OPEN CALL ANALYSIS

ISF DIGITAL INVESTIGATIONS AND STANDARDISATION 2026

ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CYBER: action grants for cybercrime investigation tools and for standards on digital evidence

EUnita strategic translation

The call pays public bodies, non-profits, universities and, in one topic, companies to improve how European police and judicial authorities investigate cybercrime. Digital Investigations (EUR 5 million, four projects expected) pays consortia from at least two Member States for tools, training and cooperation; the final tools should end up owned by law enforcement and must be offered to any EU authority and Europol at little or no cost. Standardisation (EUR 1.5 million, one project expected) pays public or non-profit applicants to help practitioners from five Member States shape standards on digital evidence, 6G, forensics and AI. The grant covers 90% of eligible costs and is largely paid in advance. Relevance is assessed first, in a pre-selection on that criterion alone.

ISF CYBER ANALYSIS

Fit assessment | Sources | What it funds | Boundaries | Budget & competition | Eligibility | Money | Evaluation | Risks

Deadline: 15 December 2026, 17:00 CET Brussels (18:00 in Romania)

Call budget: EUR 6.5 million per the call document (Digital EUR 5 million; Standardisation EUR 1.5 million); the Portal shows one line of EUR 6.2 million for both topics | Request per project: EUR 1-2.5 million (Digital), up to EUR 1.5 million (Standardisation) | Rate: 90% | Duration: 24 months at most

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Analysis date: 22 November 2026

This analysis interprets the official call documentation for applicants. It is not legal advice. The official texts are the call document ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CYBER V2.0, the topic pages of the Funding & Tenders Portal with their questions and answers, the ISF Thematic Facility Work Programme 2023-2027 (Eighth revised and Ninth modification), the model grant agreement and the ISF Regulation (EU) 2021/1149; where this analysis and an official text differ, the official text prevails. Labels used: ***Confirmed*** *(stated in an official source),* ***EUnita interpretation*** *(a reading or recommendation by EUnita),* ***Derived estimate*** *(arithmetic by EUnita on official figures).*

1. Decision summary: is this call for you?

ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CYBER is one call of the Internal Security Fund (ISF) with two separate topics, and each topic needs its own proposal: **Digital Investigations** (ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CYBER-DIGITAL) and **Standardisation** (ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CYBER-STANDARD). The European Commission (DG HOME) manages it directly. The deadline is **15 December 2026, 17:00 CET Brussels time (18:00 in Romania)**, and the call document says call deadlines cannot be extended. **Who can still make it:** a consortium that already has its partners, a registration number (PIC) for each of them and a draft of Part B; for Standardisation, an applicant that can obtain letters of intention from practitioners in five Member States. **Who may be too late:** a team that is starting without partners; no later round is announced. **Companies:** no company can coordinate either topic; in Digital Investigations a company can be a funded beneficiary, in Standardisation a company cannot apply.

Item	Confirmed position	Source
Programme	Internal Security Fund 2021-2027, Thematic Facility, Union actions; direct management by DG HOME, unit E.4	Call document pp. 3-4
Type of grant	ISF action grant, budget-based, mixed actual costs; Portal type ISF-PJG	Call document p. 22; Portal data
Budget	EUR 6.5 million per the call document: Digital EUR 5 million (four projects expected); Standardisation EUR 1.5 million (one project expected). The Portal shows one line of EUR 6.2 million for both topics	Call document p. 10; Portal topic pages
Request size	Digital EUR 1-2.5 million; Standardisation up to EUR 1.5 million (the overview table also shows a EUR 1 million minimum). The grant awarded may be lower	Call document pp. 15, 17, 22
Rate and length	90% of eligible costs; 7% flat rate for indirect costs; 24 months at most	Call document pp. 15, 22-23
Deadline	15 December 2026, 17:00:00 CET (Brussels); 18:00 in Romania (Derived estimate)	Call document p. 10; Portal
Digital: who	At least two beneficiaries from two Member States; coordinator must be non-profit; companies are beneficiaries only	Call document pp. 14, 16-17
Standardisation: who	Public or non-profit applicants; practitioners from five Member States must take part	Call document pp. 14, 16-17; Portal answers 111194, 104556
Romania	Romania is an EU Member State and is not excluded; the documents do not name it	Call document pp. 11-12
Selection	Step 1: pre-selection on Relevance only (no cut-off stated). To be considered for funding: Relevance at least 21 of 30 points and at least 70 of 100 overall	Call document pp. 20-21

Good fit

- ✓ Police, prosecution or judicial bodies from at least two Member States that want shared cybercrime investigation tools or training (Digital)
- ✓ National forensic institutes and cybercrime units with a concrete tool, method or training package and a named law-enforcement owner
- ✓ Universities, research bodies and non-profits that can coordinate and have law-enforcement partners already committed
- ✓ Technology companies that can join a public or non-profit coordinator as funded beneficiaries (Digital only)
- ✓ A public body that can obtain letters of intention from practitioners in five Member States (Standardisation)
- ✓ A consortium whose Part B is already drafted and whose partners all hold a PIC

Not a fit

- ✗ A company that wants to lead: profit-making entities cannot coordinate either topic
- ✗ A company that wants to apply in Standardisation: profit-making entities cannot apply there
- ✗ A single organisation, or partners from one Member State only, in Digital
- ✗ Research with no clear operational output, general awareness work, or work on drugs, financial investigations, trafficking in human beings or child sexual abuse
- ✗ A team that has no partners, no PIC and no draft: the time is too short for a first consortium
- ✗ Danish entities seeking EU funding: the call excludes Denmark; the Work Programme says entities established in Denmark can participate on a no-cost basis only

EUnita verdict (interpretation)

EUnita interpretation: this is a call for law-enforcement-led consortia that are already formed. Digital Investigations is the wider door: public bodies, non-profits and universities can coordinate and companies can be funded partners. Standardisation is narrow: one project, public or non-profit applicants only, and a five-country practitioner network that must be documented by letters. Neither topic suits a company on its own. For a team without partners, the sensible use of this date is to prepare for a future round; none is announced in the call documents.

2. Source verification and document status

Document	Version and date	Role
Call document ISF-2026-TF2-AG-CYBER	Cover: V2.0, 21 September 2026 (history table lists 1.0 of 15 September and 1.1 of 21 September 2026)	The call text; followed wherever documents differ
Portal topic data and topic pages (both topics)	State of 22 November 2026; last update 17 September 2026	Identifiers, dates, status, topic text
Portal topic Q&A	12 answers (Digital) and 11 (Standardisation), dated 17 September to 18 November 2026	Official clarifications by the Commission
Application form template (AMIF/ISF/BMVI)	V2.0, 1 June 2022	Structure of Part B; for information, the submission system holds the form
Model grant agreement (AMIF/ISF/BMVI)	V1.0, 1 November 2024	Grant rules after award
Online Manual	V1.3, 1 May 2026	Submission steps
ISF Thematic Facility Work Programme 2023-2027	Eighth revised: Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 8142 final of 2 December 2025. Ninth modification (non-substantial): signed 23 March 2026; the call document names it as the version last modified (p. 4, footnote 3)	Eligible entities, Denmark and third countries; the call text is followed where it is more specific

Document	Version and date	Role
Regulation (EU) 2021/1149 (ISF)	OJ L 251, 15 July 2021	Legal basis
Europol page "Agreements and working arrangements"	No date printed; read 22 November 2026	Countries with operational agreements

Confirmed: the call document is the call text and the Portal answers clarify it; where an answer corrects the document (Standardisation eligibility, below), the answer and the current table agree. The Work Programme (Eighth revised and Ninth modification) was read for the rules on eligible entities, Denmark and third countries; the topic wording comes from the call document and the Portal topic data, which carry the same topic text. Official updates prevail.

Where the official documents differ

- Budget: the call document gives EUR 6,500,000 (EUR 5,000,000 plus EUR 1,500,000); the Portal shows one line of EUR 6,200,000 for both topics. The gap of EUR 300,000 is not explained. The call document is followed.
- Criteria weights: the text of section 9 gives Relevance 30, Quality 50, Impact 20; the scoring table gives 30, 40 and 30. Thresholds are the same in both. No document says which prevails.
- Standardisation minimum: the overview table shows a minimum request of EUR 1,000,000; the text says only that the request must not exceed EUR 1,500,000.
- Topic identifiers: the call document writes ISF-2026-TF2-AG-DIGITAL and -STANDARD; the Portal identifiers, used for submission, include CYBER.
- Standardisation eligibility: the first table (15 September 2026) let companies, international organisations and non-EU entities take part; Portal answer 104556 of 22 September 2026 and the current table bar them.
- Standardisation third countries: the topic text (p. 9) lists third countries with an agreement with Europol among the main beneficiaries; the eligibility rules (p. 14), the table (p. 17) and Portal answer 104556 bar entities established outside the EU. These rules allow only the applicants they name, whatever the topic text says, and are followed.
- Denmark: the call document says "excluding Denmark" (footnote 20) and does not mention a no-cost route; the Work Programme says "entities established in Denmark can participate on a no-cost basis only". The call document does not address how that route applies to this call.
- Smaller points: the cover says V2.0 while the history table ends at 1.1; the public-bodies row of the eligibility table is blank; Portal answer 111143 repeats its question without an answer; the Portal text of the Digital impact omits "ready to be used effectively".

3. What the call funds

Both topics pay for work that helps law enforcement and judicial authorities to investigate cybercrime and handle digital evidence. Digital Investigations also admits third countries with an operational agreement with Europol as non-coordinating beneficiaries; Standardisation does not (section 2). The objectives are the same for both: build capacity and expertise, support the implementation of EU law, and foster cooperation between law enforcement or judicial authorities and private entities.

Topic 1: Digital Investigations (EUR 5 million)

- **Investigating cyber-attacks and cyber-enabled crime:** training, investigative techniques and tools, with the top threats of the Europol IOCTA 2025 as reference. Areas named: digital forensics of mobile, computer, network, IoT (including automotive) and cloud; visual data analysis; malware analysis and reverse engineering; cryptocurrency tracing; identifying and disrupting criminal infrastructure; big-data handling; threat intelligence and metadata; open-source intelligence; crime

using artificial intelligence.

- **Encryption:** capabilities against criminal use of encryption, such as training, points of expertise and a toolbox of alternative techniques. Measures that could weaken encryption in general, or affect many people indiscriminately, are excluded.
- **AI and language models:** use or adaptation for analysis, translation, transcription and detection of AI-generated material used for criminal purposes.
- **Cross-border cooperation:** digital evidence exchange, secondments, 24/7 contact points, dedicated platforms; cooperation between private entities or cybersecurity authorities and law enforcement, including information exchange systems; better reporting of cybercrime.

What the call expects of a Digital project

- Evidence of user needs and no duplication; build on EU-funded results (Horizon Europe, ISF); links with EMPACT actions are "especially welcomed".
- Law enforcement in the EU involved across the whole development cycle; final tools "should be owned by law enforcement in the EU" and made available to any EU law enforcement authority and to Europol "at little or no cost".
- Assets named: a commitment to distribute tools through the Europol Tools Repository, to test them in the Europol sandbox with resources set aside, and to use communities such as CYCLOPES and ULTRA; access to realistic datasets; a plan for ownership and sustainability.
- No feasibility study or scoping inside the project: it must be done before the grant agreement.

Topic 2: Standardisation (EUR 1.5 million)

- An analysis of where standardisation for security is needed, and standardisation activities in areas "notably 6G and Internet based communication, digital forensics, vehicles forensics and Artificial Intelligence".
- Raising awareness among security practitioners and supporting their participation in standardisation; pooling Member State resources; training (with ECTEG where relevant); expertise through studies and advice; a sustainable EU approach; areas where EU legislation would benefit from standardisation.
- The project "should be leading to the delivery of concrete standards" for law enforcement or the judiciary; strategic contributions are "a plus". Proposals may involve national authorities, academia, technology providers and national standardisation bodies, and build on FORMOBILE, CYCLOPES and the European Working Group on Standardisation for Public Safety.

Policy anchors named in the call

EMPACT 2026-2029; the Europol IOCTA; EU e-evidence rules; the second additional Protocol to the Budapest Convention; the UN Cybercrime Convention; the ProtectEU internal security strategy; the Commission Roadmap on lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement (COM(2025) 349); the High Level Group on Access to Data.

4. Boundaries: avoid the wrong door

- **Not relevant to either topic** (call document p. 14): proposals focusing only on general awareness of cybercrime, for example for the public; research without a clear link to an operational output; specific crime areas such as drugs, financial investigations, trafficking in human beings or child sexual abuse, which the call says other programmes or calls cover.
- **Online child sexual abuse** is excluded from the Digital topic by name.

- **Financial support to third parties** is not allowed, and the Part A budget sheet keeps a line for it that cannot be removed.
- **Scoping and feasibility studies** belong before the grant agreement, not inside the project.
- **Tool building in Standardisation:** the topic pays for standards work by practitioners, not for developing tools; tools belong to Digital Investigations (EUnita interpretation).
- **Research-led work:** a project whose main output is research, with no operational use by law enforcement, fits research programmes better than this call (EUnita interpretation).

Wrong-door checks

- A company without a public or non-profit coordinator cannot use Digital Investigations; it cannot apply in Standardisation at all.
- A consortium of beneficiaries from one Member State does not meet the Digital minimum.
- Danish entities are not eligible for funding as Member State entities; the Work Programme says they can participate on a no-cost basis only, which the call document does not repeat.

5. Budget, competition and expected number of grants

Item	Digital Investigations	Standardisation
Topic budget	EUR 5,000,000	EUR 1,500,000
Projects expected	Four	One
Requested EU contribution	EUR 1,000,000 to 2,500,000	Not above EUR 1,500,000 (table also shows a minimum of EUR 1,000,000)
Derived estimate: average	EUR 1,250,000 a project (EUR 5,000,000 divided by four)	The whole EUR 1,500,000 if requested in full

Confirmed: the call document says the Commission expects to fund four projects under Digital Investigations and one under Standardisation, and reserves the right not to award all funds or to redistribute them between the topics (call document p. 10). The Portal shows a single budget line of EUR 6,200,000 and no number of grants. The grant awarded "may be lower than the amount requested" (p. 22).

Derived estimate: at the EUR 1,000,000 minimum, five projects would fit the Digital budget; at the EUR 2,500,000 maximum, two. Four projects fit the budget only if the average request stays at or below EUR 1,250,000.

Competition: the number of proposals received, success rates and scores are not published for this call or the previous round. Standardisation is a single award, so every eligible proposal competes for one place. The previous Digital round had the same EUR 5 million budget but smaller requests (section 6), and its call document gives no number of projects; EUnita interpretation: larger requests under the same budget mean fewer projects.

6. What has been funded before

The previous round, ISF-2024-TF2-AG-DIGITAL, opened on 30 April 2024 and closed on 5 September 2024, 17:00:00 Brussels time (printed as "CET" in the 2024 call document). It had one topic, Digital Investigations, a budget line of EUR 5,000,000, requests of EUR 400,000 to EUR 1,000,000 per project, a minimum of two applicants from two eligible countries, and criteria weighted 30, 50 and 20 in both text and table. Standardisation appeared there only as a focus within one bullet

on lawful interception for 5G and internet-based communication.

A list of funded projects, the number of applications received and their scores are not published in the call documents or the Portal data. The 2026 call names earlier projects and communities to build on: CYCLOPES and ULTRA (Digital); FORMOBILE and CYCLOPES (Standardisation). Confirmed: the 2026 requests (EUR 1-2.5 million) are larger than the 2024 requests (EUR 400,000-1,000,000). EUnita interpretation: a request of 2024 size, below EUR 1,000,000, would sit under the Digital minimum.

7. Who should apply, and with which ideas

Digital Investigations

- **Coordinators:** public bodies (police, prosecution, judicial authorities, forensic institutes), public universities, research organisations and non-profit organisations established in a Member State other than Denmark.
- **Funded partners:** companies and SMEs, international organisations, and entities from third countries with a Europol operational agreement, as non-coordinating beneficiaries in a consortium that includes an entity from a Member State.
- **Ideas that match the call text:** a forensic toolkit for mobile, cloud, IoT or vehicle data owned by a law-enforcement partner and offered to all EU authorities; cryptocurrency tracing support; analysis, translation or transcription tools using language models; a training package with ECTEG for investigators; a cross-border platform or contact-point network for digital evidence; better reporting of cybercrime to the authorities.
- **Evidence to bring:** letters or documented interest from law enforcement, EMPACT participants and the Europol tools channels; a plan for realistic datasets; ownership and sustainability after the project.

Standardisation

- **Applicants:** public or non-profit legal entities in a Member State other than Denmark, alone or, preferably, from at least two Member States.
- **Practitioners:** representatives of the community that benefits from the standards, such as police authorities, judicial authorities and forensic institutes, from at least five Member States; standardisation organisations are not practitioners (Portal answer 111195).
- **Ideas that match the call text:** practitioner participation in standardisation bodies on digital forensics, vehicle forensics, 6G and internet communication or AI; a gap analysis of where standards are needed; training for practitioners; a sustainable mechanism for the EU approach.

Romanian applicants

Confirmed: Romania is not named in the documents. EUnita interpretation: as an EU Member State other than Denmark, Romania meets the geographic rule, so Romanian public and private legal entities are eligible in Digital Investigations, and public or non-profit entities in Standardisation. A Romanian public body, public university or non-profit organisation or university may coordinate in either topic. A Romanian company can be a funded beneficiary in Digital Investigations only; in either topic it can be an unfunded associated partner, a subcontractor or a third party giving in-kind contributions. No national annex applies; the call is managed by the Commission.

8. Eligibility checklist

✓	Applicant is a legal entity, public or private, established in an EU Member State (overseas countries and territories included) other than Denmark. Confirmed (call document pp. 11-12).
✓	Digital: at least two applicants that are beneficiaries (affiliated entities do not count), from at least two different participating Member States (p. 14).
✓	Digital: the coordinator is not a profit-making entity, an international organisation or an entity established outside the EU (p. 14).
✓	Standardisation: at least one applicant from a Member State, "ensuring the participation of practitioners of at least 5 EU Member States"; a consortium from two Member States is preferred (p. 14). The overview table on p. 16 says "5 EU Member States participating in ISF".
✓	Standardisation: the applicant is public or non-profit; companies, international organisations and non-EU entities cannot apply (pp. 16-17; Portal answer 104556).
✓	Standardisation: letters of support or intention from practitioners in five Member States are the minimum (Portal answer 111194).
✓	Third-country entities, Digital only: operational agreement with Europol, non-coordinating beneficiary, consortium with at least two independent entities and one in a Member State (pp. 11-12).
✓	Every beneficiary, affiliated entity and associated partner has a PIC in the Participant Register before submission; beneficiaries and affiliated entities are validated before the grant is signed (p. 12).
✓	The proposal addresses one topic only (p. 4); it fits the topic scope and none of the excluded areas (p. 14).
✓	The mandatory annex "list of previous projects" is uploaded as a separate PDF; without it the proposal is inadmissible (p. 11).
✓	Part B has at most 50 pages; pages beyond are not read (p. 11).
✗	No natural person (except a sole trader), no EU body, and no entity under EU restrictive measures in any role (pp. 12-13).
✗	No project may directly benefit Georgian authorities; Israel follows the 2013 Commission guidelines (pp. 12-13).
✗	Danish legal entities are not eligible for funding as Member State entities (call document p. 12, footnote 20). The Work Programme says "entities established in Denmark can participate on a no-cost basis only"; the call document does not address this.
✓	Ireland takes part in the ISF: the Work Programme lists the participating Member States as all EU Member States except Denmark; the call document does not mention Ireland.
?	Associated countries: the call defines no group; beneficiaries from countries negotiating association may take part if negotiations conclude before signature and cover the call (p. 12); no country is named.

Third-country entities with an operational agreement with Europol, according to Europol's own page: Albania, Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Colombia, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, Norway, North Macedonia, Serbia, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Ukraine and the United States (Denmark is also listed). The same page lists New Zealand and the United Kingdom under a different heading, "EU agreements on Europol cooperation/adequacy decisions"; the call document does not say whether they count. The call document does not list the countries; the Work Programme says third countries "will be further specified in the calls for proposals", and this call names only those with an operational agreement with Europol.

9. How the money works

- **Form of grant:** budget-based mixed actual-cost grant; only actual costs are reimbursed, with unit-cost and flat-rate elements (p. 22).
- **Rate:** 90% of eligible costs. Derived estimate: at least 10% comes from other sources. Grants may not give a profit; for-profit beneficiaries declare revenues and any profit is deducted.
- **Cost categories:** A personnel; B subcontracting; C purchases (travel and subsistence, equipment, other goods, works and services); D other categories, not applicable; E indirect costs.
- **Indirect costs:** a 7% flat rate on eligible direct costs, with exceptions (p. 23).
- **Unit costs:** travel, accommodation and subsistence follow the Commission unit-cost decision; owners of SMEs and natural persons may use unit costs; volunteers are covered (p. 23; Portal answer 104053).
- **Equipment:** depreciation, or full cost for listed equipment where it is essential and the only option.
- **Subcontracting:** must be done by third parties, not by beneficiaries; subcontracting above 30% of total eligible costs must be justified (p. 28).
- **Not allowed:** financial support to third parties; VAT paid by public bodies acting as public authority; costs of separate project websites. In-kind contributions are allowed but cost-neutral.
- **Security:** for 5G or 6G network equipment or technologies, no third-country security requirements that could affect implementation, and compliance with Commission cybersecurity guidance (pp. 23-24).

Payments and financial security

- Pre-financing normally 80% of the maximum grant, paid within the period the grant agreement sets, counted from its entry into force or from receipt of any required financial security, whichever is later; no interim payments; progress reports are not linked to payments; the balance is paid at the end. All payments go to the coordinator.
- A financial security (a bank-issued undertaking) is required only if the grant agreement says so; it must be in euro from a bank in a Member State.
- Liability is limited joint and several: each beneficiary up to its maximum grant amount. A consortium agreement is required.
- A financial capacity check applies to all beneficiaries except public bodies, international organisations and requests of EUR 60,000 or less; public bodies and international organisations are exempt from the operational capacity check.

Duration: 24 months at most; extensions are possible by amendment if justified. The start is normally after grant signature; a retroactive start is exceptional and never before the submission date. A mid-term progress report is mandatory, and key performance indicators with baselines and targets follow Annex VIII of the ISF Regulation.

10. Evaluation

Procedure: an evaluation committee checks admissibility and eligibility, then evaluates proposals per topic in two steps. First a **pre-selection on Relevance only**, for all eligible proposals; then the proposals that pass are assessed against all criteria and ranked by score (call document p. 20).

Criterion	Text of section 9	Scoring table	Threshold
Relevance	30 points	30 points	21 of 30
Quality	50 points	40 points	None stated

Criterion	Text of section 9	Scoring table	Threshold
Impact	20 points	30 points	None stated
Total	100 points	100 points	70 of 100

Confirmed: both thresholds appear in the call document: "Individual thresholds for the criterion 'Relevance': 21/30 points." and "Overall threshold: 70 points." The weights differ between the text and the table and no document says which prevails; the previous round used 30, 50 and 20 in both places. Proposals that pass the individual threshold for Relevance and the overall threshold "will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available call budget".

What each criterion looks at

- **Relevance:** clarity and consistency of the objectives against the topic, contribution to EU strategic documents and legislation, previous results in the field, and the European or transnational dimension.
- **Quality:** the logic from problem to solution, methodology, expertise and quality of the consortium and teams, management, risks, feasibility, cost effectiveness and value for money. Operational capacity is assessed here, through staff profiles, descriptions of participants and the list of previous projects.
- **Impact:** short and long-term impact, ambition and innovation, communication including visibility of EU funding, dissemination, sustainability and replicability.

Tie-breaks

Within a topic, ties are decided by the Relevance score, then Impact, then Quality. Then the portfolio of projects and positive synergies between them, or other factors related to the objectives of the call, are considered. Remaining budget is used across topics for a balanced geographical and thematic spread. All applicants receive an evaluation result letter; successful proposals are invited to grant preparation and others go on a reserve list or are rejected. Exclusion grounds and award refusals are set out in section 7 of the call document.

11. Application package and timeline

Applications are electronic only, through the submission system opened from the call's official topic page; paper submissions are not possible. Each user needs an EU Login account, and each organisation a PIC from the Participant Register. The proposal is submitted once, even though evaluation has two steps.

- **Part A:** administrative data on participants and the summary budget, filled in online.
- **Part B:** the technical description, from the submission system template, uploaded as PDF; 50 pages at most, Arial 9 points, A4, margins of at least 15 mm. Structure: Relevance; Quality (concept and methodology, consortium set-up, teams, management, cost effectiveness, risks); Impact (including communication and sustainability); work plan; ethics and security.
- **Part C:** contribution to the programme key performance indicators, filled in online.
- **Mandatory annex:** the list of previous projects of the last four years (not limited to EU-funded projects), uploaded as a separate PDF cut from the Part B template (Portal answer 104052). The detailed budget table, CVs of the core team and activity reports are not required.
- **Letters of support** from bodies that do not take part may be uploaded as annexes or linked at the end of Part B (Portal answer 111150). The abstract must be in English; English is advised for the whole application.

Date	Event	Status
15 September 2026	Call opens	Confirmed
10 November 2026	Online information session	Confirmed
Tuesday 8 December 2026, 17:00 CET	Questions received later are not answered (call document p. 27)	Call rule applied to the deadline
Sunday 13 December 2026, 17:00 Brussels	Latest time the Online Manual advises for submitting	Derived estimate
Tuesday 15 December 2026, 17:00:00 CET	Deadline (18:00 in Romania); the system then closes	Confirmed
December 2026 to March 2027	Evaluation	Indicative
April 2027	Information on evaluation results	Indicative
May 2027	Grant agreement signature	Indicative

Confirmed: proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline, and each version replaces the previous one; a confirmation e-mail with date and time is sent, and no e-mail means the proposal was not submitted. Problems caused by last-minute submission are at the applicant's risk. The Commission cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants or actions. Non-IT questions go to HOME-ISF@ec.europa.eu; submission-system problems go to the Portal IT helpdesk.

12. Risks and red flags

1. **Time:** the deadline is 15 December 2026, 17:00 CET (18:00 in Romania) and cannot be extended. A consortium formed now has to agree partners, PICs, the work plan, the budget and the list of previous projects in the time left.
2. **Consortium rules:** fewer than two beneficiaries from two Member States in Digital, a coordinator that is for-profit, an international organisation or non-EU, or fewer than five practitioner countries in Standardisation, makes the proposal ineligible.
3. **Admissibility:** a proposal without the list of previous projects is inadmissible; pages beyond 50 are not read.
4. **Wrong applicant type in Standardisation:** the first version of the table allowed companies; the corrected table and Portal answer 104556 do not. Rely on the current text.
5. **One award in Standardisation:** a single project is expected, so competition is for one place. The table minimum of EUR 1,000,000 is unexplained.
6. **Ownership and sustainability in Digital:** the final tools should be owned by EU law enforcement (the call's wording) and must be offered at little or no cost to any authority and Europol; the modalities are left to the consortium (Portal answer 111140), so the proposal must show how.
7. **Thresholds and weights:** Relevance 21 of 30 and 70 of 100 overall; the two weightings (30/50/20 or 30/40/30) are not reconciled.
8. **Budget rules:** no financial support to third parties; subcontracting above 30% needs justification; VAT of public bodies acting as authority is not eligible; for-profit beneficiaries declare revenue.
9. **Security:** projects handling EU classified information face security scrutiny; no grant agreement is signed until at least one beneficiary has the required facility security clearance; EU TOP SECRET cannot be funded.
10. **Funding uncertainty:** the Commission may not award all funds, may move funds between the topics, and may cancel the call without compensation.

13. EUnita recommendations

1. EUnita interpretation: decide first whether the team can still field a legal consortium by 15 December 2026. For Digital, name two Member States and a public or non-profit coordinator; for Standardisation, name five practitioner countries and secure signed letters of intention.
2. Confirm each partner's PIC and validation status now; the submission system needs a PIC for every beneficiary, affiliated entity and associated partner.
3. Write Relevance first. It is the pre-selection step, carries the first tie-break and has its own threshold of 21 of 30. Tie each objective to the topic text and to the EU documents the call names.
4. Digital: fix tool ownership, distribution through the Europol Tools Repository and sandbox testing, user-need evidence and EMPACT links early; they are the points the call singles out.
5. Standardisation: name the standards, formats or protocols to be improved and the standardisation bodies where practitioners will take part; do not propose tool development.
6. Draft the list of previous projects as soon as the partners are known; it is mandatory and needs the last four years of key projects, not only EU-funded ones.
7. Submit well before the deadline. Derived estimate: the Online Manual's 48-hour advice points to Sunday 13 December 2026, 17:00 Brussels time. Send questions before 17:00 CET on Tuesday 8 December 2026 (7 calendar days before the deadline; call document p. 27).
8. A company that cannot lead should look for a public or non-profit coordinator in Digital, or consider the associated-partner or subcontractor route in either topic.

Unresolved points

- Quality and Impact weighting (30/50/20 or 30/40/30); whether the EUR 1,000,000 table minimum applies to Standardisation; why the Portal budget line (EUR 6,200,000) differs from the call document (EUR 6,500,000).
- Digital: the call welcomes "more Member States than the minimum" but gives no number.
- The exact dates of evaluation, results and signature (months only); any repeat of the call.

Sources

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- Topic page: Digital Investigations: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/isf-2026-tf2-ag-cyber-digital
- Topic page: Standardisation: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/isf-2026-tf2-ag-cyber-standard
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- ISF Thematic Facility Work Programme 2023-2027, Ninth modification (23 March 2026): https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/document/download/e23a9d11-230b-477b-88bf-fbdce76e5150_en?filename=Ninth%20modification%20of%20the%20ISF%20Thematic%20Facility%20work%20programme%202023-2027%20%28non-substantial%20modification%29.pdf
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- Model grant agreement AMIF/ISF/BMVI, V1.0 (1 November 2024): https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/agr-contr/general-mga_amif-isf-bmvi_en.pdf
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- Regulation (EU) 2021/1149 establishing the Internal Security Fund: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32021R1149
- Europol: agreements and working arrangements: https://www.europol.europa.eu/partners-collaboration/agreements
- DG HOME: Internal Security Fund 2021-2027: https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/funding/internal-security-funds/internal-security-fund-2021-2027_en
- Previous round: call document ISF-2024-TF2-AG-DIGITAL, V1.0 (30 April 2024): https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/isf/wp-call/2023-2025/call-fiche_isf-2024-tf2-ag-digital_en.pdf

Checked 22 November 2026. Official updates prevail.