
EIC ACCESS+ Open Call

For EIC Awardees and Seal of Excellence Holders

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1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

EIC ACCESS Plus project (EIC ACCESS+) aims to support EIC Awardees and Seal of Excellence holders (under the Horizon Europe programme) to access specialised services listed in the EIC Service Catalogue, by offering financial support to partially cover the services cost and facilitating the delivery of tailored assistance to address the unique scaling challenges of deep tech European innovators. Through this public Open Call, EIC Awardees and Seal of Excellence holders (under the Horizon Europe programme) will be selected to access the EIC Service Catalogue to answer their specific innovation needs. The financial support consists of a lump-sum (grant) to reimburse costs supported by applicants to access the EIC Catalogue services.

EIC ACCESS+ project is funded by the European Union within the Horizon Europe programme (grant agreement N° 101167739), with the six European partners participation: INNOVA SRL (Italy), the coordinator, ASTER CAPITAL PARTNERS (France), ASOCIATA SPHERIK (Romania), BPIFRANCE, (France), EUROPEAN BUSINESS AND INNOVATION CENTRE NETWORK (Belgium) and BOOSTER LABS S.A.S (France).

2 ABOUT THIS CALL

The present Open Call aims to attract and recruit EIC Awardees and Seal of Excellence holders (under the Horizon Europe programme) seeking financial support to access the EIC Service Catalogue. Through the Open Call, they can ask for financial assistance to access high-level specialised services and address specific needs relating to innovation, go-to-market and other business challenges. The total financial support for this call amounts to € 3.45 million which will be distributed to organisations which apply following the rules below described.

3 WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Participation in the present Open Call is allowed to the following beneficiaries:

1. **EIC Awardees**, recipient entities of the EIC Pathfinder, EIC Transition, and EIC Accelerator awards.
2. **Seal of Excellence Holders**, entities awarded the Seal of Excellence certification under the Horizon Europe Programme.

For EIC Transition and EIC Pathfinder projects with more partners, any project partner is entitled to apply. It is important that the services to be provided by EIC Service Catalogue Partners, for which the application is made, benefit the project or its results. For this purpose, the applicant/s must provide a written statement from the project Coordinator, acknowledging the relevance of the application to the project or its results¹.

The same rule applies to the Seal of Excellence projects under the Horizon Europe programme. Applications may be submitted by Spin-offs as well, stemming from EIC awarded projects,

¹ The project coordinator acknowledgement can be done through an email addressed to the applicant.

however, the project coordinator must consent by a written declaration confirming the connection between the spin-off and the project.

Beneficiaries of the grant are the project partners in EIC Transition and EIC Pathfinders projects, eligible to apply for the EIC ACCESS+ financial support such as: universities, private and public Research Organisations, SMEs actually performing project research and development activities and high-tech spin-offs stemming from a project.

4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

The EIC ACCESS+ initiative provides a structural financial support mechanism designed to assist beneficiaries interested in accessing specialised services from the EIC Service Catalogue (Catalogue). Beneficiaries are eligible to receive a grant covering up to 50% of the cost associated with the supply of the service in the Catalogue. The grant is calculated on the cost (VAT excluded) paid to the service provider to access the services. Only the EIC Partners listed in the EIC Service Catalogue can be selected to provide the services.

The maximum grant available varies according to the selected services. There are four service packages, as follows:

- **Service Package 1 - Research Package**
 - Access to Infrastructure and R&D support
 - Prototyping and Proof of Concept (PoC)
- **Service Package 2 - Business Acceleration**
 - Acceleration, Incubation and Venture building
 - Business Planning
 - Matchmaking
 - Internationalisation
- **Service Package 3 - Skills Improvement**
 - Coaching and Mentoring
 - HR & Talent
- **Service Package 4 - Access to Funds**
 - IP & Legal
 - Due Diligence
 - Support fundraising

The services listed above, under each service package, are those included in the EIC Service Catalogue.

The grant assigned to each beneficiary cannot exceed the following thresholds:

- **For services within the Research Package up to € 60,000**
- **For service within the Business Acceleration Package up to € 30,000**
- **For services within the Skills Improvement Package up to € 10,000**
- **For services within the Access to Funds Package up to € 30,000**

The beneficiary may apply to one or more services, either within the same package or in different packages, however, the maximum cumulative grant, referring to the different services, must not exceed € 60,000 per beneficiary.

Beneficiaries are requested to have already agreed on the service supply conditions and cost with the service provider. A copy of the contract between the two parties will be required to finalise the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) Agreement with the EIC ACCESS+ (see Section 8).

5 APPLICATION PROCESS

Beneficiaries shall apply using the online form available either at the EIC ACCESS+ website at this [link](#), or in the [EIC Service Catalogue website](#).

The application process will be opened for online submission starting from **November 1st, 2024, until May 31st, 2026, or until reaching the amount of € 3.45 million available for FSTP under the EIC Access+ project.** Unless otherwise stated via an official announcement. Submissions after the deadline will not be accepted unless an extension of the call closing is officially announced.

Only applications using the process described below and fulfilling all the eligibility criteria, as defined in Section 6 of this call, will be taken into account for the evaluation.

Once the evaluation process is positively completed (see Section 7), the selected applicant will be contacted by the EIC ACCESS+ Team to finalise the FSTP Agreement (see Section 8).

5.1 Application Form

The application process will take place fully online. Applicants will be asked to create a profile to access the EIC ACCESS+ Community Hub on the EuroQuity platform used by EIC ACCESS+ to manage the application process. Once the profile has been created, applicants may access the online form and start filling out the different sections by providing the following information:

- **Information about the organisation:**

General information on the organisation: name and contact details, address, PIC number, and other relevant administrative information.

- **Service Selection:**

Selection of the service within the EIC Service Catalogue offer.

- **Service Description:**

Service description providing a clear indication of the objectives to be achieved through the service provision, to justify the choice.

- **Service Impact Description:**

Description of the service's medium-term impact, focusing on measurable effects on different business areas. Potential impacts could include:

1. Technology innovation to accelerate product development and/or launch of new solutions;
2. Increased market share, access to new markets and/or internationalisation;
3. Access to finance to securing external private funding (e.g., Business Angels, Venture Capital funds);
4. Improvement of skills and competencies, enhancing overall business performance;
5. Reduction of environmental footprint (e.g., energy efficiency, sustainable sourcing);
6. Enhanced social impact (e.g., job creation, community engagement);
7. Strengthened governance and business ethics (e.g., better transparency, and compliance).

- **Service Provision Period:**

The period of the service's supply execution, indicating the number of months that will be necessary to achieve the set objectives.

- **Service Provider Selection:**

The service provider must be indicated to finalise the application. Only the service providers listed in the EIC Service Catalogue (EIC Partners) are allowed to deliver services supported by EIC ACCESS+. If, during the application process, the applicant does not choose any EIC Partner in the Catalogue, the EIC ACCESS+ Team will help them by providing a list of three (3) potential service provider candidates which better fulfil the applicant's needs. The applicant must select one service provider, meanwhile, the application process will be suspended until the service provider is selected. Support can be asked from the EIC ACCESS+ Team by email: help@eicaccessplus.eu.

The application will be considered eligible when the form is filled out and the application procedure is completed by submitting the online form.

5.2 Application Submission

After the submission, an electronic "Time Stamp" will be assigned to the application, certifying the delivery day and time. Applications will be assessed on a "first come, first served" basis.

6 SELECTION CRITERIA

Only applications complying with the following criteria will be considered eligible for the grant:

1. **Applicants:** must be based either in one of the EU countries or Associate Countries and be EIC Awardees or Seal of Excellence holders under Horizon Europe.
2. **Service Request:** The services requested must not have been previously funded by the EIC ACCESS+ initiative nor by the European Commission, National incentives, or any other public initiatives. The double funding is not permitted in the service delivery or as part of the service cost, for which the applicant is asking the EIC ACCESS+ grant support. The verification process to prevent double funding will be based on a declaration of honours and on cross-checking EIC records.
3. **Grant Limit:** The total grant amount(s) already received under the EIC ACCESS+ project must be below or equal to € 60,000 per beneficiary. Such a limit will be applied taking into account the applying organisation's PIC numbers. Different PIC numbers are considered like different applicant organisations.
4. **Service Description:** Applications must include a clear description of the requested service, outlining the expected results and impacts.
5. **Delivery Timing:** The application must specify the expected timing for the service delivery. The service's complete delivery should be ensured by June 30th, 2026.
6. **Link to the project:** The application must specify the link between the applicant and the project and its role in the project, providing a short description of the activities executed.
7. **Service Provider Selection:** The applicant must indicate the service provider selected from the EIC Service Catalogue.

7 APPLICATION EVALUATION

A selection Committee made up of 6 members from the EIC ACCESS+ Team will evaluate the applications according to the criteria defined in Section 6.

Applications will be collected on a rolling basis every two weeks and grouped in cohorts. Each cohort will be evaluated within 7 days.

The results of the evaluation will not be published on the EIC ACCESS+ website, but all applicants will be informed individually. In case of rejection, the reasoning will be provided upon request.

After the official communication of the evaluation results, the selected applicants will be contacted by the EIC ACCESS+ coordinator to finalise the FSTP Agreement.

8 FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTY (FSTP) AGREEMENT

8.1 FSTP Agreement Finalisation and Signature

If the application is approved, a FSTP Agreement between the ACCESS+ project and the applicant will be signed. As project coordinator, INNOVA is entitled to sign the agreement on behalf of the EIC ACCESS+ Consortium. The FSTP Agreement will include the following information:

- The applicant's administrative information;
- A short description of the service provider and its expertise;
- The duration of the service provision;
- The financial contribution requested;
- The obligation to participate in the ACCESS+ ex-post surveys;
- Obligations and conflict of interests;
- Data protection rules;
- Other standard contractual obligations;
- Annexes

The FSTP Agreement will be signed using the qualified electronic signature procedure. The qualified electronic signature must be compliant with the Regulation (EU) 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation). Therefore, applicants are encouraged to verify the signature and the validity of the certificate with one trusted service provider of the Member States of the European Union ([here is the list of them](#)).

The standard FSTP Agreement template is available on the project website at this [link](#).

8.2 Reporting and Payments

The grant payment will occur in one or two instalments, depending on the selected service and the related cost. For a grant equal to or below € 10.000, the applicant will receive the whole amount in one single instalment after the service conclusion. For grants above € 10.000, two instalments will be paid, the first 50% after the FSTP Agreement signature and the rest 50% after the service conclusion.

Before the last payment, applicants must provide a short report, describing the service obtained and results achieved, using a standard template provided by the EIC ACCESS+ project. Applicants must also fill out a satisfaction questionnaire on the service quality and assess the service provider's expertise. The final payment will be released only after administrative checks are completed successfully and the applicant has filled out the satisfaction survey.

Additional surveys will be launched with beneficiaries by the EIC ACCESS+ project to accurately measure the impacts and outcomes of the services over the applicant's innovation activities and/or business strategy.

9 DURATION OF THE FSTP AGREEMENT

The duration of the FSTP Agreement between the applicant and INNOVA will be specifically mentioned, and its conclusion cannot be later than July 31st, 2026. Applicants will lose their right to obtain the grant if the service is not concluded within the above deadline.

If, for any reason, the European Innovation Council will close this action before the above deadline, the EIC ACCESS+ project shall instantly terminate the FSTP Agreement.

10 EXCLUSION CONDITIONS AND LOSS OF ELIGIBILITY

Specific exclusion conditions and criteria for loss of eligibility are established:

- Applicants must be EIC Awardees or Seal of Excellence (Horizon Europe programme) holders to qualify for funding. Ineligibility arises if an applicant has previously received funding for the same services requested or fails to comply with the established eligibility criteria, including the submission of accurate documentation.
- Any applicant must demonstrate the link with the project and clearly specify its role and activities carried out.
- Any applicant receiving double funding for the same service from other sources will be disqualified.
- Misrepresentation or fraudulent activities during the application process will also lead to immediate disqualification.
- Applicants must fulfil their reporting obligations and provide required updates during the service delivery phase;
- Applicants under OLAF investigation will be disqualified.
- Non-compliance with the terms outlined in the FSTP Agreement, including the proper use of funds and adherence to service delivery standards, can also jeopardise future opportunities in EIC funding schemes.

11 CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Applicants should be aware that the information submitted under this Call will be used by the EIC ACCESS+ project and other entities directly involved in the EIC ACCESS+ project.

Specifically, the selected applicants should be aware that the EIC ACCESS+ project will maintain internal records of:

- A list of the applications received, with names and addresses of applicants.
- All communications with applicants prior to the call closure.
- A copy of the completed forms used in the evaluation sessions.
- A record of all relevant facts that occurred before, during or after the implementation of the call, as well as any deviation from the standard procedure.
- Copies of requests for payment and attached administrative documents.

- Any additional document provided by the applicant.

Subject to the conditions established in the FSTP Agreements, decisions, or contracts, any data, knowledge, and information communicated as confidential in the framework of an action shall be kept confidential, taking due account of European Union Law regarding the protection of and access to classified information.

Selected applicants shall comply with national legislation, regulations and ethical rules in their own countries, as well as any other requirements as defined by the participation in the EIC ACCESS+ initiative.

By submitting the application, the applicants consent to the processing of their data by the EIC ACCESS+ project members for the purpose of evaluation of the application. The applicant's data will be processed in accordance with the EIC ACCESS+ Privacy Policy and will be retained for 5 years after the application deadline. The EIC ACCESS+ Privacy Policy is available on the project website.

The applicant's personal data will be collected, processed and treated by the EIC ACCESS+ project in accordance with regulation (EU) 2016/679, also known as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation). Please refer to Annex 2 for a complete Privacy Statement.

12 DOCUMENT VERSION AND FAQs

The preset document is the version 1.0. Changes and updates to it will be promptly communicated and included in a new version.

[FAQs](#) are available on the project website. They will be regularly updated.

13 CONTACTS

For any further information please contact the EIC ACCESS+ project at: info@eicaccessplus.eu

If you want to contact us for a technical problem in relation to the online application form, please contact the Technical Team at: help@eicaccessplus.eu.