



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Partnerships

EIC Ecosystem Partnership Programme

July 2024

Established by the European Commission





1. What is the EIC Ecosystem Partnership Programme?

The EIC Ecosystem Partnership Programme (formerly known as the EIC Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-Investment Support programme) was launched in 2021 with the aim of expanding the [EIC Business Acceleration Services](#) by addressing one of the greatest challenges for its innovators, i.e., access to specialised sector-focused services. The EIC Partners address this need by providing:

- Standalone services such as workshops, training and matchmaking on topics that are not covered by BAS.
- Highly specific, niche services, such as access to research infrastructure, technological due-diligence or IP guidance.
- Integration into EIC Partner's accelerations, incubation, or venture building programmes, according to the technology stage and specificities of the innovators' project.

For more information, please visit the webpage for the [EIC Ecosystem Partnership Programme](#).

2. Who are the EIC beneficiaries?

EIC beneficiaries are quality-validated and trusted entities (e.g., SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs, consortia/projects) supported by European Innovation Council (EIC) funding streams to develop or advance new and innovative technologies (covering solutions from Technology Readiness Level/TRL 1 to 8).

When preparing your application, check if the service offers you have are aligned with the areas of activity of the EIC beneficiaries. The service offers should fulfil their likely needs based on organisational structure, focus of technology and innovation, and Technology Readiness Level (TRL). EIC beneficiary groups and their focuses are:

- **Pathfinder:** Consist of project consortia and focus on projects with advanced research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies with TRL 1 to 4.
- **Transition:** Consist of project consortia and focus on projects designed for validation of technologies with TRL 4 to 5/6 and development of business plans for specific applications.
- **Accelerator:** Consist of organisations (e.g., SMEs, start-ups, spin-offs, and small mid-caps) that bring their innovations/technologies with TRL 5/6 to 8 to the market and scale up.

Seal of Excellence holders (SoEs) can also benefit from the service offers under the Programme. 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, but which are not directly funded by the EIC. More information about Seal of Excellence holders can be found [here](#).

You can find more information about the needs of EIC beneficiaries in this [Needs Analysis Report](#).

3. How can I know if I am eligible to participate in the Programme as an EIC Partner?

All applicants for the open EIC Call for Partnerships on the [EIC Community Platform](#) should meet the following criteria to enter the contenders' list:

- No criminal history, outstanding court cases or litigations, or other types of ethical or financial conflicts with the law within or outside the EU.
- 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).



In terms of service offers of applicants, the following assessment and evaluation criteria will be used:

- Offering services that are within the areas of activity and meet the needs of the EIC beneficiaries and Seal of Excellence holders.
- 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.

4. What do I or my organisation gain by participating in the Programme?

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.

5. What is expected from EIC Partners to participate in the Programme?

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) 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.

6. When is the deadline for the EIC Call for Partnerships?



The EIC Call for Partnerships is an open call. Therefore, applications can be submitted at any time within the timeframe of the Programme and eligible applicants will be enrolled on a rolling basis.

7. What is the duration of the Programme?

The Programme is expected to run from December 2021 to December 2025.

8. What do I need to apply to the EIC Call for Partnerships?

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](#).

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 participation in Programme events and activities.

9. Are there any deep technologies and innovation areas in which my services should focus on?

There are 10 deep technologies and 4 innovation areas that have been prioritised by the EIC. These sectors are considered some of the most relevant for EIC beneficiaries:

- **EIC deep technologies:** Artificial Intelligence and robotics; Internet of Things (IoT) and big data; Machine Learning; Quantum technologies and computing; 3D technologies; Nanotech; Green Hydrogen; Computer vision; Autonomous and sensor tech; and Semiconductors.
- **EIC innovation areas:** New deep-tech technologies & ICT; Health & Medical care; Environment and Energy; and Space and Defence.

Applications are not restricted to organisations specialised in the 14 prioritised deep tech and innovation areas only. Organisations from other sectors may also apply. These applications will be evaluated according to how relevant the offered services will be to EIC beneficiaries. Therefore, EIC Partners are encouraged to apply to the Call and thoroughly describe the services offered.

10. What is the EIC Service Catalogue?

[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 (e.g., project stage – pathfinder, transition, accelerator, service category, partners' country of origin, Technology Readiness Level, 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 only.

11. What type of services is the EIC looking for?

The EIC is looking for service offers that complement and fill in the existing gaps in the current listing of [EIC Business Acceleration Services](#) (BAS). EIC Partners can provide piloting or presently running services fit for the needs of the EIC beneficiaries, which fall within the frame of prioritised sectors and innovation areas. The services provided by the EIC Partners through the Programme can be one or a combination of the following three categories:

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.

12. As an EIC Partner, am I required to provide services exclusively to EIC beneficiaries?

The services of EIC Partners should be offered 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.

On an additional note, the EIC Partners are not obligated to provide services to all EIC beneficiaries who apply for their offers. The selection of the EIC beneficiaries should be fair, but the EIC Partners will have the free will to choose to whom they provide their services. Moreover, services that are considered undervalued 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 December 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.

13. When preparing my application, what should I pay closer attention to?

Prospective applicants should carefully read the [Terms and Conditions](#) for the EIC Call for Partnerships. When filling out the application, please pay special attention to the following issues:

1. Clearly define the typology of EIC beneficiaries that your services target and how you intend to fulfil their needs. Explain how your services would be relevant to the EIC beneficiaries as an organisation or a team and the readiness of their technologies (Technology Readiness Level/TRL).
2. To showcase the impact of your services, clearly explain how they would be implemented so as to accommodate the EIC beneficiaries' pressing needs and resources, and how the services have added value to the existing base of information, knowledge, know-how and skills.
3. To showcase the diversity of your services, browse through the existing EIC [Business Acceleration Services \(BAS\)](#) and explain in detail how your services add value and/or complement the current BAS offer. Please use concrete terms in the explanation, referring to terms of format for implementation, topics addressed, agenda, typology of service, duration, etc.

14. What is recommended for applicants to the EIC Call for Partnerships?

Before submission:

- Carefully read through the [Terms and Conditions](#) for the EIC Call for Partnerships with a special focus on the eligibility criteria and examples of service descriptions.
- In case of any doubt, contact the EIC Partnerships Helpdesk at eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu before submitting your application.
- Carefully check that your organisation complies with the eligibility criteria, especially pertaining to institutional status and quality of service offers.



- In cases of large corporations, please check internally that only one application is being submitted for the organisation, or if two different entities under the same umbrella are applying (e.g., cluster members and departments in universities), kindly indicate the name of the entities in the application form.

Preparing the application:

- Only indicate the deep tech and innovation areas and sectors that pertain to the services you are offering through this Programme.
- Your service offers cannot exceed three. Therefore, carefully select the most suited services before submitting.
- Avoid creating an attachment of brochures, service catalogues and leaflets as the sole source of information for any detail in your service description. You can attach company briefs to showcase your track record but not to describe your services.
- Avoid more than 250 words description per service. Focus your descriptions on detailing more about the activities, impact, costs and target groups.
- Look through some examples of topics, themes, talking points, concerns and concepts that have been identified as relevant for EIC beneficiaries in the [Needs Analysis Report](#) when selecting your services.
- Avoid copy-pasting descriptions from one service to another. Each service should have its relevant attributes distinctly highlighted. When describing your services, focus on the following:
 - *What the service aims to produce at the end, e.g., concrete examples from the perspective of the beneficiaries.*
 - *Describe the main profiles of end-users who would benefit the most from the service, e.g., early-stage researchers, SMEs, spin-offs and the types/status of innovations or technologies you are looking for (if relevant), e.g., revenue, maturity stage of technology, IP.*
 - *Different phases of the services and their outcomes, if applicable.*
 - *Some of the activities that will take place in the service, e.g., training and capacity building for business modelling, prototyping, conceptualisation and ideation of business plans and funding schemes. If you have more than one activity in the service, name them in a chronological order but ensure not to overspend the word limit.*
 - *How the EIC beneficiaries can benefit from it, e.g., development of business plan, coaching in IP, talent acquisition.*
 - *Engagement of experts as coaches, mentors, instructors, and others, if applicable. Please indicate if they will be in-house or outsourced experts.*
 - *Whether the service will have a Call for Applications, pre-application, fixed deadlines or accept applicants on a rolling basis.*
- For services with costs, show the amount in Euro using hourly or daily rates if experts are involved, or full lump sum if it is a complete package. The field for costs is mandatory.
- Ensure there is a diversity of services in typology, target end-users, outcomes, mode of implementation, etc.
- Keep the descriptions short and comprehensible for third person readers and use the third person.

Submission:

- Use the platform provided by the Programme to submit the application (applications submitted by email will not be accepted).
- In case a wrong submission is made, immediately contact the Programme Helpdesk to request a re-submission.



15. To become an EIC Partner, should the organisation have to propose a minimum number of services?

A minimum of one service and a maximum of three services can be offered by EIC Partners.

16. What are some good examples of services that EIC Partners can provide?

Three categories of services can be offered. However, the scope of the offers depends on the capacity of the EIC Partners to provide the services: **i)** standalone services, e.g., training or workshops on topics such as IP guidance, branding for investment, marketing a business, business modelling, etc.; **ii)** Individualised services, e.g., access to test beds, living labs, certified laboratory facilities, technological due diligence, etc.; and **iii)** Programme cohort services, which are plug-ins onto acceleration and incubation programmes with mid- to long-term durations.

Some examples of topics, themes, talking points, concerns and concepts that have been identified as relevant for EIC beneficiaries are below (this is not an exhaustive list):

- *Coaching on Intellectual Property (IP) Guidance and developing an Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) strategy and compliance with legal and regulatory requirements;*
- *Training to understand the meaning of networking in the Venture Capital and customer world;*
- *Funding guidance and general mapping with alternative ways of funding (private and public);*
- *Information on market regulatory requirements and how to shape a product to be in accordance;*
- *Framework to cooperate legally across different jurisdictions;*
- *Financing IP at the early stages;*
- *Support in dealing with legal issues;*
- *Monitoring services from the EIC regarding IP;*
- *Built-in (grants) mechanisms for exploiting EIC funded IP;*
- *Training and mentorship to bounce ideas, pitching and reverse pitching events;*
- *Mental support necessary with experienced entrepreneurs and mentors;*
- *Talent acquisition or creation of a talent pool to share job opportunities across SMEs and other EIC beneficiaries;*
- *Provision of test beds/ test platforms for entrepreneurs/early-stage companies;*
- *Knowledge on new value chains specific for the sectors (e.g., raw materials, automotive, tech industries, etc);*
- *Guidance on cash flow, business intelligence that is specific to the market; support on commercialisation and road to market support;*
- *Training on basic skills on management and dealing with failure in innovation;*
- *Training on business coaching, business leadership, business strategy and modelling, business planning and business concept validation;*
- *Management on transition from Research and Development (R&D) to SME (with the risk of leaving the university contract).*

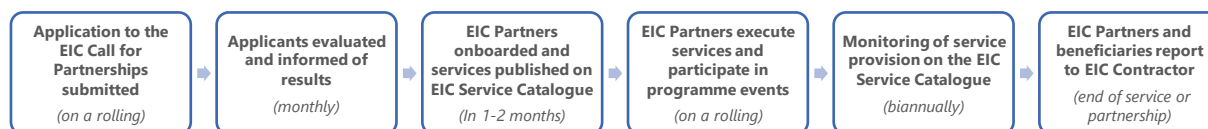
More information about the needs of EIC beneficiaries can be found in this [Needs Analysis Report](#).

It is recommended that the offered services are complementary to [Business Acceleration Services \(BAS\)](#) and the current services on the [EIC Service Catalogue](#). Applicants are encouraged to investigate the existing BAS calendar and EIC Service Catalogue and provide services that focus on different topics (e.g., for trainings and coaching) or approaches (e.g., pitching and investments), or are complementary to the existing ones. Moreover, EIC Partners can also focus on providing individualised and programme cohort services, which are normally not covered under BAS.



17. What will happen after I submit my application?

Your application will be screened and assessed by an Evaluation Committee. 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 participation in Programme events and activities. The Programme and Call's roadmap is concisely presented below.



18. How are EIC Partners compensated for their services?

The mission of the EIC Call for Partnerships is to create win-win collaborations between the EIC and EIC Partners, as well as create a bridge between EIC Partners and EIC beneficiaries. The services provided to EIC beneficiaries through the EIC Ecosystem Partnership programme can be offered free of charge (i.e., the EIC Partners offer in-kind), at a reduced rate, with a negotiable price or with equity deals. For the services that cannot be offered free of charge or with equity deals (directly negotiated with EIC beneficiaries), the payment will be made by the EIC beneficiaries from their project grants and/or through the support of the EIC (cascade funding for EIC beneficiaries offered through the Financial Support to access services from Ecosystem Partners initiative ([HORIZON-EIC-2023-PARTNERS-01](#))). Please note the Programme does not have decision-making power in the rollout of the cascade funding or application to the EIC Partner services. The decision is made solely by the parties responsible for the [HORIZON-EIC-2023-PARTNERS-01](#) initiative, the Contracting Authority (EIC) and EIC beneficiaries.

Please find more information about this initiative on the [EIC Service Catalogue's FAQs](#).

19. What kind of reporting needs to be done for the Partnership?

As part of the monitoring activities, the EIC Partners will be asked to provide informal feedback about the service implementation throughout the Partnership period. No written reports will be required.

20. Will there be Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will apply to EIC Partners?

There are no KPIs that will apply to EIC Partners in the Programme.

21. Is it possible to apply as a Consortium or on behalf of a programme or association?

Yes, a consortium can also apply to become an EIC Partner but must do so as a single entity.

22. Am I allowed to suggest collaborative activities with the EIC?

The EIC is keenly interested in engaging in joint initiatives that foster stakeholder connections, including matchmaking sessions and training programs. Our primary objective is to enhance the visibility of the EIC Ecosystem Partnership Programme. Please note that all proposed activities are non-binding and subject to validation by the EIC.



23. Can entities from non-EU countries, such as the United Kingdom and Switzerland, apply to the EIC Call for Partnerships?

Yes, organisations registered in the United Kingdom and Switzerland. The Programme is open to applicants from outside and inside Europe, especially for internationalisation services.

24. If I have questions or doubts, how can I seek help?

A helpdesk service is available for applicants at eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu. The helpdesk is functional during working days (excluding bank holidays in Portugal).

25. Is it possible to withdraw my application due to unforeseen circumstances that hinder my full participation?

The application for the EIC Call for Partnerships can be withdrawn at any time. Applicants are advised to send an email to the EIC Contractor through the eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu regarding the withdrawal of the application.

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For additional information, please refer to the EIC Ecosystem Partnership Programme helpdesk at eicpartnerships-helpdesk@eic-bas.eu. The helpdesk is managed by the EIC Contractor, on behalf of the European Innovation Council.