

## European Innovation Council (EIC)

The EIC aims at **identifying and supporting breakthrough technologies and game-changing innovations** with the potential to scale up internationally and become market leaders.

It supports all stages of innovation from R&D on the scientific underpinnings of breakthrough technologies, to validation and demonstration of breakthrough technologies and innovations to meet real world needs, to the development and scaling up of start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The funding and support is organised into three main funding schemes:

- **EIC Pathfinder** for advanced research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies (TRL 1-4);
- **EIC Transition** to validate technologies and develop business plans for specific applications (TRL 5 to 6);
- **EIC Accelerator** to support companies (SMEs, start-ups, spin-outs and in exceptional cases small mid-caps) to bring their innovations to market and scale up (TRL 5/6 to 9).

Within each scheme the calls are:

- **open calls** (bottom up approach) with no predefined thematic priorities ('Open Funding'). Open Funding is designed to enable support for any technologies and innovations that cut across different scientific, technological, sectoral and application fields or represent novel combinations.
- **challenge driven approach** (top-down) provides funding to address specific technological and innovation breakthroughs. The challenges are defined for each scheme and take into account EU priorities for transitioning to a green, digital and healthy society, as well as the overall strategic planning for Horizon Europe, and the inputs of stakeholders, experts and the EIC pilot Advisory Board.

**Table 1. Summary of main calls in 2021<sup>8</sup>**

	Who can apply	What for	Open calls (Section II)		Challenge driven calls (Section III)		
			Call deadline(s)	Indicative Budget (EUR million)	Challenges	Call deadline(s)	Indicative Budget (EUR million)
<b>EIC Pathfinder</b>	Consortia of at least three different independent legal entities (e.g. research organisations, universities, SMEs, industry) established in at least 3 different eligible countries. Single applicants or small consortia (two partners) may be able to apply for Pathfinder Challenges according to the call specifications.	Grants of up to EUR 3 million (open) or EUR 4 million (challenge driven) (or more if properly justified) to achieve the proof of principle and validate the scientific basis of breakthrough technology (TRL 1-4)	19 May 2021	168.00	1. Awareness inside 2. Tools to measure & stimulate activity in brain tissue 3. Emerging Technologies in Cell & Gene Therapy 4. Novel routes to green hydrogen production 5. Engineered living materials	27 October 2021	132.00
<b>EIC Transition</b>	Single applicants (SMEs, spin-offs, start-ups, research organisations, universities) or small consortia (two to 5 partners). Applications must build on results from eligible Pathfinder, FET or ERC Proof of Concept projects	Grants of up to EUR 2.5 million (or more if properly justified) to validate and demonstrate technology in application-relevant environment (TRL 4 to 5/6) and develop market readiness	22 September 2021	59.60	1. Medical devices 2. Energy harvesting and storage technologies	22 September 2021	40.50
<b>EIC Accelerator</b>	Single Start-ups and SMEs (including spin-outs), individuals (intending to launch a start-up/SME) and in exceptional cases small mid-caps (fewer than 500 employees)	Blended finance: up to EUR 2.5 million grant component for technology development and validation (TRL 5/6 to 8); EUR 0.5 - 15 million investment component for scaling up and other activities. Grant only/grant first under certain conditions. Investment component only for small mid-caps or as follow up to grant only (i.e. for SMEs, including start-ups)	Any time (short applications) Full applications by 9 June 2021 and 6 October 2021	592.50	1. Strategic Health and Digital Technologies 2. Green Deal innovations for the economic recovery	Any time (short applications) Full applications by 9 June 2021 and 6 October 2021	495.10

<sup>8</sup> This table provides a simplified overview. All applicants need to read the relevant sections for the full information on eligibility and conditions for funding. The Director-General responsible for the call may decide to open the call up to one month prior to or after the envisaged date(s) of opening. The Director-General responsible may delay the deadline(s) by up to two months.<sup>9</sup> For any applicant to be considered for interview, they must meet all the evaluation criteria at all of the previous steps of the selection process.

## Objectives

The overall objective of the EIC is to **identify, develop and deploy high risk innovations of all kind with a particular focus on breakthrough, market-creating and deep-tech innovations**<sup>1</sup>. It aims to support the rapid scale up of innovative technologies and companies (mainly start-ups and SMEs) at EU and international level along the pathway from ideas to market.

## EIC Pathfinder

### EIC Pathfinder Open

You should apply to EIC Pathfinder Open if you are looking for support to realise an ambitious vision for radically new technology, with potential to create new markets and/or to address global challenges. EIC Pathfinder Open supports early stage development of such future technologies (e.g. various activities at **low Technology Readiness Levels 1-4**), based on high-risk/high-gain science-towards-technology breakthrough research (including 'deep-tech'). This research must provide the foundations of the technology you are envisioning.

This call is open for collaborative research. The consortium includes at least three independent legal entities, each one established in a different Member State or Associated Country and with at least one of them established in a Member State. The legal entities may for example be universities, research organisations, SMEs, start-ups, industrial partners or natural persons.

**Budget:** The total indicative budget for this call is EUR 168 million.

For this call, the EIC considers proposals with a requested EU contribution of up to EUR 3 million as appropriate.

**The call deadline for submitting your proposal is 19 May 2021 at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.**

**Proposal Part B sect 1-3 Max 17 pages**

### EIC Pathfinder Challenge

EIC Pathfinder Challenges aim to build on new, cutting-edge directions in science and technology to disrupt a field and a market or create new opportunities by realizing innovative technological solutions grounded in high-risk/high-gain research and development.

With each specific challenge call, the EIC will establish a portfolio of projects that explore different perspectives, competing approaches or complementary aspects of the Challenge. The complexity and high-risk nature of this research will require multidisciplinary collaborations.

You should apply if you have an ambitious idea to realise the vision of a specific Pathfinder Challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> **Deep tech** is technology that is based on cutting-edge scientific advances and discoveries and is characterised by the need to stay at the technological forefront by constant interaction with new ideas and results from the lab. Deep tech is distinct from 'high tech' which tends to refer only to R&D intensity.

EIC is particularly interested in your ideas for new deep-tech: technology that becomes possible thanks to cutting-edge science in an area of the specific challenge. **We are seeking new technological solutions at early stage of development that are new and disrupt the standard practice up to this point.**

You should apply if you have a potential project that would contribute to the specific objectives of the respective Challenge. Specifically, your project must aim to deliver, by its end the specific outcomes defined in the respective challenge chapter.

The 5 **Challenges** are:

- Awareness Inside
- Tools to measure and stimulate activity in brain tissue
- Emerging Technologies in Cell and Gene therapy
- Novel routes to green hydrogen production
- Engineered Living Materials

The Pathfinder Challenges support collaborative research and innovation from consortia or applications from single legal entities (unless stated otherwise in the specific challenge chapter).

In case of a consortium, this should include at least two independent legal entities (as for example universities, research organisations, SMEs, start-ups, natural persons).

In the case of monobeneficiary projects, mid-caps and larger companies will not be permitted.

**Budget** The total indicative budget for this call is EUR 132 million which is expected to be allocated in approximately equal shares across the challenges.

The EIC considers proposals with an EU contribution of up to EUR 4 million as appropriate. Nonetheless, this does not preclude you to request larger amounts, if properly justified or stated otherwise in the specific Challenge. The funding rate of this grant will be 100% of the eligible costs.

**The call deadline for submitting your proposal is [27 October 2021] at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.**

**Proposal Part B sect 1-3 Max 25 pages**

## *EIC Transition*

### **EIC Transition Open**

EIC Transition funds innovation activities that go beyond the experimental proof of principle in laboratory. It supports both the maturation and validation of your novel technology in the lab and in relevant application environments (by making use of prototyping, formulation, models, user testing or other validation tests) as well as the development of a business case and business model towards the innovation's future commercialisation.

Your proposed activities must include further technology development **on the results achieved in a previous project**<sup>2</sup> and follow user-centric methodologies to increase chances of the innovation's future success in the market.

EIC Transition projects should address, in a balanced way, both technology and market/business dimensions, possibly including iterative learning processes based on early customer or user feedback.

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<sup>2</sup> Pathfinder, FET or ERC Proof of Concept project

These activities should include, subject to the level of maturity of the technology, a suitable mix of research, technology development and validation activities to increase the maturity of the technology beyond proof of principle to viable demonstrators of the technology in the intended field of application (i.e. up to **Technology Readiness Level 5 to 6**). The activities must in all cases address market readiness towards commercialisation and deployment (market research, business case, prospects for growth, intellectual property protection, competitor analysis etc.) and other relevant aspects of regulation, certification and standardisation, aimed at getting both the technology and the business idea investment-ready.

At the end of your Transition project, you should be ready for the next stage, which can be to apply for EIC Accelerator (if you are a SME, including start-ups or spin-offs), to seek other investors or sources of funding, to enter licensing or collaboration agreements with third parties, or other routes to market deployment. In case your project is not led by an SME or commercial partner, the formation and spin out of a new company can be included as part of the activities.

Your proposal must build on results (demonstrated proof of principle) achieved within an eligible project. As Transition funding is a new scheme, for 2021 it is restricted to applications based on results generated by the following eligible projects:

- EIC Pathfinder projects (including projects funded under EIC pilot Pathfinder, Horizon 2020 FET-Open, FET-Proactive) and FET Flagships calls (including ERANET calls under the FET work programme)<sup>3</sup>
- European Research Council (ERC) Proof of Concept projects

If you are applying on the basis of an eligible project for which the grant is still active, you may apply if the project has been active for at least 12 months (i.e. the start date of the grant is more than 12 months before the date of the Transition call deadline).

If you are applying on the basis of an eligible project which has already been completed, you may apply within 24 months of the completion of the project (i.e. the end date of the grant for the eligible project is less than 24 months from the date of the Transition call deadline).

You can apply for EIC Transition either as:

- A single legal entity established in a Member State or an Associated Country ('mono-beneficiary') if you are an SME or a research performing organization. Larger companies (i.e. which do not qualify as SMEs) are not eligible to apply as a single legal entity;
- A small consortium of minimum 2 and maximum 5 independent legal entities ('multi-beneficiary')

**Budget:** The total indicative budget for this call is EUR 59.6 million.

For this call, the EIC considers proposals with a requested EU contribution of up to a EUR 2.5 million as appropriate.

**The call deadline for submitting your proposal is 22 September 2021 at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.**

**Proposal PartB sect1-3 Max 25 pages.**

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<sup>3</sup> Eligible projects are those funded under the following calls: FETOPEN-RIA-2014-2015; FETOPEN-01-2016-2017; FETOPEN-01-2018-2019-2020; H2020-FETPROACT-2014; FETPROACT-01-2016; FETPROACT-01-2018; FETPROACT-EIC-05-2019; FETOPEN-04-2016-2017; FETOPEN-03-2018-2019-2020; FETFLAG-03-2018; H2020-FETFLAG-2014 (for projects funded under the related Specific Grant Agreements); projects resulting from a joint transnational call (both with and without EU co-funding) under any of the QuantERA, FLAG-ERA and ChistERA ERANETs.

## EIC Transition Challenge

EIC Transition Challenges aim to leverage the outstanding results of an ongoing or recently finished project in the specific domain of the Challenge and push forward groundbreaking innovations with a clear perspective towards market uptake for specific applications.

For each Transition Challenge, the EIC aims to establish a portfolio of projects that explore different, competing perspectives or address complementary aspects of the Challenge.

EIC Transition Challenges fund activities to mature a technology beyond the experimental proof of principle in laboratory and to develop the business case for the market uptake of the technology in an innovation for a specific application or set of applications that address the objectives of the challenge. As such, projects **must address the twin development of technological and business aspects.**

As specified in the Transition Open, your proposal must build on results (demonstrated proof of principle) achieved within an eligible project.<sup>2,3</sup>

You can apply for EIC Transition either as:

- A single legal entity established in a Member State or an Associated Country ('mono-beneficiary') if you are an SME or a research performing organization. Larger companies (i.e. which do not qualify as SMEs) are not eligible to apply as a single legal entity;
- A small consortium of minimum 2 and maximum 5 independent legal entities ('multi-beneficiary')

The 2 **Challenges** are:

- Medical technology and Devices: from Lab to Patient
- Energy harvesting and storage technologies

**Budget:** The total indicative budget for this call is EUR 40.5 million, to be funded through Next Generation EU as this call contributes to the objectives to rebuild a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. The total indicative budget is expected to be allocated in approximately equal shares across the challenges. For this call, the EIC considers proposals with a requested EU contribution of up to EUR 2.5 million as appropriate.

**The call deadline for submitting your proposal is 22 September 2021 at 17.00.00 Brussels local time.**

**Proposal Part B sect 1-3 Max 25 pages.**

## EIC Accelerator

### EIC Accelerator Open

The EIC Accelerator supports companies (principally start-ups and SMEs) to scale up high impact innovations with the potential to create new markets or disrupt existing ones. The EIC Accelerator provides a unique combination of funding from EUR 0.5 to EUR 17.5 million and Business Acceleration Services. The EIC Accelerator focuses in particular on innovations building on scientific discovery or technological breakthroughs ('deep tech') and where significant funding is needed over a long timeframe before returns can be generated ('patient capital'). Such innovations often struggle to attract financing because the risks

and time period involved are too high. Funding and support from the EIC Accelerator is designed to enable such innovators to attract the full investment amounts needed for scale up in a shorter timeframe. The EIC Accelerator is open to innovations in any field of technology or application.

The EIC Accelerator supports the later stages of technology development as well as scale up. The technology component of your innovation must therefore have been tested and validated in a laboratory or other relevant environment (e.g. at least **Technology Readiness Level 5/6 or higher**)

You can apply as:

- a single company classified as a SME and established within a Member State or an Associated Country, or
- A single company classified as a ‘Small mid-cap’ (up to 500 employees) established in a Member State or an Associated Country, but your application can only be for rapid scale up purposes (e.g. Technology Readiness Level 9) and only for the investment component, or
- One or more natural persons (including individual entrepreneurs) or legal entities, which are either:
  - a. from a Member State or an Associated Country intending to establish an SME or small mid-cap (as defined above) in a Member State or Associated Country by the time of signing the Accelerator contract or, in the case blended finance is awarded, at the latest when agreeing on its investment component;
  - b. intending to invest in an SME or small mid-cap in a Member State or an Associated Country and who may submit a proposal on behalf of that SME or small mid-cap, provided that a prior agreement exist with the company. The contract will be signed with the beneficiary company only;
  - c. from a non-associated third country intending to establish an SME (including start-ups) or to relocate an existing SME to a Member State or an Associated Country, by the time of submitting a full application. Your company must prove its effective establishment in a Member State or an Associated Country. The Commission may set specific conditions and milestones in the contract to ensure that the interest of the Union is met.

## Budget

The EIC Accelerator provides **blended finance** (Innovation and Market Deployment Action) which is composed of:

- An **investment component** usually in the form of direct equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans. The minimum investment component is EUR 0.5 million and the maximum is EUR 15 million. It is intended to finance market deployment and scale up but may also be used for other purposes (including co-financing or even fully financing innovation activities). Within the maximum budget awarded by the Commission to the EIC Fund, the terms of investment will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis by the EIC Fund.
- A **grant component** to reimburse eligible costs incurred for innovation activities, including demonstration of the technology in the relevant environment, prototyping and system level demonstration, R&D and testing required to meet regulatory and standardisation requirements, intellectual property management, and marketing approval (e.g. at least Technology Readiness Levels 5/6 to 8). Eligible costs are reimbursed up to a maximum of 70%. The 30% co-financing of these activities and the costs incurred for the commercial introduction of the product or service and full scale up operations (e.g. Technology Readiness Level 9 or above) will not be reimbursed by the grant but can be financed by the investment component.

The grant component should normally not exceed EUR 2.5 million but may be for a higher amount in exceptional and well justified cases. The innovation activities to be supported should normally be completed within 24 months but may be longer in exceptional and well justified cases. The grant component may be

used for subcontracting including, only if justified, for activities which are essential for the objectives of the project.

Applicants can choose to request the **investment component only** and are not required to request a grant component.

You may request a **grant component only or grant first** (i.e. maximum EUR 2.5 million to cover TRL 5/6 to 8 and without requesting an investment component for TRL 9) if you have not previously received EIC Accelerator grant-only support.

### Application:

The application process consists of a number of steps:

1. **Short applications** which may be submitted at any time and which will be evaluated remotely by EIC expert evaluators on a first come, first served basis;  
This includes: a 5-page form (summary of your proposal and reply to a set of questions on your innovation, your potential and your team) + pitch deck (up to 10 slides) + video pitch of 3 minutes of the team aiming to provide motivation of the application. Evaluation of the short application will be received within 4 weeks.
2. If successful, you will be invited to prepare a **full application**, where you will have access to support through the EIC artificial intelligence-based IT platform and from EIC business coaches;  
The full application should be submitted within 12 months from the date of the response, in 2021 at one of the following cut off date:
  - 9 June 2021 at 17h00 Brussels local time.
  - 6 October 2021 at 17h00 Brussels local time.
3. Full applications will first be assessed remotely by EIC expert evaluators. **If successful, you will be invited to a face to face interview with an EIC jury** as the final step in the selection process.  
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). At the interview, you will be assessed by a panel of maximum 6 jury members.
4. If selected for funding, you will be invited to **negotiate an initial contract for the grant component (which will include a first prefinancing payment on the grant component) and to start the due diligence for the investment component.**

## EIC Accelerator Challenges

The EIC Accelerator Challenges supports companies (principally start-ups and SMEs) to scale up high impact innovations with the potential to create new markets or disrupt existing ones in identified areas of strategic relevance.

**Application steps and cut off dates** (9 June 2021 or 6 October 2021) are the same described for the EIC Accelerator Open

The 2 Challenges are:

- Digital and Health Technologies
- Green Deal innovations for the Economic Recovery

### Budget

The total indicative budget for this call is EUR 494.76 to 496.76 million, of which EUR 247.38 to 248.38 million will be funded through Next Generation EU as this call contributes to the objectives to rebuild a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe.

The total indicative budget is expected to be allocated in approximately equal shares across the challenges



If successful you will receive a grant for an Innovation and Market Deployment Action to cover the eligible costs, necessary for the implementation of your project. Support may be provided in the form of blended finance (combining grant of up to EUR 2.5 million and investment component of between EUR 0.5 and EUR 15 million) or grant only/ grant first support as set out in EIC Accelerator Open call.