
EIC ACCESS+ Open Call

For EIC Awardees and Seal of Excellence Holders

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1 ABOUT THE PROJECT

EIC ACCESS+ (Access+) project aims to support EIC Beneficiaries to access the EIC Service Catalogue (<https://partnerservices.eisma.eu/>), by offering financial support to partially cover the service cost and, thus, facilitating the delivery of added-value services from the EIC Partners, which are the service providers listed in the EIC Service Catalogue. The financial support consists of a lump sum (grant) to reimburse costs supported by applicants to access the EIC Catalogue services.

The Access+ project is funded by the European Union within the Horizon Europe programme (grant agreement N° 101167739), with the six European partners: 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 Beneficiaries seeking financial support to access the EIC Service Catalogue. The Open Call allows them to ask for financial assistance to hire high-level specialised services and address specific needs relating to innovation and market deployment strategies. The total financial support amounts to € 3.45 million, which will be distributed to Beneficiaries who apply according to the rules hereafter described.

3 WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Participation in the present Open Call is allowed to the following EIC 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 EIC Horizon Europe Programme.

EIC Awardees are organisations participating in EIC Pathfinder, EIC Transition, and EIC Accelerator awarded projects, either running or past projects, comprising the ones under the EIC Pilot 2018-2020. In projects having more partners, any partner is entitled to apply.

The same rule applies to the Seal of Excellence projects under the EIC Horizon Europe programme. Furthermore, spin-offs stemming from the above-mentioned awarded projects may apply; however, in this specific case, the project coordinator must provide a declaration confirming the spin-off has been set up to exploit one or more project 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.

Beneficiaries are, therefore, the project partners eligible to apply for Access+ project 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.

The requested services by beneficiaries must be present in the EIC Service Catalogue and delivered by the EIC Partners listed in the Service Catalogue. The service aims to exploit one or more project results. If

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

the service provider is a European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC)², services may be delivered by any node of the consortium, provided that the node is listed in the ERIC link of the EIC service catalogue (under EuroBioimaging - ERIC Coordinator) and that the node's expertise is described on the organisation's landing page. This ensures that beneficiaries can access a wide range of high-level expertise and equipment offered by the ERIC node.

4 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Beneficiaries are eligible to receive a grant covering up to 50% of the service cost delivered by the EIC Partners, which are the providers offering the services listed in the EIC Service Catalogue. The grant is calculated on the cost (VAT excluded) invoiced and paid to the service provider.

Only the EIC Partners listed in the EIC Service Catalogue can be selected as service providers. A special condition is reserved for ERIC and its nodes, which can be selected by beneficiaries, as explained above.

For the present Open Call, the services within the EIC Service Catalogue are grouped into 4 packages as outlined below:

- **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 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 different services must not exceed € 60,000 per beneficiary.

² https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/our-digital-future/european-research-infrastructures/eric_en

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 must be sent to the Access+ project Team, managing the grant assignment for the FSTP Agreement finalisation (see Section 8).

Services must be completed within six months following the signature of the FSTP agreement (see Section 8), except for those included in Service Package 1, which may have a longer delivery period of up to one year. Exceptions to these deadlines may be granted, provided they are properly justified and approved in advance.

Applicants may request financial support for services that began before the submission of the application, as long as the start date is after the publication of the Open Call on November 1st, 2024.

Applications whose services will be completed after June 30th, 2026, will be rejected.

5 APPLICATION PROCESS

Beneficiaries shall apply using the application form available on the Access+ Community hub, which is available through the [EIC ACCESS+ website](#).

Online application submission is possible from **November 1st, 2024 and will close on May 31st, 2026**. If the allocated amount of €3.45 million for FSTP under the Access+ project is reached, the call will be closed earlier, unless otherwise stated through an official announcement. Submissions received after the deadline will not be accepted, unless an extension has been officially announced.

Only applications following the process outlined below and fulfilling all the eligibility criteria, as in Section 6, will be assessed.

Once the evaluation process is completed positively (see Section 7), the selected applicant will be contacted by the Access+ project 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 Access+ project Community Hub on the EuroQuity platform used by the Access+ project to manage the whole 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. The service provision period cannot exceed six months except for those included in Service Package 1, which may have a longer delivery period of up to one year.

- **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 the Access+ project.

If applicants do not indicate the service provider, they may ask for support from the Access+ project 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, a submission date 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 criteria below will be considered eligible for the grant:

1. **Beneficiaries:** Only EIC Awardees or EIC Seal of Excellence holders under Horizon Europe can apply. The same as for spin-offs generated within the above-awarded projects.
2. **Geographical coverage.** Applications must be presented by applicants based in one of the **EU countries** or [Associate Countries](#).
3. **Pairing the financial support.** Access+ project provides a grant up to 50% of the service cost; the remaining uncovered cost can be funded by using either the applicant's funds or other public incentives. The verification process is applied, based on a declaration of honours and on cross-checking EIC records
4. **Grant Limit.** The total grant amount(s) per beneficiary cannot exceed € 60,000. The PIC number is used for checking. Different PIC numbers are considered different applicant organisations.

5. **Service Description.** A description of the funded service must be provided, outlining the expected results and impacts on the organisation.
6. **Service Delivery Time.** The service provision period cannot exceed six months except for those included in Service Package 1, which may have a longer delivery period of up to one year. The application must specify the expected period for the service delivery. All services must be completed by June 30th, 2026.
7. **Project links.** The application must outline the service link with the EIC Awarded project, providing a short description of the activities executed.
8. **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. Specific conditions are applied for the nodes of the ERIC consortium, as mentioned above.

7 APPLICATION EVALUATION

A selection Committee from the Access+ project 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 Access+ project 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 Access+ project 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 Access+ project Team and the approved applicant will be signed, which allows the applicant to obtain the grant. As project coordinator, INNOVA is entitled to sign the agreement on behalf of the Access+ project 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+ project 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. 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 Access+ project.

The standard FSTP Agreement template is available on the project [website](#). A copy of the application, the service provider contract and the declaration of honour will be included in the FSTP Agreement annexes. The applicant will be asked to send a copy of the signed contract with the service provider, which is mandatory for finalising the FSTP Agreement.

A simplified FSTP Agreement is foreseen either for applications asking for small grants, lower than €2,500.00 (two thousand five hundred euros) or asking for reimbursement due to participation in events such as conferences, workshops, and similar service provisions. Such applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Access+ evaluation team.

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 participate in a survey based on a questionnaire to investigate the service quality delivered by the provider and the impact/benefits of the services for the beneficiary. The final payment will be made only after the questionnaire is completed and the administrative checks are executed.

Additional surveys will be launched with beneficiaries by the Access+ project 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 the EIC ACCESS+ Team will be specifically mentioned, and its conclusion cannot be later than July 31st, 2026. Applicants will lose their right to obtain the grant if they do not conclude the service within the above deadline.

If, for any reason, the Access+ project will be closed before the above deadline, the FSTP Agreement is instantly terminated.

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 Awardee project, or EIC 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 Access+ project and other entities directly involved in the project.

Specifically, the selected applicants should be aware that the 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 Access+ project.

By applying, the applicants consent to the processing of their data by the Access+ project members for the evaluation of the application. The applicant's data will be processed under the Access+ project Privacy Policy and will be retained for 5 years after the application deadline. The Access+ project Privacy Policy is available on the project website.

The applicant's data will be collected, processed and treated by the Access+ project by regulation (EU) 2016/679, also known as GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation).

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 Access+ project 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.