



HORIZON EUROPE

#HorizonEU

THE EU
RESEARCH & INNOVATION
PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

The European
Innovation
Council



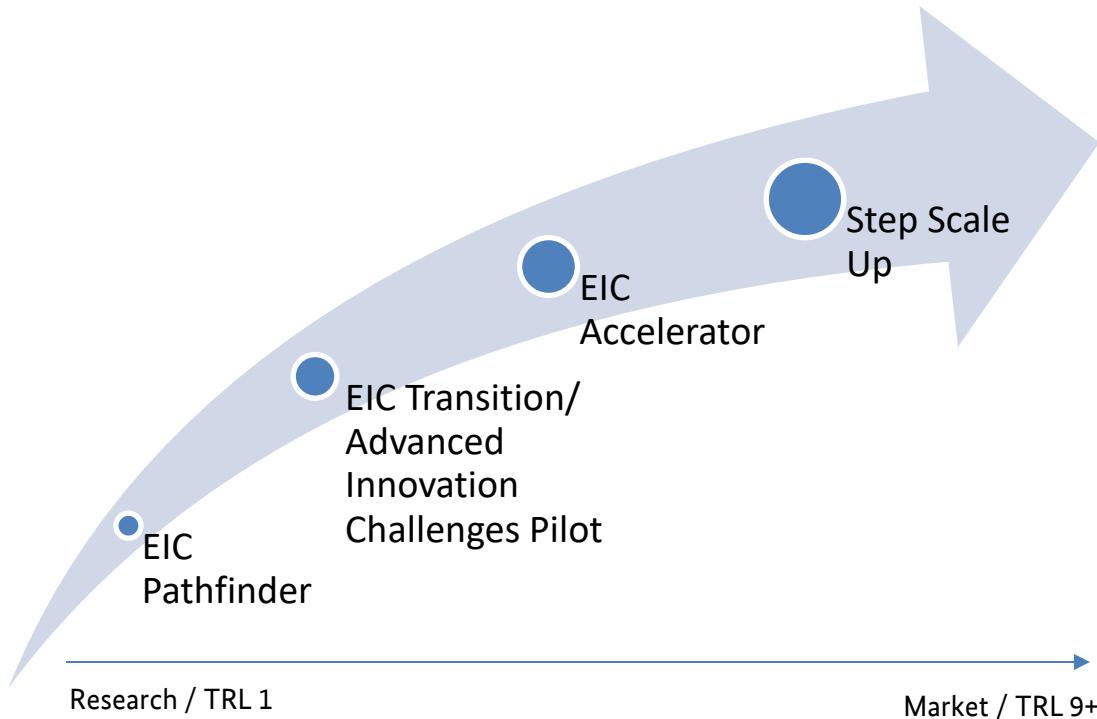
Agenda

- Introduction to the EIC
- Pathfinder, Transition & AIC
- The EIC Accelerator
- New features in 2026
- Application short application
- Success rates
- Brief overview of EIC STEP scale-up

Introduction to the EIC



European Innovation Council



Pathfinder, Transition & AIC



EIC Pathfinder

- Funds research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies
- Goal: Proof of principle (TRL 3)
- Low TRL: Start at TRL 1 or 2 and go for TRL 3 or 4.
- Open: Support of projects in any field of science
- Challenges: Support of coherent portfolios of projects within predefined thematic areas with the aim to achieve specific objectives

Deadlines:
Open: 12 May 2026
Chall.: 28 Oct. 2026
Budget per project:
up to €4 M

EIC Pathfinder Challenges 2026

1. Advanced Materials for Miniaturised Energy Harvesting Systems
2. Biotechnology for Healthy Ageing
3. DeepRAP: Deep Reasoning, Abstraction & Planning towards trustworthy Cognitive AI Systems

EIC Transition

Deadline:
16 September 2026

- Focus on results from EU funded projects
 - to mature the technologies
 - build a business case for specific applications
- Medium TRL: 3 / 4 - 5 / 6
- Grants of up to **€ 2.5 million to**
 - validate and demonstrate technology
 - develop market readiness

NEW!

EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges

- High-risk, demand-driven deep tech innovations
- Involvement of commercial users (e.g. industry, public sector), end users and other key stakeholders such as regulatory authorities
- Medium TRL: 4 to 6 /7
- Two-stage process:
 - 300.000 € **for** stage 1
 - 2,5 M€ **for** stage 2

Deadline: 26. Februar 2026

EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges - Topics

- TRL 4 at the start and TRL 6 or 7 at the end of the project.

Topics:

- Accelerating Physical AI: Embodied Intelligence for the Next Frontier of AI-Powered Robotics
- Translating Disruptive New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) into Practice

The EIC Pre-Accelerator



What is the EIC Pre-Accelerator?

Supporting early-stage deep-tech innovation in Europe

- The **EIC Pre-Accelerator** is an EU funding instrument under **Horizon Europe/WIDERA**, focused on early-stage deep-tech startups in **widening countries**.
- Helps SMEs develop **technology, business and investor readiness** before scaling or applying to larger instruments like the **EIC Accelerator**.
- Offers **grants up to ~€500 000**, coaching, mentoring and business acceleration services.

What Support is Offered?

- **Funding:**
 - Grants from **€300 000 to €500 000** per company for up to ~24 months.
- **Additional Support Services:**
 - Tailored **business acceleration services** (coaching, mentoring, networking).
 - Help in preparing for future EIC Accelerator applications.
- **Objective outcomes:**
 - Strengthened business and investor strategy.
 - Increased readiness to secure follow-on funding.

What are the funding criteria?

- ✓ **Country eligibility:** Widening countries of the EU + certain associated countries & outermost regions.
- ✓ **Applicant:** Single SME or startup legally established in eligible country.
- ✓ **Technology readiness:** TRL ~4+ (validated in lab or prototype stage).
- ✓ **Submission:** Through the **Funding & Tenders Portal**.

Timeline

-  **2025 Call (pilot)**
 - **Call opening:** 12 June 2025.
 - **Submission deadline:** 18 November 2025.
-  **Post-submission timeline:**
 - Evaluation expected to conclude by **Feb 2026**, results communicated in **late Feb – early March 2026**.
-  **Next call:**
 - Announced to open around **May 2027** (subject to official Work Programme publication).

The EIC Accelerator



EIC Accelerator

Support for start-ups and SMEs with

- Deep Tech Innovations (groundbreaking , high-risk , TRL) 6)
- large international market potential
- obal ambitions

Up to 2,5 Mio. € Grant
+ 10 Mio. € Investment

Goal

- Bring Innovations to the market
- Commercialise and scale-up

Is the EIC Accelerator a good fit for us?

- ✓ Disruptive Innovation
- ✓ Deeptech
- ✓ High development risk
- ✓ High market potential
- ✓ TRL 5 completed
- ✓ IP clarified, rights secured, FTO available
- ✓ High scaling potential
- ✓ Commercialization strategy convincing and internalized
- ✓ Interest from investors?
- ✓ Open to external capital?
- ✓ Need for Union Support?
- ✓ Focused on growth?
- ✓ Are the necessary skills available?
- ✓ Profit sharing?

- Cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries,
- need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab,
- potential to deliver transformative solutions, rooted in cutting-edge science, technology and engineering, including innovation that combines advances in the physical, biological and digital spheres,
- Distinct from 'high tech' which tends to refer only to R&D intensity.

Deep tech ventures

- positioning at the knowledge frontier with long and uncertain R&I cycles;
- relates to tangible products and industrialization processes;
- linked to the ecosystem and especially higher education institutions, problem oriented, or mission driven, focused on the creation of an option space and a dynamic de-risking cycle.

What will be financed?

**Grant up to €2.5 million Euro (70%)
Funding rate)**

Innovation activities:

Development , demonstration and prototyping,
approval, IP, preparatory market launch



Investment of 1 – 10 million. Euro :

Financing the market launch and Scale-up

Grant/ Grant

- Basically, innovation and market launch activities (development, demonstration activities, prototyping , testing for standardization, IPR, market approvals) from TRL 6 - TRL 8
- up to €2.5 million , 70% funding rate
- Lump sum

Investment component

- Investment guidelines lay the foundation
- A matter for negotiation between the EIC fund and the company
- Co-investor (50%) required – ideally a letter of intent is already in place for the application.
- EICF share between 10–25% of voting rights
- Exit after 7–10 years (longer, e.g., in case of health issues)

How can one participate?

Short application:
Any time

Level 1

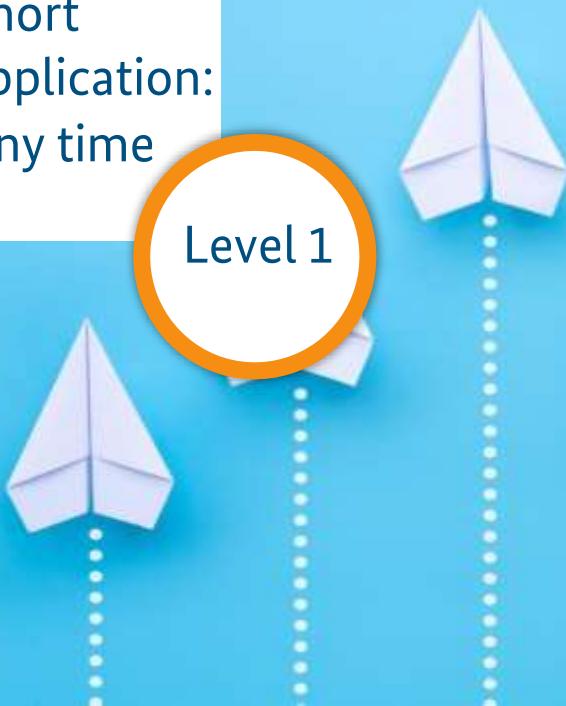
Full application,
including
Coaching

Level 2

Level 3

Pitch
Interview

open and theme-
oriented call for
proposals
("Challenges")



When can Can one submit?

Anytime: [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

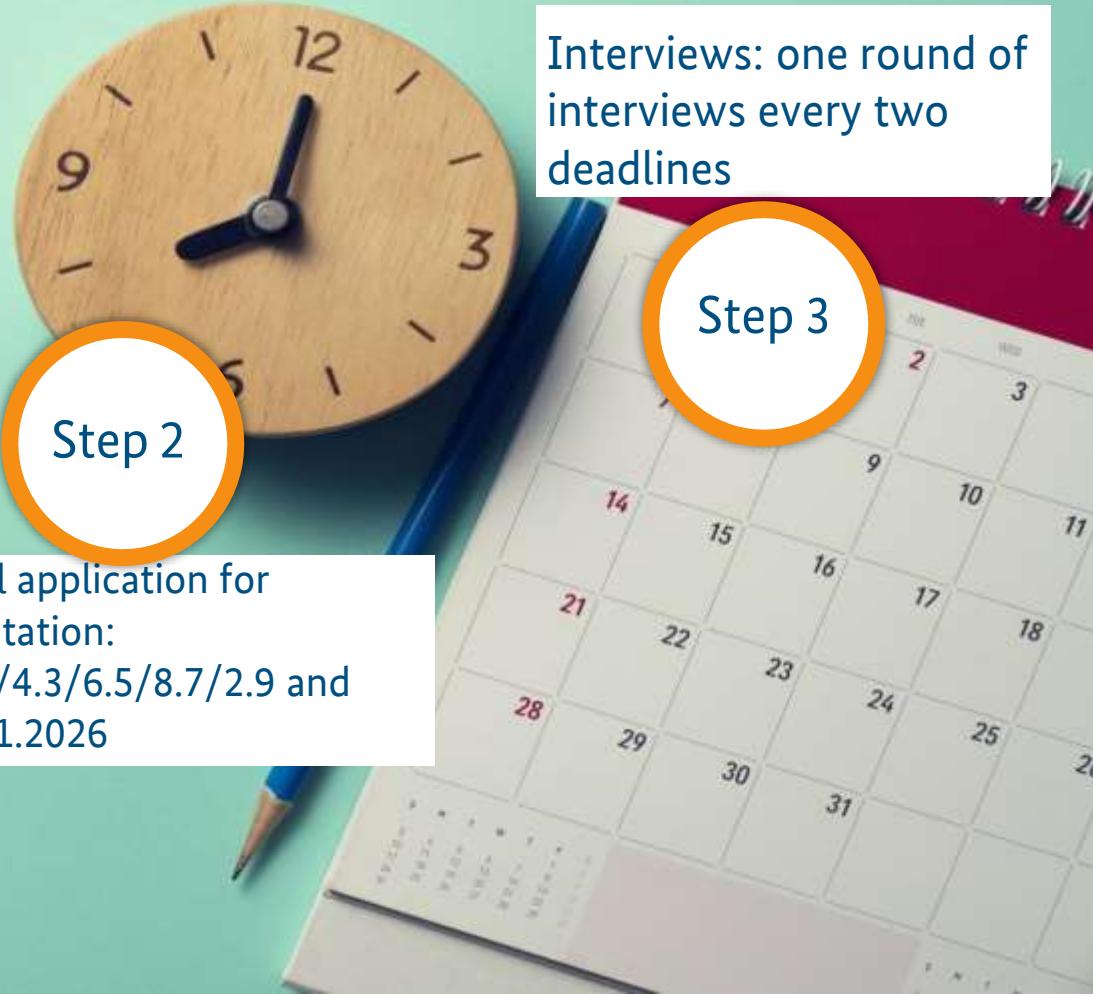
“ Batching ” on the first Tuesday of every month

Step 1

Step 2

Step 3

Full application for invitation:
7.1/4.3/6.5/8.7/2.9 and
4.11.2026



Interviews: one round of interviews every two deadlines

EIC Accelerator Challenges in 2026

- Advanced Materials for Renewable Energy and Energy Storage Systems
- Alternative Concepts and Key Enabling Technologies for Fusion Power Plants
- Biotech for Regenerating Agricultural Soils
- Boosting the European Critical Raw Materials value chain
- Deep Tech for Climate Adaptation

[EIC ACC Challenges Info-Day am 14.11.2025](#)

Budget in 2026

- EIC Accelerator 2026 gesamt: 634 Mio. €
 - EIC Accelerator Open: 414 Mio. €
 - EIC Accelerator Challenges: 220 Mio. €

[EIC ACC Budget im Arbeitsprogramm](#)

The EIC Accelerator: Changes in 2026



EIC Work Programme 2026

EN

Annex

European Commission Decision C(2025)7410 of 5 November 2025

European Innovation Council (EIC) Work Programme 2026

European
Innovation
Council



European Innovation Council (EIC) established by the European Commission, under the Horizon Europe programme (2021-27)

EIC Accelerator Overview: Innovations 2026

- Minimum investment: EUR 1 million
- Six deadlines for the full application – three rounds of interviews
- New templates for short application and full application
- New evaluation process for the full application

New features 2026

Template Short Application

- Reduced number and more focused questions (6 instead of 11).
- A more objective and evidence-based presentation.
- No questions regarding the company's mission/vision, problems and opportunities, or impact (full application).
- New: IP strategy in the short application (no FTO).
- The application forms (Part B) and the assessment questions are fully coordinated.

New features 2026

Template Full application

- Max. 20 pages (previously 50).
- However: Implementation plan in the appendix
- No DMP, CV and usually no Ownership Control Declaration

Innovations 2026

Evaluation Full Application

Evaluation steps:

- Tech Expert
- Interview with Tech Expert
- Remote Panel
- Panel Meeting → Points and Ranking for Interview Invitation

Proposal Writing: Short Application (EIC Accelerator)



Creating the project application, R&T Portal

General information

Programme
Horizon Europe (HORIZON)

Call
EIC Accelerator 2026 - Short application (HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01)

Type of action HORIZON-EIC-ACC HORIZON EIC Accelerator	Type of MGA HORIZON Lump Sum Grant (HORIZON-AG-LS)	
Deadline model continuous	Opening date 08 November 2025	Deadline date 17 December 2026 17:00:00 Brussels time

Start submission

To access the Electronic Submission Service, please click on the submission-button next to the **type of action** and the **type of model grant agreement** that corresponds to your proposal. You will then be asked to confirm your choice, as it cannot be changed in the submission system (NOTE: Applicants may change their funding requests between the short proposal and full proposal phases. Open and Challenge Topic can only be selected at the full proposal phase). Upon confirmation, you will be linked to the correct entry point.

To access existing draft proposals for this topic, please login to the Funding & Tenders Portal and select the My Proposals page of the My Area section.

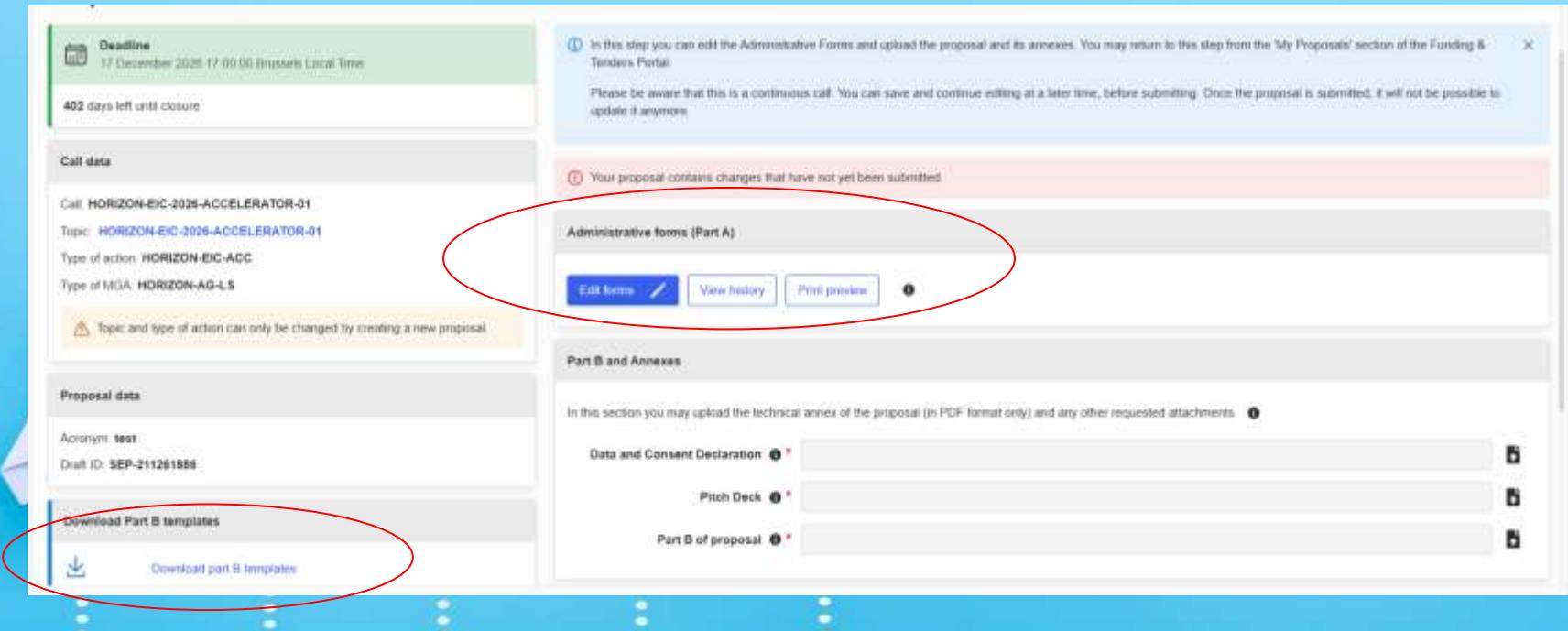
Please select the type of your submission:

HORIZON EIC Accelerator (HORIZON-EIC-ACC), HORIZON Lump Sum Grant (HORIZON-AG-LS)

 **Start submission**



Application documents



Deadline
17 December 2026 17:00:00 Brussels Local Time
402 days left until closure

Call data
Call: HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01
Topic: HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01
Type of action: HORIZON-EIC-ACC
Type of MGA: HORIZON-AG-L5

⚠ Topic and type of action can only be changed by creating a new proposal

Proposal data
Acronym: test
Draft ID: SEP-211261888

Download Part B templates

In this step you can edit the Administrative Forms and upload the proposal and its annexes. You may return to this step from the 'My Proposals' section of the Funding & Tenders Portal.

Please be aware that this is a continuous call. You can save and continue editing at a later time, before submitting. Once the proposal is submitted, it will not be possible to update it anymore.

Your proposal contains changes that have not yet been submitted.

Administrative forms (Part A)
Edit forms  View history Print preview 

Part B and Annexes

In this section you may upload the technical annex of the proposal (in PDF format only) and any other requested attachments. 

Data and Consent Declaration  

Pitch Deck  

Part B of proposal  

Components of the short application

Part A
(online)

Part B
(Template)



Documents

Pitch Deck
Pitch Video
Data Consent



Submission

Technology – Excellence

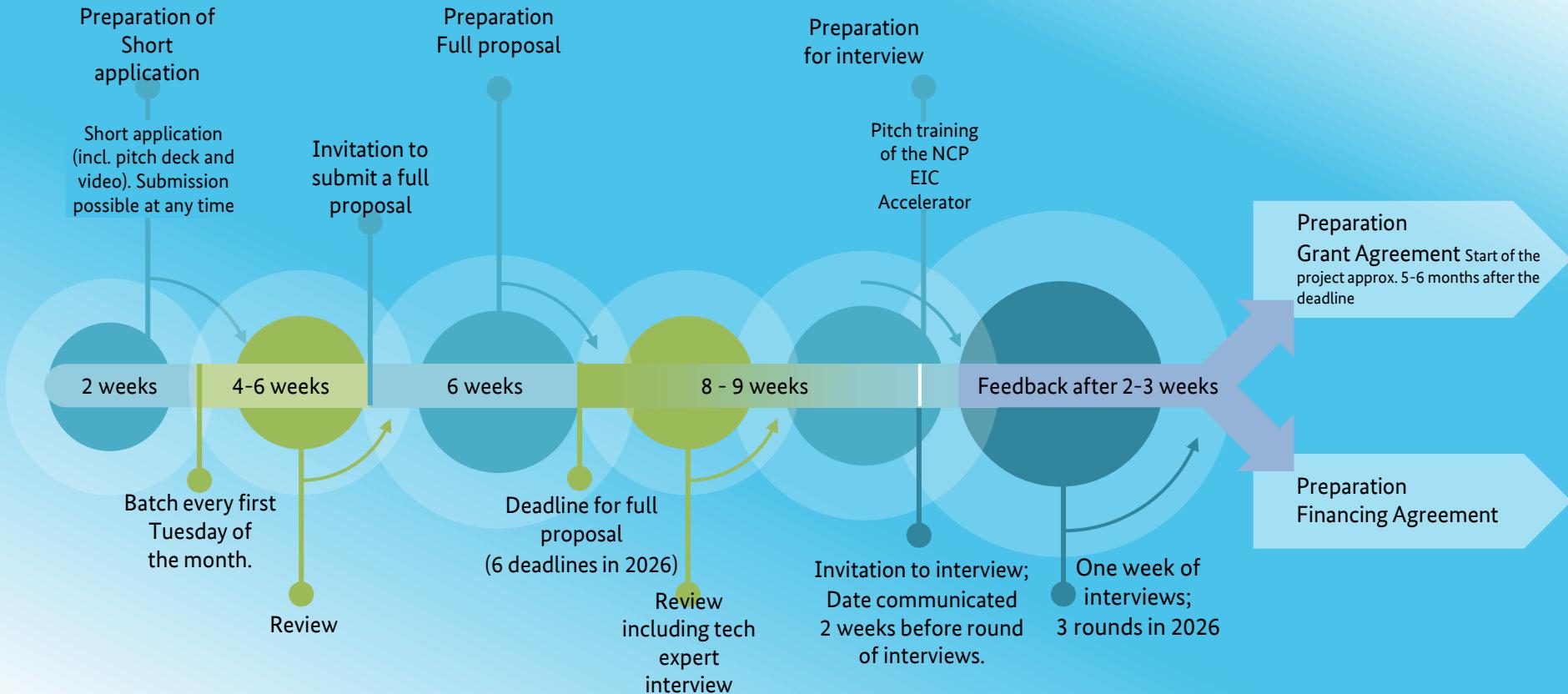
Topic	Submission question	Evaluation sub-criteria
Innovations – novelty and groundbreaking character	<p>Describe how your innovation is Deep Tech.</p> <p>Describe the novelty and disruptive potential of your technology compared to existing solutions.</p>	<p>Deep Tech (groundbreaking scientific or technological advances)?</p> <p>Significant improvement (in cost or performance)?</p>
Technology maturity – TRL	Prove that TRL5 is complete.	Is there sufficient evidence that the innovation has met all aspects of TRL 5?
IP	Please describe patents (granted or pending) and indicate the status of FTO preparation.	Adequate intellectual property protection? A solid strategy for protecting intellectual property for market entry?

Market – Impact

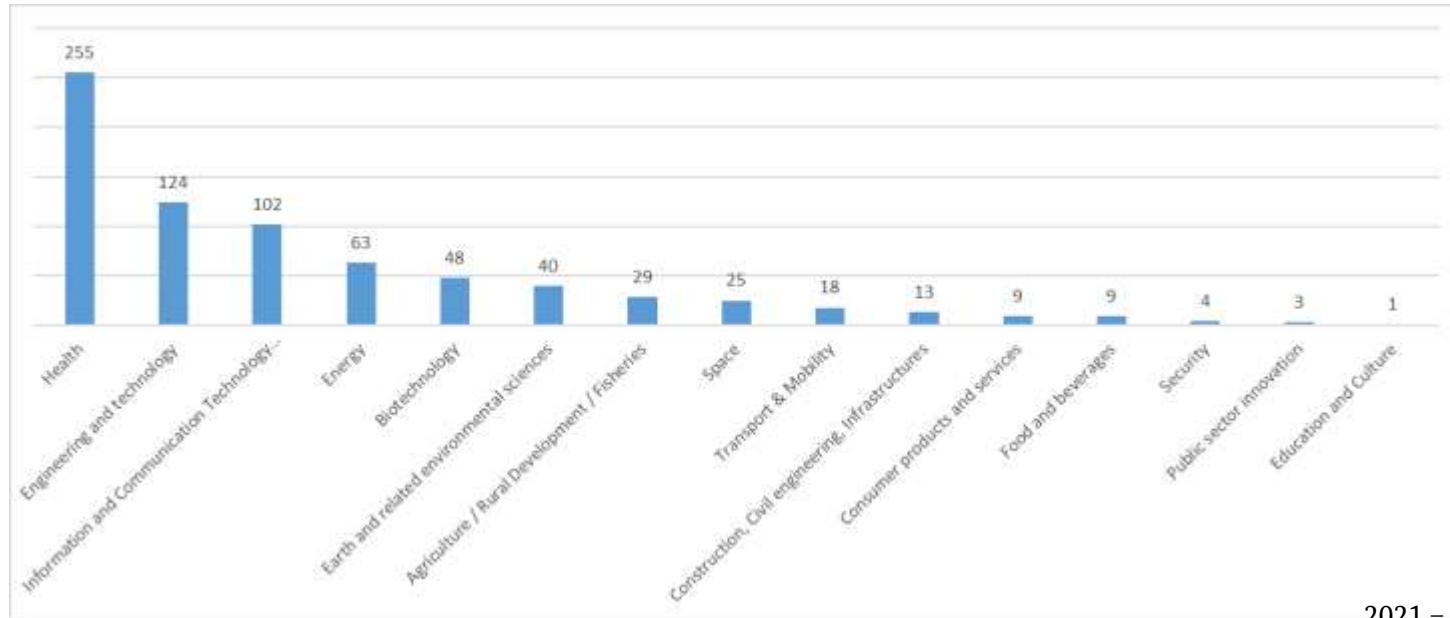
Topic	Submission question	Evaluation sub-criteria
Market opportunity	<p>Describe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Your market launch and marketing strategy- Your customer value proposition,- Their partnerships,- who your customers are and why they will use your solution.	<p>What is the entire market being discussed, and how large is it?</p> <p>What is a realistic expectation regarding the share of the overall market?</p>

Implementation and Need for union support

Topic	Submission question	Evaluation sub-criteria
team	<p>Describe your key employees and their areas of responsibility. Also, identify any critical gaps (including gender distribution) and how these should be addressed.</p>	<p>Does the company have the necessary team in terms of skills and competencies to develop the innovation and scale the business? Have any skills/competency gaps been identified (including gender distribution)? Is there a plan to close these gaps?</p>
Risk level of the investment and leverage	<p>Describe your investor traction and specify the timing and size of your future funding round . Explain why you need EIC funding and why market participants are not willing to provide the entire amount of funding you require.</p>	<p>Did the company attract early interest from investors? Is its financing requirement significantly higher than the amount that market participants can finance on their own?</p>



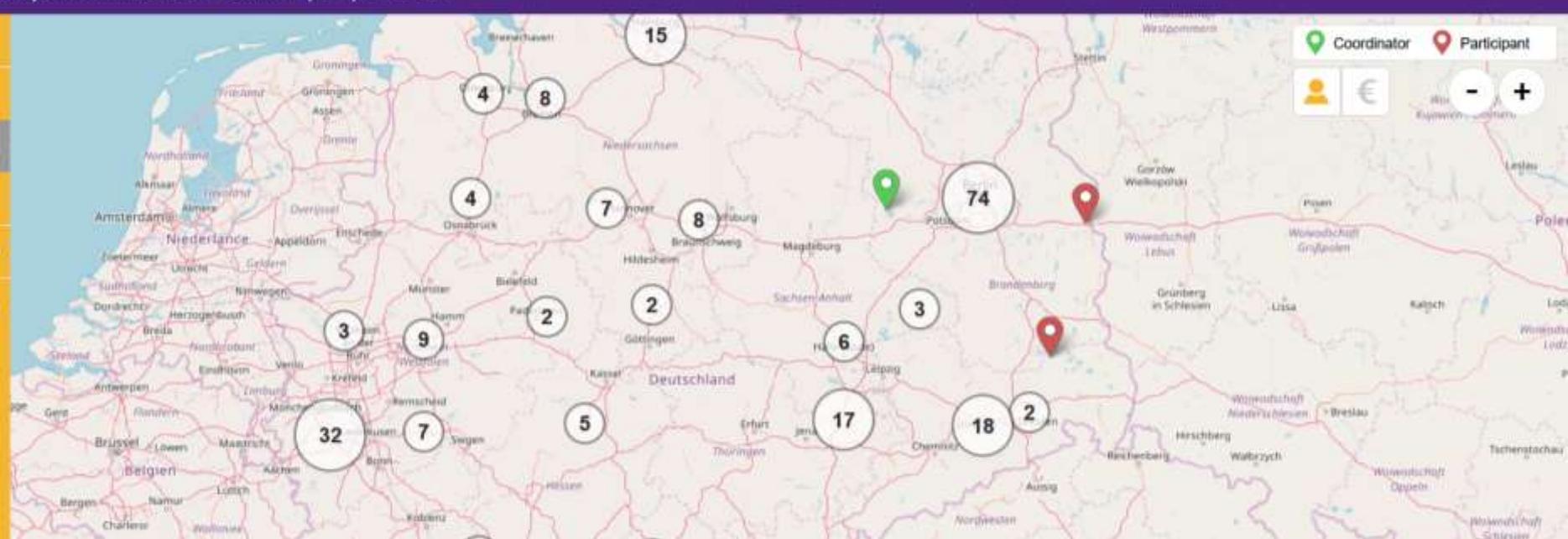
Successful Applications after Technology areas



2021 – March 2025

Success stories in the EIC Datahub

European Innovation Council (EIC) datahub



<https://eic.easme-web.eu/?mode=7&domains=sme%20-%20phase%202&countries=DE&dates=2022>

Brief overview of EIC STEP scale-up

EIC STEP Scale-up

Support for start-ups and scale-ups

- Investments of 10 to 30 million EUR as co-investments in larger financing rounds (50-150 million EUR).
- 20% " Pre-Commitment " required.

Investment of up to
€30 million

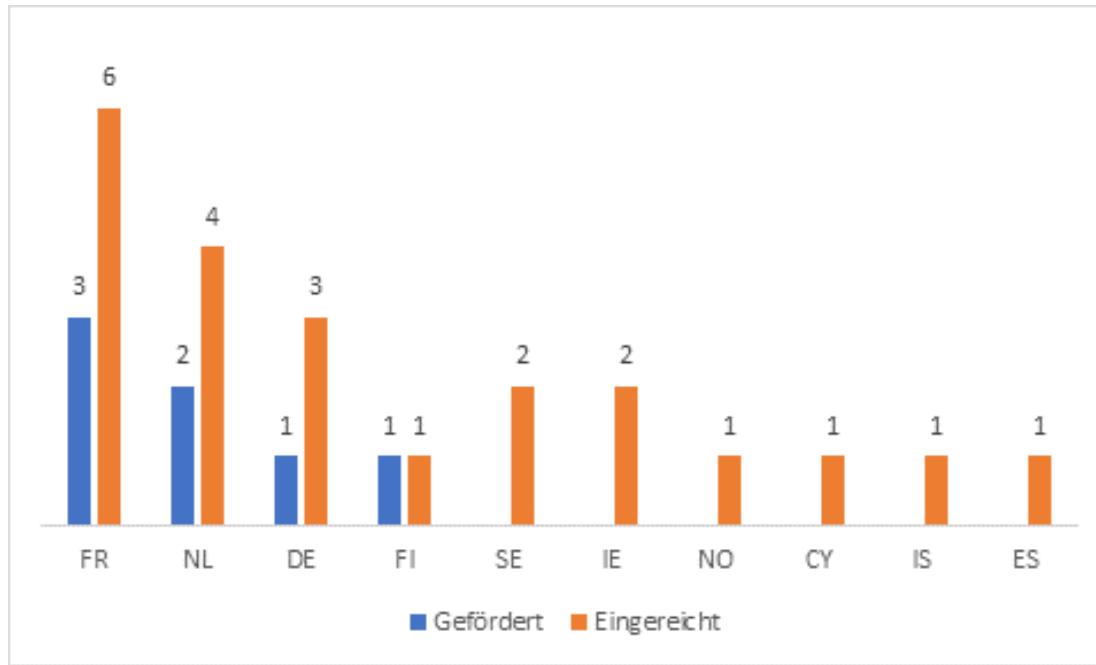
Goal

→ Scaling groundbreaking innovations in digital technologies; Clean and resource-efficient technologies; Biotechnology

Ongoing application process

Annual budget: €300 million

STEP Scale Up – Results March 2025



34 submissions

22 Interviews

7 grants

FR: 55 million EUR

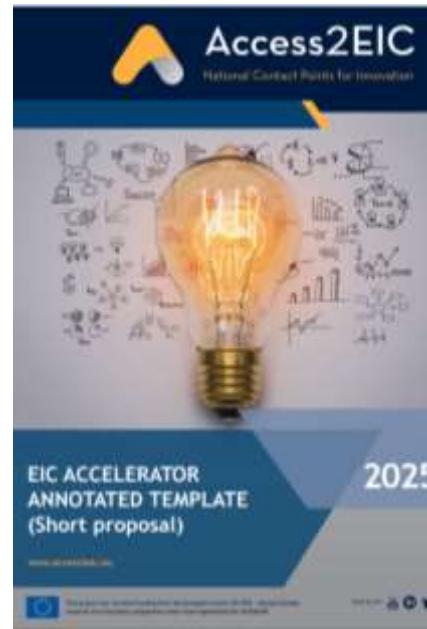
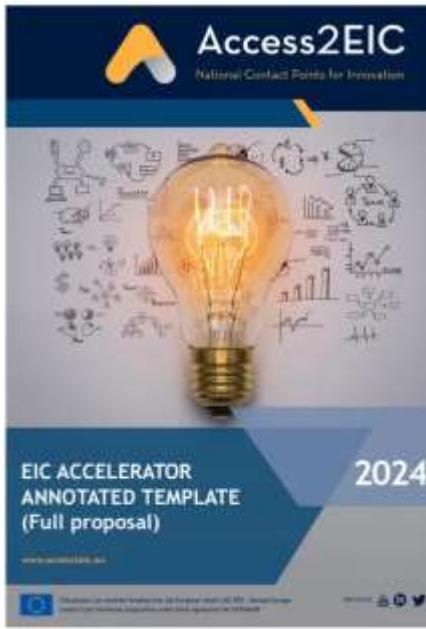
NL: EUR 35 million

DE: EUR 30 million

Links

- [NKS EIC Accelerator page](#)
- [EIC page of the European Commission](#)
- [Start a short application \(EU Funding & Tenders Portal\)](#)
- [Guide for Applicants](#)
- [EIC Work Programme 2026](#)
- [Investment Guidelines \(Dec 2023\)](#)
- [FAQs](#)
- [Expert/Expert become](#)
- [Coach become](#)

Guidelines for the EIC Accelerator



[Publication – Access2eic](#)