EUnita | EU Grant Advisory & Consultancy

BattleVerse Open Call 1

Funding opportunity analysis for potential applicants

Analysis identity	Verified position
Programme and instrument	European Defence Fund research action 101224034; financial support to third parties for six-month experiments. Parent topic: EDF-2024-RA-SIMTRAIN-BRG-STEP.
Call and audience	BattleVerse First Open Call; general public analysis for SMEs, start-ups and justified complementary partners.
Deadline	16 November 2026, 17:00 Brussels time (CET). Submit in EMS; a saved draft is insufficient.
Prepared by	EUnita — EU Grant Advisory & Consultancy | 28 September 2026

This document helps you decide whether your organisation and solution fit the call, what evidence to assemble, and how to avoid preventable submission or delivery risks. Rules may be clarified before the deadline; recheck the live EMS page and FAQ before submission.

Decision in brief: CONDITIONAL GO for a technically credible, eligible experiment with a demonstrable route to TRL 5, no ineligible ownership or subcontracting dependency, and enough working capital to carry the 70% final-payment period. Topic-specific decisions appear at the end.

1 Executive summary and strategic reading

BattleVerse is seeking software and simulation experiments that can become useful additions to its human-centred military mission-planning ecosystem. It is a six-month, single-stage cascade-funding call. The call budget is €1.2 million, with up to €60,000 per beneficiary and up to three beneficiaries per experiment. The ceiling is €180,000 only for a three-beneficiary experiment; one SME can apply alone. Up to 20 third-party beneficiaries are targeted, subject to budget distribution.

Your application must show an experiment that can be built, integrated or tested and evaluated within six months. A general AI claim, a commercial product pitch, or an unfunded research idea is a weak fit. The strongest case links a precise defence simulation need to measurable performance, BattleVerse interoperability, human control and credible exploitation. This is EUnita's reading of the published scope and evaluation criteria.

2 Call at a glance

Item	Applicant decision fact
Funding	€1.2m call envelope; up to €60k per beneficiary; up to €180k with three beneficiaries. Up to 100% of eligible costs, justified as a lump sum
Consortium	One SME/start-up, or up to three legal entities with at least one SME/start-up. Non-SME partners require a specific capacity that an available SME cannot adequately provide.
Geography and control	Each beneficiary must be established in EU-27, Norway or Ukraine and meet the call's ownership/control rule.
Topics	1: LLM-based decision support; 2: multi-physics/multi-domain simulation; 3: distributed AI for UxV coordination. Select a topic in EMS.
Maturity and time	Show a credible route to at least TRL 5 by the end of the six-month experiment; no common starting-TRL floor is stated.
Submission	English proposal PDF, 15-page evaluated limit, mandatory signed Declaration of Honour and Ownership Control, and EMS form data.
Payment	30% after the sub-grant agreement and administrative formalities; 70% after successful completion and approval of deliverables and reports.

3 What the call funds and what it does not

The instrument funds experimentation with simulation software or interoperable digital capabilities relevant to BattleVerse. The intended outputs are demonstrators, tested models or components, validation evidence and documented integration or operational learning. The six-month grant is tied to agreed work and deliverables, not an unrestricted product-development cheque.

The guide explicitly excludes subcontracting of project activities. It does not promise access to operational data, classified environments or production deployment. A proposal that depends on any of those should secure a feasible, lawful alternative test environment and state the assumption. Routine sales, generic training, hardware procurement without experiment logic, and topics outside the three technical scopes should not be treated as fundable concepts. The latter are EUnita screening judgments based on the call objective and FAQ.

4 Programme context and evaluator logic

This is third-party support under an EDF research action, administered by the BattleVerse consortium. It is not a direct application to the European Commission and does not use a national co-funder model.

Evaluators score Technical Excellence, Impact and Implementation; they will judge the submitted proposal as written. A workable interface and validation plan matter as much as an ambitious algorithm.

The call is human-centred: Topic 1 expects explainable decision support under operator authority, Topic 2 realistic and interoperable simulation, and Topic 3 coordinated autonomy with human supervision. Across topics, show a baseline, technical advance, test scenario, quantitative KPIs, integration assumptions and credible six-month resourcing.

5 Calendar and decision points

When	Published milestone	What to do
14 Sep 2026, 12:00 Brussels time	EMS publication and opening.	Start eligibility, ownership and topic fit checks.
6 Oct 2026	Project information webinar advertised.	Use it to test technical and administrative questions; registration details are on the call page.
16 Nov 2026, 17:00 Brussels time / CET	EMS closing	Upload, validate and press Submit before the deadline; only the latest submitted version counts.
18 Nov – 14 Dec 2026 (planned)	Eligibility check (18 Nov), evaluation and selection (9 Dec), results by email (14 Dec).	Planned dates from the Guide's timeline (Figure 1); recheck EMS for any change.
15 Dec 2026 – 11 Jan 2027 (planned)	Predefined sub-grant signed with CERTH (15 Dec – 3 Jan); six-month experiments start on 11 Jan 2027.	Confirm the start date and payment timetable in the agreement before committing costs.
Experiment months 1 / 4 / 6	D1 / D2 / D3 deliverables.	Price the evidence and demonstration work from the outset.

6 Funding, budget and cash flow

The grant can cover up to 100% of eligible experiment costs, but the applicant must build a defensible lump-sum budget by beneficiary and work package. The proposal template asks for personnel, other costs, total cost and total funding requested. The guide explicitly confirms direct personnel costs and excludes subcontracting; any material, equipment or travel item in "other costs" should be checked against the guide and helpdesk before inclusion, because a template field alone does not establish eligibility.

For a €60,000 beneficiary grant, the stated payment split implies €18,000 initially and €42,000 only after the final work and reporting have been approved. That is an illustration, not an awarded amount or guaranteed payment date. Applicants need working capital for development, the Paris and Athens in-person events, and any delay in final acceptance. The guide states no equity transfer, revenue share, advance before contracting, or separate co-financing percentage; the actual IP, audit and recovery terms sit in the predefined sub-grant agreement, which should be reviewed before signature.

A strong budget assigns real work and cost to each beneficiary. Adding partners to lift the headline ceiling can increase integration, administration and travel costs; there is no automatic €180,000 award.

7 Topic 1 LLMs for strategic decision support

The topic covers LLMs, agentic or neuro-symbolic methods, game-theoretic modelling, scenario generation and mission planning under uncertainty. On-premises or air-gapped operation, MSaaS interfaces, RAG, knowledge bases, traceable recommendations and human approval workflows are expressly relevant. Expected evidence includes prototype performance, accuracy, latency, hardware demands, robustness and operational limitations.

Strong fit: an SME with a working AI component, lawful test data, a defined operator task and a method for measuring false or unsafe recommendations. Weak fit: a generic chatbot or an autonomous order generator with no human approval and no credible simulation interface. Show what the operator sees, can contest, and remains responsible for. This is an EUnita application screen, not an extra eligibility rule.

8 Topic 2 Multi-physics and multi-domain simulation

The scope includes naval and submarine scenarios, electronic warfare, platform dynamics, environmental and cyber effects, digital twins, federated simulation and model interoperability. The valuable output is an executable component or model package with documented inputs, outputs, interfaces and validation, not merely a visual rendering.

Strong fit: a validated simulation component that improves fidelity, speed, scalability or cross-domain interaction and can be tested in a BattleVerse-like environment. Weak fit: a closed simulation with no interface plan or an expensive hardware-dependent demonstration that cannot be delivered in six months. Define the physical assumptions and the comparison baseline.

9 Topic 3 Distributed AI for UxV swarms

The topic seeks distributed coordination of heterogeneous unmanned systems, resilient communication, adaptive planning and collaborative action in contested or degraded settings. Proposals should state their shared situational-awareness assumptions and demonstrate human supervision, operational control, measurable coordination performance and interoperability with simulation services.

Strong fit: a testable distributed-AI method with defined failure cases, human intervention and reproducible scenarios. Weak fit: an autonomy claim without communication, safety or supervision tests, or a proposal that requires real-world classified assets to prove its result. Explain how the simulation represents degraded links and operator override.

10 Eligibility, admissibility and capacity

- Confirm each beneficiary is a legal entity established in EU-27, Norway or Ukraine; natural persons cannot apply. The lead must be an SME or start-up if applying alone; every consortium needs at least one.
- Verify SME status under the EU definition, including linked/partner-enterprise implications where relevant. The consortium may sample and request evidence
- Trace direct and indirect control, beneficial owners, special rights and material financial links. Control from outside EU-27, Norway or Ukraine is an exclusion risk under the guide.
- If using a university or RTO, explain its indispensable complementary task and why an available SME cannot provide it. Do not insert a nominal partner to reach €180,000.
- Check staff, infrastructure, data rights and cash capacity against the six-month deliverables and travel. The declaration requires statements on stable funding, resources, exclusions, conflicts and other EU grants.

The FAQ allows the same consortium to apply to more than one topic, but only one experiment can ultimately be selected per consortium. The same organisation cannot remain in two or more selected proposals; it must choose. Applicants should screen overlapping proposals and partners early.

11 Application process and document checklist

At submission	What the applicant must prepare
EMS general details	Lead organisation, type and country; experiment title and acronym; call and one selected technical topic. The authenticated draft screen displayed these fields on 28 September 2026.
EMS technical proposal	A summary of around 300 words covering objectives, sector and technologies, plus platform metadata such as keywords. The guide names General Details, Technical Proposal, Annexes and Submission as the process sections.
Proposal PDF	Use the official proposal template and its section order; English; no more than 15 evaluated pages; file no more than 20 MB. The guide says excess pages are truncated.
Mandatory annex	Declaration of Honour and Ownership Control, completed and signed by an authorised representative; verify each beneficiary's declaration and supporting ownership evidence.
Final action	Press Submit; a draft or upload alone does not complete submission. EMS accepts revised submitted versions before closure; retain the final receipt and PDF copy.

The live draft was viewed read-only and only its General details screen was directly inspected. The later EMS section names above come from the guide and FAQ, not an inferred portal screenshot. The public supporting-document tab lists the guide, FAQ, proposal template and declaration. No separate model sub-grant agreement, evaluation sheet, budget workbook or dated corrigendum was visible there on 28 September 2026.

12 Proposal content and limits

The official template uses three narrative sections: Technical Excellence (indicatively up to 3 pages), Impact (up to 5) and Implementation (up to 7). It requests a concept and SMART objectives; technical advance, architecture, method and starting/final TRL; measurable defence impact and BattleVerse collaboration; exploitation; work plan, Gantt chart, team/resources, risk, ethics/security/data and a beneficiary budget. These section allocations are indicative inside the 15-page evaluated limit. Evaluators will ignore links intended to bypass that limit.

Use A4 with at least 15 mm margins, Century Gothic 11 pt or larger for body text, standard spacing and at least single line spacing. The guide and official template agree on Century Gothic; the FAQ says Arial 11 pt. The stricter, repeated guide/template instruction is the safer rule. Do not use our EUnita report styling as the proposal template.

The proposal must contain no classified or restricted content. If implementation would need restricted assets, identify the need and explain it without disclosing protected information.

13 Evaluation, thresholds and ranking

Criterion	Score needed	What must be credible
Technical Excellence	At least 3/5	Novelty, precise objectives, robust method, BattleVerse relevance and plausible TRL path.
Impact	At least 4/5	Operational and technological value, realistic KPIs, replicability, European relevance and exploitation.
Implementation	At least 3/5	Six-month work plan, team, infrastructure, risks, security/data, eligible budget and resources.
Total	At least 11/15	Thresholds permit ranking; they do not guarantee selection.

The guide ranks proposals after evaluation and places other approved proposals on a reserve list. Equal scores are broken first by Impact, then Technical Excellence, then Implementation with attention to

resource efficiency. Final selection may also consider topic spread, geography, sector diversity and the consortium's coaching capacity. No topic quota, application volume or success probability has been published.

14 Legal, IP, data and security obligations

The selected beneficiary signs a predefined, non-negotiable sub-grant agreement with CERTH. The guide says it governs IP, record-keeping, reporting and payment, but the actual clauses were not part of the public source set reviewed. Before signing, check background IP access, new results, software/source-code delivery rights, confidentiality, dissemination approval, audit and recovery terms. No ownership or revenue-share formula should be assumed.

A signed declaration is a legal attestation covering truthful information, ownership and control, sufficient resources, exclusions, conflict of interest and double funding. Its ownership form requests detailed shareholder/control information and may require ID or passport copies. Handle those documents through the official secure route and confirm exactly what EMS requires. The declaration contains both "control" and "no control" alternatives; select and complete the applicable one, and obtain clarification where the form wording does not reflect the entity's facts.

Personal-data processing must comply with GDPR and national law. Experiments may be subject to BattleVerse project security instructions; the guide refers to a project security instruction document if classified BattleVerse information arises. This is not permission to include classified material in the proposal. Manage conflicts promptly and notify the coordinator of relevant ownership changes.

15 Implementation, monitoring and payment conditions

Month	Mandatory output or event	Practical implication
M1	Online kick-off; D1 experiment design and technical approach.	Agree KPIs, requirements, data plan and integration assumptions immediately.
M2	In-person learning expedition, Paris	Budget travel and the team member who can explain the experiment.
M3 and M5	Online individual monitoring.	Keep test evidence, risks and milestones current.
M4	D2 technical implementation and demonstration.	Provide architecture, interface/deployment material and validation evidence.
M6	In-person final evaluation/hackathon, Athens; D3 final report.	Demonstrate results and limits; complete exploitation and recommendations before final payment review.

Dissemination and exploitation are expected during and after the experiment, with participation in sector events and innovation-hub activities. The exact final-payment date is not published; the 70% balance depends on approval of all required deliverables and reports. Plan capacity for revisions and evidence retention.

16 Applicant fit and strategic angles

Strong candidates are eligible SMEs or start-ups with a testable component, a relevant defence use case, a defined user or operator task, and enough in-house capability to deliver within six months. A civilian technology can fit if the experiment credibly adapts it to the defence simulation need. Universities and RTOs can be complementary partners only with the guide's necessity justification.

Useful angles include an auditable human approval loop for Topic 1; a documented simulation interface and benchmarked physical fidelity for Topic 2; and degraded-communications plus operator override tests for Topic 3. These are examples of proposal positioning, not client-specific concepts or guarantees of selection.

Do not invest in a full proposal when an essential entity fails the country/control rule, the core work is subcontracted, the technology cannot be demonstrated at TRL 5 in six months, or the team cannot finance the post-grant-agreement work until final acceptance. These are EUnita screening conclusions drawn from the official requirements

17 Key risks and mitigations

Risk	Client action
Ownership or partner ineligibility	Map the full control chain and SME status before drafting; secure signed declarations and clarify uncertain structures with the helpdesk.
Weak BattleVerse connection	Show a concrete interface, data flow and target validation environment; state dependencies that remain unconfirmed.
Cash-flow gap	Plan delivery costs against a 30/70 payment split and unconfirmed approval timing.
Ineligible subcontracting	Keep core work within funded beneficiaries; ask the helpdesk before putting any external service in other costs.
Proposal/FAQ formatting conflict	Follow guide and template: Century Gothic 11 pt minimum, A4, 15 mm margins and 15 evaluated pages.
Sensitive data or unclear IP	Use non-classified submission content; verify data rights and review SGA clauses before signature.

18 Official links and source documents

[1] BattleVerse Open Call 1 Guide for Applicants, official EMS supporting document.
https://battleverse.ems-carsa.com/nfs/programme_5/call_1/call_preparation/BattleVerse_OC1%20Guide%20for%20Applicants_vFINAL.pdf

[2] BattleVerse Open Call 1 FAQ, official EMS supporting document.
https://battleverse.ems-carsa.com/nfs/programme_5/call_1/call_preparation/BattleVerse_OC1%20FAQ_vFINAL.pdf

[3] Official Proposal Template and Declaration of Honour and Ownership Control.
https://battleverse.ems-carsa.com/nfs/programme_5/call_1/call_preparation/BattleVerse_Open_Call_Proposal_Template.docx
https://battleverse.ems-carsa.com/nfs/programme_5/call_1/call_preparation/BattleVerse_Declaration%20of%20Honour%20and%20Ownership%20Control_Template.docx

[4] Live EMS call details, supporting-document list and application route.
https://battleverse.ems-carsa.com/call/detail/1

[5] BattleVerse public open-call page and webinar notice.
https://battleverse-project.eu/open-calls/

19 Final EUnita position by topic

Topic 1 — CONDITIONAL GO. Apply where the LLM tool supports a defined military planning or training task, provides auditable human control and can be validated for accuracy, safety and integration. An unspecialised chatbot is a poor fit

Topic 2 — CONDITIONAL GO. Apply where a multi-physics model or simulation component can be delivered with documented interfaces and measured improvements in realism, performance or interoperability. A standalone closed simulation is a poor fit.

Topic 3 — CONDITIONAL GO. Apply where distributed UxV coordination can be demonstrated in credible degraded scenarios with measurable performance and operator control. A swarm claim without supervision and failure testing is a poor fit.

20 How EUnita can help

EUnita can test strategic fit and go/no-go; interpret the guide and FAQ; check consortium and ownership constraints; structure a six-month experiment, work plan and budget; develop the proposal's technical, impact and implementation story with the applicant's evidence; review ethics, data, security and IP assumptions; and support final EMS consistency checks and submission. The applicant remains responsible for technical claims, signed declarations and the final submission decision.

EUnita contact

EUnita — EU Grant Advisory & Consultancy
David Gaburici, Managing Partner
david.gaburici@eunita.eu | +40 746 666 090 | www.eunita.eu