



BACKING **VISIONARY** ENTREPRENEURS



What's holding back EUROPEAN INNOVATION?



PERFORMANCE

- Strong research performance not translated into innovation
- Lack of breakthrough / disruptive innovations that create new markets



FUNDING & INVESTMENT

- Financing gaps “valleys of death” in Transition from lab to enterprise and scaling up for high-risk innovative start-ups



ECOSYSTEM

- Many national & local ecosystems, but fragmented at European level
- Need to include all regions and all talent (especially female)





What makes ***EIC UNIQUE?***

European
Innovation
Council



- **€10 billion budget** under Horizon Europe to identify, develop and scale up breakthrough technologies and disruptive innovations ;
- **One-stop-shop for all TRLs**: early-stage research ideas to tech transfer/commercialisation to scaling finance for startups and SMEs
- **Bottom up (open) and top downs (challenges)** funding approach;
- Strategy steered by independent **EIC Board** involving entrepreneurs, investors, researchers etc.
- Portfolio overseen by Programme Managers to identify new and emerging opportunities and **pro-active management of portfolios**;
- **Partnerships** to enhance the European innovation ecosystem (Business Acceleration Services, Plug in from national programmes, from EIT, ERC, Seal of Excellence, etc.)
- **Dedicated EIC Fund** to invest in EIC selected companies, and

EIC IMPACT (2024)

INVESTING IN DEEP TECH STARTUPS

- €2.5bn of investment mobilised with a leverage effect of €3 of additional investment for every € of EIC investment
- Invested alongside over 600 VCs, corporates and strategic investors, including the 25 largest VCs in Europe
- €1.2bn of total investment into EIC supported companies since 2019

ADDRESSING STRATEGIC AUTONOMY

- €850m for quantum and semiconductors
- €725m for developing or applying AI;
- €700m for energy generation and storage solutions;
- €625m for biotechnology and biomanufacturing
- €500m for advanced materials

SCALING START-UPS & SMEs ACROSS EUROPE

- EIC companies averaging **50%** employment growth and **55%** revenue growth
- EIC supported startups and SMEs in **30 countries**
- **70** 'centaur' valuations including six above €500 m
- **30% women led** companies supported in 2024 (female

A PIPELINE OF BREAKTHROUGH TECHNOLOGIES AND COMPANIES

- **680** research projects
- ~50% of Transition projects from ERC PoC and ~ 45% from Pathfinder.
- **1350** unique innovations with >75% market creating or targeting emerging markets
- >100 startups





EIC PRIZES

- Women innovators
- Capital of innovation



SEAL OF EXCELLENCE

Fast track to other funding

EIC ACCELERATOR

- For single companies
- Grants up to **€2.5 million**
- Equity up to **€10 million**
- To enter the market & scale-up (TRL 6-9)



EIC ACCELERATOR SERVICES

- Mentors, coaches
- Global partners
- Innovation ecosystems
- EIC Community Platform



EIC STEP

Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform

- Co-investments up to **€30 million**
- Digital, deep tech, biotech, clean tech



Pre-Accelerator

EIC TRANSITION

- For consortia & single companies
- Grants up to **€2.5 million**
- To develop business cases (TRL 4-6)



EIC PATHFINDER

- For consortia
- Grants up to **€4 million**
- To research technology breakthroughs (TRL 1-4)



EIC PROGRAMME MANAGERS

- In-house leading experts
- Identifying potential challenges in **emerging deep tech areas**
- Pro-actively managing EIC Pathfinder, Transition and Accelerator portfolios



Backing visionary entrepreneurs

EIC Pre-Accelerator pilot call 2025

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EIC Pre-accelerator call in 2025

Pilot Action under WIDERA Work Programme

European
Innovation
Council



 [Call website](#)

Overall goal: Support to early-stage deep tech startups in **widening countries** to develop the technology, business and investment readiness from TRL 4 to TRL 6.

Call opening / closing: **12 June 2025 / 18 November 2025**

Budget: **EUR 20 million**

Indicative number of projects: **50**

Funding targeted at:

- actions addressing the **investor and market readiness** towards commercialization and deployment;
- maturation and validation of the novel technology **from TRL 4 to 6.**



European
Commission

EIC Pre-accelerator – context and scope



Deep tech is technology that is:

- based on cutting-edge **scientific advances and discoveries**,
- characterised by the need to stay at the **technological forefront** by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab,
- having the potential to deliver **transformative solutions**,
- rooted in **cutting-edge science, technology, and engineering**, including innovation that combines advances in the physical, biological and digital spheres.

Deep-tech is distinct from 'high-tech' which tends to refer only to R&D intensity.



EIC Pre-accelerator – context and scope



Scope:

Early-stage deep tech startups which:

- have high-impact innovation that could create **new markets or disrupt existing ones** (technology validated in the lab – at least TRL 4);
- possess the necessary Intellectual Property Rights to ensure **freedom to operate** and adequate protection of the idea;
- have a clear vision on the intended **pathway to market** (milestones together with concrete and verifiable KPIs to assess progress towards the market);
- have the ambition and commitments **to scale up**.



EIC Pre-accelerator – expected outcomes



Boost the innovation potential of early-stage deep-tech startups in widening countries by enhancing their business, investor, and technology readiness to secure funding from the EIC Accelerator or other sources.

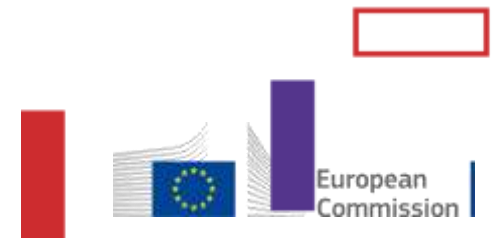
Increased business, investor, and technology readiness (at least all aspects of TRL 5 completed) **of high potential deep-tech startups** in widening countries to a level where they will:

- be successful in applying and attracting the **EIC Accelerator** funding and/or;
- manage to secure other **private investment** and/or;
- attract successfully **national or regional funding** as alternative funding sources
(e.g. through Seal of Excellence programmes)

EIC Pre-accelerator – specific conditions



- Eligibility: **mono-beneficiary projects** with legal entities as **SMEs** established in the widening countries.
- Proposal template: **Coordination and Support Action adapted to the Pre-Accelerator** evaluation criteria
- Evaluation: single stage, based on the EIC Transition open criteria (first step) – included in the Pre-Accelerator call text
- Form of support: - grant for **max 2 years**
 - **70%** reimbursement (**lump-sum**)
 - between **300K-500K EUR**



EIC Pre-accelerator – additional features

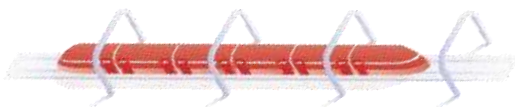


In addition:

- Free access to tailored **EIC Business Acceleration Services** to improve investor readiness
- **Fast Track** to the EIC Accelerator;
- **Seals of Excellence** to be awarded, accompanied by free access to BAS.

EIC BUSINESS ACCELERATOR PROCESS

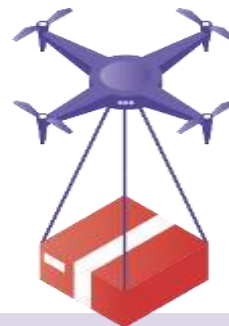
Step 1



IDEA PRESENTATION

- Applicants have a disruptive / deep tech idea with a potential to scale up. Submissions of short proposals are possible at any time. Evaluation by remote evaluators within 4-6 weeks.

Step 2



SUBMISSION

- Successful step 1 applicants submit their full proposal to regular cut-off deadlines, to be assessed by remote evaluators.
- To help you draft your full proposal, you will be entitled to receive **3 days of remote coaching** from the EIC Business Acceleration Services.



Pre-Accelerator is offering Fast-Track to Step 2

Step 3



PITCH

- Successful Step 2 applicants will pitch their innovation in front of EIC Jury Members. If selected, applicants will be awarded funding.
- If not selected, applicants will be awarded a **Seal of Excellence** to help you secure funding from other sources as well as get support from EIC Business Acceleration Services.

Seal of Excellence



- Applicants meeting all evaluation criteria thresholds and not selected for funding will be awarded **Seal of Excellence**.
- Applicants awarded the 'Seal of Excellence' will have access to **EIC Business Accelerator Services** and support to access other sources of funding.
- **Only** awarded to those applicants who give consent (in the proposal template) to **sharing** the data about their application with other eligible funding bodies

Proposal Template



- Please pay attention to all the instructions in the proposal form.
Do not use the standard CSA version. Use the one from the Pre-Accelerator submission system.
- **Part A Administrative part**: General information, Participants, Budget, Ethics (including the Ethics Self-Assessment) and Security section, and the Declarations.
- **Part B Core Narrative part** (to be uploaded in pdf):
 - Section 1: Excellence
 - Section 2: Impact
 - Section 3: Quality and efficiency of the implementation
 - Additional annex(es): lump sum budget table/ information on clinical trials (if relevant)

LINK to the guidance and submission documents:

[Call text and submission system](#)



Part B Narrative part



- Seal of Excellence consent: give authorisation to share your data and proposal with NCP & national/regional authorities for possible alternative funding.
- Part B should include description of the **data management plan**, plan for dissemination and exploitation, **patent applications**, **deliverables**, work plan and resources, KPI & milestones, **risks and risk mitigation**.
- Page limit for Part B is **strictly 22 pages** all together. Follow the instructions in the respective sections and delete them after.
- + Additional annex(es): lump sum budget table/ information on clinical trials (if relevant)
- If serious ethics issues are expected, it is possible to add information in a separate document (no template) and upload it with the annexes.

Each Evaluation Criterion has 3 sub-criteria



1. Excellence

- 1.1 Technological breakthrough
- 1.2 Objectives
- 1.3 Methodology

**Threshold:
4/5**

2. Impact

- 2.1 Credibility of the impacts
- 2.2 Economic and/or societal benefits
- 2.3 Investment readiness and go to market strategy

**Threshold:
4/5**

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation

- 3.1 Quality and motivation of the team
- 3.2 KPIs and Milestones:
- 3.3 Workplan and Allocation of resources

**Threshold:
3/5**

1. Excellence



- **Technological breakthrough:** Does the technology have a high degree of **novelty** and higher performance compared to other technologies available or in development? Does the technology indicate **high commercial potential**?
- **Objectives:** How credible and feasible are the objectives for the planned **technology development and maturation**? How credible and feasible are the objectives and KPIs for the planned **business development process**?
- **Methodology:** Is the **timing** right for this technology/innovation (i.e., feasibility, technological readiness level (TRL), unique selling points) ?

2. Impact



- **Credibility of the impacts:** To what extent the **commercial impact(s)** described in the proposal are credible and substantial within the project and beyond (e.g., one or several sectors, setting new standards, etc.)?
- **Economic and/or societal benefits:** To what extent does the proposed innovation have scale up potential including high capacity **to gain or create new European or global markets**? To what extent is the proposed innovation expected to generate positive impacts for the European Union, Member States or Associated Countries (e.g., strategic autonomy, employment, etc.)?
- **Investment readiness:** To what extent the proposal and its activities contribute to make the technology and the team **investment ready** (including through IP protection and market validation)? Is there a well-defined and convincing **go-to-market strategy** and pathway, including what regulatory approvals may be needed (if relevant),
time to market, possible business and revenue model?

3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation



- **Quality and motivation of the team:** To what extent does the (project) team have the necessary **high-quality capabilities and high motivation** to move decisively towards market? To what extent do the applicant team have the necessary expertise to create a **unique commercial value from the emerging technology** and develop an attractive business and investment proposition?
- **KPIs and Milestones:** Are both milestones and KPIs present, **relevant and clearly defined** (measurable, timed, comparable etc.) to track progress along the pathway towards objectives? Have the **main risks** (e.g., technological, market, financial etc.) been identified, together with measures to mitigate in order to achieve the project objectives?
- **Workplan and allocation of resources:** How appropriate and effective is the **allocation of resources** (person-months and equipment) in the workplan and work packages?

To summarise: what is expected in a proposal



- 1. Impact** (or size of the opportunity): how big is the problem that the proposal is aiming at & who has the problem (market analysis)
- 2. Value proposition** (the central element of the business model):
 - a. how the proposal aims to solve the problem,
 - b. competitive advantage vs direct competitors and alternative solutions
 - c. sustainability of the competitive advantage (e.g., IPR protection)
- 3. Other aspects** of the business model according to the need of proposals: e.g. not exhaustive list
 - a. how the value proposition is delivered (direct exploitation/licence/etc.)
 - b. **key resources** (patent and other IP aspects)
 - c. key partners (collaboration)
 - d. **key people**: need to have a leading team for the project & beyond or the steps to identify them
 - e. **customers / segments**: description of the already achieved engagement with potential customers.

Dos and Don'ts in preparing a proposal



- Do pay attention to TRL
- Do your preliminary market research and explore potential competitors
- Do put both milestones (including TRL achievements) and KPIs!
- Do take into account the maturation of technology and business in the project!
- Do have a mixed team able to advance both technology and business aspects
- Do not apply if your TRL is <3 or >5 . Pre-Accelerator is not Accelerator with higher success rate
- Don't forget to focus on impact and high commercial potential
- Don't forget about your exploitation channel
- Don't forget about you IPR (strategy)
- Do not forget to talk to your NCP and/or EEN nor to read well the WP and the FAQ to be published soon.



Thank you !

<https://eic.ec.europa.eu>
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