
EIC ACCESS+ Open Call

For EIC Awardees and Seal of Excellence Holders

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1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

EIC ACCESSPlus 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 described below.

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.

EIC Awardees refers to organisations participating in EIC Pathfinder, EIC Transition, and EIC Accelerator awarded projects, comprising the ones under the EIC Pilot 2018-2020. In projects with more than one partner, any project partner is entitled to apply.

Services are provided by the EIC Service Catalogue Partners, and they aim to improve the exploitation potential of either the overall project or at least of one of its results.

If the applicant is not the project coordinator, a written statement from the project coordinator must be provided acknowledging the relevance of the application for the project itself 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, however, the project coordinator must send a declaration confirming the spin-off is a project result.

Beneficiaries are, therefore, the project partners eligible to apply for EIC ACCESS+ financial support, as above described, which consist of universities, private and public research organisations and SMEs, performing project research and development activities, as well as high-tech spin-offs stemming from projects.

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 supplying the service in the Catalogue. The grant is calculated based 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 within the service packages, which are:

- **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

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

- **Service Package 4 - Access to Funds**
 - IP & Legal
 - Due Diligence
 - Support fundraising

The services listed above, within each service package, are the ones present 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 for 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. The services must be completed before 30 June 2025 to be eligible for the grant.

A copy of the contract between the two parties must be sent to the EIC ACCESS+ Team, managing the grant assignment.

5 APPLICATION PROCESS

Beneficiaries shall apply by submitting the application form available in the EIC ACCESS+ Community hub. The link to the Community hub is available on the [EIC ACCESS+ website](#).

The application process is open for online submission starting from **November 1st, 2024 and will close on May 31st, 2026. If the amount of € 3.45 million, for FSTP under the EIC Access+ project, is reached, the call will be closed earlier.** Unless otherwise stated via an official announcement. Submissions after the deadline will not be accepted unless an extension is officially announced.

Only applications using the process described below and fulfilling all the eligibility criteria, as in Section 6, will be evaluated.

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:**

Provide a clear description of the objectives to be achieved through the service provision.

- **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 secure 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:**

Indicate the number of months 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 applicants do not indicate the service provider, they may ask for support from the EIC ACCESS+ Team to find one. In such a case, EIC ACCESS+ Team provides support, meanwhile, the application process will be suspended until the service provider is selected. 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 submission, an electronic "Time Stamp" and an ID number are assigned to the application. 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 receiving the grant:

1. **Geographical coverage.** 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. The same geographical condition is applied for spin-offs.
2. **Double funding.** Generally, double funding of costs is not allowed. However, if the requested service cost has already been partially funded through public or private funds, the remaining cost share can be covered by the EIC ACCESS+ grant. The verification process, based on a declaration of honours and on cross-checking EIC records, is applied.
3. **Grant Limit.** The total grant amount(s) per beneficiary can not exceed € 60,000. The PIC number is used for checking. Different PIC numbers are considered different applicant organisations.
4. **Service Description.** A clear description of the funded service must be provided, outlining the expected results and impacts to the organisation.
5. **Delivery Time.** The application must specify the expected period for the service delivery. Service delivery must be ensured by June 30th, 2026.
6. **Project links.** The application must outline the service link with the EIC Awarded project, providing a short description of the activities executed. Applicant must clarify its role in the project.
7. **Service Provider Selection.** The applicant must select the service provider from the [EIC Service Catalogue](#). Applications without the service provider will be suspended until it will be selected.

7 APPLICATION EVALUATION

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

Applications are collected on a rolling basis every week and assessed within the next 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

The **FSTP Agreement** between the EIC ACCESS+ Team and the approved applicant will be signed. As project coordinator, INNOVA is entitled to sign the agreement on behalf of the EIC ACCESS+ Team. 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 is signed using an electronic signature, having validity in the European Union. If applicants do not have access to such an electronic signature, different methods for the signature can be used, ensuring legal validity. Instructions in this regard will be provided by the EIC ACCESS+ Team.

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 service and the related cost. The grant equal to or below € 10.000 is paid in one single instalment after the service conclusion. The grant above € 10.000 is paid in two instalments, 50% after the FSTP Agreement signature and the last 50% after the service conclusion.

Before the last payment, applicants will be asked to provide a short report, describing the service obtained and results achieved, using a standard template provided by the EIC ACCESS+ project. Applicants will also be asked to fill in a satisfaction questionnaire on the obtained service quality. The final payment will be transferred after the administrative checks.

Additional surveys will be launched with beneficiaries by the EIC ACCESS+ over the project duration, to accurately measure service impacts and outcomes 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, Spin-off from EIC Awardeed project, or Seal of Excellence (Horizon Europe programme) holders to qualify for funding.
- Applicants must demonstrate the link with the project and specify its role and activities carried out.
- Applicants receiving double funding for the same service cost 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 will lead to the agreement's termination

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 before 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 documents 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 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 participation in the EIC ACCESS+ initiative.

By applying, the applicants consent to the processing of their data by the EIC ACCESS+ project members for the evaluation of the application. The applicant's data will be processed under 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 data will be collected, processed and treated by the EIC ACCESS+ project by 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

Changes and updates to the current Open Call text will be promptly communicated by publishing the new version on the EIC ACCESS website. [FAQs](#) are available on the project website for consultation.

13 CONTACTS

General information on how to apply may be obtained at: info@eicaccessplus.eu.

Information and support on the online application form may be obtained at: help@eicaccessplus.eu.