



# Terms and Conditions for the EIC Call for Partnerships

Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support  
programme

*September 2023*

This document elaborates on the conditions, rights, and timeline of the EIC Call for Partnerships, as well as the scope for the services to be provided by EIC Partners in the context of the EIC Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support programme.

The applicants are advised to carefully read this document prior to applying to the EIC Call for Partnerships. The terms and conditions stipulated in this document are to be adhered to by the EIC Partners throughout the collaboration period in the abovementioned programme. This document has two sections, the *EIC Call for Partnerships terms and conditions*, and *Appendix*.

## 1. EIC Call for Partnerships Terms and Conditions

### Background

Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support programme is an initiative of the EIC and EISMEA implemented as a part of the [Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support tender](#). The EIC Call for Partnerships is launched under this Programme with a duration of four years (December 2021 - December 2025). Starting from July 2023, the EIC Call for Partnerships is an open call and applications are received on a rolling basis. The core objective of the Programme and call is to create new partnerships between selected EIC Partners and EIC to provide business acceleration services to EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders and help raise EIC visibility. The EIC Partners will be the key service providers, offering niche-specific and horizontal services, such as incubation, acceleration, access to research infrastructures, training and coaching, and technology due diligence, among others. These services will be directed to EIC beneficiaries through the [EIC Service Catalogue](#) and implemented through the support of the EIC and EIC Contractor in aspects such as selection of EIC Partners and EIC beneficiaries, communication and promotion, EIC Service Catalogue monitoring and helpdesk support provision, etc. The purpose of this Programme is to complement the [EIC Business Acceleration Services \(BAS\)](#) with highly-specialised and niche-specific services to boost scaling up, market entry and expansion of EIC innovators. As the current EIC BAS service portfolio has a limited capacity to offer sector-specific and niche services essential to many EIC beneficiaries, these new partnerships will aim to fill in the existing gaps in supply. Through the support of the EIC Contractor, the EIC Partners will be closely guided in filtering and selecting the services that require highly technological expertise, domain knowledge for technological due diligence, best practices and immersive long-term programmes relevant for EIC beneficiaries. All EIC Partners will undergo screening and selection by the EIC Contractor and EIC prior to onboarding on to the Programme. The EIC beneficiaries applying to the services on the EIC Service Catalogue can pay for the service (when applicable) from their resources (including grants) and as of Q1 2024 eligible EIC beneficiaries could receive a support to cover up to 50% of the cost of a service through a cascade funding scheme offered by the EIC.

### Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for EIC Call for Partnerships are as follows:

- No criminal history, outstanding court cases or litigations, or other types of ethical or financial conflicts with the law within or outside the EU<sup>1</sup>.
- Service offers are considered of high standards, showcasing excellence and relevance to EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders.
- Applicants are willing to have their organisation and services rated on the EIC Service Catalogue (a mandatory field in the application form).

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<sup>1</sup> Applicants found to be in conflict with this statement will be subject to rejection or withdrawal from the Programme.

The evaluation criteria for EIC Partners are as follows:

- Offering services that are within the areas of activity and meet the needs of the EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders<sup>2</sup>.
- Offering services that are complementary to the EIC Business Acceleration Services and EIC Partner services on the EIC Service Catalogue (For instance, in terms of target audiences, geographical distribution, sectors of specialisation, category or typology of services, among others).
- Offering services that have a clear added value for EIC beneficiaries or EIC (e.g., Reduced price, preferential treatment or conditions).
- Offering services that respect the time frame of the Programme.
- Demonstration of a strong track record in providing business acceleration services and three or more years of experience in the market.

## Application and Onboarding

Candidates should apply to the EIC Call for Partnerships through an application form [here](#). The application must be submitted in English. Applicants can also find the form on the [EIC Community Platform](#). EIC Partners will be enrolled on a rolling basis. All applicants will be informed of the results by email and the selected applicants will receive instructions on the next steps, i.e., creation of the EIC Partner and services landing pages on the EIC Service Catalogue, communication and promotion actions, and possible participation in Programme events and activities. The Programme and Call's roadmap is concisely presented below.



## Guidelines for Participation

EIC Partners will / can:

- Have the organisation and service offers published on the EIC Service Catalogue.
- Get support from the EIC Contractor to promote the services directly to EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders.
- Receive invitations to participate in online and physical events organised by other EIC Partners, EIC Contractor or the EIC.
- Be able to contribute to the Programme by proposing potential high-level stakeholder engagement events and activities that are inclusive and promote collaboration among EIC Partners and EIC beneficiaries or help to raise EIC visibility.
- Receive technical support through the Programme helpdesk ([eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu](mailto:eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu)) and from the EIC Contractor.
- Design and implement service offers as desired, without interference from the EIC or EIC Contractor.
- Negotiate the possibility of attaining equity deals and other agreements such as Non-Disclosure Agreement with the EIC beneficiaries.
- Explore business opportunities with EIC beneficiaries beyond the project scope.

EIC Partners should:

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<sup>2</sup> The needs of EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders can be found in the Needs Analysis 2022 report. Link: <https://eu1.hubs.ly/H05grpw0>

- Provide accurate and confirmable information about their organisation and service offers in the application as well as a link(s) to the service website that would serve EIC beneficiaries as additional information and updates regarding the services.
- Respect and abide by the EU contractual and regulatory laws (such as Intellectual Property protection<sup>3</sup>, Confidentiality policies<sup>4</sup>, Privacy Policy<sup>5</sup>) and the Cancellation Policy of the initiative<sup>6</sup>.
- Provide feedback on the Partnership and Programme at the end of the collaboration or upon need (the request to be prompted by the EIC Partners).
- Offer services exclusively to EIC beneficiaries within the context of the Programme. However, outside the scope of the Programme, EIC Partners may pursue their business and offer the same services and opportunities to non-EIC beneficiaries.
- Not offer paid services that are sponsored by public funding and would be, through other channels, offered free-of-charge to EIC beneficiaries.
- Locally, regionally and internationally promote the initiative and their respective services to attract EIC beneficiaries. EIC Partners have the free will to send targeted invites to EIC beneficiaries they are associated with and with whom they foresee further collaborative opportunities.

## Benefits

- The EIC Partners can benefit from the initiative in the following ways (non-exhaustive):
- Gain direct access to a community of quality-stamped and validated technologies from a wide selection of European Ecosystems (and many associated countries) and across all fields and disruptive innovation areas.
- Offer EIC innovators acceleration services, business opportunities, and accelerate the growth in partners' regions or networks.
- Venture into deals with new, up-and-coming innovative start-ups and SMEs within the European deep tech innovation ecosystem.
- Attain a seat as an EIC Ecosystem Community member and gain the benefits of being on the frontline as a participant in EU-funded programmes with a reputation as a facilitator in the European innovation ecosystems.

## Scope of Services

The service offers of applicants are submitted through the EIC Call for Partnerships application form only. For the selected applicants, the service descriptions that were submitted during the application stage will be displayed on the [EIC Service Catalogue](#). The service descriptions can be slightly changed by the EIC Contractor to adapt its content to the requirements of the EIC Service Catalogue. Each EIC Partner can have a maximum of three services on the EIC Service Catalogue, but there is no limit to the number of EIC beneficiaries that an EIC Partner can support. All services should be directed to EIC beneficiaries or Seal of Excellence holders, and not to other types of organisations (e.g., corporates or public organisations). Moreover, services that are considered undervalued, with poor rating or lacking demand from EIC beneficiaries and/or Seal of Excellence holders will be withdrawn from the EIC Service Catalogue after 6-12 months counting from January 2024. The decision to retain or withdraw services from the EIC Service Catalogue will be solely made by the EIC and EIC Contractor, unless a formal request to remove the service is made by the EIC Partners.

The different compartments of the service description are explained below for applicants to use as guidelines when filling in the application form.

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<sup>3</sup> European Union IPR policy and Helpdesk. Link: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/intellectual-property-rights\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/doing-business-eu/intellectual-property-rights_en)

<sup>4</sup> EU provided multipurpose template for drawing up Non-disclosure Agreement. Link: [https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-03/Mutual-Non-Disclosure-Agreement-EN\\_2021.pdf](https://intellectual-property-helpdesk.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2021-03/Mutual-Non-Disclosure-Agreement-EN_2021.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Privacy Policy of the European Commission. Link: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/privacy-policy\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/privacy-policy_en). As the intermediary body and sole handler of personal data and confidential information, the EIC Contractor applies the [EU Privacy policy](#) enacted under [Regulation \(Eu\) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council](#).

<sup>6</sup> Cancellations by the EIC Partners are accepted without contention anytime during the partnership, unless there is an ongoing service provision to EIC beneficiaries. In this case, cancellations will only be considered in duly documented cases of "force majeure" or mutual consent. The EIC Partner has the responsibility to inform the EIC Partner as soon as possible by email with the necessary evidence enclosed.

- Typology of Services: The services provided through the Programme are broadly classified into three categories based on their duration, format for the selection of EIC beneficiaries, methods for the implementation of services and cost of services. The three service classes are as follows:
  - Standalone services have a short duration and are not part of a larger programme. They are mainly offered as collective activities. Can be offered free of charge, tailor-made for researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs with specific needs in their innovation and development stage. The typical examples of a standalone service are workshops, individual training sessions on co-creation and business modelling, matchmaking events, etc. executed by experts in the field.
  - Individualised services are highly customised services, tailor-made to the specific needs of each EIC beneficiary. Typical examples comprise the usage of specific laboratory equipment, access to research facilities, or technological due diligence. Acceleration programmes or Coaching & Mentoring services with modules or activities adapted or created attending the specific needs of EIC beneficiaries can also be considered individualised services.
  - Programme cohort services are mid- to long-term immersive programmes that provide access to specific expertise, training, incubation or acceleration. These programmes would engage the EIC beneficiaries in a continuous journey, through a series of need-specific services for mentoring, technological and infrastructure support, and regional matchmaking. Usually, and due to their nature, these services have very specific dates to receive applications and for implementation.
  
- Start and end date for launch of call for services: This applies to services that will have a call for application to recruit EIC beneficiaries for a pre-application, screening, registration, and/or selection before the launch of the services. For those cases, a call is launched to announce the start of the application or registration for the services. The typical cases where a call is needed are workshops and training sessions (call for EIC beneficiaries to register for the event) and acceleration programmes (in which EIC beneficiaries are selected by the programme manager according to the number of available seats). This might not be applicable to all services. If it is applicable, please indicate the expected opening date of the call for application and the deadline for the last applications (can be estimated). If not applicable, simply insert "On a rolling basis".
  
- Start and end date for service implementation: This applies to services whose implementation will begin and end on specific dates (please specify the timeline). If the service is open throughout the Partnership (and can be delivered at any time), simply insert "On a rolling basis".
  
- Frequency of occurrence for the services: The frequency of occurrence of services offered by EIC Partners can differ depending on the requirements of each service. The EIC Partner services vary from those that run continuously such as incubation services, to others that are seasonal or annual such as events, acceleration services, etc. There are several options for the frequency of services that applicants can use: weekly, monthly, annually, once every quarter of a year, once every six months, and on a rolling basis/continuously open. If the applicants have different formats, the option for 'Other' can be selected with a short elaboration on the format to be used. Each service page on the EIC Service Catalogue will have a link embedded to direct EIC beneficiaries to the EIC Partner site where they can learn the specifics about the services.
  
- Service Description: Please follow these guidelines when describing your services:
  - Keep the descriptions short and comprehensible for third person readers/EIC beneficiaries.
  - Use the third person in your description (e.g., avoid using I and we).
  - Describe the engagement of experts as coaches, mentors, instructors and others, if applicable. Please indicate if they will be in-house or outsourced experts.

- Describe the main profiles of end-users to whom the service is directed (target audiences).
- Avoid generalisations in your service descriptions and try to follow this structure: 1) What is the Service; 2) Duration of the Service; 3) Targets and sectors; 4) Goal of the service; 5) Phases of the service (if applicable); 6) Activities that you deliver during the service or in each phase of the service; 6) Expected outcome; 7) Process and mode for the Implementation.
- If you have more than one activity in the service, name them in a chronological order but ensure not to overspend the word limit.
- Do not include consultancy services that provide active support on proposal writing to help EIC beneficiaries getting funding from European projects or instruments as they will not be accepted and not included in the EIC Service Catalogue.
- Proofread your descriptions to pick out grammatical and spelling mistakes and improve the cohesiveness of the description. Please check the word limit before and after you have completed your description (service descriptions have a 250-word limit).

Examples of service descriptions:

- Example 1 - Workshop: This workshop is a two-day acceleration service directed to EIC Accelerator, EIC Pathfinder and EIC Transition innovators that develop solutions to fight drug-resistant infections. The goal is to validate the technology with different stakeholders and learn how to develop a new and/or reinforce the beneficiary's current business model. On the first day, EIC beneficiaries will refine their presentation skills and present their business ideas and model to a set of investors, experts and head teachers. On the second day, based on the experts' feedback, beneficiaries will develop and refine their business model through a set of co-creative exercises. This work will not only allow the beneficiary to obtain a comprehensive view of the essential building blocks of the business model, but also directly feed into an updated and/or developed Business Model Strategy, Go-To-Market strategy and a Scale up Strategy. In the end of the service, EIC beneficiaries will be capable of clearly presenting their business model to investors and potential clients, as well as have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of their solution and how it compares with the main solutions in the market. This workshop will run based on a single or multiple beneficiaries' request(s). This support will be provided by selected and dedicated mentors, operators, and business experts and can be delivered online or offline (in our headquarters).
- Example 2 - Coaching session: A two-day training directed to EIC Accelerator beneficiaries from the Space sector. The training aims to provide a general understanding of the principles behind the capital raising process and the negotiation process with investors. The morning of the first day will be dedicated to discussions on categories of financial investors and financial investors mindset and expectations; in the afternoon, participants will hear from in-house experts about fundamentals of business plan preparation, go-to-market strategy and growth strategy. On the second day, EIC beneficiaries will prepare a pitch deck and learn about transaction structures and sensitive topics to be negotiated with investors. At the end of the service, beneficiaries will be able to identify the different types of investors and adapt their pitch deck to different audiences. The training will be held via Zoom or a similar platform, in English.
- Example 3 - Acceleration Programme: A six-month acceleration programme directed toward EIC Pathfinder and EIC Transition beneficiaries from the Green and Environment sectors. The programme aims to support EIC beneficiaries in the development of financial, business and sustainability strategy with key in-house experts in the specialised fields. The experts will facilitate the identification of technological maturity gaps and business model uncertainties and help the EIC beneficiaries to define pathways for bridging those hurdles. The first phase consists of expert and self-evaluation on business viability and feasibility. The second phase will take the EIC beneficiaries through a series of training and coaching sessions with experts in

entrepreneurship in environmental sustainability, and green energy. The third phase includes the application of knowledge from the first two phases to develop the financial and business plans, suitability strategy and legal profiles. The final phase will see the EIC beneficiaries through networking and pitching sessions to acquire funding and investment. The programme will run twice in 2024. The Programme team is committed to identifying and recruiting the best entrepreneurs to lead and ensure the technologies scale up. Hybrid implementation. Free of charge for the first cohort and 50% discount will be offered to the second cohort.

- Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of the innovation targeted by the service: This refers to the Technological Maturity Stage (based on TRL) of the innovation targeted by the service. Each service can target technologies in one or more of the nine stages of Technology Readiness Level, which correspond to the technological maturity of the innovative solution at stake. The different TRLs can be found [here](#):
  - EIC Pathfinder programme covers TRL 1-3: Services addressing TRL 1, 2 or 3 support projects requiring advanced research to develop the scientific basis for breakthrough technologies, to formulate its technological concept or to develop an experimental proof of concept.
  - EIC Transition programme covers TRL 4-6: Services addressing TRL 4, 5 or 6 should focus on projects looking for validation of their technologies, in controlled or real environments, and the development of business plans for specific applications.
  - EIC Accelerator programme covers TRL 7 and above: Services addressing TRL 7, 8 or 9 support organisations (e.g., SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs and small mid-caps) in bringing their innovations to the market and scaling up, comprising the prototype demonstration, the completion of the product/service and its competitive production. These organisations should be operating on a commercial or near commercial scale.
  
- Sector of specialisation/focus: The sector of focus refers to the domains in which the organisation and each service fall under or serve. A selection of sectors has been provided in the application form, but applicants can also indicate sectors that are not listed or identify as sector agnostic.
  
- Service categories: The services offered under the Programme will be classified into one of the following 10 categories of services (you must choose one service category per service):
  1. Acceleration, Incubation & Venture building – Business programmes that support early-stage and growth-driven innovators in their journey through mentoring, financing, planning or product development services.
  2. Support Fundraising – Fundraising services encompass preparation for investor introductions, access to networks of investors and access to investment programmes.
  3. Matchmaking – Services designed to help innovators connect with relevant European players and engage with business networks to provide technical, financial or strategic support.
  4. Business Planning – Services designed to help innovators with strategic issues (business model, product-market fit, market research) and business development (sales, go-to-market strategy, partnerships).
  5. Coaching & Mentoring – Trainings and personalised sessions to support the reskilling and upskilling of founders and their team on very specific subjects.
  6. Access to Infrastructure & R&D Support – Scientific and technical support for product development or product validation. Specialised services related to the use of laboratories, coworking spaces and cutting-edge technological tools.
  7. Intellectual Property & Legal – Services designed to help innovators with Intellectual Property assets (trademarks, patents, copyrights) and legal / regulatory affairs (product certification, quality standards, safety regulations).
  8. Due Diligence – Business appraisal services that estimate the company's value, assets, and commercial potential. Due diligence services may have different focus (e.g., financial, legal, environmental, technological) depending on the goals of each innovator.

9. Prototyping & PoC – Tools and methods that allow experimentation and early iteration of solutions with final users. The goal is to understand if the innovation is (technically) feasible, desired (by final users) and (economically) viable.
  10. Human Resources & Talent – Talent prospecting and acquisition support services linked to recruitment.
  11. Internationalisation - Support for market entry and expansion beyond the current borders of the innovator's geographic location.
- Costs or cost-related requirements: The costs for services for EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders can be decided by the applicant and normally can be labelled as: Free of charge, negotiable, reduced price, full price, equity. For the services where payment will be required, the amount in Euro with the hourly, daily or package rate should be indicated. For the equity deals and success fees, the percentage should be indicated as well.
  - Disclaimer related to the service: The disclaimer for a service is not a mandatory field to fill in. If the services have special factors or conditions that the EIC beneficiaries should be aware of prior to applying, they can be listed here. These can be qualification pre-requirements, selection criteria, restrictions to the offer (e.g., service only offered to EIC beneficiaries from a specific country/region of origin), special discounts only for some EIC beneficiaries, special timelines, requirements for feedback from EIC beneficiaries, special conditions for payment or returns for the service offer, protocols, etc.

## 2. Appendix

### Definitions

**European Innovation Council (EIC)**<sup>7</sup> is an initiative of the European Commission piloted in 2018 under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020) and fully implemented in 2021 under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme (2021-2027). With a budget of €10 Billion, the EIC aims to identify breakthrough technologies and innovative solutions and support their maturation and market outreach by providing funding, facilitating access to scaling up services, enabling win-win partnerships and acquisition of investment, among others. The EIC Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support is an initiative of the EIC that aims to support EIC Beneficiaries in deploying sector-specific innovations and technologies and gain meteoric scaling in order to reach the market.

**European Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency (EISMEA)**<sup>8</sup> is a managing body of the European Commission that overlooks the activities of the EIC as well as the initiatives that support scaling of SMEs, innovation ecosystems, single market, consumer policy and interregional innovation investments. EISMEA succeeds and replaces the former European Union Executive Agency for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (EASME). Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support is an initiative born of a call for tenders, launched together by the EIC and EISMEA, as the Contracting Authority.

**EIC beneficiaries** are organisations, including SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs, scale-ups, small mid-caps, and consortia/projects supported by EIC funding streams to develop or advance new technologies, which cover stages covering from the conceptualisation, experimentation, validation to the completion stage (TRL 1 to 8)<sup>9</sup>. EIC beneficiaries refer not only to the recipients of funding from the EIC but also to innovators from European and national initiatives that have a commitment or an agreement with the EIC (e.g., Women Tech EU funding scheme). The portfolios of EIC beneficiaries are housed on the EIC

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<sup>7</sup> European Innovation Council (EIC). Link: [https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index\\_en](https://eic.ec.europa.eu/index_en)

<sup>8</sup> Executive Innovation Council and SME Executive Agency (EISMEA). Link: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes\\_horizon-2021-2022\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf). Page 13.

<sup>9</sup> Technology Readiness Level (TRL) scale. Link: [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes\\_horizon-2021-2022\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2021-2022/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2021-2022_en.pdf). Page 10.



Community Platform as quality-validated and trusted organisations/innovations that have been flagged as developers of highly relevant and innovative technologies. The EIC Beneficiaries are classified into two groups based on the EIC funding schemes and support they receive:

- Funding scheme 'Pathfinder Programme' and 'Transition Programme': these two schemes support project consortia. The EIC Pathfinder programme focuses on projects with advanced research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies. The programme supports technologies with TRL 1 to 4. The EIC Transition programme supports projects designed for validation of technologies and development of business plans for specific applications. The programme supports technologies with TRL 4 to 5/6.
- Funding scheme 'Accelerator Programme': this scheme supports organisations (e.g., SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs and small mid-caps) in bringing their innovations to the market and scaling up. The programme supports technologies with TRL 5/6 to 8.

More information about the types of beneficiaries funded by the EIC can be found [here](#).

**Seal of Excellence holders** are awardees of a quality label which shows that a proposal submitted to a call for proposals exceeded all of the evaluation thresholds set out in the work programme. It is awarded to individual SMEs that apply for EIC Transition or EIC Accelerator funding and are assessed to meet the relevant evaluation criteria as defined in the call text, but which are not directly funded by the EIC. The EIC Seal of Excellence provides access to EIC Business Acceleration Services and facilitates funding from other sources. The Seal of Excellence for the EIC Transition and EIC Accelerator is only awarded to those applicants who agree to share the data about their proposal (basic information on the proposal, the call and the proposer) with other alternative funding bodies which may decide to fund the project. More information about Seal of Excellence holders can be found [here](#).

**EIC Contractors** are a consortium of organisations entrusted and financially supported by the European Commission (i.e., EIC and EISMEA) to implement projects and initiatives powered by the EIC. Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support is implemented by three SMEs and one public body: Dealflow.eu BV (Belgium), EurA AG (Germany), BpiFrance (France) and Dealroom (Netherlands). The EIC Partners will be in direct contact with the EIC Contractors for the duration of the initiative as intermediaries for the EIC and EISMEA and guiding bodies for the EIC Partners and beneficiaries to implement the activities foreseen. The EIC Contractor carries the role of a mediator between the EIC Partners and EIC/EISMEA as well as the responsibility of providing all the relevant documentations (e.g., communication packages, contracts, manuals for training), information, trainings, online management tools and instruction, advice on best practices, administrative aid during EIC beneficiary selection process and guidance to EIC Partners and EIC beneficiaries. The EIC Contractor is the sole contact point for the EIC Partners and will lead the communication with them after the submission of application. The EIC Partners and EIC beneficiaries can contact the EIC Contractor through the Helpdesk services or through other channels of communication established in the negotiation stages. The EIC Contractor also has the charge of promoting the initiative and enlisting a wide range of EIC beneficiaries.

**EIC Partners** are procurers, investors, accelerators, incubators, venture capital, public innovation bodies and other types of corporates<sup>10</sup> that submit the application to enrol in the Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support initiative and are selected as service providers by the EIC, EISMEA and EIC Contractors. These entities are considered strategic partners for EIC beneficiaries seeking mentorship, coaching, networking opportunities, facilities to advance/validate their technologies, expert advice, co-investors, etc. EIC Partners will be supported by the EIC Contractors to co-design tailor-made services that complement the current [EIC Business Acceleration Services \(BAS\)](#) catalogue and squarely meet the needs of the EIC beneficiaries. The EIC Partners will contribute to the expansion of the current BAS by bringing in specific experience and expertise or access to specialised networks in certain innovation areas or sectors.

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<sup>10</sup> The typology of EIC Partners is not limited by the sectorial specialisation or geographical location of the organisations. The type of organisations can also include Trade or Innovation agencies, Business Innovation Centres, Science and technology parks, Chambers of Commerce, Academic and Research Institutions, etc. However, EIC Partners will be prioritised based on the how the services they offer meet the needs of EIC beneficiaries, fall within the prioritized deep-tech and innovation areas of the EIC, motivation to provide top-quality services to EIC beneficiaries, among others.

**EIC Call for Partnerships application form** for the Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support initiative is the application from a potential EIC Partner bearing a preliminary description/offer of services and the terms of their implementation. The application serves as a declaration of the applicants' interest in participating in the initiative and illustration of the capacity to meet the requirements/expectations of the programme, EIC, EISMEA and EIC Contractor (not legally binding).

**Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support Helpdesk** is an online (written and call) service provided by the EIC Contractor to EIC Partners and Beneficiaries for the duration of the initiative to answer questions, provide information and clarify doubts in a systemized format. The services have been active starting from the launch of the EIC Call for Partnerships.

**EIC Service Catalogue** is the webpage that centralises and displays the service offers of all selected EIC Partners. The [EIC Service Catalogue](#) is searchable by different filters (project stage – pathfinder, transition, accelerator, service category, partners' country of origin, etc.). Each service offer is described in terms of activities, deadlines and financial requirements. The EIC Service Catalogue is the single-entry point for EIC beneficiaries to explore the available offer of services from EIC Partners and to apply for these services as well. The EIC Service Catalogue is targeted only towards EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders.

**EIC prioritised deep technology and innovation areas** represent the domains and sectors of specialisation in which business acceleration services for EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders are highly demanded. The selection of EIC Partners will closely consider the quality, scope, cost and timing of the services offered and their relevance for EIC Beneficiaries. Thus, based on the existing portfolio of EIC-supported deep-tech organisations and solutions, the following have been prioritised<sup>11</sup>.

**EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS)**<sup>12</sup> EIC funded organisations, consortia, researchers, innovators or entrepreneurs are currently provided with access to a range of EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS) for different stages of development of their activities. The BAS have three main pillars:

- Access to world-class coaches, mentors, expertise and training;
- Access to global partners, leading corporates, investors, procurers, distributors and clients; and
- Access to innovation ecosystem partners and peers.

A list of the current BAS available and more information about the initiative can be found on the [EIC Community Platform](#).

**Technology Readiness Level (TRL)**<sup>13</sup> or TRL is a widely adopted scale applied in the EU to assess and grade the maturity of technologies through nine developmental stages that exhibit the readiness of a technology for use in its anticipated functions.

- *TRL 1 — Basic principles observed*
- *TRL 2 — Technology concept formulated*
- *TRL 3 — Experimental proof of concept*
- *TRL 4 — Technology validated in a lab*
- *TRL 5 — Technology validated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)*
- *TRL 6 — Technology demonstrated in a relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)*
- *TRL 7 — System prototype demonstration in an operational environment*
- *TRL 8 — System complete and qualified*

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<sup>11</sup> Tender Specifications of the Call for Tenders of 'Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support'. Link: <https://etendering.ted.europa.eu/cft/cft-display.html?cftId=8828>. Page 14. EIC deep technologies: 1) Artificial Intelligence and robotics; 2) Internet of Things (IoT) and big data; 3) Machine Learning; 4) Quantum technologies and computing; 5) 3D technologies; 6) Nanotech; 7) Green Hydrogen; 8) Computer vision; 9) Autonomous and sensor tech; 10) Semiconductors. EIC innovation areas: 1) New deep-tech technologies & ICT; 2) Health & Medical care; 3) Environment and Energy; and 4) Space and Defence.

<sup>12</sup> EIC Business Acceleration Services (BAS). Link: [https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/business-acceleration-services\\_en#eic-inpage-197](https://eic.ec.europa.eu/eic-funding-opportunities/business-acceleration-services_en#eic-inpage-197)

<sup>13</sup> Technology Readiness Level (TRL) definition. Link: [https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/default/files/technology\\_readiness\\_revisited\\_-\\_icegov2020.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/isa2/sites/default/files/technology_readiness_revisited_-_icegov2020.pdf).

- *TRL 9 — Actual system proven in an operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies, or in space)*

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*For additional information, please refer to the Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-investment Support programme helpdesk at [eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu](mailto:eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu). The helpdesk is managed by the EIC Contractor, on behalf of the European Innovation Council.*

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