



EIC Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-Investment Support Programme:

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on Partnerships

1. Who are the EIC Beneficiaries?

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

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

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

Seal of Excellence holders may also benefit from the service offers under the programme.

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

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

1. Have a branch or office (not necessarily headquarters) registered in the EU or associated countries.
2. Have a verifiable link to a registered institution, thus, not apply as a single actor (e.g., freelancer, consultant).
3. Agree to respect and abide by the requirements of initiative stipulated in the [Terms of Engagement](#) and general EIC regulations.
4. Provide service offers that fall within the timeframe of the initiative (2022-2025)

In terms of service offers of applicants, the following assessment and evaluation criteria will be used. In their application, all applicants must demonstrate how their service will meet the requirements below:

- Excellence and impact of the applicant service offer.



- Alignment of the applicant service offer with the areas of activity and needs of the EIC Beneficiaries.
- Complementarity of the applicant service offer to the EIC Business Acceleration Services.

To verify the status of the conditions above, please consult the [Terms of Engagement](#).

3. What do I or my organisation gain by participating in the programme?

The EIC Partners can benefit from the initiative in the following ways (non-exhaustive):

- Gain direct access to a community of quality-stamped and validated technologies from a wide selection of European Ecosystems (and many associated countries) across all fields and disruptive innovation areas.
- Access a database of over 6000 innovative researchers and start-ups financially supported by the EIC and 430 innovation-driven research teams.
- Gain an EIC label to raise each partnership's visibility on a European level and nurture connections between the EIC and present partner organisations through networking events and community building activities.
- Attain a seat as an EIC Ecosystem Community member and gain the benefits of being on the frontline in EU-funded programmes, with a reputation as a facilitator in the European innovation ecosystems.
- Venture into deals with new, up-and-coming innovative start-ups and SMEs within the European deep tech innovation ecosystem.
- Pilot and promote new services through EIC Beneficiaries by providing them first-hand experiences and testing of services.

EIC Partners have the right to:

- Access to the EIC Community Platform and database of EIC Beneficiaries.
- Promote their institution as an EIC collaborator using the unified e-label for EIC Partners.
- Independence to design their services (e.g., content, structure, agenda, duration, date and venue, experts, etc.).
- Seek administrative, technical, contractual, and instructional support from the EIC Contractor through one-to-one meetings and Helpdesk services for the initiative.
- Request feedback on the service implementation from the EIC Beneficiaries.



- Negotiate the possibility of attaining equity deals with the EIC Beneficiaries.
- Explore business opportunities with EIC Beneficiaries beyond the project scope.

4. When is the deadline for the Call for Partnerships?

The Call for Partnerships will be open on a rolling basis. While there is no specific deadline, there are defined cut-off dates that allow for the grouping of the applications into batches, for the purpose of evaluation and selection.

The first cut-off for the first batch of applicants **was on 22 June 2022**. The second cut-off date is on **14 December 2022**.

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

The application to become an EIC Partner is done online, by submitting the Partnership Application, which includes a specific file, the Service Description Form. All applications should be submitted in English. EIC Partners are advised to carefully read through the [Terms of Engagement](#) prior to applying. Guidance and recommendations for new applicants can be found [here](#).

The Service Description should be submitted in PDF format.

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

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

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

Applications are not restricted to organizations specialized in the 14 prioritized deep tech and innovation areas only. Organisations from other sectors may also apply. These applications will be evaluated according to how relevant the offered services will be to the EIC Beneficiaries. Therefore, EIC Partners are encouraged to apply to the Call and thoroughly describe the services offered in the Service Description Form (a few bullet points have been included in the form as guidelines to help you elaborate on your services).

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

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

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



Yes, organizations registered in the United Kingdom and Switzerland, as well as other associated countries of the EU participating in the Horizon Europe programme can apply to the Call for Partnerships.

9. What type of services is the EIC looking for now?

The EIC is looking for service offers that complement and fill in the existing gaps in the current listing of [EIC Business Acceleration Services](#) (BAS).

EIC Partners can provide piloting or presently running services fit for the needs of the EIC Beneficiaries, which fall within the frame of prioritised sectors and innovation areas.

The services provided by the EIC Partners through the programme can be one or a combination of the following three categories:

Standalone services are individual offers, typically offered free of charge, tailor-made for researchers, innovators, and entrepreneurs with specific needs in their innovation and development stage. These would be implemented in the form of workshops, individual training sessions on co-creation and business modelling, matchmaking events, etc. executed by experts in the field. These services should ideally cover specific topics not currently included in the EIC BAS offer.

Individualised services are specific to each EIC Beneficiary and their highly particular situations, including the usage of specific laboratory equipment, access to research facilities, or technological due diligence. Individualised services will not be offered in a one-size-fits-all approach but should focus on filling in the gap in the current EIC BAS offer. These are typically offered free of charge or at a reduced cost for the EIC Beneficiaries.

Programme cohort services are mid- to long-term immersive programmes that provide access to specific expertise, training, incubation or acceleration. These programmes would engage the EIC Beneficiaries in a continuous journey, through a series of need-specific services for mentoring, technological and infrastructure support, and regional matchmaking that can currently not be offered by EIC BAS. Admission to these programmes is preferably free of charge, in a situation in which the EIC Partners would pick the EIC projects with whom they anticipate low-risk, win-win exchanges. However, equity deals can also be negotiated between the EIC Partners and EIC Beneficiaries prior to admission.

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

No. The services of EIC Partners should be offered exclusively to EIC Beneficiaries within the context of the programme. However, outside the scope of the programme, EIC Partners may pursue their business and offer the same services and opportunities to non-EIC Beneficiaries. Nevertheless, only the EIC Beneficiaries that participate in the services foreseen in the MoU will be counted towards the contribution or performance indicators of the EIC Partner.

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



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

Prospective applicants should carefully read the [Terms of Engagement](#) for the initiative.

When filling out the application, please pay special attention to the following issues:

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

Concisely describe how you intend to gain from the Partnership at an organisational level and what types of deals you can/anticipate making with the EIC Beneficiaries after the service implementation. If you are piloting new services that you wish to validate through the participation of the EIC Beneficiaries, clearly indicate which and the expected outcomes of the service provision.

Guidance and recommendations for new applicants can be found [here](#).

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

No, the services offered can be described in just one item, if desired. You are not required to offer your entire service portfolio, but just the services that you think can provide added value and be impactful for the beneficiaries. The EIC Partners should take the needs of the EIC Beneficiaries and currently existing Business Acceleration Services into consideration when selecting the service offer(s), to ensure complementarity and excellence. The services described in the application to the Call for Partnerships should only be those that will be offered under the framework of the Call.

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

Three categories of services can be offered (See Question 7). However, the scope of the offers depends on the capacity of the EIC Partners to provide the services: **i)** standalone services, e.g., training or workshops on topics such as IP guidance, branding for investment, marketing a business, business modelling, etc.; **ii)** Individualised services, e.g., access to test beds, living labs, certified laboratory facilities, technological due diligence,



etc.; and **iii**) Programme cohort services, which are plugins onto acceleration and incubation programmes with mid to long-term durations.

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

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

It is recommended that the offered services are complementary to the existing [Business Acceleration Services \(BAS\)](#) of the EIC. The BAS are normally standalone services for coaching, training, e-pitching, workshops, bootcamps, etc. For the Ecosystem Partnerships programme, the EIC Partners can investigate the existing BAS calendar and provide services that focus on different topics (e.g., for trainings and coaching) or approaches (e.g., pitching and investments), or are complementary to the existing ones. Moreover, EIC Partners can also focus on providing individualised and programme cohort services, which are normally not covered under BAS.



14. What will happen after I submit my application?

Your application will be screened immediately. If incomplete, the EIC Contractor will contact you directly to support your re-submission of the forms.

The application will then be assessed by an Evaluation Committee. The final list of selected partners that applied before the first cut-off date (**22 June 2022**) will be notified on **Q3 2022**. Applications received before the second cut-off date (**14 December 2022**) will be notified in **Q1 2023**.

Once selected, the EIC Partners will co-develop and sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the EIC Contractor. After the signature of the MoU, EIC Partners will be onboarded by the EIC Contractor on a rolling basis and provided the relevant materials needed for their service implementation.

Rejected applicants who nonetheless show great potential to become EIC Partners will be contacted by the programme team by email, with indications on whether they can improve their application and re-apply for the next cohort.

The timeline for the application and onboarding process is illustrated below:



Applications are evaluated by batch, after each cut-off date.

15. When will I know if I have been selected?

On Q3 2022 for the entities who submitted their application before the first cut-off date (**22 June 2022**).



Entities who submitted their application before the second cut-off date (**14 December 2022**) will be notified on **Q2 2023**.

16. If the application is successful, what is the duration of the Partnership and the focus of the negotiation process?

By default, the MoU are expected to be valid for the full duration of the four-year programme. Nevertheless, different timeframes for the partnerships can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. Also, the services do not need to have the same lifespan as the programme, i.e., can have a shorter timeframe. The MoU negotiations will focus on the scope and optimisation of the service offers; KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) rights and responsibilities of all involved parties; procedures for service implementations, and onboarding of EIC Partners (non-exhaustive).

17. How are EIC Partners compensated for their services?

The mission of the Call for Partnerships is to create win-win collaborations between the EIC and EIC Partners, as well as create a bridge between EIC Partners and EIC Beneficiaries. The services provided to EIC Beneficiaries through the EIC Ecosystem Partnerships and Co-Investment Support programme can be offered free of charge (i.e., the EIC Partners offer in-kind), at a reduced rate, with a negotiable price or with equity deals. For the services that cannot be offered free of charge or with equity deals (directly negotiated with EIC Beneficiaries), the payment will be made by the EIC Beneficiaries from their project grants. EIC Partners providing relevant in-kind or negotiable services will be prioritised during the selection process.

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

As part of the monitoring activities, the EIC Partners will be asked to provide data about the onboarded EIC Beneficiaries at the launch of the services and periodically inform the EIC Contractor on the progress of the services and on the achievement of the agreed KPIs. At the end of the Partnership, the EIC Partners will fill out a satisfaction survey. No written reports will be required.

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

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

Free, online info sessions will also be organized by the EIC Contractor to promote the programme and clarify doubts.

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

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