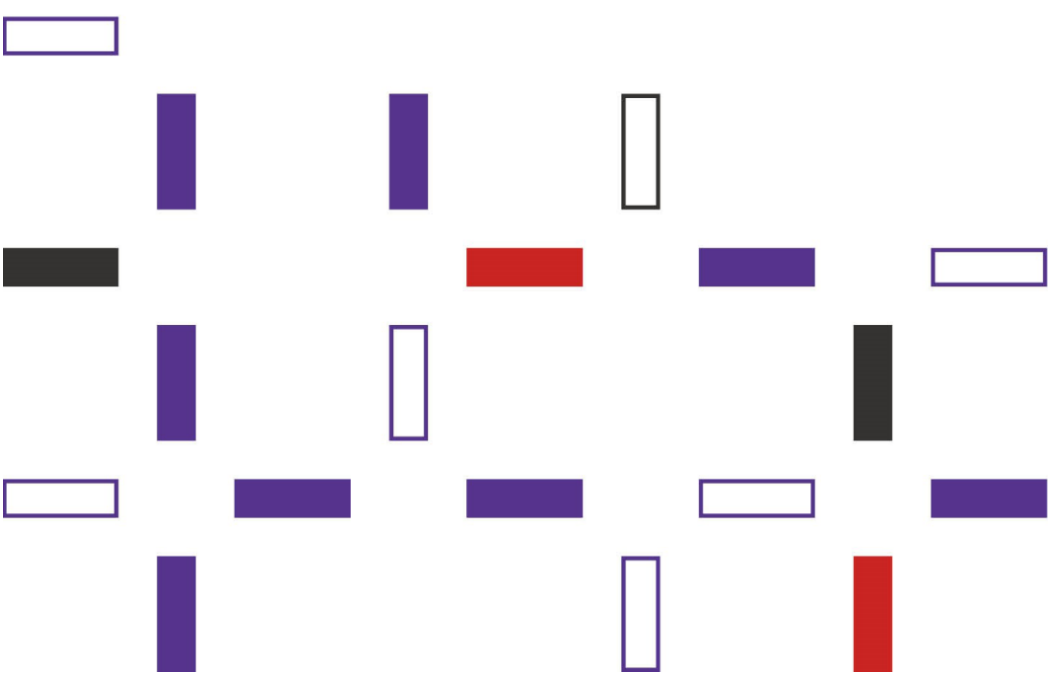




# Backing visionary entrepreneurs

European Innovation Council (EIC)  
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

*VERSION October 2021*



1. What is the expected size and duration of an EIC Pathfinder project? Can single beneficiaries apply and if yes, will they be competing against multi-beneficiary proposals?
2. What range of TRL should EIC Pathfinder projects cover? What is the expected project output?
3. Is participation of SMEs or industrial partners to EIC Pathfinder consortia compulsory?
4. What are the main changes introduced by EIC Pathfinder compared with the EIC Pathfinder pilot (former FET Open and FET Proactive)?
5. What is the difference between the Gatekeepers defined in the EIC Pathfinder Open call and the FET Gatekeepers that were used in the EIC pilot?
6. How will the rebuttal procedure in the evaluation process of EIC Pathfinder Open work in practice? When and how will applicants be contacted for submitting observations to the evaluators' assessments? What happens if an applicant does not submit observations?
7. For the Pathfinder Challenges call, what does it mean that portfolio considerations will be taken into account in the evaluation process? What does the portfolio approach mean for beneficiaries in successful Pathfinder Challenges projects?
8. Why and when may Pathfinder Open projects be added to an EIC portfolio? What kind of portfolio activities are expected? Can projects or beneficiaries, selected to join a portfolio, opt out?
9. How will participation in portfolio activities be supported? At the submission, do proposals need to allocate a budget for portfolio activities?
10. Will the Pathfinder challenges still exist in future WP?
11. Are there events foreseen to support the formation of consortium for Pathfinder calls
12. Why is there no option for rebuttal under Pathfinder Challenges?

13. I would like to apply for a Transition project to further develop the results created by someone else (another project, another partner in my project, etc). What is the written evidence of the IPR agreement to be included in the proposal?
14. What is the Seal of Excellence for Transition projects? How and to whom is it given? What support is available for such Seals of Excellence?
15. What is the expected size and duration of an EIC Transition project?
16. Is participation of SMEs or industrial partners to EIC Transition Open consortium compulsory? Can researchers participate?
17. When and how will a selected Transition project be added to a portfolio of projects? Do projects have a choice? What kind of portfolio activities are expected and how will this participation be supported?
18. How much should applicants invest upfront in the market aspects (business case, business model) for the proposal and how much this would be developed in the project itself?

19. Can I apply to the EIC Accelerator if I have already been a grant beneficiary under the SME Instrument or EIC Accelerator Pilot?
20. Can a 'grant-only' supported company from the EIC pilot (funded from Horizon 2020) apply for an equity follow-up? If so, how shall it apply; by means of a full application or with a different type of request?
21. What does prioritisation mean for inviting applicants to interview; how will it work? If I am not invited to the first batch of interviews, when will my interview take place?
22. What happens if my company loses SME status during the implementation of an EIC project?
23. To what extent is an investor located in a country that is not an EU Member State or an Associated Country able to invest in an EIC supported SME? How and when will the company have to give its prior agreement? Would the investor be eligible to accompany the SME in the interview?
24. What are the differences between the Grant first and Transition activities in terms of state of project, e.g. definition of the risks, the commercial objectives, the market strategy and necessary finances needed?
25. When must the applicant send a short application at the latest in order to be able to apply for the following cut-off for full applications? How long will it take from my short application until I can start with the grant activities and until have the investment component signed?
26. At what stage should the applicant define the type of funding (blended, grant only, grant first, equity) to apply for?
27. When should I apply for grant first?
28. Can I change funding request between step 1 and 2?
29. I applied for blended finance, can the jury recommend a different type of funding after the interview?
30. What does the Jury expect to see when I was a "potential GO" in a previous interview round? Do I have to improve both, the full proposal or/and the pitch deck?
31. We have been rejected twice and are now preparing an improved application. Who decides if our application has been "significantly improved"?
32. Will the evaluation summary reports be more extensive than those of the EIC Accelerator Pilot?
33. When shall we expect to see the use of reimbursable advance, guarantees, and convertible loans? Will these be used for ongoing projects?
34. What kind of risks need to be linked to my innovation to be relevant for the EIC Accelerator? Is it strictly development risks or also risks linked to the go-to market strategy?
35. We have heard that "blended finance" will now become the preferred form of support. Is it a disadvantage to apply for grant only?
36. What happens if there are major changes in the course of the application process - for example, that we gain a VC as an investor? How is this reflected in the application process and the evaluation?
37. In the AI platform, how are equity-based Work Packages added and why does the applicant need to provide cost categories there when equity is not linked to eligibility of costs?
38. What is expected to be found in "post TRL 9 activities" within the grant domain? If you are using TRL and BRL scales together why you are not using BRL scales to describe WPs?
39. What are milestones and why are WP linked to TRL milestones and not to BRL ones?
40. Features: Difference between "existing technology", "needed technology" and "technology to be developed"?
41. What exactly are exploitation revenues?
42. Do we have to indicate final deliverables on WP level or each task should have a deliverable?
43. Why is the market penetration strategy requested for all the states of the market?
44. Is BRL the same as MRL and what are the existing levels? Which TRL levels exist?
45. How should the value chain be specifically defined?
46. Where will it be possible to insert the graphs and pictures? In the form of the AI platform or only in the pitch deck? Is there a limit to the number of slides?
47. Is it mandatory to include a data management plan in a full application to the EIC Accelerator? What needs to be uploaded on Freedom to Operate, e.g.; a legal opinion or self-assessment?
48. Will my proposal be rejected if I submit for the health challenges and the Commission finds it should have been addressed to the open call instead, or will it simply be moved to the open call?

49. At the end of the diagnostic tool on the AI platform, the company gets ratings in the fields of science, technology and team. Are the evaluators during the different evaluation steps able to access these results?
50. To what extent will results generated by the AI Platform affect the evaluation?
51. What is the procedure if I have received a NO-GO after my first Step 1 submission but believe that one or more evaluators have wrongly assessed my proposal?
52. What is the procedure if I have received a NO-GO after my second Step 1 submission and believe that one or more evaluators have wrongly assessed my proposal?
53. What is the procedure if I have received a NO-GO after my first Step 2 submission but believe that one or more evaluators have wrongly assessed my proposal?
54. As a condition to be allocated a Seal of Excellence, applicants have to agree that some information of their proposal is shared. What information is shared and with whom?
55. What is the role of National Contact Points (NCPs) and Europe Enterprise Network (EEN) in application process? Will NCPs be informed about applicants selected from stage 1 application?

---

## **D EIC Community and Business Acceleration Services p.15**

---

56. How are coaches selected? Can we suggest coaches/ cooperate with coaches we worked with in the past?
57. I am an EIC Accelerator applicant invited to submit the full proposal; what support will I get from coaches? Can they support us in proposal writing as well? Is it compulsory for an applicant to use coaching support to build up a proposal?
58. How can I benefit from coaching? Are there any selection criteria to participate?
59. When can I use the three days of coaching if I receive a GO at Step 1 of the EIC Accelerator?
60. Do I have to pay for the Business Acceleration Services? Which are the eligible costs?
61. How can I get access to other BAS services (access to expertise, trainings, matching, community events, services provided by EIC partners)?
62. How can I access the EIC Community and what does it provide?
63. Can R&I activities be financed under action 3 - Stimulation of co-creation of pilots and test solutions?
64. For actions 2 and 3, it is respectively mentioned in the call text that "at least two EIC funded projects and companies to be invited per market engagement and consultation" and "at least one EIC funded company or project has to be included in this co-creation", but then how to guarantee equal treatment and transparency amongst interested suppliers?
65. For the action 3, does the budget (eg. 100.000€ max) has to go only to the procurer(s) that then will have to pay the selected suppliers? Alternatively, can the budget be split between the procurer(s) and the suppliers in order to speed up the financial process?

---

## **E General conditions and eligibility p.17**

---

66. Can I apply for several EIC calls at the same time? Can I apply for both Open and Challenges?
67. Can I apply for EIC funding if I have an ongoing grant from the EIC pilot (or another Horizon 2020 grant)?
68. How do I know which countries are associated to the EIC? Can I apply if I am based in a third country, which is not associated?
69. Can entities in the UK apply for EIC funding?
70. Can I relocate my company from the UK between step 1 and step 2 in order to apply for blended finance?
71. Can I apply directly to the Step 2 Full application under the EIC Accelerator if I have received a Seal of excellence in the past?
72. My company has activities in several countries; can I choose which country to apply from?
73. How the Coordination Office can manage the budget for implementing the expected activities? (re. Other action - VI.10 Support to the EIC Accelerator by the Enterprise Europe Network)

---

## **F Fast Track scheme and pilot Plug-In scheme to apply for the EIC Accelerator p.19**

---

74. How can I apply for the Fast Track scheme? When will it be available and for which programmes?

75. Is this Fast Track scheme the same as the 'Fast Track to Research and Innovation' procedures under Horizon Europe or is it something different?
76. When will the Plug-In scheme be implemented? Which countries and programmes will it apply to?

---

## **G Intellectual Property provisions for EIC Pathfinder and Transition projects**

---

**p.20**

---

77. Beneficiaries may object to the dissemination of their preliminary findings or results by the granting authority when they demonstrate concrete exploitation. In this context, what is meant by "demonstrating concrete exploitation"? Would an on-going negotiation with an entity be considered as demonstrating concrete exploitation?
78. Does Annex 7, section 3.4. Failure to exploit or disseminate, second paragraph, "the granting authority will impose penalties in accordance with the Grant Agreement" only apply when the beneficiaries do not exploit their results?
79. Why does the definition of EIC Inventor not include for-profit legal entities?

## **A. EIC PATHFINDER**

1. What is the expected size and duration of an EIC Pathfinder project? Can single beneficiaries apply and if yes, will they be competing against multi-beneficiary proposals?

EIC considers proposals with a requested EU contribution of up to EUR 3 million for Pathfinder Open and up to EUR 4 million for Pathfinder Challenges as appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not preclude you to request larger amounts, if properly justified.

In general, there is no specific expectation on the number of partners in a consortium or the duration of EIC Pathfinder projects, which should be "fit-for-purpose", i.e. decided in line with the S&T ambition, by ensuring an efficient implementation strategy of the planned R&I, dissemination and exploitation activities and considering quickly changing research landscape in given area(s). Note however that the eligibility conditions of each call needs to be satisfied (e.g., 3 minimum legal entities for consortia in Pathfinder Open and 2 for consortia in the Pathfinder Challenge, unless specified in the Challenge text call). For

some Pathfinder Challenges, projects are expected to have a set duration specified in the in the Challenge Guide.

Applications from single legal entities are not eligible under the EIC Pathfinder Open call and under the EIC Pathfinder Challenge – Awareness Inside. Single legal entities can however submit applications under the other EIC Pathfinder Challenges, where they will compete with proposals submitted by consortia.

## 2. What range of TRL should EIC Pathfinder projects cover? What is the expected project output?

It is expected that the various activities within the EIC Pathfinder projects should cover low TRLs, typically in the range between TRL 1 and 4. Note however that the TRLs range of some EIC Pathfinder Challenges may be narrower as specified in the given Pathfinder Challenge text call and Challenge Guide.

The main expected outcomes of Pathfinder projects are top-level scientific publications in open access and an adequate formal protection of the generated Intellectual Property (e.g. a patent application). In addition, the expected outcome of Pathfinder Open project is the proof of principle that the main ideas of the envisioned future technology are feasible, thus validating its scientific and technological basis. For Pathfinder Challenge projects, the expected outcomes are described in the given Challenge text call and Challenge Guide. Moreover, Pathfinder Challenge projects are also expected to contribute to the outcomes of the Challenge Portfolio activities as described in the Challenge Guide.

## 3. Is participation of SMEs or industrial partners to EIC Pathfinder consortia compulsory?

The participation of SMEs and industrial partners in the EIC Pathfinder consortia is not compulsory.

Please note however that for the Pathfinder Open call, applicants are encouraged to involve and empower in their team 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.

## 4. What are the main changes introduced by EIC Pathfinder compared with the EIC Pathfinder pilot (former FET Open and FET Proactive)?

In 2021, the EIC will launch two calls for proposals under the Pathfinder: a bottom-up call (Pathfinder Open) and a top-down call (Pathfinder Challenges). These calls build on the FET Open and the FET Proactive parts of the EIC Pathfinder pilot under Horizon 2020, respectively.

The EIC will take an active approach of project and programme management to develop business and technology-based visions, assisted by designated Programme Managers whose task will be to identify, develop and implement such visions and to nurture potential market-creating innovation out of EIC funded projects and activities.

More specifically:

- the EIC will encourage and stimulate further maturation of preliminary findings and results by providing guidance but also additional and continuous support, including financial;
- Pathfinder projects will have direct access for submitting full proposals to the EIC Accelerator call under a novel fast-track procedure;
- Pathfinder project participants can also receive additional support in the form ad-hoc grants of up to EUR 50 000 to explore potential pathways to commercialisation or for portfolio activities

Main changes specific for EIC Pathfinder Open include:

- Revision of the Gatekeepers that describe the essential characteristics for Pathfinder Open proposals; full alignment with the corresponding evaluation sub-criteria under Excellence.
- Introduction of a rebuttal procedure to provide applicants the opportunity to reply to the evaluators' comments before the ranking list is finalised.
- A slightly increased page limit for Pathfinder Open proposals (17 A4 pages for sections 1-3 of part B) compared to FET Open (15 A4 pages).

Main changes specific for EIC Pathfinder Challenges include:

- For each Challenge, a Pathfinder Challenge Guide will be published on the EIC website and on the Funding & Tenders Portal. This Challenge Guide will provide more information about the specific objectives of the Challenge, as well as relevant portfolio considerations.
- Applications from single legal entities will be eligible for most of the topics (except the Pathfinder Challenge – Awareness Inside).
- The ranking list of proposals to be funded will be based on the evaluation scores as well as on each proposal's contribution to the setting up of a consistent portfolio of projects. The evaluation committee may also propose adjustments to the proposals in as far as needed for the consistency of the portfolio approach.

Projects funded under the Pathfinder Challenges call will be included in the corresponding Challenge portfolio with a medium to long-term business goal and a technology-based strategic plan under the supervision of an EIC Programme Manager.

5. What is the difference between the Gatekeepers defined in the EIC Pathfinder Open call and the FET Gatekeepers that were used in the EIC pilot?

The Gatekeepers in the EIC Pathfinder Open call describe the essential characteristics that submitted proposals should have. They describe the kind of ideas the programme is looking for to facilitate the applicants' decision on proposal submission.

In comparison to the EIC Pilot, proposals that do not convincingly satisfy all Gatekeepers will not be declared 'out of scope', but they are very likely to receive low marks by the EIC expert evaluators as the Gatekeepers are in direct correspondence with the first three sub-criteria of the Excellence criterion.

6. How will the rebuttal procedure in the evaluation process of EIC Pathfinder Open work in practice? When and how will applicants be contacted for submitting observations to the evaluators' assessments? What happens if an applicant does not submit observations?

About 2-2.5 months after the call deadline the applicants will receive via the Funding & Tenders Portal, the evaluators' comments and will have the chance to reply to them within 7 calendar days with a strict page limit (maximum two A4 pages). The participants' replies cannot be used to alter or add to the content of the proposals, but must strictly focus providing clarifications and/or on responding to potential misunderstandings or errors by the evaluators. These replies will be made available to the evaluation committee who will decide on the final score on the basis of the remote score and the outcome of its consensus discussions, taking into consideration the comments from the rebuttal procedure, if any.

There are no consequences if a participant does not submit observations (not compulsory).

7. For the Pathfinder Challenges call, what does it mean that portfolio considerations will be taken into account in the evaluation process? What does the portfolio approach mean for beneficiaries in successful Pathfinder Challenges projects?

The evaluation process includes two steps: first, a remote evaluation of each proposal separately and second, the evaluation by the Evaluation Committee taking into account portfolio considerations. Portfolio considerations for a given Challenge call are described in the Pathfinder Challenge Guide. As a general principle, in order to balance out the portfolio, a categorisation of the proposals will be used and the proposals will be allocated to different components or categories. A suitable portfolio of proposals to be funded will be selected by the evaluation committee from the highest scoring ones for each category or component and proposed for funding.

Projects in a Challenge portfolio are expected to interact and exchange, remaining flexible and reactive in the light of developments within the portfolio or in the relevant global scientific or industrial community. They will progress together towards common Portfolio goals and create new opportunities for radical innovation as described in the Challenge Guide.

8. Why and when may Pathfinder Open projects be added to an EIC portfolio? What kind of portfolio activities are expected? Can projects or beneficiaries, selected to join a portfolio, opt out?

Each Pathfinder Open project will be allocated in at least one thematic or challenge portfolio. This allocation may change over time as new portfolios are created or evolve. EIC Portfolio activities will be identified and developed by EIC Programme Managers in consultation with the beneficiaries of the actions in each portfolio, and where appropriate with other interested EIC Community members and third parties. The aim of thematic portfolios is to develop cooperation within the portfolio in order to support the member-projects in achieving more efficiently and effectively their objectives, and more generally to enhance research, prepare transition to innovation and stimulate business opportunities, and strengthen the EIC Community. Such activities may include participation to conferences, workshops or meetings, data sharing, or participation to any relevant EIC Business Acceleration Services events, just to name a few.

It should be emphasised that the Pathfinder Open call is bottom-up and thus the level of adherence of a proposal to one or several existing portfolios is not an eligibility or evaluation criterion for proposals submitted to this call. It is nevertheless expected that all Pathfinder projects will be included in at least one portfolio.

9. How will participation in portfolio activities be supported? At the submission, do proposals need to allocate a budget for portfolio activities?

Pathfinder Open proposals do not need to allocate budget for these activities while those from Pathfinder Challenges should allocate a corresponding budget as indicated in the relevant Challenge Guide.

In specific cases the participation in portfolio activities may be supported by ad hoc grants with fixed amounts of up to EUR 50 000 per project.

10. Will the Pathfinder challenges still exist in future WP?

The Challenge-driven approach will continue in future EIC work programmes beyond 2021. The topics identified for the challenge-driven calls in the EIC WP 2021 will evolve, with new topics identified in later years, with the possibility of some topics identified in this Work Programme to be complemented with additional funding. Throughout 2021, the EIC will organise various discussions and events to help identify



the most promising emerging topics for the Challenges, and EIC Programme Managers are expected to play a central role in this process.

11. Are there events foreseen to support the formation of consortium for Pathfinder calls?

The European Commission supports the formation of consortia for Pathfinder calls by means of its Partner Search tool on the Funding and Tenders Portal. Specific networking events may be organised and announced at a later stage. Please also contact your National Contact Point for further information and support.

12. Why is there no option for rebuttal under Pathfinder Challenges?

The rebuttal process is a pilot that will be introduced in 2021 to the evaluations of proposals submitted to the Pathfinder Open call only. If successful, it might be rolled out to other Horizon Europe calls at a later stage.

## **B. EIC TRANSITION**

13. I would like to apply for a Transition project to further develop the results created by someone else (another project, another partner in my project, etc). What is the written evidence of the IPR agreement to be included in the proposal?

Proposals must build on results from an ongoing or finished project, funded as a result of a call in any relevant topic and clearly identified in the proposal. Proposals must include a declaration by the coordinator or the IP owner(s) of the necessary rights and ownership of results to be exploited, as described in the proposal.

Applicants that are not the owner of the result to be further developed in the proposal must provide a letter from the relevant beneficiary or beneficiaries of the previous relevant project that own(s) the result that confirms the existence of the necessary agreements with the applicants, including on IPR.

14. What is the Seal of Excellence for Transition projects? How and to whom is it given? What support is available for such Seals of Excellence?

The Seal of Excellence is a quality label awarded to project proposals submitted to the EIC, to help these proposals find alternative funding. It certifies the value of the proposal, based on the outcome of the rigorous EIC evaluation process.

Proposals for EIC Transition (mono-beneficiary only) that were judged to deserve funding (i.e. met all the evaluation criteria) but did not get it due to budget limits will receive the Seal of Excellence. EIC Transition proposals must meet the thresholds on all evaluation criteria to receive the Seal of Excellence.

The Seal of Excellence projects can participate in activities and request up to three days of free business coaching through the EIC Business Acceleration Services, and access to finance services through the Enterprise Europe Network (for SMEs).

15. What is the expected size and duration of an EIC Transition project?

The EIC considers proposals with a duration of up to 3 years as appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not preclude you to request a different duration, if properly justified.

The expected size may depend on the path chosen, the sector and amount of work proposed in the application. E.g.: for mono-beneficiary proposals, the budget may be smaller than for multi-beneficiary proposals, and certain sectors may be more expensive than others.

The minimum amount envisaged for a project is EUR 500 000.

16. Is participation of SMEs or industrial partners to EIC Transition Open consortium compulsory?  
Can researchers participate?

The Work Programme allows for the participation of academic partners without an SME or industrial partner. However, the evaluation will assess the “necessary high-quality expertise, capabilities and motivation to move decisively towards innovation, create a unique commercial value from the emerging technology and develop an attractive business and investment proposition”.

It is therefore encouraged that companies participate, including SMEs/start-ups, and which may include companies that did not take part in the previous consortia that originated the results.

17. When and how will a selected Transition project be added to a portfolio of projects? Do projects have a choice? What kind of portfolio activities are expected and how will this participation be supported?

The Transition Challenge projects will be by default part of the related challenge portfolio. If deemed necessary, the Transition Open projects may be allocated to at least one Thematic or Challenge Portfolio.

18. How much should applicants invest upfront in the market aspects (business case, business model) for the proposal and how much this would be developed in the project itself?

The applicants should have sufficient preliminary business case/business model and market analysis for the application area(s) they have in mind at the proposal stage. The Transition projects should advance both the technology and business aspects. The business case and business model will be refined during the project duration as to become a credible basis for entrepreneurship, business creation and investment.

## **C. EIC ACCELERATOR**

19. Can I apply to the EIC Accelerator if I have already been a grant beneficiary under the SME Instrument or EIC Accelerator Pilot?

As a general rule, you may apply to the EIC Accelerator if your previous project is finalized. Beneficiaries of ongoing grant-only projects (SME Phase 2 or EIC Accelerator Pilot) can only apply to the investment-only component. They will have to submit a new proposal to the short application phase. Beneficiaries of completed projects can apply for any of the options starting from the short application: grant + investment; investment-only; grant only/first. Please keep in mind a grant-only support under the EIC Accelerator can only be provided once to a beneficiary during Horizon Europe for a maximum of EUR 2.5 million to cover activities of TRL 5/6 to 8.

20. Can a 'grant-only' supported company from the EIC pilot (funded from Horizon 2020) apply for an equity follow-up? If so, how shall it apply; by means of a full application or with a different type of request?

Grant-only beneficiaries under the EIC Accelerator pilot in Horizon 2020 can apply for an investment component follow-up in Horizon Europe. To do so, eligible applicants will have to submit a new proposal via the short application stage of the evaluation procedure for the EIC Accelerator.

21. What does prioritisation mean for inviting applicants to interview; how will it work? If I am not invited to the first batch of interviews, when will my interview take place?

All companies receiving a GO from the remote evaluation stage will be invited to the face-to-face interviews. In case the number of companies to invite exceeds the capacities of the initially planned interview sessions, a first batch of companies will be invited according to the prioritisation as set out in the Work Programme. The remaining batch of companies to interview will be invited to a further set of interviews to be organised before the interviews of the next cut-off date.

22. What happens if my company loses SME status during the implementation of an EIC project?

The consequences of losing the SME status during the implementation of the grant component will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking in consideration, in particular, the causes for losing the SME status. A change to the ownership situation of the beneficiary that calls into question the decision to award the grant may constitute a ground for terminating the contract.

23. To what extent is an investor located in a country that is not an EU Member State or an Associated Country able to invest in an EIC supported SME? How and when will the company have to give its prior agreement? Would the investor be eligible to accompany the SME in the interview?

There are no excluded investors by geography *a priori*. However, the EIC is an initiative of the EU and where relevant, considerations will take into account EU technology sovereignty. When implementing investments decided by the Commission, the EIC Fund will ensure that supported companies keep most of their value, including their IP, in the EU or in the Associated Countries in order to contribute to their economic growth and job creation. The Commission may set specific conditions and milestones in the contract to ensure that the interest of the Union is met.

Before submitting the full application, applicant companies will be offered the opportunity to share certain data and information with investors who have undergone a prior EIC Fund due diligence process and who may wish to invest in the company or project and assist the company in developing its idea into a business plan.

For applications for blended finance (including an investment component), the EIC Fund will start the negotiation process to structure the potential investment agreement. During this stage, the EIC Fund will also look for other investors. The company will be asked for its consent before other investors are contacted or engaged in negotiations.

Companies are allowed to send a maximum of three representatives to the interview. More details on this respect will be communicated at a later stage.

Existing investors or investors that submitted a proposal on behalf of an applicant that is subsequently invited to the interview, are also eligible to attend the interview among the three representatives of the company. Investors are expected to explain how they are supporting and/or intend to support the company if it is retained for the EIC support.

24. What are the differences between the Grant first and Transition activities in terms of state of project, e.g. definition of the risks, the commercial objectives, the market strategy and necessary finances needed?

Pathfinder's Transition activities help all types of researchers and innovators develop the pathway to commercial development in the Union, such as demonstration activities and feasibility studies to assess potential business cases, and support the creation of spin offs and start-ups. Transition activities are open to projects and/or results stemming from the EIC Pathfinder, FET, and ERC Proof of Concept and such results are typically at TRL 3-4. At the end of a Transition project, the technology should have matured to TRL 5/6 and the business case should be sufficiently advanced for the applicant to be ready for the next stage, which can be to apply for EIC Accelerator.

Applicants selected under the EIC Accelerator may be awarded grant first support with the investment component of blended finance introduced at a later stage. This is the case when the innovation is at least TRL 5/6 but is based on a scientific discovery or novel technology and still requires significant work to validate and demonstrate in relevant environments in order to properly assess its commercial potential. Such innovations may include, but are not limited to, those based on research results from the EIC Pathfinder and Transition, as well as European Research Council. Grant-first companies are eligible for a follow on equity component subject to a milestone assessment attesting that the innovation activities are well under way and that the innovation has the potential for deployment.

25. When must the applicant send a short application at the latest in order to be able to apply for the following cut-off for full applications? How long will it take from my short application until I can start with the grant activities and until have the investment component signed?

Once you submit your short application, you should receive results within approximately 2-4 weeks.

From that moment, you may submit the full proposal to any of the cut-off dates within the next 12 months from the date of the response to your short application.

Once you submit the full application, we will aim to inform you of the evaluation results as follows:

- Within approximately 5-6 weeks you will be informed about the result of the remote evaluation. If successful, you will be invited to attend a face-to-face interview with an EIC jury.
- Face to face interviews will be organised approximately 8-9 weeks after the cut-off date (or longer if there is a need for a further set of interviews).
- You will be informed about the result of the interview within approximately 2-3 weeks.

If you are selected for funding, you will be invited to negotiate and then sign an initial contract that will initially provide for the grant component.

In parallel, if your application included an investment component, the EIC Fund will start the negotiation process to structure the potential investment. At the end of this process, which should usually take between 2 to 6 months, the investment component will be decided.

26. At what stage should the applicant define the type of funding (blended, grant only, grant first, equity) to apply for?

For short application, applicants will be invited to fill a questionnaire on the EIC AI-based IT platform illustrating their innovation and submit a 10-slide presentation and a 3-minute video

pitch. Applicants will also have to estimate the costs required to develop their idea, in the form of grant or investment, and they will have to demonstrate the need for EU support. Please note that at this step, the amounts are indicative and non-binding.

Full application consists of a detailed business plan and full information on the company's finances and structure. Applicants will also need to propose a set of milestones to be used as a basis for the EIC to manage the funding for their innovation. Applicants are requested to define at this stage the type of funding (Grant and investment, grant only, grant first, investment only) they are applying for and provide a detailed budget.

27. When can I use the three days of coaching if I receive a GO at Step 1 of the EIC Accelerator?

You are entitled to three days of coaching to be used whenever you need them. You are only entitled to the coaching services once. Therefore, you may choose to use them directly after Step 1 to prepare your full application for the first time. You may also choose to apply for Step 2 without using a coach and should you be rejected, you can use the coach to prepare your resubmission.

28. Can I change funding request between step 1 and 2?

You may adjust the EIC funding request when submitting your full application for step 2 because the short application only requires to indicate an estimate while the full proposal should demonstrate your complete business plan and financial needs.

29. I applied for blended finance, can the jury recommend a different type of funding after the interview?

If your proposal is invited to interview, Jury members, but also the EIC in the context of the investment negotiation, may propose to revert a full blended finance proposal to "grant first" where they see fit.

30. What does the Jury expect to see when I was a "potential GO" in a previous interview round? Do I have to improve both, the full proposal or/and the pitch deck?

An applicant will be expected to have improved the proposal, strengthening the weaknesses highlighted by the Jury. The pitch deck should also be updated reflecting the changes in the proposal.

31. We have been rejected twice and are now preparing an improved application. Who decides if our application has been "significantly improved"?

Applicants will be asked to indicate the novel and improved elements in the proposal compared to the previous one(s) for experts to assess.

32. Will the evaluation summary reports be more extensive than those of the EIC Accelerator Pilot?

Yes, applicants will receive detailed feedback from each of the individual expert evaluators on the different award criteria.

33. When shall we expect to see the use of reimbursable advance, guarantees, and convertible loans? Will these be used for ongoing projects?

Reimbursable advances are not available at the start of 2021 but may be introduced during the course of 2021 in which case the terms and conditions will be made available on the EIC website.

The EIC Accelerator's investment component may take the form of direct equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans. The EIC Fund will propose the structure of the investment according to the outcome of the due diligence.

The EIC Accelerator may include other financial instruments in future years.

34. What kind of risks need to be linked to my innovation to be relevant for the EIC Accelerator? Is it strictly development risks or also risks linked to the go-to market strategy?

Various typologies of risks are covered during the evaluation, including technology, regulatory and implementation/market risks. The experts will assess the considerations given to the management and mitigation of these risks.

35. We have heard that "blended finance" will now become the preferred form of support. Is it a disadvantage to apply for grant only?

It is not a disadvantage to apply for grant only, but all applications will be assessed against the same evaluation criteria, including the potential to scale up the innovation. If the applicant applies for grant only, then they must demonstrate that the company has other sources of finance for scaling up the innovation. Applicants should apply to the one that best fits their needs.

36. What happens if there are major changes in the course of the application process - for example, that we gain a VC as an investor? How is this reflected in the application process and the evaluation?

Any significant information which changes between the submission of the full application and the interview should be highlighted to the jury during the interview and will be assessed accordingly by the jury. Any major change after the outcome of the interview should be taken into account during the negotiation process to structure the potential investment agreement during compliance checks, due diligence, syndication of potential co-investors, tranches of investment and related objectives and milestones, etc.

37. In the AI platform, how are equity-based Work Packages added and why does the applicant need to provide cost categories there when equity is not linked to eligibility of costs?

For TRL 5 to 8 there is no need to add work packages since it is the basis of costs declared for these Work Package that equity support can be allocated up to a limit 30%. Cost categories are used in the equity part in order for the EIC to be able to analyse them.

38. What is expected to be found in "post TRL 9 activities" within the grant domain? If you are using TRL and BRL scales together why you are not using BRL scales to describe WPs?

In line with the approach followed by the EIC Accelerator, all projects need to describe market activities even when they are not supported by the grant component. Projects requesting grant only support also need to describe market activities, and to indicate which are the other sources, other than the EIC, that they can use to finance their market activities.

Depending on their nature, costs declared for TRL9 onwards can be declared either in the TRL9 work packages within the Development part of the Design Module, or in exploitation costs within the Go To Market part of the Design Module. For instance, all costs related to the development of a product, service or process can be included in TRL9 work packages within Development part of the Design Module. Other costs can be declared in the exploitation costs within the Go to Market part of the Design Module. Please however ensure that you declare these cost only once.

According to the design of the AI platform and in line with EIC requirements, it is necessary to have at least:

- One work package for technology development, one work package for market activities and one work package for management to develop your innovation activities.
- One work package for market activities and one for management to develop your market/scale-up activities (TRL 9).

39. What are milestones and why are WP linked to TRL milestones and not to BRL ones?

Milestones are checkpoints produced at a specific point in a task while deliverables are tasks results such as reports, studies, tests, etc. While milestones can sometimes correspond to the completion of a deliverable, the two are not necessarily linked. It is not necessary to have a milestone for every deliverable. However, the most important deliverables can be good indications of where you want to place milestones.

These milestones are mandatory and correspond to the achievement of TRL levels during the project. So in short, work packages are linked to TRLs in order to be consistent with the difference between Grant component (which can support activities up to TRL 8) and Equity component which can support activities in TRL 9.

40. Features: Difference between "existing technology", "needed technology" and "technology to be developed"?

"Existing technologies" are technologies that already exist and that applicants can use to carry out the project. "Needed technologies" are the ones where you need to advance your own knowledge in order to continue the project and finally "Technologies to be developed" addresses the technological gap in the project's technology which the project requires to deliver the solution. These definitions are also described on the AI tool platform.

41. What exactly are exploitation revenues?

Exploitation revenues can include different types of revenues (sales, licensing, contracts, etc), to be identified for each company. This issue may be discussed with coaches.

42. Do we have to indicate final deliverables on WP level or each task should have a deliverable?

Each task needs to have at least one deliverable, and there can be only one final deliverable for each task.

43. Why is the market penetration strategy requested for all the states of the market?

Applicants should fill only the steps that are relevant to their project, and therefore the market penetration strategy should focus on the market to be addressed by the innovation.

44. Is BRL the same as MRL and what are the existing levels? Which TRL levels exist?

BRL and MRL Levels are the same, and align with TRL levels:

BRL 1: Basic research: You can describe the need(s) but have no evidence

BRL 2: Needs formulation: You articulate the need(s) using a customer/user story

BRL 3: Needs validation: You have an initial 'offering', stakeholders like your slideware

BRL 4: Small scale stakeholder campaign: Run a campaign with stakeholders ('closed' beta - a number of friendly stakeholders that is relevant according to specificities of your market)

BRL 5: Large scale early adopter campaign: Run a campaign with early adopters ('open' beta - a number of intended customers that is relevant according to specificities of your market)

BRL 6: Proof of traction: Sales match a number of paying customers that is relevant according to specificities of your market

BRL 7: Proof of satisfaction: A happy team and happy customers give evidence to progress

BRL 8: Proof of scalability: A stable sales pipeline and strong understanding of the market allow revenue projections

BRL 9: Proof of stability: KPIs surpassed and predictable growth

TRL levels:

TRL 1: Basic Research: Basic principles observed

TRL 2: Technology Formulation: Technology concept formulated

TRL 3: Needs Validation: Experimental proof of concept

TRL 4: Small Scale Prototype: Technology validated in lab

TRL 5: Large Scale Prototype: Technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 6: Prototype System: Technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)

TRL 7: Demonstration System: System prototype demonstration in operational environment

TRL 8: First Of A Kind Commercial System: System complete and qualified

TRL 9: Full Commercial Application: Actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)

45. How should the value chain be specifically defined?

In the AI tool, the value chain specified using "cards" which can analysed from the perspective of being before and after the solution is provided. You should ensure consistency between the stakeholders involved in the value chain, and the information you put in the card of the stakeholder.

Please see the indications on the AI platform: Please upload your FTO if you have one. If you do not have one, please upload a note of up to 2 pages explaining why and providing as much information as



possible on this issue. In cases where the FTO is not relevant (e.g. software), please upload a simple statement.

46. Where will it be possible to insert the graphs and pictures? In the form of the AI platform or only in the pitch deck? Is there a limit to the number of slides?

Under step 2, applicants provide data into different fields. Out of the data, the AI Tool builds a business plan. In other words, applicants do not need to provide a form B in pdf (as was the case previously): the AI platform simply collects all their data and inputs via a step by step methodology.

In addition, you will be able to upload the following documents in your Business plan:

- Pitch deck (mandatory)- no maximum number of slides but the pitch deck will be used in the interview should you be invited to the jury and must be presented in 10 minutes maximum.
- 10 pages maximum Annex with any additional information you'd like to add (optional)

You can also insert url links anywhere in your texts. However, all the essential information to explain your project must be in the platform and not referred to external material via the url. So be aware that evaluators are under no obligation to read the additional information referred to in the url.

47. Is it mandatory to include a data management plan in a full application to the EIC Accelerator? What other documents in the Go to Market section should be uploaded? What needs to be uploaded on Freedom to Operate, e.g. legal opinion or self-assessment?

For the Accelerator applications, applicants are not required to present a full Data Management Plan at the application stage. Rather, it is expected that applicants upload at least a one page document in which they take into account the need to develop such a Plan as part of their project implementation (and for which associated costs are eligible) and to demonstrate an awareness of the relevant considerations for their project. Consequently, applicants should already think about it at the application stage (and take note that the rules concerning data management plans are different compared to Horizon 2020).

Applicants are required to upload the following documents in the following sections of Go to Market:

- Results of the FTO analysis: Go to Market/Prepare/Intellectual Property. Please upload your FTO if you have one. If you do not have one, please upload a note of up to 2 pages explaining why and providing as much information as possible on this issue. In cases where the FTO is not relevant (e.g. software), please upload a simple statement.
- Data management plan: Go to Market/Prepare/Intellectual Property. Please upload your Data Management Plan if you have one, or a one pager providing your thoughts on the underlying issues (open access to data, access of public authorities in case of emergencies) and your guiding principles as to how you would tackle these where needed.
- Financial Information: Go to Market/Prepare/Finance. Please use the financial information template provided in this section with your information
- Letters of intent (if any- this is optional): Go to Market/Scale/Scaling strategy

48. Will my proposal be rejected if I submit for the health challenges and the Commission finds it should have been addressed to the open call instead, or will it simply be moved to the open call?

The Commission will not move the proposals from one Call to the other. The applicant has the responsibility to make the choice and take the decision to submit his/her proposal either to the EIC Accelerator Open call or to one of the EIC Accelerator Challenges.

Please take a close look at the sections in the Work Programme regarding the EIC Accelerator Challenge areas of strategic relevance in order to take the decision: "The EIC Accelerator Challenges is open to

innovations in the specific fields of technology or application described by the specific challenges (III.3.1 and III.3.2)”

The proposal will not be declared out of scope if you submit your health related proposal to the EIC Accelerator Open call however if you believe it fits better in the challenge call, it is recommended to select that option.

Also, please note that all of the evaluation criteria established for the EIC Accelerator Open call will apply. However, in addition, applications under the health challenge will be evaluated against an additional criterion for 'Impact': “Strategic Impact on Digital or Health Technologies: Does the innovation have the potential to be a strategically important technology for Europe, in terms of welfare of citizens or relevance to economic development? Your proposal must describe this impact in relation to the priority areas set out for this call”.

In case the evaluators will not be convinced, they will score accordingly under this sub criterion.

49. At the end of the diagnostic tool on the AI platform, the company gets ratings in the fields of science, technology and team. Are the evaluators during the different evaluation steps able to access these results?

Yes, the expert evaluators at each step of the process will have access to the ratings. However, please keep in mind this information is not a score and is meant only as additional guidance and insights to assist the applicants in their application and for the experts in their assessment. Therefore, the ultimate responsibility of the application remains with the applicant. Experts may use the information to support their assessment, but ultimately the experts' decision is their own responsibility and should be based on their knowledge and expertise.

50. To what extent will results generated by the AI Platform affect the evaluation?

The AI-based IT Platform will provide applicants with AI support to assess their concept/idea as they prepare their short application. If the short application is successful, the AI-based IT Platform will further provide AI & methodological support to help applicants develop their business plan in the full application. It is the applicant's decision how to respond to the feedback and support, and the applicant is fully responsible for the content and submission of the application.

The AI-based IT Platform will provide evaluators with data and insights about the proposed innovation. However, the evaluators are fully responsible for their evaluation of proposals.

51. What is the procedure if I have received a NO-GO after my first Step 1 submission but believe that one or more evaluators have wrongly assessed my proposal?

Because each applicant is entitled to submit a second time, the rebuttal system is now embedded in the resubmission process on the AI platform. The newly submitted proposal contains text fields which allow the applicant to both respond to evaluator's feedback as well as summarize the changes made if applicable. The new set of evaluators will base their judgement on both your improved proposal and your comments to the previous evaluation results.

52. What is the procedure if I have received a NO-GO after my second Step 1 submission and believe that one or more evaluators have wrongly assessed my proposal?

If you receive a NO-GO for the second time in Step 1, you have 5 working days to submit a complaint regarding your evaluation if the complaint is based on: 1) factual errors; 2) manifest error of appreciation regarding the purpose and scope of the Accelerator or 3) experts asked for details or documents that are

deemed to be submitted at the full proposal stage only. The complaint form is available on the AI platform together with the evaluators' report. You will be able to submit a complaint to individual evaluator feedback which the EIC Evaluation team will carefully assess.

53. What is the procedure if I have received a NO-GO after my first Step 2 submission but believe that one or more evaluators have wrongly assessed my proposal?

Because each applicant is entitled to submit a second time, the rebuttal system is now embedded in the resubmission process on the AI platform. The newly submitted proposal contains text fields which allow the applicant to both respond to evaluator's feedback as well as summarize the changes made if applicable. The new set of evaluators will base their judgement on both your improved proposal and your comments to the previous evaluation results.

54. As a condition to be allocated a Seal of Excellence, applicants have to agree that some information of their proposal is shared. What information is shared and with whom?

Provided that applicants have given prior consent, information is shared with National contact points (NCPs) of their Member State or associated country. This can be done following Step 1 (short evaluation) stage where applicants are asked to agree to share:

- only the proposal number;
- or basic information (proposal number, name of company, contact data, title and abstract and amount requested).

Following the outcome of the evaluation of a full proposal, if applicants have been awarded a Seal of Excellence and have given their consent, then information is shared with funding bodies who support the Seal of Excellence, including management authorities of Structural Funds. At present, this information is limited to basic information (proposal number, name of company, contact data, title and abstract and amount requested).

In addition, to provide relevant support to applicants that are qualified for the interview in front of a Jury, the same basic information relating to each company having successfully crossed the remote evaluation stage will be provided to the NCPs of the corresponding Member State or associated country.

55. What is the role of National Contact Points (NCPs) and Europe Enterprise Network (EEN) in application process? Will NCPs be informed about applicants selected from stage 1 application?

NCPs are an important element of the strategy for supporting European innovators, acting as connectors between the EIC and potential applicants in the different Member States.

Under Horizon Europe, greater collaboration is foreseen with NCPs, enabling them to follow-up on EIC-funded companies as well as those companies that are awarded the Seal of Excellence.

The Enterprise Europe Network (EEN) will complement the support provided by NCPs, for example by identifying and encouraging more companies from widening countries and women led companies to apply, and to support Seal of Excellence companies to find alternative sources of funding.

## **D. EIC COMMUNITY AND BUSINESS ACCELERATION SERVICES**

56. How are coaches selected? Can we suggest coaches/ cooperate with coaches we worked with in the past?

Coaches will be vetted to appear on a list selectable for coaches. They must meet essential experience criteria that will be published in the new Call for Expression of Interest for EIC Coaches

The process to find and select a coach will be by:

- creating a shortlist of possible matches through individual selection criteria
- inviting them, explaining the main business challenge and including project information
- have 'chemistry' calls with those who responded to be available and interested, to make a final choice.

57. I am an EIC Accelerator applicant invited to submit the full proposal; what support will I get from coaches? Can they support us in proposal writing as well? Is it compulsory for an applicant to use coaching support to build up a proposal?

An EIC business coach – in face-to-face online setting - will mainly question your aspirations and challenge your assumptions. Our coaches will let you discover improvement opportunities and they have the task to let you learn and solve business development issues. Topics can cover the whole entrepreneurial venture, depending on your needs, from challenging the value proposition and business model, improving the strategy and investor business case, building the team, the leadership and processes, up to international expansion. The coaching support we offer is not compulsory to build a proposal, just strongly recommended. You will always remain fully responsible yourself for the content of your proposal. EIC coaching assignments cannot be instrumental for proposal writing or other consultancy activities.

58. How can I benefit from coaching? Are there any selection criteria to participate?

The business development coaching is available for various EIC target groups and will be tailor made to deliver the desired outcome:

- For Accelerator applicants (full application stage) and Seal-of-Excellence teams, your objective may be to improve the value proposition and investor pitch.
- For Pathfinder researchers your objective may be to discover innovation opportunities and to provide insight in your entrepreneurship potential.
- For Transition teams your objective may be to get to know the industry and to create a value proposition.
- For Accelerator start-ups and scale-ups, your objective may be to improve your business plan, the strategy implementation and a faster market entry.
- In the Women Leadership Programme additional WLP Coaching is offered to help you tackle potential glass ceiling issues.

For Accelerator applicants and Seal-of-Excellence teams, three days of coaching are offered. For all further beneficiaries the starting offer of three coaching days may be extended on the recommendation of project officers and programme managers.

You will all receive an invitation to select a coach, as soon as you become eligible to the service.

Business Acceleration Services are tailored as much as possible to the EIC beneficiaries' needs and aim to guarantee the best match possible with relevant business partners. This is why most offered EIC services will have a certain selection process based on specific criteria relevant to the specific event or service. If this is the case, the criteria and the selection process are announced in the event publication and/or the registration website. If there are no selection criteria, the event may also be based on a 'first come first serve' basis or an unlimited attendance approach. Please check out any details in this regard in the event publication (in the [EIC Community](#)). Please note as well that even if your grant or EIC funding is contractually finished you are still eligible and invited to apply to the EIC BAS services.

59. When can I use the three days of coaching if I receive a GO at Step 1 of the EIC Accelerator?

You are entitled to three days of coaching to be used whenever you need them. You are only entitled to the coaching services once. Therefore, you may choose to use them directly after Step 1 to prepare your full application for the first time. You may also choose to apply for Step 2 without using a coach and should you be rejected, you can use the coach to prepare your resubmission.

60. Do I have to pay for the Business Acceleration Services? Which are the eligible costs?

Business Acceleration Services form an integral part of the EIC programmes and are offered for free (in-kind) to eligible EIC funded projects and companies, Seal of Excellence as well as to innovators and companies coming from other European or national initiatives that have entered into a specific agreement with the EIC. Nevertheless, if the event or service requires travel or accommodation those are to be taken care of by the attendee. For the EIC funded companies and projects, there are possibilities to claim those costs under your current grant, please contact your project officer in this regard.

61. How can I get access to other BAS services (access to expertise, trainings, matching, community events, services provided by EIC partners)?

EIC BAS Global Offer is presented and available via the [EIC Community](#). You will find there an event/service agenda and information relevant to application/expression of interest to participate in each individual BAS service. Access to some services like specific expertise and advice is triggered through the project review process or programme manager.

62. How can I access the EIC Community and what does it provide?

The [EIC Community Platform](#) is an exclusive, virtual business platform, where EIC innovators can connect and leverage potential business partnerships. It gathers all innovative companies and innovators funded under the European Innovation Council covering the EIC Accelerator, EIC Transition, EIC Pathfinder and Women TechEU programs, as well as coaches, national contact points, corporates, investors, procurers, staff of the EIC ...and many more.

If you are...

→ an EIC beneficiary (Accelerator, Pathfinder, Transition, Women TechEU), access a one-stop-shop to:

- Register to EIC Business Acceleration Services, such as the EIC Corporate Programme, EIC Investor Programme, EIC Procurers Programme, EIC Community Talks & Trainings;
- Get access to your event group for photos and videos or background information;

- Create a personal and company profile;
- Use the powerful search engine to find like minded companies;
- Explore business opportunities among EIC peers;
- Get exclusive access to [ScaleUp EU](#), our matching platform with investors;
- Expand networks with EIC ecosystem partners;
- Share your experience and get support from peers via horizontal and thematic groups;
- Co-create ideas and knowledge;
- Promote interesting other events to the EIC Community;

*To have access to these sections, you will be requested to log in using your EU Login username and password. If you do not have one, you can create your [EU Login here](#). If you are funded by the European Innovation Council, it may be that your user profile has been already automatically registered. In this case, just log in with EU Login username and password and you are already in!*

→ not part of the internal EIC Network yet? Access the public side of the EIC Community Platform and find:

- The most relevant news, success stories, open calls and events promoted by the Business Acceleration Services are available outside the platform;
- Sharing options: spread the great news with your network: you can do it directly on your digital page.

63. Can R&I activities be financed under action 3 - Stimulation of co-creation of pilots and test solutions?

Horizon Europe's Coordination and Support actions exclude financing R&I activities, therefore, action 3 will only support pilots and test solutions that focus on actual systems proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies or in space).

64. For actions 2 and 3, it is respectively mentioned in the call text that "at least two EIC funded projects and companies to be invited per market engagement and consultation" and "at least one EIC funded company or project has to be included in this co-creation", but then how to guarantee equal treatment and transparency amongst interested suppliers?

For actions 2 - market consultation – and action 3 – co-creation –, when public or private procurers will be selecting suppliers for consultation (action 2), or to co-create with (action 3), they will have to target primarily, but not exclusively, EIC beneficiaries.

65. For the action 3, does the budget (eg. 100.000€ max) has to go only to the procurer(s) that then will have to pay the selected suppliers? Alternatively, can the budget be split between the procurer(s) and the suppliers in order to speed up the financial process?

Since public procurers will be fully responsible for the co-creation process (project management, expressing the needs, collecting the proposals, selecting the suppliers, co-creating with the suppliers, etc.), they will receive the full amount of the requested grant. The public procurer will thus be in charge of paying the selected suppliers.

To be noticed that the consortium submitting the proposal, will have to develop/design this aspect in their proposal to make it safer and stronger in terms of responding to the legal constraints.

## E. GENERAL CONDITIONS AND ELIGIBILITY

66. Can I apply for several EIC calls at the same time? Can I apply for both Open and Challenges?

You may apply to several EIC calls at the same time as long as the same costs are not financed twice by the EU or national budget.

- If you decide to apply to both Pathfinder Open and Challenge calls, please make sure to adapt your proposals in line with the different objectives and evaluation criteria of the relevant call.
- For Transition, given the fact the EIC Transition Open and Challenge calls are opening at the same time, we strongly discourage to submit the same proposal to both calls.
- For the EIC Accelerator, you can only apply to one call at a time and must choose between the Open and the Challenges. You may apply to another EIC Accelerator call once you have received the evaluation results of the first submission.

67. Can I apply for EIC funding if I have an ongoing grant from the EIC pilot (or another Horizon 2020 grant)?

You can apply for EIC funding if you have an ongoing grant as long as the same costs are not financed twice by the EU or national budget.

- For Pathfinder, please make sure that you explain in your proposal how your ongoing H2020 grant(s) relate to your current application.
- For Transition, please make sure to fulfil the eligibility conditions described in the Work Programme (e.g. applications should be based on results generated by eligible projects specified in the Work Programme).
- For the EIC Accelerator you cannot apply for funding if you have an ongoing EIC Accelerator/EIC Pilot/SME Instrument project. Exceptionally, if you have an ongoing grant-only project, you can apply for an investment only component under the EIC Accelerator.

68. How do I know which countries are associated to the EIC? Can I apply if I am based in a third country, which is not associated?

At the date of the publication of the EIC 2021 work programme, there will be no countries associated to Horizon Europe yet. Association agreements will be negotiated over 2021. EFTA countries and UK should be swiftly associated, so that legal entities established in these countries can apply to the first calls for proposals. A legal entity based in a third country which is officially candidate for association to Horizon Europe is eligible; however, the signature of any grant agreement with such entity will be subject to the positive conclusion of the association negotiation, including to Horizon Europe's third pillar. Such a negotiation result will be made public on the Commission's dedicated Horizon Europe website.

A legal entity based in a third country which is not candidate for association to Horizon Europe can apply as part of a consortia in which the minimum number of EU or Associated Country partners are present. This applies to EIC Pathfinder and Transition calls which are open for consortia.

A legal entity based in a third country which is not candidate for association to Horizon Europe can apply at the short application stage for the EIC Accelerator but must relocate or establish an eligible company in an EU Member State of Associated Country before receiving any support.

69. Can entities in the UK apply for EIC funding?

UK entities may participate in all parts and calls of the EIC funded by grants, including the Pathfinder scheme, Transition activities, and the grant only part of the EIC Accelerator.

For the EIC Accelerator, this means that UK start-ups and SMEs will be able to apply for the calls, but will only be able to request a "grant-only" support. UK entities will not be eligible to apply for "blended finance" (which combines a grant with an investment component) and UK entities already awarded a "grant-only" support will not be eligible for follow up equity investments.

UK entities that win EIC funding will also be eligible to receive Business Acceleration Services (coaching, mentoring, events, etc.), except these relating to access to investors.

70. Can I relocate my company from the UK between step 1 and step 2 in order to apply for blended finance?

A company located in UK, having submitted a successful short application, may relocate to an EU member state/Associated Country, before submitting their full application. In this case, a new company has to be established in a member state in order to be eligible for blended finance. The PIC number of the newly established entity has to be communicated before submitting the full application to the EIC evaluation team so that we can update your application with the correct information.

71. Can I apply directly to the Step 2 Full application under the EIC Accelerator if I have received a Seal of excellence in the past?

No, you have to start the evaluation process from Step 1 Short Application. The AI-based IT platform will guide you through the whole submission process, as well as provide you with assessment of the different funding opportunities you may have at national and European level.

72. My company has activities in several countries; can I choose which country to apply from?

To be able to apply, your company must prove its effective legal establishment in a Member State or an Associated Country (in this second case, including to Horizon Europe's third pillar). Activities run in other countries are not taken into account to check your eligibility.

In case you develop R&I activities in a non-associated country, you may legally create a start-up in a Member State or an Associated Country by the time of submitting a full application. In case your company is already legally established in a non-associated country, you may relocate it to a Member State or an Associated Country, by the time of submitting a full application. The Commission may set specific conditions and milestones in the contract to ensure that the interest of the Union is met.

73. How the Coordination Office can manage the budget for implementing the expected activities? (re. Other action - VI.10 Support to the EIC Accelerator by the Enterprise Europe Network)



The Coordination Office is expected to allocate implementation of the actions to other EEN members to cover all regions of the Member States and Associated Countries 3rd pillar. In this sense they will rely on other EEN members as third parties eg. affiliated entities, subcontractors and/or provide financial support to third parties.

Further details regarding the implementation will be provided in the guideline note accompanying the call. To be published in October 2021.

## **F. FAST TRACK SCHEME AND PILOT PLUG-IN SCHEME TO APPLY FOR THE EIC ACCELERATOR**

74. How can I apply for the Fast Track scheme? When will it be available and for which programmes?

Under the Fast Track scheme, applicants do not apply directly to the EIC Accelerator call. Instead, the responsible funding bodies identified in the Work Programme decide whether an existing project is suitable for support under the EIC Accelerator based on a project review to assess the innovation or market deployment potential of such project.

Initially, the funding bodies and schemes which are eligible for the Fast Track for Accelerator cut off dates in 2021 are the ones listed in Annex 4 to the 2021 Work Programme.

75. Is this Fast Track scheme the same as the 'Fast Track to Research and Innovation' procedures under Horizon Europe or is it something different?

The Fast Track scheme referred to in Annex 4 to the Work Programme and the Fast Track to Research and Innovation (FTRI) referred to in Horizon Europe Regulation are two different things.

On the one hand, the FTRI is a procedure that may be applied to allow a faster, bottom-up access to funds for small collaborative consortia covering actions from fundamental research to market application. To this end, the FTRI may be proposed under some of the calls for proposals dedicated to select research and / or innovation actions Under the Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness and the European Innovation Council Pathfinder parts of the Framework Programme.

On the other hand, the Fast Track scheme stems from Article 43(5) of Horizon Europe Regulation. Its purpose is to allow eligible funding bodies to directly submit for evaluation under the last award criterion (Article 43(4)(c)) a proposal for an innovation and market deployment action which already fulfils the first two criteria, provided that cumulative conditions as set out in the Regulation, in the Specific Programme, and in the Work Programme are met.

76. When will the Plug-In scheme be implemented? Which countries and programmes will it apply to?

The plug-in scheme will be implemented from the first EIC Accelerator cut-off in 2022 at the earliest. It will apply to regional and national public programmes – from member states and countries associated to Horizon Europe - that have been assessed by a group of experts and certified by the European Commission.

# **G. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY PROVISIONS FOR EIC PATHFINDER AND TRANSITION PROJECTS**

77. Annex 7 of the Work Programme states that beneficiaries may object to the dissemination of their preliminary findings or results by the granting authority when they demonstrate concrete exploitation. In this context, what is meant by “demonstrating concrete exploitation”? Would an on-going negotiation with an entity be considered as demonstrating concrete exploitation?

Beneficiaries may not have to disclose underlying detailed data and results when they commit to publish, patent or protect their results or when they demonstrate concrete exploitation; i.e. plan a specific use of the results for commercial purposes that will lead to an update of the Plan for dissemination and exploitation.

Entering in negotiation may constitute a step towards exploitation but a concrete exploitation will have to be materialised through a written commitment by the entity.

78. Annex 7 of the Work Programme says that if a beneficiary fails to exploit or disseminate a result the granting authority can impose penalties; when will such penalties be applied?

The granting authority will impose penalties when the beneficiary “continues to oppose to the dissemination by the granting authority or refuses to provide any data or document necessary for the said dissemination.” Hence, the granting authority will not impose penalties if the beneficiary attempts to disseminate and provides the means to the granting authority to support the dissemination.

79. Why does the definition of EIC Inventor not include for-profit legal entities?

The context in non-for-profit entities and in for-profit entities is different in regards to the exploitation of the results or research findings. Indeed, exploitation may be an ancillary aim in non-for-profit entities. Therefore, the EIC provides for the necessary access rights for “the EIC inventor” where these are most needed to increase the probability that results are turned into innovation.