Introduction to EIC Pathfinder

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Applicants' Day
19 March 2021

European Innovation Council

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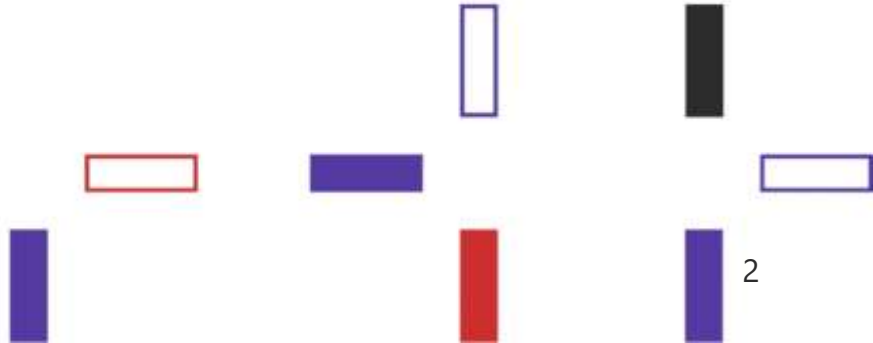

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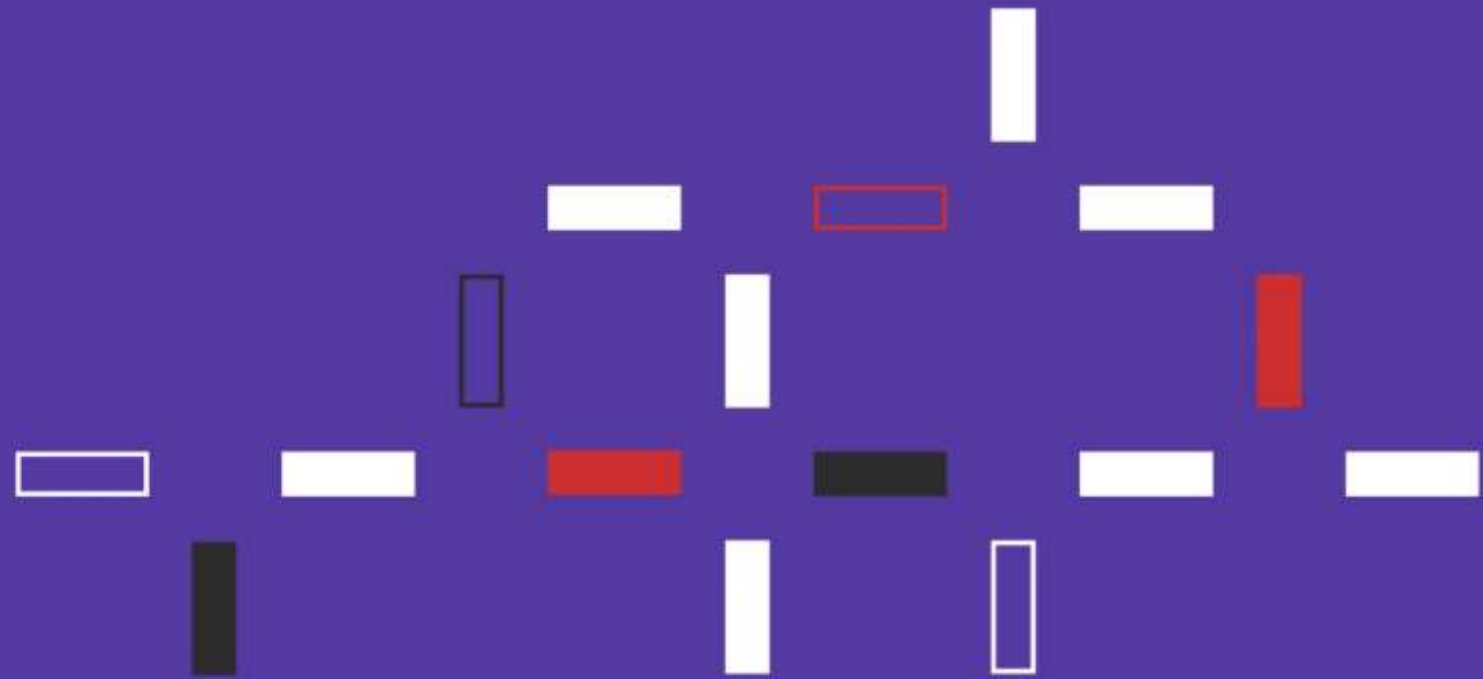
EIC Pathfinder



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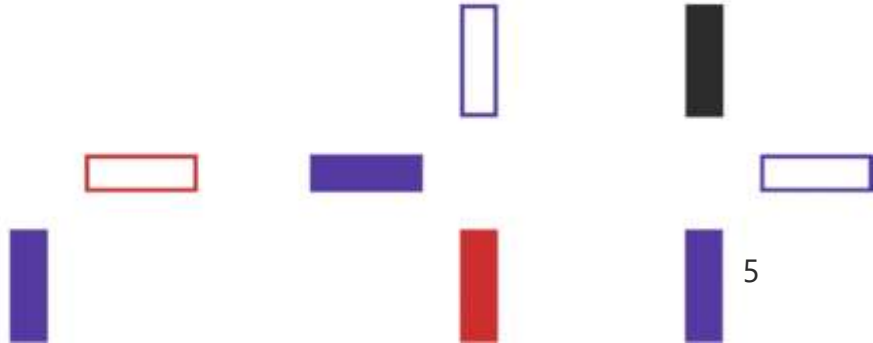
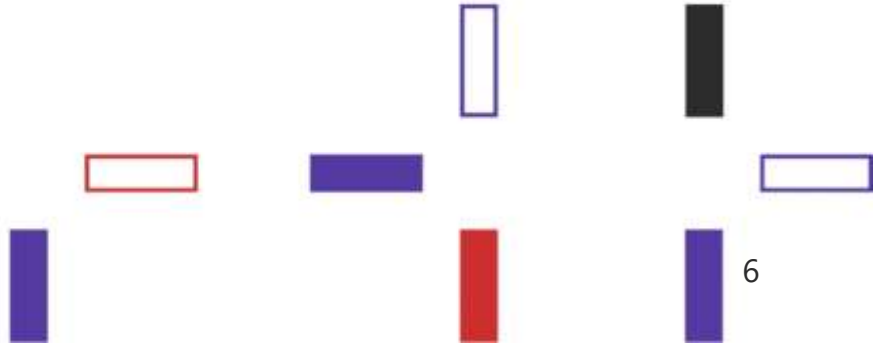
What is the EIC Pathfinder?

The EIC Pathfinder programme funds **research** to **develop the scientific basis** to underpin **breakthrough technologies**.



Funding schemes

- **EIC Pathfinder Open** ⇨ bottom-up approach with no predefined topics
- **EIC Pathfinder Challenges** ⇨ top-down challenge-driven calls for tackling specific technology breakthroughs by portfolios of projects



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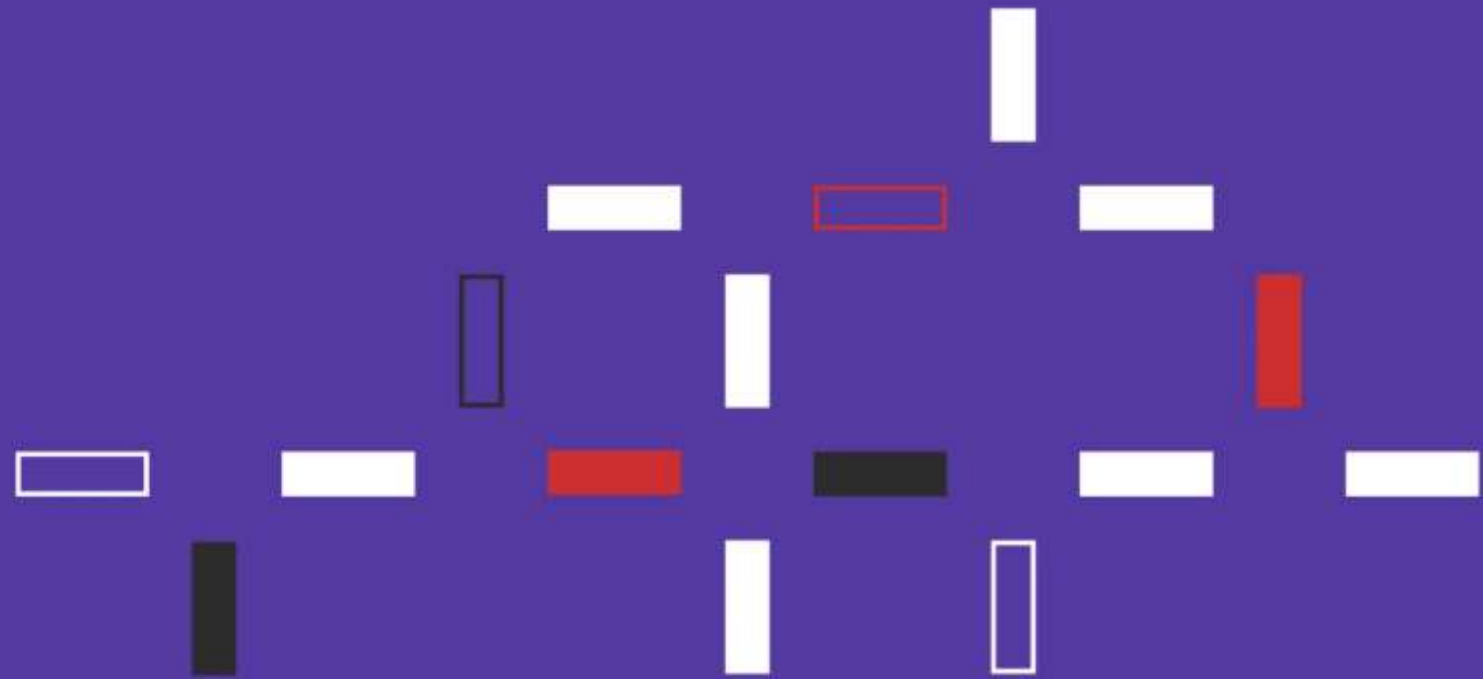
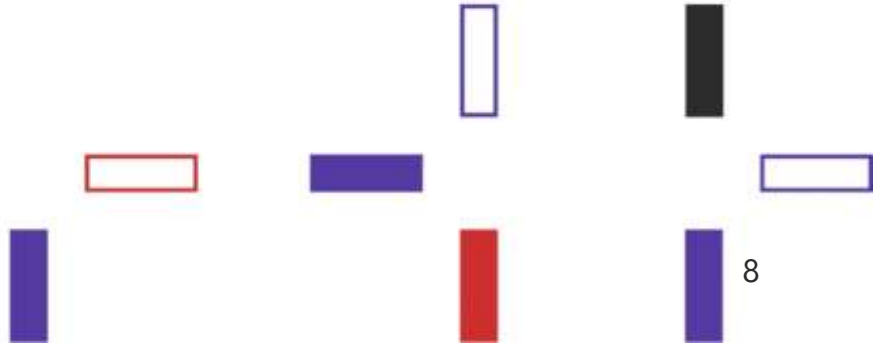
EIC Pathfinder Open



EIC Pathfinder Open - Who is it for?

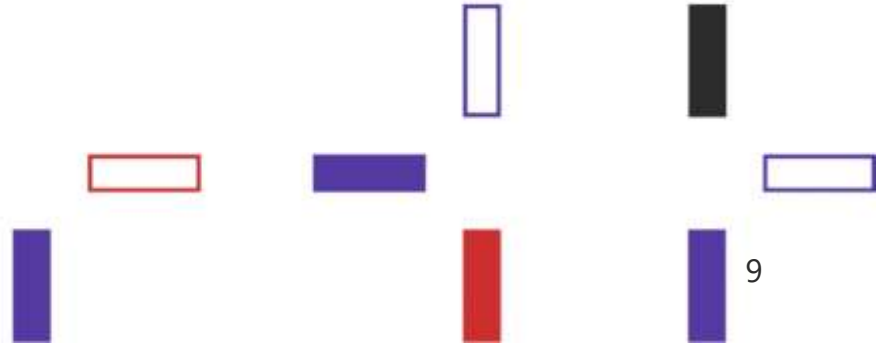
- Do you have **a vision for a future technology** that could make a real difference to our lives?
- Do you see a plausible way of **achieving the scientific breakthrough** that will make this technology possible?
- Can you imagine collaborating with an **interdisciplinary team of researchers and innovators**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



Why should you apply?

You apply for an EIC Pathfinder Open grant:

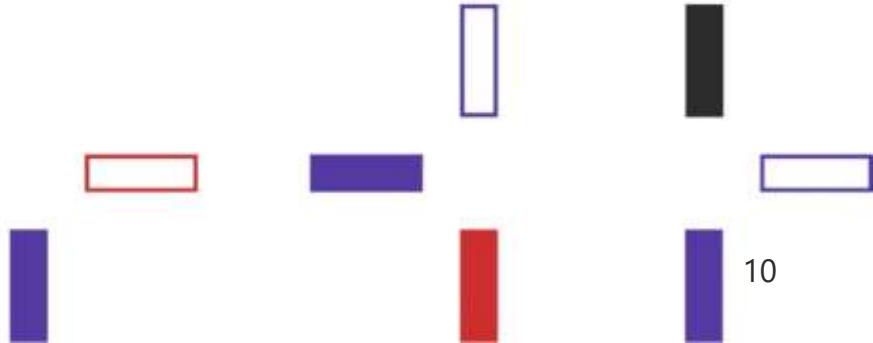
- for support to realise **an ambitious vision for radically new technology**, with **potential to create new markets** and/or to **address global challenges**.
- for **early stage development** of such future technologies (e.g. various activities at low Technology Readiness Levels 1-4),
- to provide the **foundations of the technology** you are envisioning.



EIC Pathfinder Open : Gatekeepers

Collaborative, interdisciplinary research, meeting the following Gatekeepers:

- **convincing, long-term vision of a radically new technology** that has the potential to have a transformative positive effect to our economy and society;
- **concrete, novel and ambitious science-towards-technology breakthrough**, providing advancement towards the envisioned technology;
- **high-risk & high-gain research approach & methodology**, with concrete and plausible objectives.



Expected outcomes of EIC Pathfinder Open project

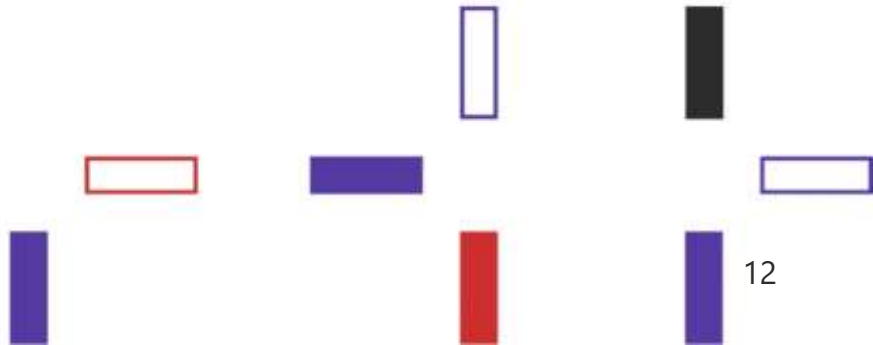
- the expected outcome of a EIC Pathfinder project is the **proof of principle** that the **main ideas of the envisioned future technology are feasible**, thus validating its scientific and technological basis;
- projects are expected to take the necessary measures to **allow future uptake to take place**, for instance through an **adequate formal protection of the generated Intellectual Property (IP)**;
- projects are encouraged to involve and empower in their teams **key actors** that have the potential to **become future leaders** in their field such as excellent early-career researchers or promising high-tech SMEs, including start-ups.

All the above will **strengthen Europe's capacity for exploiting the scientific discoveries made in Europe** throughout the steps to market success or for solving global challenges.

EIC Pathfinder Open:
Can you apply? Consortium composition

- A consortium has to include at least **three independent legal entities**, each one established in a different Member State or Associated Country and with at least one of them established in a Member State.

- Legal entities: all types are eligible.



What support will you receive if your proposal is funded?

- You will receive a grant for a **Research and Innovation Action (RIA)** to cover the **eligible costs**, necessary for the implementation of your project.
- For this call, the EIC considers proposals with a requested EU contribution of **up to EUR 3 million** as appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not preclude you to request larger amounts, if properly justified. The funding rate of this grant will be 100% of the eligible costs.
- The total indicative budget for this call is EUR 168 million.

Additional opportunities for selected projects

Projects or their beneficiaries funded through EIC Pathfinder are eligible:

- to receive additional **Ad hoc grants** (up to 3 per project or more if duly justified) with fixed amounts of up to €50,000 :
  - for complementary activities to explore potential pathways to commercialization
  - for portfolio activities.
- to submit a proposal to the **EIC Transition** for transforming their research results into innovation opportunities;
- to submit an **EIC Accelerator** proposal via the **Fast Track** scheme;
- to receive free access to a wide range of **Business Acceleration Services**.

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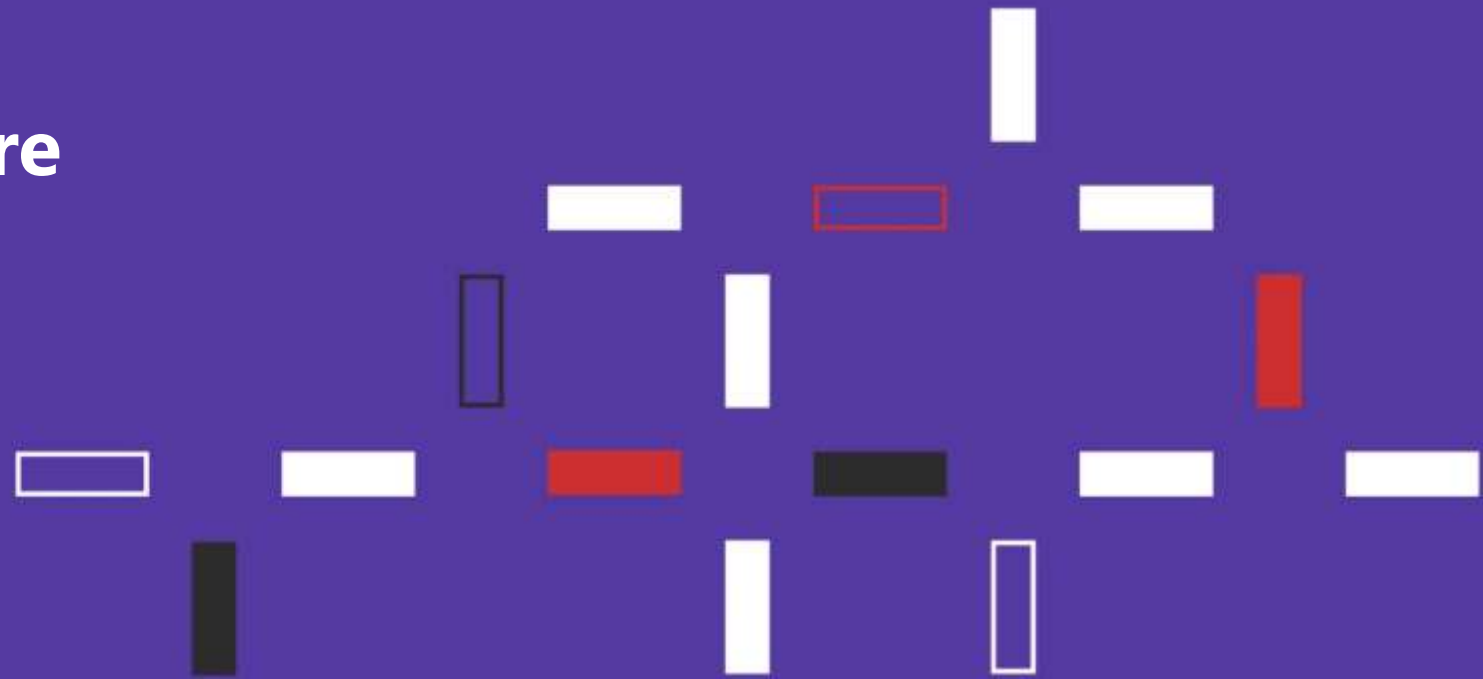
EIC Pathfinder Open

Evaluation Procedure



How do you apply; how long does it take?

- You must submit your application via the **EU Funding & Tenders Portal** before the given deadline.
  - Specific EIC Pathfinder Open proposal template
  - Maximum **17 pages** for the sections 1-3 in part B.
- You will be informed about the outcome of the evaluation within **5 months from the call deadline** (indicative).
- If your proposal is accepted for funding, your grant agreement will be signed by **8 months after the call deadline** (indicative).
- The deadline to submit the proposal is **19 May, 2021 at 17h00** CET.

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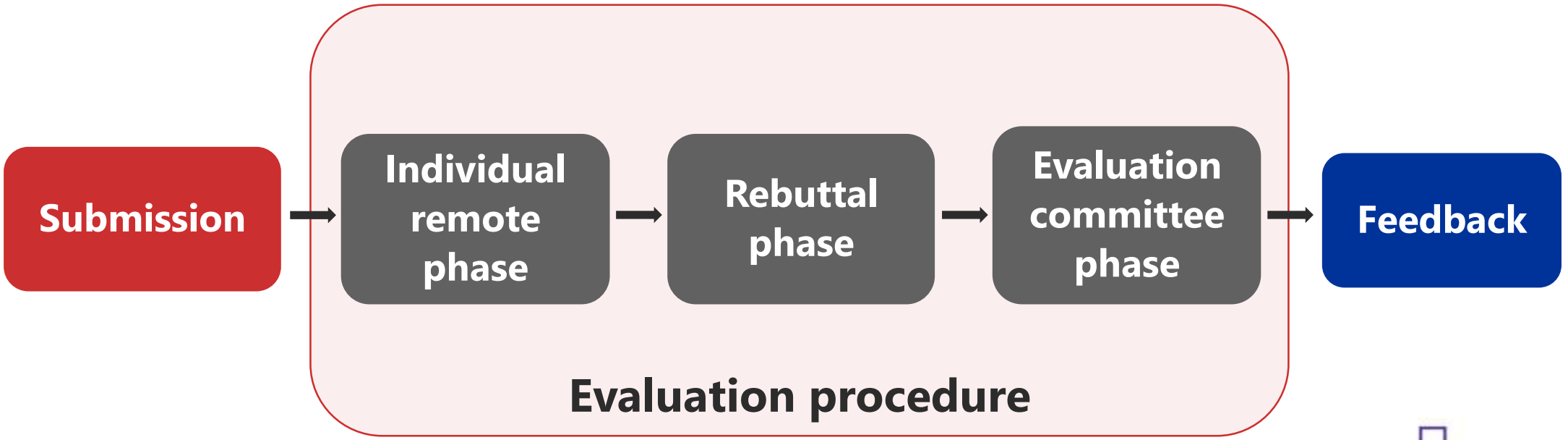
How does the EIC decide if your proposal will be funded?



Evaluation: Individual Remote phase

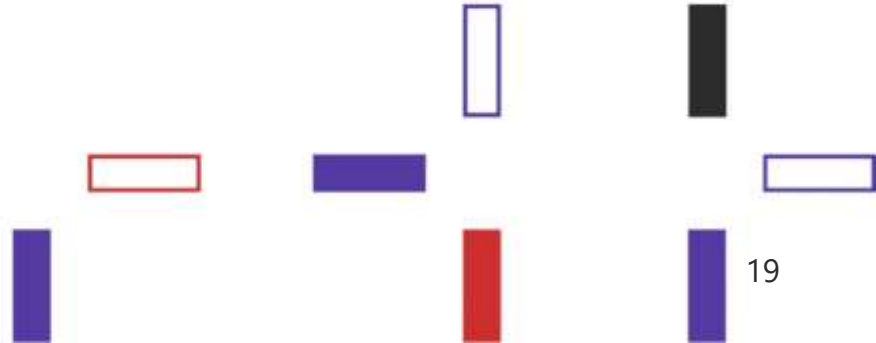
- Expert evaluators evaluate the proposals with respect to the **evaluation criteria**:
  - Excellence
  - Impact
  - Quality and efficiency of the implementation
- The **remote score** for each evaluation criterion will be the **median of the evaluators' scores**.
- The **overall remote score** will be the **weighted sum** of the three median scores from the three evaluation criteria.

1. Evaluation criterion “Excellence”

- **Long-term vision:** How convincing is the vision of a radically new technology that has the potential to have a transformative positive effect to our economy and society?
- **Science-towards-technology breakthrough:** How concrete, novel and ambitious is the proposed science-towards-technology breakthrough with respect to the state-of-the-art? What advancement does it provide towards realising the envisioned technology?
- **Objectives:** How concrete and plausible are the proposed objectives? To what extent are high-risk/high-gain research approach and methodology appropriate for achieving them?
- **Interdisciplinarity:** How relevant is the interdisciplinary approach from traditionally distant disciplines for achieving the proposed breakthrough?

Threshold **4/5**

Weight **60%**

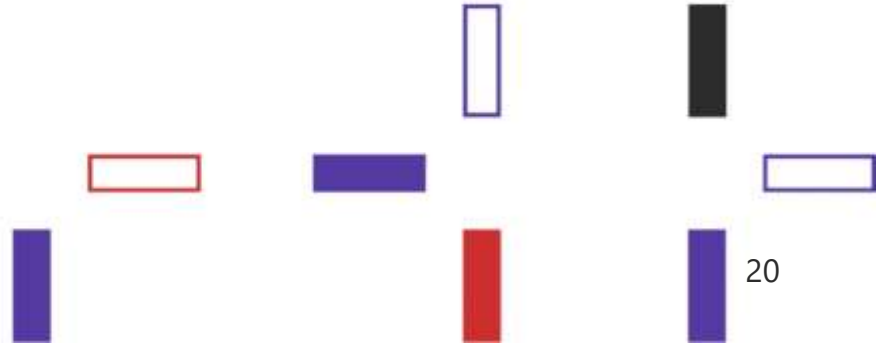


2. Evaluation criterion “Impact”

- **Innovation potential:** How adequate are the proposed measures for protection of results and any other exploitation measures to facilitate future translation of research results into innovations with societal or economic impact? How suitable are the proposed measures for empowering key actors that have the potential to take the lead in translating research into innovations?
- **Communication and Dissemination:** How convincing and wide reaching are the proposed measures and plans for public/stakeholder engagement and for raising awareness about the project outcomes, including through Open Science, with respect to their potential to establish new markets and/or address global challenges?

Threshold **3.5/5**

Weight **20%**

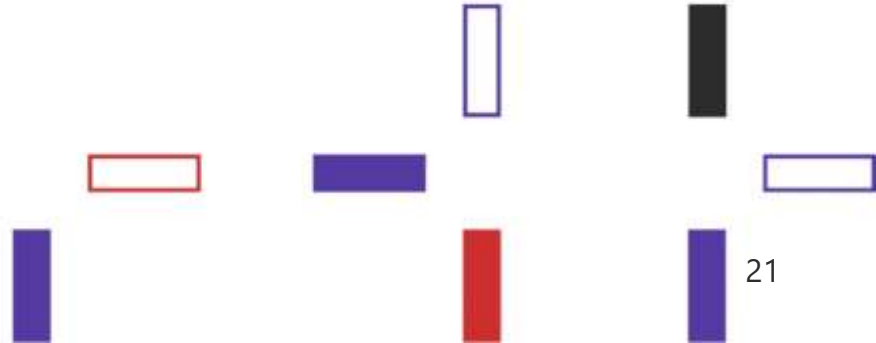


3. Evaluation criterion "Quality and efficiency of the implementation"

- **Quality of the consortium:** To what extent do the consortium members have all the necessary high quality expertise for performing the project tasks?
- **Work plan:** How coherent and effective are the work plan (work packages, tasks, deliverables, milestones, time-line, etc.) and risk mitigation measures in order to achieve the project objectives?
- **Allocation of resources:** How appropriate and effective is the allocation of resources (person-months and equipment) to tasks and consortium members?

Threshold **3/5**

Weight **20%**



Rebuttal phase - “Right-to-react”

- You will have the opportunity to **reply within 7 calendar days** with a strict page limit (**maximum two A4 pages**) to the evaluators’ comments;
- your **replies cannot be used to alter or add to the content** of the proposals, but must strictly focus on providing clarifications and/or on responding to potential misunderstandings or errors by the evaluators;
- the replies will be **made available to the evaluation committee**;
- the evaluation committee will **take into consideration** the comments from the rebuttal procedure, if any, in order to arrive at their final scores for the proposals that underwent this procedure.

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Evaluation committee phase

- the evaluation committee will be composed of **external independent experts different** than those who evaluated the proposals remotely;
- the **final score** will be decided based on the remote score and the outcome of its consensus discussions, taking into consideration the comments from the rebuttal procedure, if any;
- these discussions will **focus on controversial proposals that have a realistic chance of getting funded** (i.e. proposals from an appropriately chosen range above and below the funding threshold);
- **expert evaluators** who evaluated and scored the proposals remotely may be **invited to the consensus discussions**, in particular for controversial proposals;
- the evaluation committee will confirm the **ranking list**.

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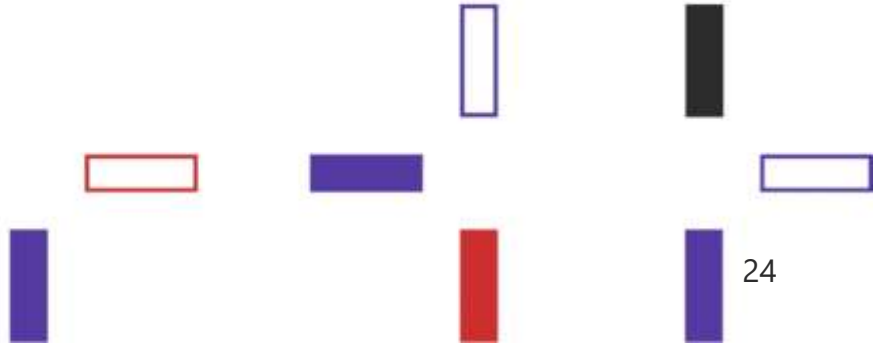
Feedback to Applicants

Applicants will receive an **Evaluation Summary Report** that will comprise of:

- the **final score;**
- a collation of the **comments** from individual reports, or extracts from them;
- a **comment that summarises** the assessment by the evaluation committee;
- **additional comments,** possibly including advice not to resubmit proposal.



Call 2021 – Summary table

	EIC Pathfinder Open
Total budget	€168 million
Proposals (indicative)	Up to €3 million
Funding rate	100% of eligible costs
Length of proposal	17-page proposal – Section 1 to 3
Applicants	Consortia: Min. 3 partners from 3 different MS/AC (of which at least 1 partner in a MS). Legal entities: all types are eligible.
Call dead line	**19 May, 2021 at 17h00 CET**

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Thank you!

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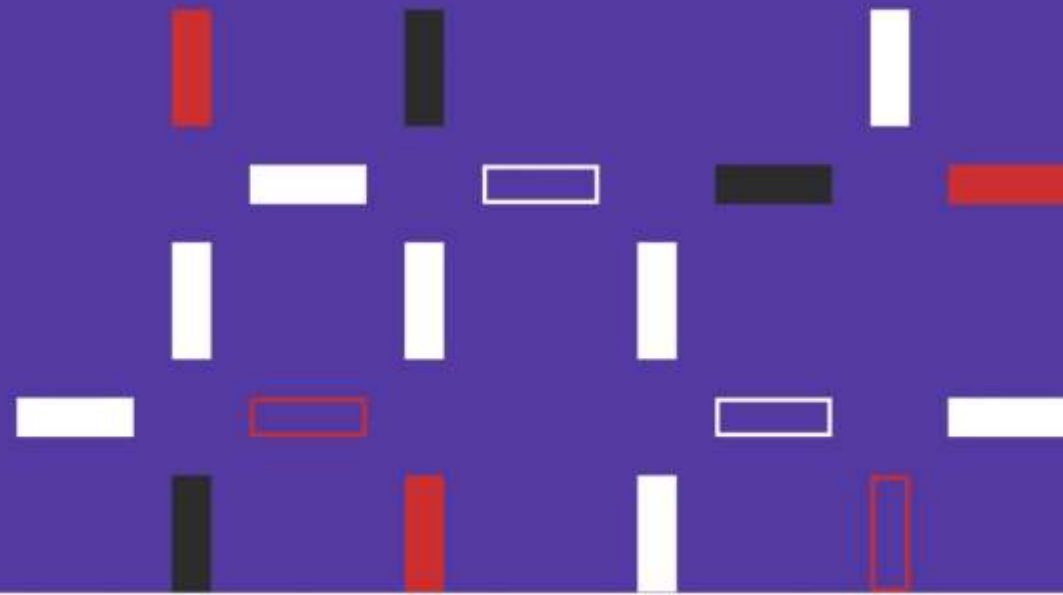

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