OPEN CALL ANALYSIS

EIC ACCELERATOR 2027

Open and four Challenges: lump-sum grants below €2.5 million and EIC Fund equity of €1 to 10 million for deep-tech SMEs and start-ups

EUnita strategic translation

The EIC Accelerator pays a single SME or start-up to finish the last, costly stage of a deep-tech innovation. A lump-sum grant below €2.5 million, covering at most 70% of eligible costs, pays for demonstration, prototyping and testing at TRL 6 to 8. An investment of €1 to 10 million from the EIC Fund, usually equity or quasi-equity, can pay for deployment and scale-up. A company asks for the grant, the investment or both. It sends a short proposal that four evaluators mark GO or NO GO, then a full proposal at one of four cut-offs in 2027, then pitches to a jury. What decides the outcome is a finished TRL 5, the strength of the innovation and team, and whether the company needs EU money because private investors will not fund the next stage alone.

EIC ACCELERATOR ANALYSIS

Fit assessment | Sources | What it funds | Boundaries | Budget & competition | Funded before | Who should apply | Eligibility | Money | Evaluation | Application & timeline | Risks | Recommendations

Short proposals at any time, batched monthly (next: 1 December 2026) | Full proposals only after a GO (or Fast Track or Plug-in): 20 January (with a GO in hand), 17 March, 1 September, 4 November 2027, 17:00 Brussels time

Call budget: €578 million (Open €428 million, Challenges €150 million) | Grant per company: below €2.5 million | Equity: €1 to 10 million | At least TRL 5 completed at entry

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Analysis date: 16 November 2026

*This analysis interprets the official call documentation for applicants. It is not legal advice. The official texts are the EIC Work Programme 2027 (Commission decision C(2026)7629), the Funding & Tenders Portal topic HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01, the short-proposal and full-proposal templates and the EIC Accelerator FAQ, checked on 16 November 2026; where this analysis and an official text differ, the official text prevails. Labels used: **Confirmed** (stated in an official source), **EUnita interpretation** (our reading or recommendation), **Derived estimate** (our arithmetic on official figures).*

1. Decision summary: is this call for you?

The EIC Accelerator is the European Innovation Council's route for scaling up deep-tech innovations in a single SME or start-up. The EIC Work Programme 2027 was launched on 5 November 2026 and is the final EIC Work Programme under Horizon Europe. It budgets €578 million: €428 million for Open (any field of technology) and €150 million for four Challenges. Support is a lump-sum grant below €2.5 million (ceiling €2,499,999), an EIC Fund investment of €1 to 10 million, or both together as blended finance. The route has two written steps before the jury. A short proposal can be submitted at any time and is batched on the first Tuesday of every month (next: 1 December 2026). Only a successful short proposal, or Fast Track or Plug-in, opens a full proposal, which goes to one of four cut-offs in 2027: 20 January, 17 March, 1 September and 4 November, each at 17:00 Brussels time (18:00 in Romania). A jury interview follows for the proposals that pass the remote evaluation. This analysis covers Open and the four Challenges; section 3 has a subsection for each Challenge.

Item	Confirmed position	Source
Scheme	EIC Accelerator, Horizon Europe: Open (no predefined themes) and four Challenges (ocean observation, climate-neutral and smart cities, fusion power plants, carbon removal and utilisation)	WP 2027 pp. 72–73, 92
Who runs it	The European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) is the granting authority for the grant component; DG RTD is the granting authority for the equity component; the EIC Fund manages the investment, with the European Investment Bank as adviser	WP 2027 pp. 81, 167 fn 247
Portal topic and status	HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01 (“Short proposal”), type of action HORIZON-EIC-ACC, lump-sum grant agreement. Status: open for submission since 10 November 2026; continuous model	Portal topic page and data file
Deadlines	Short proposals: at any time, batched on the first Tuesday of every month at 17h00 Brussels time (next: 1 December 2026). Full proposals, only after a successful short proposal or through Fast Track or Plug-in: 20 January, 17 March, 1 September and 4 November 2027, each at 17h00 Brussels time	WP 2027 pp. 78–79
Budget	€578 million indicative: Open €428 million (grant €171 million, equity €257 million); Challenges €150 million (grant €60 million, equity €90 million)	WP 2027 pp. 74, 167–168
Support	Grant only, blended finance or investment only. Grant: ceiling €2,499,999 (Table 1: “below EUR 2.5M”), eligible costs reimbursed up to 70%. Investment: €1 to 10 million, usually equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans	WP 2027 pp. 75–76
Who can apply	Restriction first: a single small mid-cap (up to 499 employees) may apply only for investment-only support or, in exceptional cases, blended finance for rapid scale-up. Otherwise a single SME in a Member State or Associated Country; natural persons or legal entities who intend to establish such a company or to invest in one	WP 2027 p. 73
TRL	At least TRL 5 completed at application. The grant funds innovation activities typically at TRL 6 to 8 (“e.g. at least TRL 6 to 8”). Fusion Challenge: TRL 4 to 6 at the point of application	WP 2027 pp. 72, 77, 100
Partners	One company applies. There is no consortium route	WP 2027 p. 73
Romania	Romania is a Member State. A Romanian SME applies on the same terms; the EIC says it uses no geographical criteria or quotas in selecting companies	WP 2027 p. 178; General FAQ
Steps	Short proposal, full proposal, jury interview; then grant agreement and, for equity, due diligence by the EIC Fund	WP 2027 pp. 77–83

Good fit

- ✓ An SME or start-up that has completed TRL 5 (validation in a relevant environment) and needs to fund prototype, system-level demonstration, testing or certification work at TRL 6 to 8
- ✓ A deep-tech company whose innovation builds on a scientific discovery or technological breakthrough and needs patient capital over a long time
- ✓ A company whose financing need is significantly higher than market actors can fund alone, ideally with early traction with investors
- ✓ A company that needs €1 to 10 million of equity, with or without a grant, for deployment and scale-up
- ✓ A team that can prepare a 12-page short proposal, a 10-slide deck and a 3-minute video now, and a full proposal and interview later
- ✓ A company working on ocean observation, climate-neutral and smart cities, fusion power plants or carbon removal and utilisation, which have their own Challenge budgets
- ✓ Founders or investors who intend to set up an SME in a Member State or Associated Country by the time of signature

Not a fit

- ✗ Teams below TRL 5, except in the Fusion Challenge (TRL 4 to 6 at application)
- ✗ Consortia and research organisations: one company applies
- ✗ Companies above SME size, except small mid-caps (up to 499 employees) asking for investment-only support or, exceptionally, blended finance
- ✗ Companies that need more than €10 million of equity: a separate call, EIC STEP Scale Up, covers €10 to 30 million
- ✗ Companies that want grant-only a second time: it is provided once per legal entity under Horizon Europe
- ✗ Entities with three unsuccessful submissions to the Accelerator since 1 January 2024
- ✗ Applicants who need a quick decision: the full-proposal panel result takes about 8 to 9 weeks and the investment decision usually 2 to 6 months after selection

EUnita verdict (interpretation)

A realistic route for an SME or start-up that has finished TRL 5 and can show why private investors will not fund the next stage alone. It is a selective three-step route with a hard limit: three unsuccessful submissions close the Accelerator to a legal entity under Horizon Europe. In the two rounds under the 2026 batches that the EIC has published, 38 companies were selected after 87 interviews and 35 after 88 interviews, and in the second round 35 from 453 full applications; these are past results of other companies, not an indication of any company's chance. The 2027 calendar is short: four full-proposal cut-offs, the last on 4 November 2027. A company with no short-proposal GO yet cannot follow the FAQ's advised lead time for 20 January 2027; 17 March 2027 is the first cut-off it can plan for (Derived estimate, section 11). This verdict is our reading of the documents. It is not an evaluation score or a chance of selection.

2. Source verification and document status

Confirmed: the facts below were checked against the official files and pages listed in the Sources section on 16 November 2026. “WP 2027” means the EIC Work Programme 2027 (Commission decision C(2026)7629). Page numbers are those of the PDF.

Document	Version and date	Status in this analysis
EIC Work Programme 2027	Commission decision C(2026)7629, 211 pages; the EIC page and the EIC news item date the launch 5 November 2026	Governing text for rules, budget, dates and Challenges
Portal topic HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01	Topic page and data file read 16 November 2026; status open; opened 10 November 2026	Identifiers, status, opening date, conditions and the submission link
Short-proposal template	Cover version 5.0, 23 October 2026; Part B version 3.0	Form and limits of step 1

Document	Version and date	Status in this analysis
Full-proposal template	Part B V2.2, 26 October 2026; cover version 3.0	Form and limits of step 2
Accelerator FAQ (EIC website)	Read 16 November 2026	Practical answers; partly worded on the 2026 text. The Work Programme prevails where they differ
Guide for applicants	Version 6.0, 19 November 2025 (the EIC page lists 20 November 2025)	Built on the 2026 Work Programme; background only
Annexes for the full proposal (archive)	Titled WP2026; EIC page date 9 July 2026	2026 version; the Portal template of October 2026 is used instead
EIC Fund Investment Guidelines	2026 version; EIC news item of 27 August 2026	Rules of the investment component; the Work Programme's figures prevail for the Accelerator
Lump Sum Model Grant Agreement, Lump Sum Decision, detailed budget table	Agreement version 1.0, 1 November 2024; Decision version 2.0 (date not yet filled in on the published copy)	Generic templates for lump-sum payment and reporting; terms are set in each grant agreement
Lists of selected companies and EIC news items	15 June 2026 and 16 November 2026	The only official data on companies selected under the 2026 batches
EIC Work Programme 2026 (17 June 2026; 5 November 2025), EIC Board statement and factsheets on WP 2027	As listed in the Sources section	Comparison with 2026 and context
Fast Track and Plug-in pages	Read 16 November 2026	Routes straight to the full proposal; the pages still cite Annex 3 of the 2024 and Annex 4 of the 2023 Work Programme, and Annexes 3 and 4 of the Work Programme 2027 prevail
EIC funding opportunities 2027 page	Read 16 November 2026	Summary figures; it states a €0.5 million minimum investment, and the Work Programme (p. 76) sets €1 million
Portal List of Participating Countries (Horizon Europe)	Version 4.2, 7 October 2026	Current list of associated countries and transitional arrangements; the Work Programme points to it for the up-to-date list (p. 178 fn 285)

Confirmed: on 16 November 2026 the EIC published a second selection round (35 companies, news item and list of that date). The Work Programme, the Portal topic and the two templates are the versions in the table. Statements marked (FAQ) rest on the Accelerator FAQ, which is partly worded on the 2026 text; statements marked (Guide v6.0) rest on a 2026 document. Where the Work Programme 2027 says otherwise, it prevails.

Where the official documents differ

- **Challenge 2.4.** Table 1 of the Work Programme calls it “Carbon removal and circularity …”; Section V.2.4 and the EIC Challenges page say “Carbon removal and utilisation …”. This analysis follows Section V.2.4.
- **End of the submission period.** The Portal topic shows a deadline date of 16 December 2027, 17:00:00 Brussels time, with a continuous model. The Work Programme sets four full-proposal cut-offs, the last on 4 November 2027. This analysis follows the Work Programme for cut-offs.
- **Investment size and TRL.** The EIC page and the factsheets say TRL 6 to 9 for the investment. The Investment Guidelines give €500,000 to €30 million per company “without prejudice to” the Work Programme. The EIC page on funding opportunities 2027 says €0.5 million to €10 million. The Work Programme gives the grant at least TRL 6 to 8 and the investment €1 to 10 million; this analysis follows it.
- **Small mid-cap.** Work Programme and Portal: up to 499 employees. FAQ: up to 500.
- **United Kingdom and the EIC Fund.** The Work Programme (p. 178 fn 286) associates the UK except for the investment component managed by the EIC Fund. The Portal's List of Participating Countries (version 4.2, 7 October 2026) also says the UK is associated with the only exception of the EIC Fund and lists a transitional arrangement for the UK for the EIC Fund (2026 and onwards) without saying what it changes. This analysis follows the Work Programme; the point is open (section 13).
- **Earlier short-proposal GOs.** The FAQ and Work Programme footnote 129 word the rule for GOs obtained under the 2024 and 2025 Work Programmes differently. This analysis follows the Work Programme.
- **Jury outcomes.** The FAQ speaks of a binary GO/NO GO and of a 2026 Challenge that no longer exists. The Work Programme 2027 adds the outcome GO Reserve.
- **Older documents.** The Guide for applicants and the full-proposal annexes archive are 2026 versions (six batches, the 2026 Challenges). The Challenges and Fast Track FAQ pages are partly worded on the 2026 text.
- **Apply button.** The “Apply for the EIC Accelerator” button on the EIC Accelerator page links to the 2026 topic HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01. Its own latest-information text says that call closed on 4 November 2026 and that proposals go to HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01.
- **Section numbers.** The Portal topic refers to “section IV” of the Work Programme for evaluation and specific conditions. In the 2027 text the Accelerator is section V.
- **Number of steps.** The EIC page says the selection process “comprises 3 steps” and the application process “consists of 4 steps” (the fourth is grant signature and due diligence). The Work Programme says three main steps.

3. What the call funds

Confirmed: the 2027 Work Programme is “the final Work Programme under Horizon Europe” (WP 2027 p. 12). The Accelerator “supports companies (principally SMEs, including start-ups) to scale up high impact innovations with the potential to create new markets or disrupt existing ones”. It focuses on innovations that build on scientific discovery or technological breakthroughs (deep-tech) and need significant funding over a long time (“patient capital”) (p. 72). The technology “must have been tested and validated in a laboratory and other relevant environment (e.g., at least Technology Readiness Level 5 completed)”. The Work Programme reads this as all aspects of TRL 5 completed (p. 77, fn 124).

There are two routes. **Accelerator Open** has no predefined thematic priorities and accepts any field of technology or application. **Accelerator Challenges** address predefined areas (pp. 72–73). An applicant chooses one.

Three forms of support

Form	What it is	Note
Grant only	A lump-sum grant under a grant agreement	Provided only once to a beneficiary during Horizon Europe, for a maximum of €2.5 million (the ceiling for a grant component is €2,499,999, p. 76). The beneficiary must be a start-up or an SME and the project must show capacity and willingness to scale up (p. 75)
Blended finance	A grant component plus an investment component, usually direct equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans, under an investment agreement	The two are "intrinsically interlinked". For example, the Agency may terminate the grant component if the EIC Fund rejects the investment or the applicant declines the offer (p. 75 fn 118)
Investment only (equity-only)	The investment component alone	€1 to 10 million; higher amounts are available under the EIC STEP Scale Up call (p. 76)

What the grant can pay for

- Confirmed: 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 TRL 6 to 8" (pp. 76–77).
- Confirmed: innovation activities "should normally be completed within 24 months but may be longer in well justified cases". Subcontracting is allowed, including, only if justified, for activities essential to the objectives (p. 77).
- Confirmed (FAQ): clinical trials are innovation activities at TRL 6 to 8 and can be in the grant component.
- Confirmed: eligible costs are reimbursed up to 70%; the beneficiary pays the other 30% from its own resources (pp. 75–76).

What the investment can pay for

- Confirmed: the investment component "is intended to finance market deployment and scale up". It can be requested in parallel to the grant, where it may co-finance innovation activities, or at a later stage during the grant (p. 76).
- Confirmed (FAQ): there are no restrictions on the use of the investment component. The investment can cover both innovation activities (up to TRL 8) and market or scale-up activities (above TRL 8).

The four Challenges of 2027

Challenge	Budget	What sets it apart (details in the subsections below)	WP pages
V.2.1 Advanced in-situ Ocean Observation Technologies for Scalable, High-Resolution Marine Monitoring	€30 million	Proposals should quantify the improvement over current practice and address the full life cycle of the system	92–94
V.2.2 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities	€50 million	A letter of intent from a city of the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission is strongly encouraged	94–97
V.2.3 Alternative Concepts and Key Enabling Technologies for Fusion Power Plants	€20 million in 2027	TRL 4 to 6 at application; at least 50% of the indicative budget is expected to go to entities in Member States or countries associated to both Euratom and Horizon Europe	97–100

Challenge	Budget	What sets it apart (details in the subsections below)	WP pages
V.2.4 Carbon removal and utilisation for climate change mitigation and EU industrial resilience	€50 million	Storing captured fossil CO2 as a gas without chemical transformation, and hydrogen production technologies, are not within the scope	100–102

- Confirmed: all four Challenges fall within the scope of the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) (p. 92). A project submitted under a STEP-relevant Challenge is also awarded the Sovereignty (STEP) Seal if it is recommended as a GO or as a NO GO with a Seal of Excellence (p. 85).
- Confirmed: the budget of an underused Challenge is transferred to Open projects aligned with its scope (p. 92). Challenge proposals are also assessed, at the full-proposal stage only, on Challenge alignment (“Does the innovation contribute to the expected Challenge outcomes?”) and, within STEP scope, on STEP impact; Open proposals are not (Table 8, p. 86).
- Confirmed (FAQ): EISMEA does not transfer proposals from one call to another, and does not declare a proposal out of scope if it is submitted to Open although it meets the requirements of a Challenge. The FAQ allows an applicant to ask the helpdesk to move a proposal only after an obvious clerical error.
- Confirmed: potential dual-use applications may be supported, “while advancing civilian application use”, under both Open and Challenges. They are assessed on the same criteria and get no preferential treatment (pp. 73, 85). Proposals with potential nuclear applications are eligible (p. 72 fn 112).
- Confirmed: all successful proposals also receive Business Acceleration Services (p. 75; amounts in section 9).

Confirmed: all four Challenges share the same four full-proposal cut-offs, the same forms of support, the same applicant rules and one Portal topic for the short proposal (HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01). The Work Programme names two budget lines: HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOROPEN-01 and HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATORCHALLENGES-01. The two Challenge-only criteria are Challenge alignment (“Does the innovation contribute to the expected Challenge outcomes?”) and STEP impact (a clear and measurable positive impact by bringing to the Union's internal market an innovative, emerging and cutting-edge innovation with significant economic potential, or by reducing or preventing strategic dependencies of the Union; applicants from Associated Countries must demonstrate contributions to the EU internal market or strategic dependencies). In a GO Reserve tie, Challenge proposals rank ahead of Open proposals after women-led companies (p. 84 fn 137). What differs between the Challenges is set out below, following Section V.2 of the Work Programme 2027 (pp. 92–102).

V.2.1 Advanced in-situ Ocean Observation Technologies for Scalable, High-Resolution Marine Monitoring (WP 2027 pp. 92–94)

- Budget: €30 million indicative (Work Programme 2027, pp. 92–94). Criteria: the Accelerator criteria plus Challenge alignment and STEP impact, at the full-proposal stage only (Table 8, p. 86).
- TRL: At least TRL 5 completed at application; the grant funds innovation activities typically at TRL 6 to 8 (pp. 72, 77).
- Scope: Deep-tech innovations that address one (or more) of five priorities: autonomous ocean observation systems (sensor networks across the surface, water column and seabed, autonomous marine vehicles, long-endurance and connected systems, underwater communication); integrated ocean observation and mapping systems; AI-ready and interoperable data ecosystems (AI-driven ocean data analytics, FAIR datasets); persistent and connected observation capabilities with civil, environmental, economic and security applications; and scalable biodiversity monitoring

(eDNA-based approaches, AI-enabled species and habitat detection).

- Expected outcomes: Expected outcomes include stronger European leadership in strategic ocean observation technologies and services, a contribution to the European Digital Twin Ocean, a stronger industrial base from sensors to data services, collaboration between SMEs, industry, investors, researchers and public institutions, and an investment-ready blue economy; the Challenge also supports the Ocean Eye objective.
- Specific points: Across all priorities, proposals should quantify the improvement expected over current practice (the metric, the baseline and how it will be measured) and address the full life cycle of the system, including end-of-life management and, where possible, reuse of sensors and hardware deployed at sea. Applicants are encouraged to engage end users such as weather and climate services, shipping, fisheries and aquaculture, offshore energy, telecommunications, insurance and environmental protection.

V.2.2 Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities (WP 2027 pp. 94–97)

- Budget: €50 million indicative (Work Programme 2027, pp. 94–97). Criteria: the Accelerator criteria plus Challenge alignment and STEP impact, at the full-proposal stage only (Table 8, p. 86).
- TRL: At least TRL 5 completed at application; the grant funds innovation activities typically at TRL 6 to 8 (pp. 72, 77).
- Scope: Deep-tech solutions, including nature-based solutions and engineering approaches, that address one of three priorities: energy and buildings (decarbonisation of energy use, supply and management in the built environment, for example retrofitting, renewable integration and storage, smart thermal networks, long-term storage); transport and mobility (decarbonising urban transport with a specific focus on public transport, for example smart bidirectional charging, autonomous SAE L4 public-transport solutions, congestion reduction and traffic management); and resource management (circular resource management, for example recycling and reuse of urban waste streams, and water resource planning and wastewater processing). The examples in the Work Programme are “such as, but not limited to”.
- Expected outcomes: Expected outcomes include measurable decarbonisation improvements in buildings and energy, mobility and resource management, scalable solutions that can be adapted to different urban contexts, and tangible benefits for residents and the environment. Through its Business Acceleration Services, especially the innovation procurement programme, the EIC will connect supported companies with the network of cities in the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission.
- Specific points: Applicants are strongly encouraged to engage with at least one city that is part of the Climate-Neutral and Smart Cities Mission and to secure a clear commitment in the form of a letter of intent underlining interest in the proposed solution; connections can be facilitated through the Cities Mission Platform. Applicants may also explore synergies with projects supported by the Driving Urban Transitions (DUT) Partnership.

V.2.3 Alternative Concepts and Key Enabling Technologies for Fusion Power Plants (WP 2027 pp. 97–100)

- Budget: €20 million indicative (Work Programme 2027, pp. 97–100); a continuation of the 2026 Challenge, supported by a transfer from Euratom (p. 98, fn 170). Criteria: the Accelerator criteria plus Challenge alignment and STEP impact, at the full-proposal stage only (Table 8, p. 86).
- TRL: TRL 4 to 6 at the point of application (“The TRLs of applicants can therefore vary from 4 to 6”, p. 100); the grant funds innovation activities typically at TRL 6 to 8.
- Scope: Companies focused on one or more elements of the fusion value chain: alternative concepts (magnetic, inertial and magneto-inertial fusion, at system level or for core components); advanced materials for extreme conditions; sustainable and stable fuel production (tritium

production and a closed tritium fuel cycle); new laser technologies for inertial confinement fusion; new components and systems for plasma heating and current drive; magnets; advanced digital technologies (AI, machine learning, digital twins); targets for inertial confinement fusion; and other key enabling technologies, which will also be considered.

- Expected outcomes: Expected outcomes include keeping European technology leadership and building a value chain for the commercialisation of fusion (expected in 2040), more competitive European fusion companies, new deep-tech start-ups and SMEs in the sector, and the scale-up of technologies that address critical bottlenecks for commercially viable fusion power plants.
- Specific points: Fusion systems integrate technologies of varying maturity, so the TRL of applicants “can … vary from 4 to 6 at the point of application for support”. Whatever area a company addresses, it should show how the innovation advances the TRL or addresses one or more critical bottlenecks, including cost-effectiveness, in the design, construction and operation of commercially viable fusion power plants. The Challenge is supported by a transfer of budget from the Euratom Research and Training Programme. Because of that contribution, at least 50% of the indicative budget is expected to go to legal entities established in Member States or countries associated to both Euratom and Horizon Europe. The 2027 Challenge continues the 2026 Challenge.

V.2.4 Carbon removal and utilisation for climate change mitigation and EU industrial resilience (WP 2027 pp. 100–102)

- Budget: €50 million indicative (Work Programme 2027, pp. 100–102). Criteria: the Accelerator criteria plus Challenge alignment and STEP impact, at the full-proposal stage only (Table 8, p. 86).
- TRL: At least TRL 5 completed at application; the grant funds innovation activities typically at TRL 6 to 8 (pp. 72, 77).
- Scope: Deep-tech innovations that address one (or more) of three priorities: technologies for carbon dioxide removal (permanent removal and removal with storage in products as defined by the CRCF Regulation, such as DACCS, BioCCS and biochar, and approaches without a CRCF methodology yet, such as enhanced rock weathering, direct ocean capture, alkalinity enhancement and CO2 mineralisation in products); CO2 capture and utilisation technologies, agnostic to the carbon source, converting captured carbon into fuels, chemicals and materials, and agriculture, food and feed uses; and technologies for quantifying, monitoring and verifying environmental impact, such as removal or reduction impact and methane leakage emissions.
- Expected outcomes: Expected outcomes include faster scale-up of CCU and CDR technologies, demonstration at industrially relevant scales, sustainable solutions that minimise the use of critical and strategic raw materials, a competitive European carbon removal value chain, and new business models with early links to end users and buyers. Selected beneficiaries get tailored Business Acceleration Services, including facilitated access to the EU CRCF Buyers' Club.
- Specific points: “Solutions focused on storing captured fossil CO2 as a gas without chemical transformation and hydrogen production technologies are not within the scope of this Challenge.” Applicants may consider engaging an independent carbon ratings agency recognised by the European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) to assess the carbon removal potential of their projects.

4. Boundaries: avoid the wrong door

The Accelerator is not a research grant, not a consortium call and not a source of large equity tickets. The points below are drawn from the Work Programme and the FAQ.

What it does not fund

- Confirmed: work below TRL 5 completed (pp. 72, 77 fn 124). The one exception is the Fusion Challenge, where TRL at application may vary from 4 to 6 (p. 100).
- Confirmed: consortium projects. The applicant is a single company (p. 73).
- Confirmed: companies other than SMEs, except small mid-caps (up to 499 employees) for investment-only support or, in exceptional cases, blended finance (p. 73), and natural persons or legal entities that intend to establish or back such a company (p. 73).
- Confirmed: in the carbon removal Challenge, storing captured fossil CO2 as a gas without chemical transformation and hydrogen production technologies (pp. 100–102).
- Confirmed: equity above €10 million. “Higher amounts are available under the EIC STEP Scale Up call” (p. 76).
- Confirmed: proposals containing EU classified information (p. 80).

Neighbouring doors

Door	What it is	Source
EIC STEP Scale Up	Equity of €10 million up to €30 million; cut-offs 28 January, 29 April, 6 September and 24 November 2027; €290 million. A concurrent submission with the Accelerator is not permitted	WP 2027 pp. 11, 74
EIC STEP Scale Up Defence	Cut-off 1 June 2027; €100 million. A concurrent submission with the Accelerator is not permitted	WP 2027 pp. 11, 74
EIC Transition	Grant below €2.5 million to move from TRL 3 to TRL 5 or beyond; cut-off 14 September 2027	WP 2027 pp. 10–11
EIC Pathfinder and Advanced Innovation Challenges	Earlier-stage or different schemes of the same Work Programme	WP 2027 pp. 10–11
Scaleup Europe Fund	Equity above €30 million	WP 2027 p. 11
WomenTechEU	A separate scheme	WP 2027 p. 12

Confirmed: a Seal of Excellence from the Accelerator “does not in itself give the right to apply directly to the full proposal” (FAQ). Seals are described in section 10.

5. Budget, competition and expected number of grants

Confirmed: the total indicative budget for 2027 is €578 million, of which €347 million is for the investment components managed by the EIC Fund (pp. 74, 167–168).

Budget line	Grant component	Investment component	Total	Source
Open (HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOROPEN-01)	€171 million	€257 million	€428 million	WP 2027 pp. 167–168
Challenges (HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATORCHALLENGES-01)	€60 million	€90 million	€150 million	WP 2027 pp. 167–168
Total	€231 million (derived: 171 + 60)	€347 million	€578 million	WP 2027 pp. 74, 167–168

- Confirmed: the Challenge budgets are ocean observation €30 million, cities €50 million, fusion €20 million and carbon removal and utilisation €50 million. Derived estimate: 30 + 50 + 20 + 50 = €150 million, which matches the stated total.
- Confirmed: the budgets are indicative and the final figures “may change by up to 20%” (p. 167 fn 248). Open may be increased by amounts committed but not allocated under earlier cut-offs and by divestments (fn 249). The investment amount may be increased by unused amounts allocated to the EIC Fund under earlier Work Programmes (p. 74).
- Confirmed: a reserve of €30 million is set for follow-on investments and for the investment component of “Grant first” companies (p. 168). Up to €20 million (indicative) may go to Western Balkans SMEs on the Seal of Excellence reserve list, subject to transfers from the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (pp. 74–75).
- Confirmed: grant budgets are spread “approximately equally” between the interview sessions. If the amount for GO applicants is less than a session's budget, the rest moves to the next session (p. 75).

Competition and expected number of grants

- Confirmed: “A number of proposals requesting approximately 2.5 times the available grant budget will be invited to interview”, or fewer if quality is insufficient (p. 84 fn 136). Derived estimate: 2.5 × €231 million is about €578 million of grant requests invited to interview across 2027. This is arithmetic on the rule, not a forecast of applicants.
- Derived estimate: at a ceiling of about €2.5 million per grant, €231 million would pay about 92 grants (231 ÷ 2.5 = 92.4). The real number depends on grant sizes and on how many awards are equity-only. The Work Programme does not state an expected number of grants.
- Not published: the number of applicants and the success rate for the 2027 batches. The two official 2026 rounds are in section 6.

Change against 2026

Item	Work Programme 2026 (17 June 2026)	Work Programme 2027
Total budget	€634 million	€578 million
Open	€414 million	€428 million
Challenges	€220 million	€150 million
Investment components	€380 million	€347 million
Full-proposal batches	Six (7 January, 4 March, 6 May, 8 July, 2 September, 4 November 2026)	Four (20 January, 17 March, 1 September, 4 November 2027)

Source: WP 2026 p. 74 and p. 79; WP 2027 pp. 74 and 79. The 2027 text describes the change as an “optimization of the evaluation calendar through four Accelerator batches” (p. 12).

6. What has been funded before

Confirmed: the EIC has published two rounds of selected companies under the 2026 batches. Both come from official EIC news items and lists. They cover the 2026 Work Programme, which had five Challenges, and say nothing about the 2027 batches.

Item	News item of 15 June 2026 (1st and 2nd batch 2026)	News item of 16 November 2026 (3rd and 4th batch 2026)
Companies selected	38	35

Item	News item of 15 June 2026 (1st and 2nd batch 2026)	News item of 16 November 2026 (3rd and 4th batch 2026)
Proposals that reached the interview stage	87	88
Full applications received	Not stated in the news item	453
Total proposed funding for grants	€90 million (grant support only); a further €202 million is provisioned for potential equity investments	€84 million; 32 companies will be assessed for equity investments of up to €10 million each by the EIC Fund
Countries represented	16 EU and associated countries; most from France, United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland	17 EU and associated countries; most from France, Switzerland and Germany
Companies led by women	21%	31%
Further applications above the threshold (Seal of Excellence)	95	74
STEP Seals under the Challenges	12	13
Form of support in the list (our count of the list)	32 blended finance, 1 equity only, 5 grant only	32 blended finance, 1 equity only, 2 grant only

- Confirmed (counts as published): 38 companies were selected after 87 interviews in the first round, and 35 after 88 interviews in the second round, which had 453 full applications. These are past results of other companies under the 2026 batches; they are not an indication of any company's chance.
- Derived estimate: €90 million over the 37 companies with a grant component is about €2.4 million each; €84 million over 34 is about €2.5 million each.
- Confirmed: the first news item says 84% of beneficiaries were eligible for blended finance, with the others receiving grant-only or equity-only support. Both items say grant agreements for most selected companies are expected to be finalised within the next three months.
- Confirmed (our reading of both lists): neither list names a company from Romania.
- Not published: success rates and applicant numbers for 2027. Official figures for the earlier rounds show the level of competition; they are not a forecast.

7. Who should apply, and with which ideas

EUnita interpretation: the route suits a company that is already building a product and is close to the market, not a team still proving its science. The profiles below follow the applicant rules (WP 2027 p. 73) and the evaluation criteria (pp. 85–88).

Who should apply

- An SME or start-up established in a Member State or Associated Country, with TRL 5 completed and a plan for TRL 6 to 8 work, such as system-level demonstration, regulatory testing or certification.
- A company whose next step costs more than private investors will fund alone. The short-proposal criteria ask for early traction with investors and a financing need significantly higher than market actors can finance alone (pp. 85–87).
- Founders who do not yet have a company: natural persons may apply if they intend to establish an SME or small mid-cap by the time of signing the grant agreement (investment agreement for

equity-only).
- Investors who intend to back an SME or small mid-cap and have a prior agreement with it: they may submit on its behalf.
- Companies from outside the associated countries that intend to establish or relocate an SME to a Member State or Associated Country. They must prove effective establishment at the time of the full proposal.
- Small mid-caps (up to 499 employees) that need investment-only support or, in exceptional cases, blended finance for rapid scale-up.
- Romanian SMEs and start-ups: Romania is a Member State and the EIC applies no geographical quotas.

Ideas that fit

- Deep-tech innovations in any field under Open: the innovation builds on a scientific discovery or technological breakthrough and has the potential to create a new market or disrupt an existing one.
- Under a Challenge: autonomous ocean observation and ocean data systems; urban energy, public transport or resource-management solutions with a city partner; fusion value-chain technologies; carbon dioxide removal, capture and utilisation, with monitoring and verification.
- Dual-use technologies, with the civilian application advanced and the same criteria applied.
- A “Grant first” route for a company that is not yet mature for investment: the EIC Fund may recommend starting with the grant, and the investment decision must be taken during the project or within one year after its end (p. 82).

Ideas that do not fit

- Concept-stage or laboratory work without TRL 5 completed.
- Incremental improvements without a deep-tech or breakthrough element, or with a financing need that the market can cover.
- Projects that depend on a consortium of partners; one company is the applicant.
- Under the carbon removal Challenge: storing captured fossil CO2 as a gas without chemical transformation, and hydrogen production.

8. Eligibility checklist

Marks: ✓ a condition stated in the official texts; ✗ a stated exclusion or limit; ? a point the documents leave open or that depends on the applicant's own facts. Source pages are in the Work Programme 2027 unless stated.

✓	A single company classified as an SME and established in a Member State or an Associated Country (p. 73). SME: Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC; the glossary gives fewer than 250 persons and turnover up to €50 million or balance sheet up to €43 million (p. 24).
✗	Restriction first: a small mid-cap (up to 499 employees; glossary, p. 24) may apply only for investment-only support or for blended finance in exceptional cases for rapid scale-up (p. 73). It cannot apply for grant-only support.
✓	Natural persons (including individual entrepreneurs) or legal entities that intend to establish an SME or small mid-cap by signature, that intend to invest in one with a prior agreement, or from a non-associated country that intend to establish or relocate one in a Member State or an Associated Country and can prove effective establishment at the full-proposal stage. Natural persons use the same PIC at the full proposal (p. 73 fn 114).
✓	At least TRL 5 completed: validation in a relevant environment (pp. 72, 77 fn 124). Fusion Challenge: TRL 4 to 6 at application (p. 100).

✓	Grant-only: a start-up or an SME, once per legal entity during Horizon Europe, at most €2.5 million, with information on capacity and willingness to scale up (p. 75).
✓	Companies in an associated country apply in the same way as Member State companies (FAQ). Countries associated to Horizon Europe are listed on pp. 177–178; the Overseas Countries and Territories linked to Member States are eligible on the same terms (p. 178 fn 284); the Portal's List of Participating Countries (version 4.2, 7 October 2026) prevails (fn 285).
✓	A Portal account with two-factor authentication, which has been mandatory since 30 June 2026, and a PIC for each participant in the Participant Register (Portal topic; pp. 169–171).
✓	Parent or holding company: say so in the application for the investment component. The EIC Fund may invest in the parent if it meets all criteria (p. 90).
✓	Control restriction: for grant-only, a call may limit participation to entities not controlled by a non-eligible third country, but only where its text says so. None of the four 2027 Challenge texts states such a condition (pp. 16–17, 92–102).
✗	Three unsuccessful submissions by the same legal entity since 1 January 2024, at any stage and for any form of support, bar it from applying again to the Accelerator under Horizon Europe (p. 88). A successful short proposal does not count (FAQ).
✗	Concurrent submissions to the Accelerator, EIC STEP Scale Up and STEP Scale Up Defence before feedback on the earlier one: only the most recent is evaluated (pp. 74, 170).
✗	Concurrent implementation: a company with an ongoing EIC Accelerator, EIC Pilot or SME Instrument grant project may not submit another full proposal with a grant component before that project reaches its end date; an ongoing grant-only project may be eligible to apply for blended finance or investment-only (Annex 2, pp. 170–171, fn 258).
✗	Entities subject to EU restrictive measures, in any capacity. Applicants undertake that their ultimate beneficial owners are not listed and that they do not deal with designated persons (an Obligation of Result) (pp. 176–177).
✗	Legal entities established in Russia, Belarus or non-government-controlled territories of Ukraine, and entities established elsewhere that are more than 50% owned, directly or indirectly, by an entity established in Russia, are not eligible in any capacity, even where no EU restrictive measure applies to them; exceptions are possible case by case for justified reasons (Annex 2, p. 177).
✗	More than €10 million of equity, and consortium proposals (pp. 73, 76).
?	Whether the Annex 2 exclusion of entities established in China, worded for “Research and Innovation Actions or Innovation Actions”, applies to the Accelerator (type of action HORIZON-EIC-ACC): the Work Programme does not say (p. 173). Confirm with your National Contact Point before relying on it.
?	United Kingdom and the EIC Fund: the Work Programme associates the UK except for the EIC Fund investment (p. 178 fn 286), so a UK entity can apply for grant-only; the Portal's List of Participating Countries (version 4.2, 7 October 2026) also mentions transitional arrangements for the UK for the EIC Fund without saying what they change. Whether they change the position for the Accelerator is open: confirm with your National Contact Point before relying on it.
?	Language: the Work Programme sets no language for the proposal. The full-proposal template asks for an English version of the abstract if Part B is written in another language. The video may be in any EU language and may include subtitles, and the interviews take place in English (Guide v6.0, a 2026 document; to verify in the 2027 interview invitation).
?	Loss of SME status or an ownership change during the project: assessed case by case and may be grounds for termination (FAQ).

9. How the money works

Item	Rule	Source
Grant component	Lump sum. Eligible costs are reimbursed up to a maximum of 70% within the ceiling of €2,499,999. Blended finance may have a higher grant in exceptional and well-justified cases. The 30% co-funding of the grant work packages must come from the beneficiary's own resources	WP 2027 pp. 75–76
How the lump sum is set	Applicants propose the lump sum from estimated project costs; the amount is fixed in the evaluation. The Jury may recommend a lower grant, for example if some activities go beyond TRL 8	WP 2027 pp. 77, 84
Duration of the grant work	Normally completed within 24 months; longer in well-justified cases	WP 2027 p. 77
Investment component	€1 to 10 million, usually direct equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans. Terms are negotiated case by case under the EIC Fund Investment Guidelines	WP 2027 p. 76
Flexibility amount	The award decision sets the maximum investment at the requested amount plus a flexibility amount of up to €2 million per proposal, usable only if the EIC Fund has enough available (for example unused budget)	WP 2027 p. 81
Investment Guidelines	Instruments may be convertible instruments (including loans, bonds, notes, participation rights and SAFE), a mix with direct equity, or direct equity. Minority stakes “aiming in general at stakes between ten per cent (10%) and twenty per cent (20%)”. The Guidelines give €500,000 to €30 million per company “without prejudice to” the Work Programme; for the Accelerator, €1 to 10 million applies	Guidelines 2026 paras 1.14–1.16; WP 2027 p. 76
One award decision	A single Commission award decision covers both components of a blended-finance or equity-only award. The EIC Fund decides the amount and terms of the investment in compliance with its guidelines	WP 2027 pp. 81–82
Investment timing	Usually “approximately between two to six months since the selection for funding”. If no round is foreseen within six months, the company is taken out of the process and can re-enter within the limits in the Work Programme	WP 2027 p. 82 and fn 134
Investment can be refused	The investment may be rejected, for example after due diligence, compliance checks, irregularities, misrepresentation or a manifest error in an earlier assessment. The Agency may then suspend or terminate the grant agreement	WP 2027 pp. 82–83
Follow-on investment	Additional amounts up to €10 million, limited to exceptional cases, with external review and an amended award decision	WP 2027 p. 89
Payments	After signature of the grant agreement, “a first pre-financing payment in accordance with the relevant provisions of the grant agreement”. The pre-financing percentage and the payment schedule are not published in the EIC documents	WP 2027 p. 81
Reporting	Follows the Lump Sum Model Grant Agreement (version 1.0, 1 November 2024) and the Lump Sum Decision (version 2.0, date not yet filled in on the published copy); the EIC documents give no further schedule	MGA; Lump Sum Decision
Business Acceleration Services	Applicants who pass the short proposal: 3 days of coaching. Awardees: 12 days of coaching and more if justified; access to ecosystem partners; up to 50% co-funding of services from EIC ecosystem partners to a maximum of €60,000 per beneficiary; up to €60,000 for pilots and testing with public and private buyers	WP 2027 pp. 126–127

Item	Rule	Source
Investment safeguards	Safeguards go into the investment agreement where the project falls within AI, quantum, semiconductors or biotechnology, involves one of the specific technologies listed in the Commission's economic-security recommendation, has the development of that technology as its core purpose, and the award decision identifies the need. The EIC Fund keeps IP and value in the EU or Associated Countries through case-by-case safeguards. For the grant, the beneficiary informs the Agency if IP is proposed to be transferred to an entity in a non-associated third country	WP 2027 pp. 17–18, 76–77, 91

Blended finance links the two components

Confirmed: in blended finance the grant and the investment are “intrinsically interlinked”. A lack of progress on the investment that is attributable to the beneficiary may lead to suspension of payment deadlines or termination of the grant agreement, including failure to cooperate with the EIC Fund process, with KYC and anti-money-laundering requirements or with co-investor discussions (WP 2027 pp. 75, 82).

10. Evaluation

Confirmed: the process has three main steps (WP 2027 p. 77). The table sets out who assesses each step and what the outcome means.

Step	Who assesses	What the outcome is and what it gives
1. Short proposal	Four EIC expert evaluators, with competences matching the technology and market. Each gives GO or NO GO on each evaluation element	At least three GOs out of four: the short proposal is successful. At least two NO GOs out of four: it is rejected. Feedback comes from the four evaluators either way. A GO lets the company submit a full proposal to any of the 2027 batches; the applicant may receive 3 days of remote coaching with a business coach chosen from a database. A GO is not funding and not an invitation to interview
2. Full proposal	One external technology expert, who holds an online meeting with the applicants, and an evaluation panel of at least three independent experts per batch. The panel agrees the final score	Thresholds: 4 out of 5 on each criterion and 13 out of 15 overall. About 2.5 times the available grant budget is invited to interview; fewer if quality is insufficient. Proposals above the threshold that are not invited or funded can receive a Seal of Excellence, as described below
3. Interview	The EIC Jury, which sees the full proposal and the panel report. The FAQ (partly worded on the 2026 text; the invitation sets the final format) describes 45 minutes (a 10-minute pitch and 35 minutes of questions), a jury of up to six members, in Brussels or remote, with up to three company representatives; consultants and other third parties must not take part	GO: recommended for funding within the budget. GO Reserve: second interview session only; may be funded if budget becomes available after the selected proposals from all 2027 cut-offs are funded. NO GO: not recommended
4. Grant and investment preparation	The Agency (grant) and the EIC Fund with the EIB as adviser (investment)	Grant agreement preparation. For the investment: compliance checks (KYC, AML/CTF, tax compliance, sanctions), due diligence, syndication of co-investors, tranches and milestones. The decision on the investment is the EIC Fund's

Criteria

- Confirmed, short proposal (Table 8): innovation, including its deep-tech and breakthrough nature; TRL, meaning TRL 5 completed and feasible, realistic pathways to the projected TRLs; intellectual property; market opportunity, including civilian and defence demand where a credible business case exists in both; team capability; and the risk level of the investment and its leverage effect (early traction with investors; a financing need significantly higher than market actors can finance alone) (pp. 85–87).
- Confirmed, full proposal: the three criteria are Excellence, Impact, and Level of risk, implementation and need for Union support, each with a threshold of 4 out of 5, and an overall threshold of 13 out of 15 (pp. 85–87). Elements include the business model; broader impact (European technological leadership, reduced dependencies, environmental and social impact); Challenge alignment and STEP impact (Challenges only); risk management; and, for grant-only and blended finance, the implementation plan and the reasonableness of the lump-sum costs.
- Confirmed: for blended finance and equity-only, the panel asks whether EIC Fund investment can catalyse other investment within a period of 6 months to 2 years. For grant-only, it asks about access to resources to commercialise and scale up, and about the need for EIC grant support (pp. 86–88).
- Confirmed: evaluators do not see previous submissions or evaluator comments from earlier rounds (FAQ).

Tie-breaks and ranking

- Confirmed: “in the case of ex-aequo score, female led companies will be given priority” (p. 84 fn 136).
- Confirmed: the GO Reserve list is ranked by the number of criteria scored GO, then by the remote evaluation score. Ties go first to women-led companies, then to proposals under a Challenge, then to the highest Impact score, then to the earlier submission date (p. 84 fn 137).
- Confirmed: the Jury may recommend a lower grant but does not change the investment amount or the form of support (p. 84).

Seals and review

- Confirmed: applicants that reach the thresholds but are not invited to interview, or are not funded after interview (NO GO or GO Reserve), receive a Seal of Excellence if the Jury confirms the panel's assessment. A project under a STEP-relevant Challenge is also awarded the Sovereignty (STEP) Seal if it is recommended as a GO or as a NO GO with a Seal of Excellence (pp. 83–85).
- Confirmed: an evaluation review can concern procedural aspects only. “The evaluation of the merits of a proposal will not be the subject of an evaluation review.” The request is made within 30 days after the beneficiary accesses the evaluation results and is limited to 7,000 characters (p. 193).

What each result means

- **Short proposal, GO (at least three of four evaluators):** you may submit a full proposal to a 2027 batch and may receive 3 days of remote coaching. Nothing is awarded.
- **Full proposal:** the remote evaluation gives scores against the thresholds. Proposals that reach them can be invited to interview; the number invited follows the rule of about 2.5 times the available grant budget.
- **Interview, GO:** the Jury recommends the proposal for funding within the budget. The grant is then prepared; any investment is decided by the EIC Fund after due diligence and can still be refused.
- **Interview, GO Reserve (second session only):** the proposal may be funded if budget becomes available after the selected proposals from all 2027 cut-offs are funded.
- **Interview, NO GO:** not recommended. A proposal that reached the thresholds can receive a Seal of Excellence.

11. Application package and timeline

Confirmed: submission is through the EU Funding & Tenders Portal; paper submissions are not possible. Applicants use the forms inside the submission system. The templates on the topic page are “only for information” (WP 2027 p. 169). Each participant registers in the Participant Register for a PIC before submitting; a validated PIC is not required to submit (p. 171).

Step	What you submit	Limits and notes
1. Short proposal	Part B form; pitch deck; video pitch; consent form for sharing data with National Contact Points	Form 12 pages, cover included (template reference font Times New Roman, minimum 11 pt); deck up to 10 slides in PDF; video up to 3 minutes with the core team members (up to three people). Part B sections: Technology (novelty, TRL, IP), Market, and Team, Financial needs and Implementation (WP 2027 p. 78; template v5.0)
2. Full proposal	Part B form; pitch deck; video; annexes	Form up to 20 pages, cover included; deck in PDF with no slide limit; video up to 3 minutes. Annexes: financial plan and equity needed (cap table); IP strategy with freedom-to-operate analysis, or a note of at most 2 pages, or a simple statement where not relevant; letters of intent; for grant-only and blended finance, an implementation plan of at most 10 pages and the lump-sum detailed budget table (both submitted blank for equity-only) (WP 2027 p. 79; template Part B V2.2)
3. Interview	A pitch of at most 10 minutes	There is no slide limit at the full-proposal stage, but the applicant must be able to present at the Jury interview in “maximum 10 minutes” (WP 2027 p. 79 fn 131)
4. After selection	Documents for grant preparation and, for equity, due diligence	Legal entity validation for the grant agreement; KYC, compliance checks and due diligence for the investment (WP 2027 pp. 80–82)

Confirmed: before the full proposal the applicant is offered the chance to share basic data with the National Contact Point. For an investment component the applicant must agree to share information with the EIC Fund (pp. 78, 80).

Dates

Event	Date and hour	Source
Work Programme 2027 launched	5 November 2026	EIC page and news item
Short-proposal submission opened on the Portal	10 November 2026	Portal topic

Event	Date and hour	Source
Online information day, EIC funding opportunities 2027	19 November 2026, 09:30 to 15:40 CET; Accelerator slot 13:30 to 14:10 CET; registration ends 18 November 2026, 09:30 CET	EIC event page
Online information day, Accelerator Challenges 2027	20 November 2026, 09:00 to 12:30 CET; registration ends 19 November 2026, 10:00 CET	EIC event page
Short proposals	At any time; batched on the first Tuesday of every month at 17h00 Brussels time (next: 1 December 2026); result about 4 to 6 weeks after batching	WP 2027 p. 78
Full-proposal batch 1	20 January 2027, 17h00 Brussels time (18:00 in Romania); only for applicants who already hold a short-proposal GO or come through Fast Track or Plug-in	WP 2027 p. 79
Full-proposal batch 2	17 March 2027, 17h00 Brussels time; the first cut-off a new applicant can plan for (Derived estimate, table below)	WP 2027 p. 79
Full-proposal batch 3	1 September 2027, 17h00 Brussels time	WP 2027 p. 79
Full-proposal batch 4	4 November 2027, 17h00 Brussels time	WP 2027 p. 79
Panel result	About 8 to 9 weeks after the batching date	WP 2027 p. 80
Interview sessions	After each second batch; two per year; dates not published. Invitation at least 2 weeks ahead; result about two to three weeks after the session	WP 2027 pp. 79–80
Investment decision	Usually two to six months after selection	WP 2027 p. 82

- Confirmed: the Director-General responsible “may delay the cut-off(s) by up to two months” (p. 79 fn 130). Table 1 adds that the call may be opened up to one month before or after the envisaged date (p. 10).
- Confirmed (FAQ): a full proposal submitted after 17:00 on the cut-off day is retained for the next cut-off, unless it is the last of the year. The FAQ advises submitting at least 48 hours before the cut-off.
- Confirmed: a successful short proposal allows a full proposal to any of the 2027 batches (p. 78). For GOs obtained under the 2024 and 2025 Work Programmes, the Work Programme allows a full proposal only if one was already submitted and the submission limits are respected (p. 79 fn 129).
- Not published: what happens to a short-proposal GO obtained after the last 2027 batch.

Planning back from each cut-off

Derived estimate: the FAQ advises submitting a short proposal “at least 10 weeks ahead of the foreseen submission of a full application” (up to 6 weeks to evaluate, at least 4 weeks to prepare the full proposal). The table applies this advice to the 2027 cut-offs and the first-Tuesday batching dates.

Full-proposal cut-off	Ten weeks earlier	Last monthly batching on or before that date	Panel result, 8 to 9 weeks after the cut-off
20 January 2027	11 November 2026	None for a new applicant: the first batching after the 2027 topic opened is 1 December 2026	17 to 24 March 2027
17 March 2027	6 January 2027	5 January 2027	12 to 19 May 2027
1 September 2027	23 June 2027	1 June 2027	27 October to 3 November 2027
4 November 2027	26 August 2027	3 August 2027	30 December 2027 to 6 January 2028

Derived estimate: a short proposal batched on 1 December 2026 gets its result between 29 December 2026 and 12 January 2027, which leaves little or no time before 20 January 2027. The 20 January 2027 batch therefore suits mainly companies that already hold a short-proposal GO. Fast Track and Plug-in companies go straight to the full proposal. Fast Track is for companies from listed Horizon Europe or Horizon 2020 projects; the Plug-in scheme is for companies from certified national or regional programmes (Annexes 3 and 4 of the Work Programme 2027; the EIC pages still cite the 2024 and 2023 annexes). One certified Romanian programme is listed: “Advancing AI Accelerator – Investment Readiness Program”, managed by Techcelerator.

12. Risks and red flags

Three-strike limit

Confirmed: after three unsuccessful submissions by the same legal entity, at any stage (short proposal or full proposal) and for any form of support, the entity may not apply again to the EIC Accelerator under Horizon Europe (WP 2027 p. 88). The limit counts from 1 January 2024 and applies equally to Fast Track and Plug-in applicants. A successful short proposal does not count. A full proposal that passes the remote evaluation but fails at interview counts as one. Withdrawing before the result does not count (FAQ).

Risk	What the documents say	Source
Short calendar	Four full-proposal cut-offs remain in 2027, the last on 4 November 2027, and the Work Programme sets none after it. A company with no GO yet cannot follow the FAQ's advised lead for 20 January 2027 (Derived estimate)	WP 2027 p. 79; FAQ
Selectivity	In the round published on 16 November 2026, 35 companies were selected from 453 full applications and 88 interviews. In June 2026, 38 were selected after 87 interviews. These are past results of other companies; they are not an indication of any company's chance. No 2027 figures are published	EIC news items
Interview and investment are separate gates	A jury GO does not secure the investment: the EIC Fund decides after due diligence and compliance checks, and the Agency may suspend or terminate the grant agreement if the investment is rejected	WP 2027 pp. 82–83
Grant covers 70%	The company pays the other 30% from its own resources. The Jury may recommend a lower grant	WP 2027 pp. 75, 84
Choice of Open or a Challenge	EISMEA does not move a proposal from one to the other, even if an Open proposal meets a Challenge's requirements; the FAQ allows an applicant to ask the helpdesk to move one only after an obvious clerical error	FAQ
Economic-security conditions	Investment safeguards where the project falls within AI, quantum, semiconductors or biotechnology and meets the conditions on pp. 17–18; the sanctions and beneficial-owner undertaking; the exclusions for Russia, Belarus, non-government-controlled Ukraine and Russian-owned entities; control restrictions for grant-only where a call states them	WP 2027 pp. 16–18, 172–178
Figures differ between pages	The EIC funding-opportunities 2027 page states a €0.5 million minimum investment; the Work Programme 2027 (p. 76) sets €1 million and prevails	EIC funding-opportunities 2027 page; WP 2027 p. 76

Risk	What the documents say	Source
Loss of SME status	An ownership change that calls into question the award may be grounds for termination and the investment component may be revoked	FAQ
Wrong Portal topic	The Apply button on the EIC Accelerator page still links to the closed 2026 topic HORIZON-EIC-2026-ACCELERATOR-01. The 2027 topic is HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01	EIC page; Portal topics
Documents lag the Work Programme	The Guide for applicants (v6.0) and the full-proposal annexes archive are 2026 versions; parts of the FAQ use 2026 wording. The 2027 Work Programme and the October 2026 Portal templates prevail	Guide; annexes archive; FAQ
Dates can move	The Director-General may delay a cut-off by up to two months. Interview session dates are not published. GO Reserve applies only to the second interview session	WP 2027 pp. 79–80, 84
Late submission	A proposal submitted after 17:00 on the cut-off day goes to the next cut-off, unless it is the last of the year	FAQ
Payment schedule not published	The pre-financing percentage and payment schedule are set in the grant agreement and are not in the EIC documents	WP 2027 p. 81

13. EUnita recommendations

EUnita interpretation: the points below are our reading of the documents for a company deciding whether to start a short proposal now. They are not an assessment of any company's chances.

1. **Test the entry conditions first.** TRL 5 completed with evidence; SME status under Recommendation 2003/361/EC; establishment in a Member State or Associated Country (or the intention to establish by signature); no earlier grant-only award if grant-only is wanted; and no more than two earlier unsuccessful submissions to the Accelerator since 1 January 2024.
2. **Choose the form of support with the funding plan.** Grant-only needs a case for the capacity to commercialise and scale up. For blended finance and equity-only, the full proposal is also judged on whether EIC Fund money can catalyse other investment within 6 months to 2 years. Keep in mind that the grant covers at most 70% of eligible costs.
3. **Treat the short proposal as the real first gate.** Four evaluators each give GO or NO GO; three GOs make it successful and two NO GOs reject it. A rejection counts towards the three-strike limit. Feedback arrives either way.
4. **Plan back from the cut-off.** Derived estimate: for 17 March 2027, submit the short proposal by the batching of 5 January 2027; for 1 September 2027, by 1 June 2027; for 4 November 2027, by 3 August 2027. A GO from an earlier submission is the only route that meets the FAQ's advised 10-week lead for 20 January 2027: a short proposal batched on 1 December 2026 is expected to return its result between 29 December 2026 and 12 January 2027 (Derived estimate). Fast Track and Plug-in applicants go straight to the full proposal.
5. **Choose Open or a Challenge on purpose.** A proposal is not moved between them; the FAQ allows an applicant to ask the helpdesk to move one only after an obvious clerical error. For Cities, secure a letter of intent from a Mission city. For Fusion, note the expectation that at least 50% of the budget goes to entities in states associated to both Euratom and Horizon Europe.
6. **Build the full proposal from the short one.** Prepare the cap table and financial plan, the IP strategy with a freedom-to-operate view, letters of intent and, for grant-only and blended finance, the 10-page implementation plan and the lump-sum budget table.
7. **Prepare the interview early.** Per the FAQ (partly worded on the 2026 text; the invitation sets the final format): 45 minutes, a pitch of up to 10 minutes, up to three company representatives and no

consultants. National Contact Points also organise mock interviews for applicants that passed the remote evaluation (FAQ).

8. **Prepare for due diligence before the jury.** A clean ownership and cap table, a view on beneficial owners and sanctions, IP held in the EU or an Associated Country, and a parent or holding company stated if there is one.
9. **Use the National Contact Point for advice.** NCPs give guidance on participation; the Portal IT Helpdesk handles technical submission matters (passwords, access rights and roles, technical aspects of submitting a proposal) and the Funding & Tenders Portal FAQ covers submission of proposals, evaluation and grant management. No official source says that either gives an opinion on a company's eligibility.
10. **Watch the EIC website.** Interview dates, any change of cut-off and any updated guide for applicants will be published there. Official updates prevail over this analysis.

Unresolved points

- Dates of the 2027 interview sessions: not published (the Work Programme says they will be published on the EIC website).
- Result dates for each 2027 batch beyond the stated intervals: not published.
- The pre-financing percentage and payment schedule of the grant: not published in the EIC documents; fixed in each grant agreement.
- What happens to a short-proposal GO obtained after the last 2027 batch (4 November 2027): not published.
- Whether the Annex 2 exclusion of entities established in China, worded for Research and Innovation Actions and Innovation Actions, applies to the Accelerator (HORIZON-EIC-ACC): the Work Programme does not say. Confirm with your National Contact Point before relying on it.
- Whether a transitional arrangement for the United Kingdom and the EIC Fund (listed in the Portal's List of Participating Countries, version 4.2) changes the position stated in Work Programme footnote 286: the documents do not say. Confirm with your National Contact Point before relying on it.
- A guide for applicants and full-proposal annexes updated for Work Programme 2027: not published; the Guide v6.0 and the annexes archive are 2026 versions.
- Language: the Work Programme sets none; the full-proposal template asks for an English abstract if Part B is in another language; the interview language (English, per the 2026 Guide) is to be verified in the 2027 invitation.
- Applicant numbers, success rate and expected number of grants for 2027: not published.
- Portal topics: the Work Programme names two budget lines (HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOROPEN-01 and HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATORCHALLENGES-01); the Portal shows one topic for the short proposal (HORIZON-EIC-2027-ACCELERATOR-01). Whether further Portal topics will open for the full proposal is not stated.
- The date of the next update of the Plug-in list: not published.

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