systems consisting of sensor networks with a view to improving underwater

and surface situational awareness, which would aid multiple areas of warfare related to the underwater environment, but also to the protection of critical underwater infrastructure.

This network would allow for automated surveillance over a wide area, specifically in confined and shallow water area(s) where underwater conditions are challenging. The detection, tracking and classification of objects within this network would be as automated as possible utilising advances in machine learning and the adoption of AI.

The possibilities of utilising the same network also for navigation and collaborative/coordinated swarming of unmanned systems in the underwater domain should also be explored.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies, design, and system prototyping, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 25 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-DA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.15. Simulation and training (SIMTRAIN)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, namely EDF-2025-RA, with the following two topics:

3.1.15.1. EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-DAFAS: Multi-disciplinary design and analysis framework for Aerial Systems

Multidisciplinary Analysis and Optimisation is a design methodology for fast and reliable design of space exploration, trade-off, and requirement sensitivity assessment, making it a key technology in modern aircraft design.

The aim of this call topic is to develop digital and fully coupled simulation capabilities (i.e. Digital Twins) for a multi-functional and high-fidelity aerial system design, including certification-relevant data. This framework should include an aerodynamic, structural, flight control system, a general system, embedded software, and design capabilities from level-zero to high-fidelity modelling, with the ability to provide tightly and loosely coupled multidisciplinary simulations. It should provide full design gradients for multidisciplinary numerical optimisation.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 28 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.15.2. EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-LVC-STEP: Live, virtual, constructive training interoperability – Joint operations and service-specific solutions

Creating a realistic joint training environment is challenging due to various issues such as limited access to training areas, the number of assets available and the need to protect information on tactics and system capabilities. An integrated mix of technologies for real platforms (live), simulators (virtual) and computer-generated players and targets (constructive) is likely to help alleviate such limitations.

The aim of this call topic is therefore to explore the interoperability of different Live, Virtual and Constructive (LVC) entities across EU Member States and EDF Associated Countries and industries, as LVC is likely to be instrumental in delivering cost-effective and realistic joint and combined training at the tactical level.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation, in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 15 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-RA.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded under this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded under this topic.

3.1.16. Disruptive technologies (DIS)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2025, EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS, with the following two topics:

3.1.16.1. EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-GDET: Great-depth enabling technologies

In the wake of recent acts of sabotage against critical underwater infrastructures, the vulnerability of assets such as strategic underwater pipelines, cables, communication backbones and offshore infrastructure requires decisive actions to ensure their security and resilience with a particular focus on Seabed Warfare (SBW).

Next-generation silent submarines are an example of new forms of threat that need to be countered by effective response capabilities to support various defence missions. Other examples of threats include unmanned vehicle carriers capable of launching a threat against energy pipelines, spoofing data from the underwater communications backbones and cutting power cables.

This topic aims at research on the assessment of which potential technologies are required to address the above needs is required. In particular, this research must prioritise the provision of technologies to EU defence capabilities that will enable solutions for monitoring and defence of critical underwater assets and to respond to threats in deep waters[10] up to 6000 meters in depth.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge and studies, not excluding other activities eligible for research actions.

[10] NATO AAP-06(2021): water having a depth greater than 200 metres.

Indicative budget: EUR 23 000 000 for this topic under the call EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded under this topic.

3.1.16.2. EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-NT: Non-thematic research actions targeting disruptive technologies for defence

See Section 3.3.3

3.2. Actions to be funded through grants but not related to the categories of actions

Two calls for proposals not related to the categories of actions will be launched in 2025:

3.2.1. EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO: Call for proposals dedicated to SMEs and research organisations

- **Targeted type of actions**: Research actions (dedicated to SMEs and research organisations).
- **Form of funding**: Lump sum grants following the call for proposals.
- **Targeted type of applicants**: Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation. Members of the consortium need to be SMEs (as defined in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC) or research organisations. The coordinator of the consortium must be an SME. The budget allocated to research organisations cannot exceed 40% of the total requested grant amount.
- **Indicative number of proposals to be funded**: Several proposals may be funded following this call (see Section 3.3.1).

3.2.2. EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME: Call for proposals dedicated to SMEs

- **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions (dedicated to SMEs).
- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals.
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation. Members of the consortium need to be SMEs (as defined in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC).
- **Indicative number of proposals to be funded**: Several proposals may be funded (see Section 3.3.2).

3.2.3. EDF-2025-CSA-NFP: Support to the National Focal Points (NFP) network

- **Targeted type of actions:** Coordination and support action
- **Form of funding:** Actual costs grant following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Applicants must be the hosting organisations of the national support structures (NFP or alternate NFP) responsible for the European Defence Fund and officially nominated to the Commission, from a Member State or EDF Associated Countries. A consortium should consist of

national support structures of at least 10 Member States or EDF Associated Countries.

- **Indicative budget for the call:** Up to EUR 2 000 000.
- **Applicable maximum funding rate:** 100% of the eligible costs of the action.

  The maximum EU financial contribution will be calculated based on the total eligible costs (direct and indirect) provided and justified by the applicants at the time of submission of the proposal.

  Indirect eligible costs must be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs of the action, excluding direct eligible costs of subcontracting and support to third parties and any unit costs or lump sums which include indirect costs.
- **Number of actions to be funded:** Up to one action may be funded under this call.
- **Other information:** The recommended duration of the action is 3 years.

This action will facilitate trans-national co-operation between National Focal Points (NFPs) with a view to identifying and sharing good practices and raising the general standard of support to (potential) programme applicants, taking into account the diversity of actors that could benefit from the programme and thus contribute to strengthening the European defence industry. It will also facilitate interactions with Enterprise Europe Network, which already has good contacts with entities that are active in civil R&D and can facilitate matchmaking, with relevant national industry associations and with relevant Horizon Europe National Contact Points (NCP) networks.

The action will build on the experiences and results of the project awarded following the call EDF-2022-CSA-NFP.

This action will support:

- NFP-organised joint training courses to improve the services they provide, and share experiences and best practices in relation to their support for the EDF;
- Twinning arrangements/facilities (in person visits or virtual), where NFPs can learn from their counterparts about the different approaches adopted in supporting national entities' participation in the EDF;
- The development of promotional material (both in digital and physical formats) on the services provided by the NFP network and on practical aspects of participating in the EDF;
- Matchmaking events at international and European defence fairs and national information days;
- Maintenance of a website for the NFP network, including, but not limited to an overview of the services provided by the network, a list of relevant events, an introduction of the EDF (with a special focus on entities that are new to defence R&D), assistance in finding partners.

These dissemination and awareness raising activities are referred to in Articles 32.2 and 32.3 of the EDF Regulation.

3.3. Actions implemented under indirect management

The following three topics may lead to actions to be implemented under indirect management:

3.3.1. EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO-NT: Non-thematic research actions by SMEs and research organisations

This topic addresses innovative defence technologies, materials and solutions, including those that can improve the readiness, deployability, reliability, safety and sustainability of EU forces across the entire spectrum of defence tasks and missions, for example in terms of operations, equipment, infrastructure, basing, energy solutions and new surveillance systems.

The proposals could address any subject of interest for defence.

In addition, in order to best complement R&D efforts already targeting civil applications and to encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge and innovative solutions to the defence sector, this topic also welcomes proposals for add-on research actions to adapt solutions originally developed for civil applications to defence requirements. The proposals should drive forward or integrate the results of projects funded under EU programme calls with a focus on civil applications and under the provision that the applicants have the necessary rights to access and commercialise the results of the precursor project.

Management mode: Action implemented under indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of actual cost grants, as decided by the Commission at the time of the award of projects following the competitive call EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO-NT.

Targeted types of activities: Any activities eligible for a research action. However, proposals must not be limited to studies.

Indicative budget: EUR 34 815 000 to support this topic, including up to EUR 815 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 4 000 000.

3.3.2. EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME-NT: Non-thematic development actions by SMEs

This topic addresses innovative defence products, solutions, materials and technologies, including those that can improve the readiness, deployability, reliability, safety and sustainability of EU forces across the entire spectrum of defence tasks and missions, for example in terms of operations, equipment, infrastructure, basing, energy solutions and new surveillance systems.

The proposals could address any subject of interest for defence.

In addition, in order to best complement R&D efforts already targeting civil applications and to encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge and innovative solutions to the defence sector, this topic also welcomes proposals for add-on development actions to adapt solutions

originally developed for civil applications to defence requirements. The proposals should drive forward or integrate results of projects funded under EU programme calls with a focus on civil applications and under the provision that the applicants have the necessary rights to access and commercialise the results of the precursor project.

Management mode: Action implemented under indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of actual cost grants, as decided by the Commission at the time of the award of projects following the competitive call EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME-NT.

Targeted types of activities: Any activities eligible for a development action. However, the proposals must address at least one activity among design, system prototyping, testing, qualification, certification and increasing efficiency.

Indicative budget: EUR 33 770 000 to support this topic, including up to EUR 770 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 6 000 000.

3.3.3. EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-NT: Non-thematic research actions targeting disruptive technologies for defence

The proposals should primarily consist of activities aiming to create, underpin and improve disruptive technologies that can achieve significant effects in the area of defence.

The proposals must substantiate their disruptive impact and could address disruptive technologies in any area of interest for defence.

Management mode: Action implemented under indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of actual cost grants, as decided by the Commission at the time of the award of projects following the competitive call EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS:

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, not excluding downstream eligible activities for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 530 000 for this topic, including up to EUR 530 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 4 000 000.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded.

3.3.4. EDF-2025-CSA-BraveTech EU testing and evaluation campaigns

In order to implement the objectives of the Brave Tech EU initiative, a coordination and support action is to be launched with the aim to support the rapid and agile development, testing and refinement of cutting-edge defence technologies. This coordination and support action should be

based on testing and evaluation campaigns of solutions to technological challenges originally addressed under EUDIS bootcamps and their follow-on actions.

The action aims to strengthen the cooperation between the EU and Ukrainian defence innovation ecosystems as accelerating the technological transformation of European defence is crucial, and to address key challenges in the defence sector, to foster the emergence of new players and the development of disruptive technologies for defence and their embedding in defence products. Although Ukraine is not an associated country to the European Defence Fund, strengthening the collaboration between the EU and Ukraine's defence innovation ecosystems through targeted actions could significantly contribute to this endeavour. This is in line with the general objective of the European Defence Fund to foster the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European defence technological and industrial base (EDTIB).

The Brave Tech EU coordination and support action aims to provide a framework for teams and companies to test and evaluate their proposed solutions to address the challenges initially addressed in EUDIS bootcamps. This action will also support iterative short and rapid development cycles to the most promising solutions, through dedicated prizes to be awarded. The action should be implemented in alignment with EUDIS actions in support of the development of innovative defence solutions.

The European Defence Agency's Hub for EU Defence Innovation (HEDI) currently serves as a platform to stimulate and facilitate defence innovation cooperation between EU Member States, while ensuring synergies with related European Commission activities, in particular those under the EDF/EUDIS.

Essentially, the BraveTech EU testing and evaluation campaigns be implemented in the context of joint EUDIS/HEDI efforts aims to contribute to:

- mobilising European and Ukrainian innovators to respond to real, operational defence needs identified by EU Member States EDF associated countries, and Ukraine;
- supporting the development of cutting-edge defence technologies through targeted financial contributions (prizes), structured around well-defined challenges to be conducted during testing and evaluation campaigns;
- enabling iterative technology and product development by integrating structured testing and experimentation campaigns, followed by refinement and adaptation phases based on end-users' feedback, where appropriate;
- strengthening collaboration between EU and Ukrainian defence innovation ecosystems to enable cross-border partnerships and knowledge exchanges;
- increasing the possible uptake and integration of promising defence technologies by ensuring their operational relevance and involving end-users in their development.

Targeted type of action: Coordination and support action

Management mode: Action implemented under indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution agreement

Entrusted tasks:

- **Organising and implementing of testing and evaluation campaigns** of innovative solutions to pre-identified technological issues;
- **Awarding dedicated prizes** to support the iterative development of the most promising solutions arising from the testing and evaluation campaigns.

Indicative budget: EUR 35 000 000, including the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

3.4. Other actions

Outreach and matchmaking activities, IT systems and studies

- EDF outreach, IT systems and studies as referred to in Article 32(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/697 (EDF Regulation), EDF outreach actions will contribute to communication activities on the political priorities related to the EDF, dissemination activities, matchmaking events and awareness-raising activities. EU Member States and EDF Associated Countries, as well as the recipients of EDF funding as referred to in Article 32(1) of the Regulation, should aim to implement similar communication efforts.

- Development and support of IT systems adapted to EDF specificities.

- Support to matchmaking for investors, SMEs and Mid-Caps, allowing all these entities to showcase their innovative products and services to end-users in the EU Member States and EDF Associated Countries, as well as to large corporates and investors. The matchmaking will strengthen the companies' development by facilitating access to follow-on financing, government contracts or corporates' supply chains.

- Studies on movement of persons/skills in the defence sector in Europe, on mapping of the European drone industry, on the implementation of the Defence Transfers Directive[11] and on zero-emission aviation with a view to future possible defence applications.

Form of funding	Public procurements
Indicative budget	EUR 1 682 382

External expertise and audits

- Recruitment of external expertise necessary for the evaluation of proposals submitted following the EDF calls for proposals: contracts of remunerated experts referred to in Article 237 of the Financial Regulation.

- Cost arising for the performance of the audits referred to in Article 30 of the EDF Regulation (contracts).

Form of funding	Contracts
Indicative budget	EUR 1 300 000

[11] Directive 2009/43/EC on intra-EU transfers of defence-related products

Indirect management

- Remuneration of entrusted entities in case of change in the management mode for specific actions, following the evaluation of the proposals submitted.

Form of funding	Contribution agreements
Indicative budget	EUR 3 285 000

Business Coaching in the European Defence Fund

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) play an important role in achieving more innovative solutions. To reduce the time needed to bring the results of R&D funded actions to the next phase, whether this consists of further development or bringing the final product to the market, the European Commission will provide business coaching to the successful SMEs beneficiaries under all EDF calls for proposals. This action will support:

- The setting up of a pool of experts that can provide targeted business coaching.
- A mechanism for matching up the skills offered by the coaches, the requirements for coaching by the SME, and the actual assignment of the coaches.

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 1 600 000

Business accelerator for the European Defence Fund

The EUDIS Business Accelerator is an eight-month programme designed to help innovative European start-ups and scale-ups enter and grow within the defence industrial ecosystem. It aims to strengthen the EU's defence innovation ecosystem and foster the growth of a competitive and resilient defence industrial base. Funded by the European Commission through a multi-year framework contract, the accelerator provides new defence companies with tailored support, including expert coaching, training, access to specialised testing environments. The Commission also provides non-dilutive seed vouchers. A central component of the programme is a series of on-site boot camps held across Europe, which provide opportunities for direct engagement with defence end users, industry leaders and investors. These boot camps are designed to deepen participants' understanding of operational defence needs, while also enhancing their business development and go-to-market strategies, as well as their readiness for dual-use opportunities. The accelerator also focuses on improving access to risk financing and building strong networks with potential partners and customers. The EUDIS Business Accelerator will support two cohorts annually, each comprising a minimum of 20 companies.

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 10 000 000

Defence equity facility under InvestEU for SMEs and Mid-Caps

The lack of risk capital in the EU for SMEs or Midcaps developing innovative defence technologies hampers their capacity to grow. This market failure has already been underlined in the conclusions of the expert group on the EDF Financial toolbox. To tackle this market failure, the "Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence" published by the Commission on 15 February 2022 announced the creation of a defence innovation scheme, including the creation of a defence investment blending facility, i.e. a defence equity facility under InvestEU.

The newly established defence equity facility will allow the Commission to guarantee equity investments made by private funds in innovative and strategic defence SMEs. The facility will allow the EU, through the European Investment Fund (EIF), to financially support private funds investing in innovative and strategic defence SMEs across the EU. The facility operates without prejudice to EIF/European Investment Bank (EIB) policies and guidelines. This support will be made through direct investments in the funds themselves and by crowding-in additional investors through signalling effects associated with the EIF's investment. It would be created by a "blending operation" as referred to in Article 8.3 of the EDF Regulation and implemented, under indirect management, by the EIF according to the InvestEU Regulation and its investment guidelines.

Enabling better access to equity funding for innovative defence SMEs and mid-caps will support their growth and ultimately improve the innovativeness in the European defence technological and industrial base. It will also reduce their exposure to non-EU investors and benefit to the EU's strategic autonomy, in line with the EDF's eligibility criteria. The creation of this facility will send a positive message to private investors on the attractiveness of the defence sector within the EU.

The EDF is expected to contribute a total funding of EUR 100 million between 2022 and 2027, including EUR 20 million in 2025. The EIF will contribute with its own resources. Financial intermediaries selected by EIF and entrusted with the funds will have to invest a minimum amount in specifically defence-related SMEs, to reach a global volume of EUR 350 million.

The Guarantee Agreement between the Commission and the EIF will set out the terms and conditions according to which: (1) the EIF will select financial intermediaries (private funds); (2) the financial intermediaries will implement equity operations. In line with the eligibility conditions of the EDF, both financial intermediaries and final beneficiaries will have to be established in the EU or EDF Associated Countries, and must not be controlled by entities from non-associated third countries. Final beneficiaries will also be subject to limitations on the transfer or exclusive licensing of their technology to non-EU and non-associated third-country entities.

The InvestEU guarantee agreement mirrors the categories of activities of the EDF's annual work programme, ensuring that the SMEs that are supported are relevant to the objectives of the programme, and that the competitiveness of the European defence technological and industrial base is supported.

Form of funding	Blending operations
Indicative budget	EUR 20 000 000

European Defence Fund Hackathon event

EUDIS hackathons and bootcamps focus on two target audiences. First, they bring together individuals from Member States, EDF associated countries and Ukraine to form competing teams. Second, they encourage more experienced innovators who have already set up a company to develop solutions to specific problems.

Funded by the European Commission through a multi-year framework contract, and in line with the EDF's awareness-raising and outreach objectives, the EUDIS hackathons and bootcamps aim to promote skills development, attract the next generation of innovators and talents to the defence sector and develop solutions to existing technological challenges faced by the armed forces. They should also encourage collaboration between different relevant communities, for example by connecting young researchers and innovators with experts from the defence industry and defence end-users from Member States, EDF associated countries and Ukraine.

These events also aim to provide a stimulating environment for creating innovative defence solutions that support the needs of the Member States, the EDF associated countries and Ukraine, as well as contributing to the EDF's objectives and a more competitive and innovative European defence industrial ecosystem in line with the priorities set out in the EDF's annual work programmes, themes for the hackathons will be selected by the Commission in coordination with the Member States, the EDF associated countries, the European Defence Agency and Ukraine.

At least three EUDIS hackathons and bootcamps are scheduled to take place annually across multiple locations in Member States and EDF associated countries, focused on start-ups, universities, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), middle capitalisation companies (mid-caps), RTOs, Armed Forces, defence colleges etc.

EUDIS bootcamps will deliver more specialised events than EUDIS hackathons, with the aim of solving urgent defence problems in multiple locations. However, the target audience will remain the same. Designed to bring together defence and dual-use technology founders and companies, the events will take place over several days. Winning teams in each location of the EUDIS bootcamps will be awarded a prize to further develop and prepare their technological solution for the BraveTech EU testing and evaluation campaigns.

Each event will also be followed by a dedicated mentoring programme for the winning teams.

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 10 000 000

4. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR 2025

Reference of the operational budget lines: 13.03 for Research and 13.02 for Development

Union actions	Total budget and percentage of 2025 appropriations (in EUR)					
	Research		Development		TOTAL	
- Grants*	328 000 000	81.47%	677 500 000	64.34%	1 005 500 000	69.08%
**Among which:*						
benefitting the cross-border participation of SMEs	*34 000 000*	*10.37%*	*33 000 000*	*4.87%*	*67 000 000*	*6.66%*
supporting disruptive technologies for defence	*43 000 000*	*13.11%*		*0.00%*	*43 000 000*	*4.28%*
for grants implemented under indirect management	*54 000 000*	*16.46%*	*33 000 000*	*4.87%*	*87 000 000*	*8.65%*
- Framework partnership agreement	13 500 000	3.35%	11 500 000	1.09%	25 000 000	1.72%
- Prizes						
- Public procurement[12]	5 205 934	1.34%	18 076 448	1.72%	23 282 382	1.60%
- Blending operations	20 000 000	4.97%			20 000 000	1.37%
- Other actions[13]	3 700 000	0.92%	38 000 000	3.61%	41 700 000	2.87%
- Financing Decision 2025 – Part 1[14]	32 000 000	7.95%	308 000 000	29.25%	340 000 000	23.36%
TOTAL	**402 405 934**	**27.66%**	**1 053 076 448**	**72.34%**	**1 455 482 382**	**100.00%**
Among which contribution from Norway	*10 120 953*		*26 486 033*		*36 606 986*	

Appendix 2 to this work programme contains detailed figures for each *category of actions*.

Appendix 3 to this work programme contains detailed figures for each *call for proposals*.

Appendix 5 to this work programme contains a multiannual indicative budget summary for each *category of actions*.

[12] Costs arising from business coaching, EDF outreach activities, corporate information technology systems, and studies, as well as from the organisation of EDF hackathons.
[13] Costs arising from the coordination and support action, the evaluation and audit activities, as well as provision for costs that arise from indirect management or may arise from changes of management mode for specific actions to be decided at the time of the award.
[14] According to Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 4365 final of 19 June 2024

5. SUMMARY INFORMATION AND FUNDING PRINCIPLES

Summary information

In 2025, the Commission will run the following actions:

- 9 competitive calls for proposals, among which 5 to support research actions, 3 to support development actions, and 1 for coordination and support action
- 2 Specific Grant Agreements (one targeting research actions and one targeting development actions)
- 1 coordination and support action to be implemented through a contribution agreement.

Grants will be awarded to consortia after the evaluation of the proposals submitted following the publication of calls for proposals.

Funding principles

Pursuant to Article 13 of the EDF Regulation, maximum funding rates that will apply to eligible costs of funded actions will be determined for each activity covered by the action and will be composed of:

- a baseline funding rate (see **Table 1** below);
- an increase in the baseline funding rate ('bonus') where conditions are met (see **Table 2** below).

The overall increase in the baseline-funding rate following the application of the increase of funding rates listed in Table 2 cannot exceed 35% of the total eligible costs of the activity.

The financial assistance of the EU provided under the EDF including the increased funding rates cannot exceed the values provided in **Table 3**.

Indirect eligible costs shall be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and financial support to third parties and any unit costs or lump sums that include indirect costs.

As an alternative, indirect eligible costs may be determined in accordance with the recipient's usual cost accounting practices on the basis of actual indirect costs provided that those cost accounting practices are accepted by national authorities for comparable activities in the defence domain, in accordance with Article 185 of the Financial Regulation, and that they have been communicated to the Commission by the recipient. By way of indication, this optional regime will be implemented as follows:

- Before the signature of the grant agreement:
  - The applicant opting for this possibility must describe in detail in the application their usual accounting practices to calculate their indirect costs.
  - The national authority must certify that these accounting practises are accepted at national level for comparable activities in the defence domain.
  - The Commission will check that the indirect costs calculated by the applicant do not contain ineligible costs within the meaning of Article 186 of the Financial Regulation and will make adjustments, where applicable, for the calculation of the maximum grant amount.

- At the end of the action:
  - The opting beneficiary declares their actual indirect costs calculated following the methodology agreed *ex ante*.
  - Financial statement of the opting beneficiary must be accompanied by a Certificate of Financial Statement (CFS) provided by an external auditor as foreseen in the Model Grant Agreement.
  - The auditor providing the CFS will follow the methodology agreed *ex-ante* to certify the amount of the actual indirect costs.
  - The Commission has the possibility to audit the actual indirect costs following the methodology agreed ex ante (to be carried out by the internal audit service of the Commission or by mandated external auditors).

The necessary details and forms will be part of the call documents that the Commission will publish on its website.

No profit rule: To ensure the continuity of the development actions after the period of EU financing provided for in the grant, the potential revenue to be generated by these actions will not be taken into consideration in accordance with point (a) of Article 192(3) of the Financial Regulation.

Table 1. Applicable baseline funding rates

Types of activities		Baseline funding rate	
		Research action	**Development action**
(a)	Activities that aim to create, underpin and improve knowledge, products and technologies, including disruptive technologies for defence, which can achieve significant effects in the area of defence	100% of eligible costs	*Not applicable*
(b)	Activities that aim to increase interoperability and resilience, including secured production and exchange of data, to master critical defence technologies, to strengthen the security of supply or to enable the effective exploitation of results for defence products and technologies	100% of eligible costs	Up to 65% of eligible costs
(c)	Studies, such as feasibility studies to explore the feasibility of new or upgraded products, technologies, processes, services and solution	100% of eligible costs	Up to 90% of eligible costs
(d)	The design of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology as well as the definition of the technical specifications on which such a design has been developed, including any partial tests for risk reduction in an industrial or representative environment	100% of eligible costs	Up to 65% of eligible costs
(e)	The system prototyping of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 20% of eligible costs
(f)	The testing of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 45% of eligible costs
(g)	The qualification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 70% of eligible costs
(h)	The certification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 70% of eligible costs
(i)	The development of technologies or assets increasing efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies	*Not applicable*	Up to 65% of eligible costs

Table 2. Increase of funding rates (bonus) for development actions:

Condition to be fulfilled to get the corresponding bonus	**Bonus** (additional number of percentage points to the baseline funding rate)
PESCO bonus	
Action developed in the context of the permanent structured cooperation (PESCO)	+ 10%
SME bonus	
Proportion of eligible costs allocated to SMEs established in the EU (for the activity concerned)	Proportion of eligible costs allocated to non-cross-border SMEs established in the EU (up to maximum 5%) + Twice the proportion of eligible costs allocated to cross-border SMEs established in the EU
Mid-cap bonus	
Proportion of eligible costs allocated to Mid-caps established in the EU (for the activity concerned)	+ 10%

Table 3. Applicable maximum funding rates

Types of activities		Maximum funding rate	
		Research action	**Development action**
(a)	Activities that aim to create, underpin and improve knowledge, products and technologies, including disruptive technologies for defence, which can achieve significant effects in the area of defence	100% of eligible costs	*Not applicable*
(b)	Activities that aim to increase interoperability and resilience, including secured production and exchange of data, to master critical defence technologies, to strengthen the security of supply or to enable the effective exploitation of results for defence products and technologies	100% of eligible costs	Up to 100% of eligible costs
(c)	Studies, such as feasibility studies to explore the feasibility of new or upgraded products, technologies, processes, services and solution	100% of eligible costs	Up to 100% of eligible costs
(d)	The design of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology as well as the definition of the technical specifications on which such a design has been developed, including any partial tests for risk reduction in an industrial or representative environment	100% of eligible costs	Up to 100% of eligible costs
(e)	The system prototyping of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 55% of eligible costs
(f)	The testing of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 80% of eligible costs
(g)	The qualification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 80% of eligible costs
(h)	The certification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	*Not applicable*	Up to 80% of eligible costs
(i)	The development of technologies or assets increasing efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies	*Not applicable*	Up to 100% of eligible costs

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF CALL TOPICS PER CATEGORY OF ACTIONS

Categories of actions	**Research call topics**	**Development call topics**
	16	**16**
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	EDF-2025-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP	EDF-2025-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP
	EDF-2025-RA-MCBRN-ATE	
2. Information superiority	EDF-2025-RA-C4ISR-MIDS-STEP	
3. Advanced passive and active sensors		EDF-2025-DA-SENS-MB4DR-STEP
		EDF-2025-DA-SENS-IRD-STEP
4. Cyber	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-CYBER-3RAV-STEP	EDF-2025-DA-CDOC-STEP
5. Space		EDF-2025-DA-SI-SPACE-3OS
		EDF-2025-DA-SPACE-SBISR
6. Digital transformation	EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDP-STEP	
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDO	
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	EDF-2025-RA-ENERENV-PSR	EDF-2025-DA-ENERENV-APEM
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NH2PS-STEP	
8. Materials and components	EDF-2025-RA-MATCOMP-CDA-STEP	
9. Air combat		EDF-2025-DA-AIR-CAC
		EDF-2025-DA-AIR-EPE
10. Air and missile defence		
11. Ground combat	EDF-2025-RA-GROUND-CBC	EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-FM2LP
		EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-LCC-STEP
		EDF-2025-DA-SI-GROUND-DAMM
12. Force protection and mobility		EDF-2025-DA-PROTMOB-SS
13. Naval combat		EDF-2025-DA-NAVAL-DSNCC-STEP
14.Underwater warfare	EDF-2025-RA-UWW-SOASW	EDF-2025-DA-UWW-AUWN-STEP
15. Simulation and training	EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-DAFAS	
	EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-LVC-STEP	
16. Disruptive technologies	EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-GDET	
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-NT	
Out of the scope of categories of actions	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO-NT	EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME-NT
	EDF-2025-CSA-NFP	

APPENDIX 2: 2025 ANNUAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS PER CATEGORY OF ACTIONS

Categories of actions	Budget (in M€)								
	Research			Development			Research and Development		
	Total			Total			Total		
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	23.5			11.5			35		
2. Information superiority	39						39		
3. Advanced passive and active sensors				58.5			58.5		
4. Cyber	20			34			54		
5. Space				115			115		
6. Digital transformation	27			0			27		
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	45			48			93		
8. Materials and components	25						25		
9. Air combat				103			103		
10. Air and missile defence									
11. Ground combat	20			172			192		
12. Force protection and mobility				35			35		
13. Naval combat				54			54		
14.Underwater warfare	20			25			45		
15. Simulation and training	43			0			43		
16. Disruptive technologies	43			0			43		
Non- thematic calls for innovative and future-oriented defence solutions focused on SMEs	34			33			67		
*Other actions**	30.9			56.1			87		
TOTAL	***370.4***	Among which		***745.1***	Among which		***1115.5***	Among which	
		For disruptive	For SMEs		For disruptive	For SMEs		**For disruptive**	For SMEs
		43	**34**		**-**	**33**		**43**	**67**

*Including the call EDF-2025-CSA and EDF-2025-CSA-Brave Tech EU test and evaluation campaigns

APPENDIX 3: 2025 ANNUAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS PER CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Call ID	Call topic ID	Budget (in M€)
EDF-2025-RA	EDF-2025-RA-MCBRN-ATE	10
	EDF-2025-RA-C4ISR-MIDS-STEP	39
	EDF-2025-RA-ENERENV-PSR	25
	EDF-2025-RA-MATCOMP-CDA-STEP	25
	EDF-2025-RA-GROUND-CBC	20
	EDF-2025-RA-UWW-SOASW	20
	EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-DAFAS	28
	EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-LVC-STEP	15
EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-CYBER-3RAV-STEP	20
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NH2PS-STEP	20
EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE	EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HDAIP-STEP	20
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HDAIO	7
EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS	EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-GDET	23
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-NT	20 + ceiling 4 per proposal
EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO-NT	34 + ceiling 4 per proposal
EDF-2025-DA	EDF-2025-DA-SENS-MB4DR-STEP	29.5
	EDF-2025-DA-SENS-IRD-STEP	29
	EDF-2025-DA-CYBER-CDOC-STEP	34
	EDF-2025-DA-SPACE-SBISR	66
	EDF-2025-DA-ENERENV-APEM	48
	EDF-2025-DA-AIR-CAC	49
	EDF-2025-DA-AIR-EPE	54
	EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-FM2LP	79
	EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-LCC-STEP	44
	EDF-2025-DA-PROTMOB-SS	35
	EDF-2025-DA-NAVAL-DSNCC-STEP	54
	EDF-2025-DA-UWW-AUWN-STEP	25
EDF-2025-DA-SI	EDF-2025-DA-SI-SPACE-3OS	49
	EDF-2025-DA-SI-GROUND-DAMM	49 + ceiling 9.8 per proposal
EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME	EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME-NT	33 + ceiling 6 per proposal
EDF-2025-RA-SGA	EDF-2025-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP	13.5
EDF-2025-DA-SGA	EDF-2025-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP	11.5
EDF-2025-CSA	EDF-2025-CSA-NFP	2

APPENDIX 4: 2025 EDF CONTRIBUTION TO STEP OBJECTIVES

EDF 2025 Call topic ID	**Budget (in M€)**	**STEP investment area supported**
EDF-2025-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP	13.5	Bio technologies
EDF-2025-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP	11.5	Bio technologies
EDF-2025-RA-C4ISR-MIDS-STEP	39	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-DA-SENS-MB4DR-STEP	29.5	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-DA-SENS-IRD-STEP	29	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-CYBER-3RAV-STEP	20	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-DA-CYBER-CDOC-STEP	34	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HDAIP-STEP	20	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NH2PS-STEP	20	Clean technologies
EDF-2025-RA-MATCOMP-CDA-STEP	25	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-LCC-STEP	44	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-DA-NAVAL-DSNCC-STEP	54	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-DA-UWW-AUWN-STEP	25	Deep and digital technologies
EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-LVC-STEP	15	Deep and digital technologies
Total indicative budget	***379.5***	

APPENDIX 5: EDF MULTIANNUAL INDICATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY PER CATEGORY OF ACTIONS

Categories of actions	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total	
	in M€	in M€	in M€	in M€	in M€	in M€	in M€	in M€	in %
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	57.8	24.9	40.0	25.0	35.0			182.7	3.38%
2. Information superiority	70.0	68.8	99.0	181.0	39.0			457.8	8.46%
3. Advanced passive and active sensors	38.0	40.0	69.0	62.0	58.5			267.5	4.94%
4. Cyber	37.9	69.9	60.0	48.0	54.0			269.8	4.99%
5. Space	49.4	148.7	125.0	50.0	115.0			488.1	9.02%
6. Digital transformation	68.5	48.2	45.0	15.0	27.0			203.7	3.76%
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	82.8	19.3	25.0	40.0	93.0			260.1	4.81%
8. Materials and components	34.6	44.9	50.0	25.0	25.0			179.5	3.32%
9. Air combat	189.8	40.0	63.0	150.0	103.0			545.8	10.09%
10. Air and missile defence	100.0		123.0	78.0	0.0			301.0	5.56%
11. Ground combat	154.7	48.7	47.0	130.0	192.0			572.4	10.58%
12. Force protection and mobility	49.1	30.0	45.0	30.0	35.0			189.1	3.49%
13. Naval combat	103.5	130.0	154.5	45.0	54.0			487.0	9.00%
14.Underwater warfare		25.0	90.0	54.0	45.0			214.0	3.95%
15. Simulation and training		29.6		25.0	43.0			97.6	1.80%
16. Disruptive technologies	64.5	37.6	41.0	40.0	43.0			226.1	4.18%
Undefined categories. including SME calls	54.1	25.2	72.0	67.0	67.0			285.3	5.27%
Other actions	8.1	25.0	30.6	33.2	87.0			183.9	3.40%
TOTAL	1162.7	855.8	1179.1	1098.2	1115.5			5411.3	100.00%