



#HorizonEU

HORIZON EUROPE

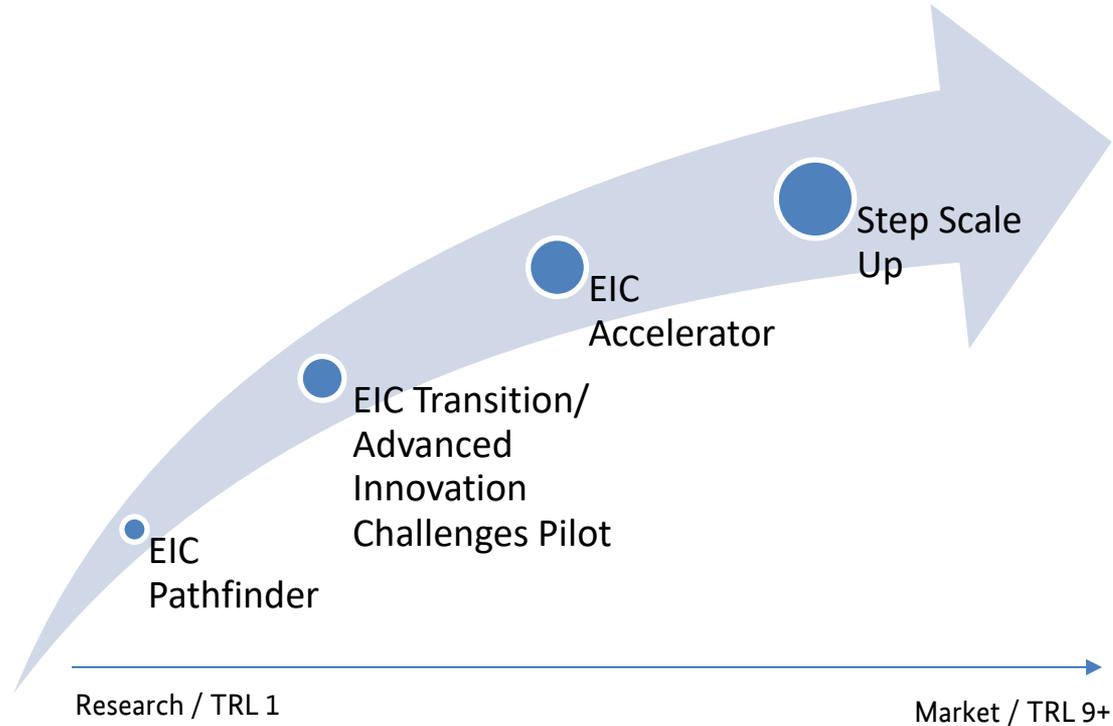
THE EU
RESEARCH & INNOVATION
PROGRAMME

2021 – 2027

The European
Innovation
Council

Research
and
Innovation

European Innovation Council



EIC Pathfinder

- Funds research to develop the scientific basis to underpin breakthrough technologies
- Goal: Proof of principle (TRL 3)
- Low TRL: Start at TRL 1 or 2 and go for TRL 3 or 4.
- Open: Support of projects in any field of science
- Challenges: Support of coherent portfolios of projects within predefined thematic areas with the aim to achieve specific objectives

Deadlines:
Open: 12 May 2026
Chall.: 28 Oct. 2026
Budget per project:
up to €4 M

EIC Pathfinder Challenges 2026

1. Advanced Materials for Miniaturised Energy Harvesting Systems
2. Biotechnology for Healthy Ageing
3. DeepRAP: Deep Reasoning, Abstraction & Planning towards trustworthy Cognitive AI Systems

EIC Transition

Deadline:
16 September 2026

- Focus on results from EU funded projects
 - to mature the technologies
 - build a business case for specific applications
- Medium TRL: 3 / 4 - 5 / 6
- Grants of up to **€ 2.5 million to**
 - validate and demonstrate technology
 - develop market readiness



EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges

- High-risk, demand-driven deep tech innovations
- Involvement of commercial users (e.g. industry, public sector), end users and other key stakeholders such as regulatory authorities
- Medium TRL: 4 to 6 /7
- Two-stage process:
 - 300.000 € for stage 1
 - 2,5 M€ for stage 2

Deadline: 26. Februar 2026

EIC Advanced Innovation Challenges - Topics

- TRL 4 at the start and TRL 6 or 7 at the end of the project.

Topics:

- Accelerating Physical AI: Embodied Intelligence for the Next Frontier of AI-Powered Robotics
- Translating Disruptive New Approach Methodologies (NAMs) into Practice

What is the EIC Pre-Accelerator?

Supporting early-stage deep-tech innovation in Europe

- The **EIC Pre-Accelerator** is an EU funding instrument under **Horizon Europe/WIDERA**, focused on early-stage deep-tech startups in **widening countries**.
- Helps SMEs develop **technology, business and investor readiness** before scaling or applying to larger instruments like the **EIC Accelerator**.
- Offers **grants up to ~€500 000**, coaching, mentoring and business acceleration services.

What Support is Offered?

- **Funding:**
 - Grants from **€300 000 to €500 000** per company for up to ~24 months.
- **Additional Support Services:**
 - Tailored **business acceleration services** (coaching, mentoring, networking).
 - Help in preparing for future EIC Accelerator applications.
- **Objective outcomes:**
 - Strengthened business and investor strategy.
 - Increased readiness to secure follow-on funding.

What are the funding criteria?

- ✓ **Country eligibility:** Widening countries of the EU + certain associated countries & outermost regions.
- ✓ **Applicant:** Single SME or startup legally established in eligible country.
- ✓ **Technology readiness:** TRL ~4+ (validated in lab or prototype stage).
- ✓ **Submission:** Through the **Funding & Tenders Portal**.

Timeline

-  **2025 Call (pilot)**
 - **Call opening:** 12 June 2025.
 - **Submission deadline: 18 November 2025.**
-  **Post-submission timeline:**
 - Evaluation expected to conclude by **Feb 2026**, results communicated in **late Feb – early March 2026**.
-  **Next call:**
 - Announced to open around **May 2027** (subject to official Work Programme publication).

EIC Accelerator

Support for start-ups and SMEs with

- Deep Tech Innovations (groundbreaking , high-risk , TRL) 6)
- large international market potential
- global ambitions

Goal

- Bring Innovations to the market
- Commercialise and scale-up

Up to 2,5 Mio. € Grant
+ 10 Mio. € Investment

Is the EIC Accelerator a good fit for us?

- ✓ Disruptive Innovation
- ✓ Deeptech
- ✓ High development risk
- ✓ High market potential
- ✓ TRL 5 completed
- ✓ IP clarified, rights secured, FTO available
- ✓ High scaling potential
- ✓ Commercialization strategy convincing and internalized
- ✓ Interest from investors?
- ✓ Open to external capital?
- ✓ Need for Union Support?
- ✓ Focused on growth?
- ✓ Are the necessary skills available?
- ✓ Profit sharing?

What will be financed?

Grant up to €2.5 million Euro (70%)

Funding rate)

Innovation activities:

Development , demonstration and prototyping,
approval, IP, preparatory market launch

Investment of 1 – 10 million. Euro :

Financing the market launch and Scale-up



How can one participate?

Short application:
Any time

Level 1

Full application,
including
Coaching

Level 2

open and theme-oriented call for proposals
("Challenges")

Level 3

Pitch
Interview



When can Can one submit?

Anytime: [Funding & Tenders Portal](#)

“Batching” on the first Tuesday of every month

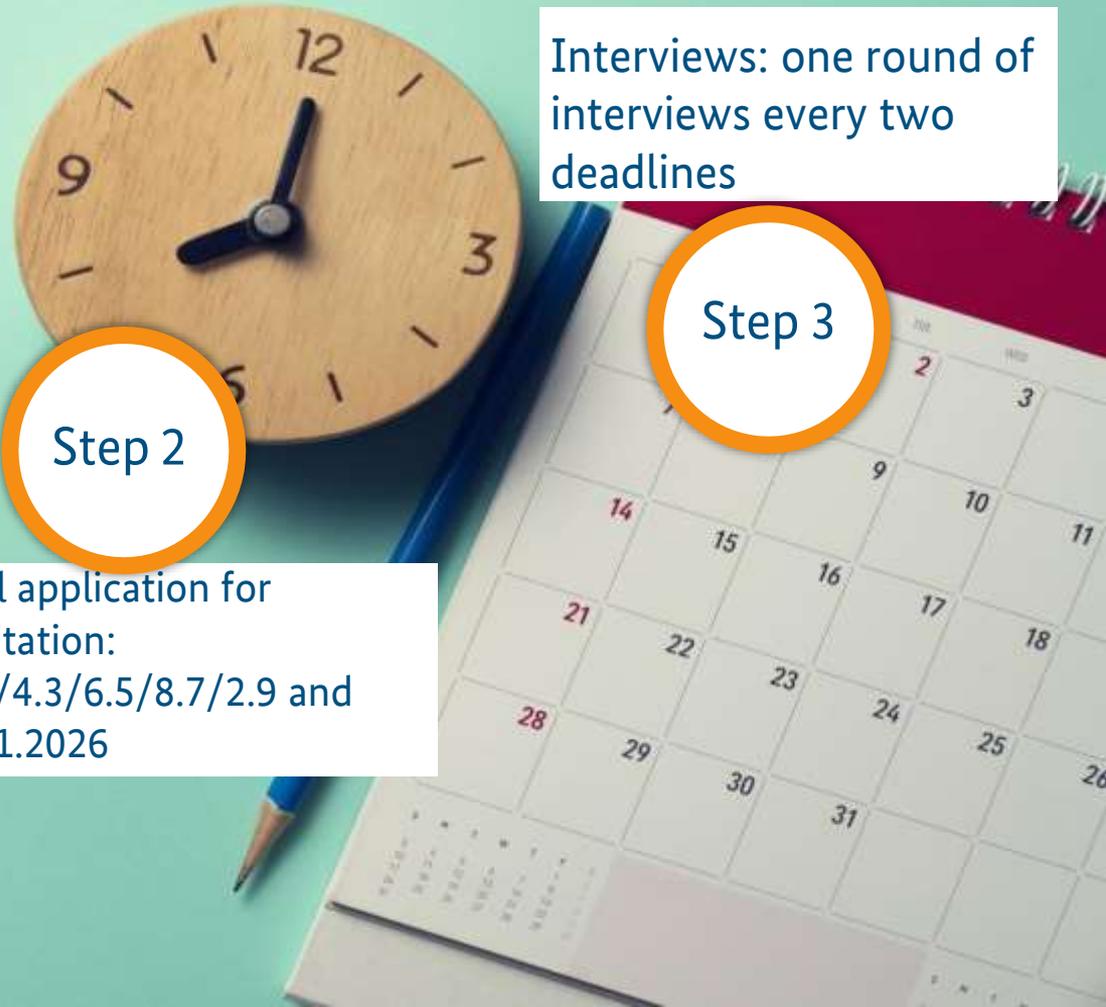
Step 1

Step 2

Full application for invitation:
7.1/4.3/6.5/8.7/2.9 and
4.11.2026

Interviews: one round of interviews every two deadlines

Step 3



Disussion

1. Have you identified a relevant funding scheme in the EIC?
2. What are the challenges for you in the application process?

Contact

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Thank you!

#HorizonEU

<http://ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe>



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