



EIC Accelerator

Guide for 2025

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Introduction

About this guide

The following guide provides a short overview of the European Innovation Council, Europe's flagship innovation programme that identifies, develops, and scales up breakthrough technologies and game-changing innovations.

Although there are several funding programmes within the EIC, this guide focuses exclusively on the EIC Accelerator. It intends to serve as an overview or starting point for applicants willing to apply for the EIC Accelerator, or also for entrepreneurs seeking European funding.

Therefore, it presents some general information about it, such as what it is, the funding options available, and its two schemes. This guide also includes an analysis of the results from the last calls: a statistical analysis of two calls with a focus on success rates, the most popular funding options, as well as the geographic focus, and the most

prominent areas of funded projects. The main changes introduced in 2025, and perspectives for the next year are also included.

This guideline also dives deeper into the requirements applicants need to fulfill, as well as a brief explanation of how the application process works. It includes some information about the Grant Agreement Phase to explain the steps to follow once the application has been successful.

Finally, we present some advice from the Strata Team, where advisors and managers share their expertise and state what they consider to be the most important factors to take into account when applying for EIC funding.

We also share some Strata's Success cases in regard to the EIC application, where we present winners such as Strolll, Sightic, Chassis Autonomy, OxyPrem or Levistor.

General Information

What is the EIC Accelerator?

The European Commission established the European Innovation Council (EIC) to help startups and SMEs scale up and develop disruptive technologies. With a budget worth more than €10 billion, this programme will run until 2027.

As part of Horizon Europe, the EIC Accelerator is the main instrument promoted by the European Commission whose aim is to boost deep tech startups that belong to Horizon Europe associated countries or to the European Union. Its focus is on high-risk high-impact projects, and it provides grants, convertible loans and equity investments.

This programme encourages high-risk investment to promote European autonomy in key inventions, boost European economic development, and create new R&D employment and social benefits. Nonetheless, its process is highly selective, and success rates range from 2 to 6 %.

Funding Forms

The EIC Accelerator provides funding in two different forms:

Grant funding: up to €2.5 million to carry out activities within TRL6 to TRL8. It covers innovation activities, including demonstration of the technology in the relevant environment, prototyping and system level demonstration, R&D and testing required to meet regulatory and standardization requirements, intellectual property management, and marketing approval.

Equity or quasi-equity investment: up to €10 million for market deployment and scale-up in the form of direct equity investments of convertible loans.

Application Types

Applicants can submit three types of applications:

Grant-only applications: in case they aim to reach TRL 8 at the end of the project and continue further development without the EIC support. Applicants need to convince evaluators that they can commercialize the innovation without EIC equity.

Investment-only applications: when applicants have already achieved TRL8 and are looking for market deployment and scale-up capital.

Blended applications, the most common type and the default option: when applicants are at TRL6 and need capital for both technology development and market deployment.

Applicants from the United Kingdom can apply for the Accelerator, but can only request and receive funding in the form of “grant only”.

EIC Accelerator Schemes

The EIC presents two schemes: EIC Accelerator Open, and Challenges. Both of them share the same rules and conditions regarding funding, application process, eligibility, submitted documents, and deadlines.

However, they slightly differ in the areas of impact:

EIC Accelerator Open accepts proposals in any field of technology, therefore, there is no predefined topic. It seeks to assist businesses where the funding from the EIC will serve as a catalyst to attract additional investors required for the invention to be scaled up.

EIC Accelerator Challenges has a budget worth €250 million in 2025, and it is focused on areas where innovative ideas or ground-breaking technology created by SMEs or startups may contribute to reaching the EU goals. In 2025, the EIC Accelerator Challenges fall within the following topics:



Biotechnology driven low emission food and feed production systems

This Challenge focuses on supporting novel biotechnology driven solutions in four areas, (see Specific Objectives) which can in combination offer a GHG mitigation potential of nearly 1.5 billion tons (tCO₂e).

Budget: €50 million.



GenAI4EU: Creating European Champions in Generative AI

The aim of this Challenge is to support start-ups and SMEs committed to bringing transformative AI-driven solutions to market. The proposed solutions should safeguard human autonomy and enhance human expertise thus providing significant added value to decision-making processes, services or industrial workflows. Novel solutions with broad future applicability are particularly encouraged.

Budget: €50 million.



Innovative in-space servicing, operations, robotics and technologies for resilient EU space infrastructure

This Challenge focuses on supporting companies developing cost-effective, scalable and resilient solutions to service and/or augment satellite capabilities, perform in-orbit refuelling, contribute to space debris reduction, and protect EU space infrastructure. It develops capabilities in areas such as cyber security control technologies, satellite-based secure connectivity, robots and robot-controlled precision systems identified under the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)160, and thereby addresses risks to the EU's future strategic autonomy.

Budget: €50 million.



Acceleration of advanced materials development and upscaling along the value chain

This Challenge therefore aims at scaling SMEs belonging to the whole value chain of advanced materials and addressing one or more of these four key application areas: energy, mobility, electronics, construction. It contributes to a common European approach in accelerating the scaling up of advanced materials, a critical technology identified under the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)130, and thereby addresses the risks to the EU's future strategic autonomy in this area.

Budget: €50 million.



Breakthrough innovations for future mobility

This Challenge therefore focuses on supporting companies developing cost-effective and scalable deep tech breakthroughs that will help deliver reductions in mobility-related emissions in its many facets, from the manufacture of vehicles to their use. It also includes approaches that deliver improvements in the efficiency of the transport system through for example the use of digital tools. It thereby develops capabilities in areas such as sensing, manufacturing and resource efficient technologies alongside sustainable alternative fuels identified under the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP)169, and thereby addresses risks to the EU's future strategic autonomy.

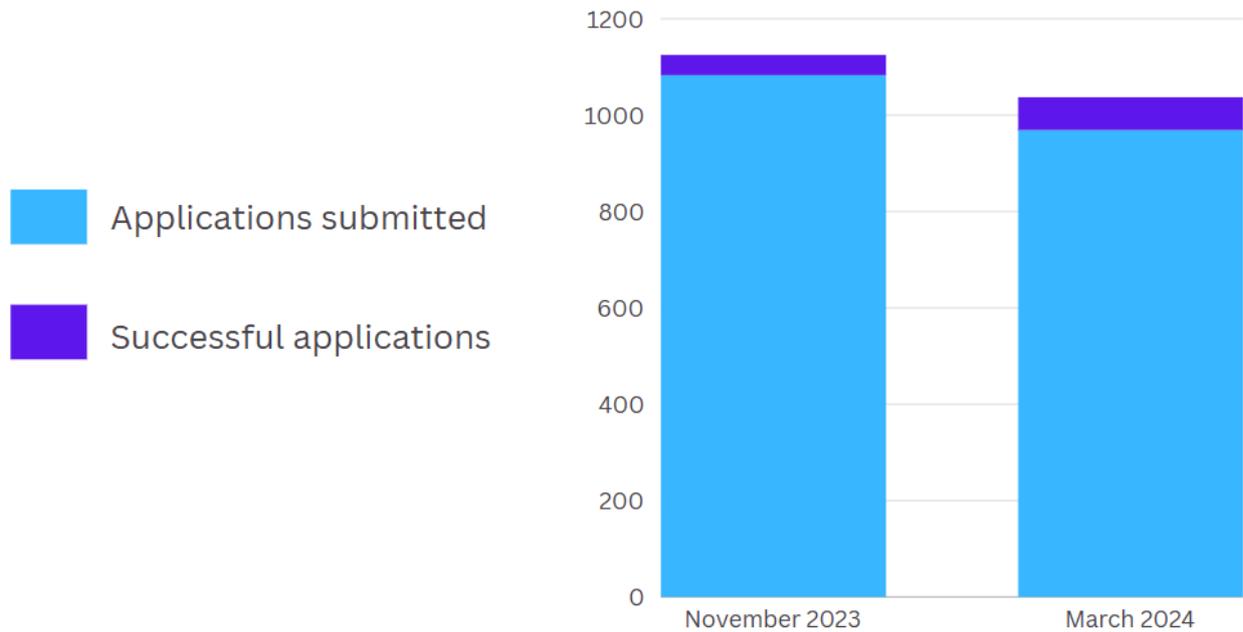
Budget: €50 million.

Overview of the end of 2023 and 2024

The following data shows an analysis of the two latest EIC calls available in 2023 and 2024: the November 2023 and the March 2024 calls¹.

Success Rates

The first EIC Accelerator call in 2024 experienced an increase in the success rate. In **November 2023**, 42 companies were funded out of 1,083 (3.8% success rate), while in **March 2024** the jury selected 68 to receive funding out of 969 proposals (7% success rate).



¹ Results from the October 2024 are not available as of the time of writing.

Preferred Funding Option

Blended finance has been the most awarded financing type (62%, and 96%, respectively). Grant first was no longer available in 2024.

Geographic Focus

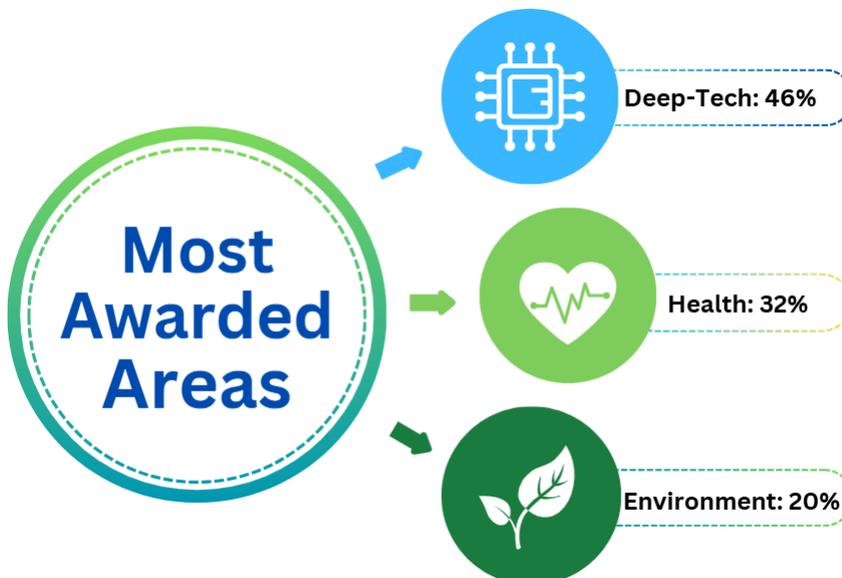
In **November 2023**, the most awarded countries were Germany (16%), France (14%), and Spain and Sweden (11% each). In **March 2024**, Germany (19%), France (19%) and Israel (13%) were the main countries.



Most Awarded Areas

In the November 2023 call, 21 out of 42 projects (48%) belonged to the Deeptech and ICT area, followed by Health (12 out of 42 projects, 29%), and, finally, Environment (8 out of 42, 19%). In the March 2024 call, 44% of the awarded projects belonged to the New deeptech area, 32% to Health and 24% to Environment.

So overall, **deeptech was the most awarded area** (46%), followed by health (32%) and environment (20%).



The EIC in 2025

In order to support disruptive technologies, the EIC Accelerator has a budget of €634 million in 2025. **The EIC will experience a budget increase in 2025** as €300 million will be deployed in the **EIC STEP scaleup call**, a new initiative for single startups and SMEs, small mid-caps, or investors working at the scale-up phase.

Changes to be Implemented from 2025

Some **novelties and changes** have been introduced in the work programme for 2025:

01

The maximum investment component is now €10 million. Investments above €10 million are available under the STEP call.

02

Applications must have completed all elements of Technology Readiness Level 5.

03

The evaluation of short proposals (Step 1) will be batched on a monthly basis with results within 4-6 weeks.

04

For proposals submitted through the Open and Challenges Calls, unanimous approval in case of consensus meetings is required for a jury interview invitation.

05

Nuclear applications are eligible in the case of the EIC Accelerator.

06

Equity-only is now open to new applicants.

07

WIDERA programme will introduce a pilot EIC Pre-Accelerator call to support early-stage deep tech startups in the so-called widening countries.

Requirements for Applicants

Who can apply for the EIC?

Applicants can apply if they are:

- A single start-up or SME (including spin-outs) established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe (HE) Associated Country,
- A 'Small mid-cap' (up to 499 employees) established in an EU Member State or HE Associated Country, but only for investment-only or for "blended finance" in exceptional cases for rapid scale up purposes;
- One or more natural persons or legal entities willing to set up a SME.

However, the EIC will only fund companies with the **potential** to create entirely new markets or revolutionise existing ones, with a **clear ambition** to grow at an international level, with a **demonstrated knowledge** of the target market and with a **convincing business plan**.

The EIC Accelerator is the perfect funding mechanism for those companies looking for substantial funding when the technology-related

risks involved are too high for private investors alone to invest.

Overall, applicants must meet these criteria to be funded by the EIC Accelerator:

- To have a high-impact innovative product, service or business model that could create new markets or disrupt existing ones in Europe and even worldwide,
- To be a start-up or a small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) with the ambition and commitment to scale up.
- Companies must be built on scientific discovery, radical thinking or technological breakthroughs ('deep tech');
- Innovation activities must have already achieved the Technology Readiness Level (TRL) 5 and are currently in TRL 6 or above;
- Companies require significant funding over a long time frame before returns can be generated ('patient capital').

The Application Process

The application process is divided into three steps:

Step 1, submission of a short proposal:

Short proposals are batched and sent to evaluators the first Tuesday of every month in 2025. Feedback is then provided within four weeks.

-Applicants must fill in a 12-page form to summarize the proposal and respond to a set of questions about the innovation, the potential market, and the company team;

-A pitch-deck of up to ten slides in pdf format;

-A video pitch of up to three minutes where the core members of the team (a maximum of three people) should provide the motivation for the proposal.

Feedback is provided within four weeks.

Step 2, preparing a full proposal:

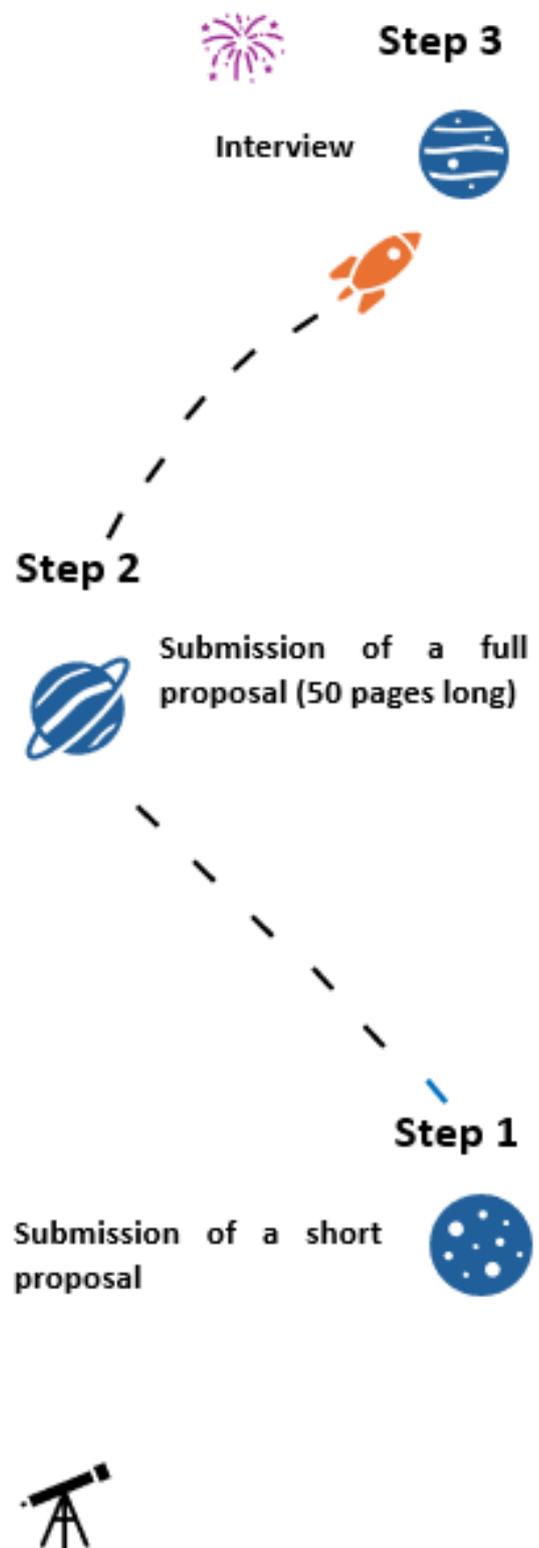
Applications meeting the basic criteria for EIC Accelerator funding are invited to prepare a full proposal to submit to one of the periodic cut-off dates for Accelerator Open or Accelerator Challenge funding.

Full Proposals should be 50 pages long at most and must clearly present the business and the innovation with a very high level of detail.

Step 3, pitching your innovation:

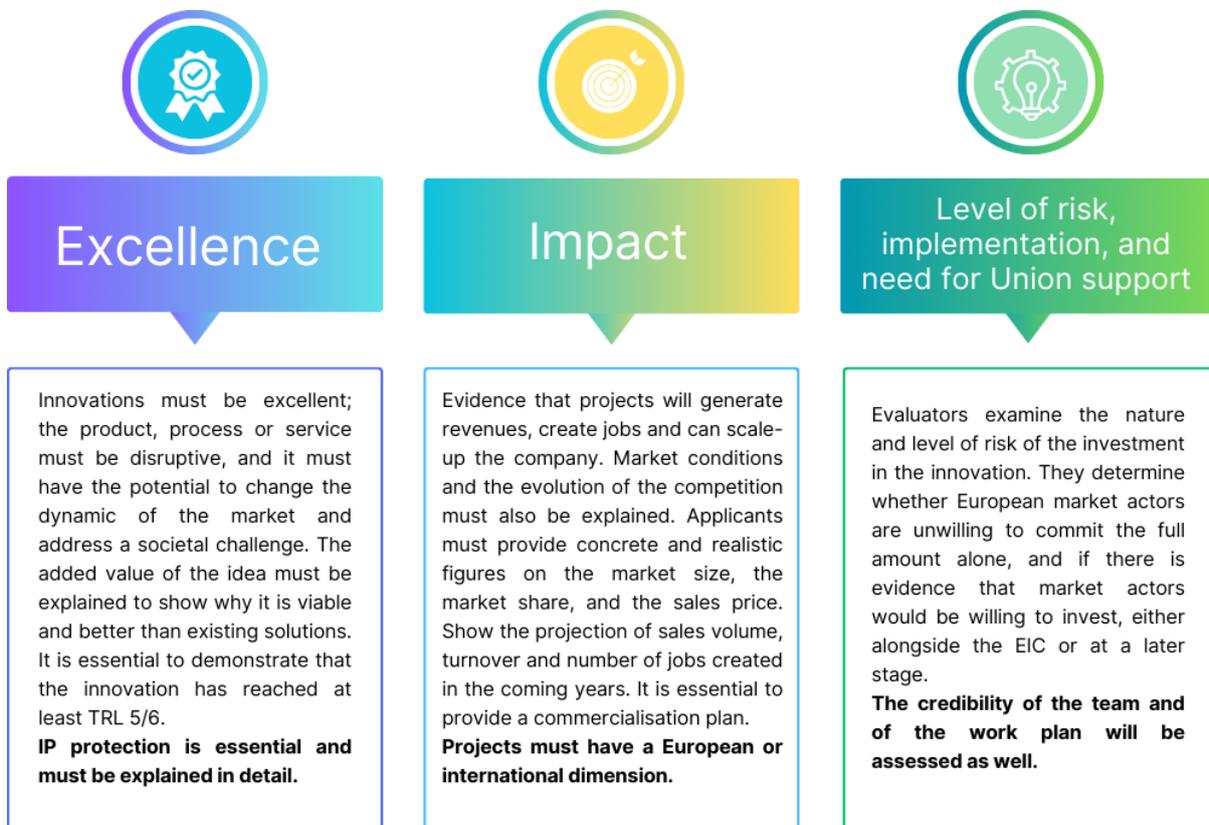
Applications meeting all of the criteria will be invited to face-to-face interviews with an EIC jury as the final step in the selection process. Interviews will take place in Brussels in 2025

The jury will ask questions related to the innovation, the company, and the team.



Evaluation Criteria

Experts evaluate the proposals according to three awarding criteria:



Grant Agreement Phase

Once the application has been selected for funding, applicants will need to work on the grant preparation.

During this phase (which usually takes from 2 to 3 months after grant approval), applicants must provide the necessary documentation and sign the Grant Agreement document. It consists of the formal agreements between the European Commission and the awarded company – as well as the timeline and budget for the project.

Strata's Unique Offering



Personal service

We operate in small, dedicated teams. Your project team of three expert consultants will stay with you throughout the entire process, with all three consultants reviewing every single document and attending meetings.



Market-leading success rates

Our success rates are typically 4× above the market average and we have already secured over €80 million in public funding. We publish many of our success cases on our website.



Expertise and experience

We ensure that all our teams comprise a blend of business management, market and commercialisation, IP, financial, organisation and people, and technological expertise with a relevant background in innovation management and entrepreneurship.



Intelligent and trustworthy

We perform careful independent evaluations and in-depth due diligence on all funding applications to ensure the highest chances of success. We bring in external experts for additional analysis, where required, at no extra cost.



Blended finance

We help our customers acquire the co-funding needed to unlock non-dilutive grants through investor matchmaking services. We can connect startups with +300 investors.

Advice from Strata's Team



Get your Team and Company Prepared and Engaged from the very Beginning

Applicants should not approach the EIC Accelerator as a single project application but as a **company endeavor**. Your C-level and key team members and advisors must be **engaged and aligned** from the very beginning. Although Step 2 (full proposal) is usually the most challenging step, the success rates have been falling for Step 3 (interview) and many companies (8 out of 10) are currently rejected after the interview. We at Strata recognise the **need for team and company preparation** from the very beginning so that we can avoid the usual mistakes at the interview made by members who have not been adequately involved in the process. Our preparation methodology does not only include proposal writing but is a comprehensive strategic and organisational process.

David Arias, Funding Advisor & Lead Innovation Consultant at STRATA



Reply Consistently and Compellingly. Take the risk

The EIC accelerator represents a **challenge** for any start-up. The fact of having to reply **consistently and compellingly** to relevant questions about the projects is in itself an incentive to approach those relevant and critical issues. Kites fly higher with strong winds. That's what the EIC will do for you. All you put at risk is your **time** because innovation is all about **challenging your ideas** about your project to ensure you were right and you still have reasons to be on track. Set up **challenges, new hypotheses, new paths** to go through, and make up how you will test and validate your ideas, at the minimum risk but with maximum ambition. Remember: **If there's no challenge in your agenda, you are not in the business.**

Rafael Zaballa, Lead Innovation Consultant at STRATA



Ensure Higher TRL than Required

Companies that want to apply for the EIC must make sure to be in a **TRL above the one required**. Very often, companies get rejected because they apply too early, however, if you have an established **TRL 5** with data, results, etc. then there will be no doubt about your stage of development.

Aracelia Tamariz, Lead Innovation Manager at STRATA



Meticulous Preparation, Quantification and Detail

Applying for the EIC Accelerator requires **meticulous preparation** and a strategic approach to stand out among a competitive pool of innovative startups. A common mistake is failing to quantify the unique value proposition of your innovation. To address this, it's important to estimate **key indicators** to clarify how much your solution is better than competing alternatives as well as the specific problems it solves and the gains it generates for customers and users. Additionally, **validation of your go-to-market strategy** is crucial to demonstrate the commercial viability of your innovation.

Gathering letters of support/intent from potential customers and investors can significantly strengthen your proposal. Lastly, be sure to **outline a detailed budget** and a realistic financial forecast with clear milestones to show how the EIC funding will accelerate your growth. By focusing on these key areas, you can increase your chances of success in securing EIC Accelerator funding.

Angela Sandri, Innovation Consultant at STRATA



Use a Concise yet Thorough Narrative

When applying for the EIC Accelerator, it is crucial to **articulate the innovative aspects** of the project, backed by clear and compelling data, showcasing its potential impact and market viability. Avoid overwhelming evaluators with excessive details; instead, present a **well-structured narrative** that emphasizes the core strengths and differentiators of your solution. A strategic blend of **thoroughness and clarity** will enhance the persuasiveness of your application, making it stand out in a competitive field.

Carmen Araquistain Portela, Innovation Consultant at STRATA



Level of Detail is Critical

An EIC Accelerator application is a 50-page proposal with up to 150 pages of annexes, and every single page should be dense with information. There are **three main areas** where applicants tend to be less prepared:

The level of detail in the technological descriptions and the milestones. The key is quantification – add as many ways to measure your technological progress (past and future) as possible. It's essential to convince the evaluators that you are at TRL5+ and that you have been analysing your progress and setting clear future goals.

The level of detail in the business model. Evaluators are looking for clear and understandable unit economics. They don't need very complex business models, but they do need to understand how you are going to make money. How much will you sell each unit for? What is the manufacturing cost? Is there a license agreement to consider, and what are the licensing fees and royalties? What is the customer acquisition cost?

Evidence of market traction. It is critical to show the evaluators that you are ensuring a perfect product-market fit and that you are already preparing to launch on the market as soon as possible. The key is the number of high-quality support letters you can secure from genuine potential customers. The requirements will vary from market to market, but you must prove that you can at least sell to your early adopters.

Martin Stanford, Innovation Manager at STRATA



Clear Objectives, Strong Support, and Plenty of Time

One of the **most important questions** one needs to answer when applying for the EIC Accelerator grant is “What are the objectives of the project”, and “What do you want to achieve by the end of the project”. Answering these questions is critical to define the workplan and the work packages. Another important aspect to consider is who is going to help you to implement such workplan” The **needed partners** should be identified and on board, so we recommend the following:

Get support. Dedicate time and effort to get as many letters of support and intent as possible. Although they are not compulsory, there is a clear correlation between the number of letters attached to the application and the success rate

Allocate time to writing the proposal. Do not underestimate the work needed to prepare the proposal. Designing a work calendar for all the parties involved in the writing and editing, and sticking to it is critical to be able to submit a strong proposal on time!

Inma Martin Berenjano, Innovation Consultant at STRATA

Success Stories

Sightic develops a revolutionary AI-technology to detect the influence of alcohol and drugs through image analysis of the eye and face area

Driven by the urgency to save lives in traffic and safety-critical work environments, Jenny Johansson and Stefanie Najafi founded Sightic in 2019 after working together at the Police Department in the fight against organised crime, in Gothenburg, Sweden. While Jenny was working as a psychologist and Stefanie as a police officer, they witnessed first-hand the dramatic consequences of alcohol and drugs in society. They decided to found Sightic to reduce alcohol and drug-related accidents.



Jenny Johansson

Co-founder Sightic Analytics (Sweden)

“We have only positive things to say about Strata. They have been very engaged and helpful throughout the whole process. We would not have succeeded without them”.

 [Read the full article here](#)

Chassis Autonomy is developing by-wire actuation systems that will enable the next step change in the automotive industry

The company's main objective is to develop fault tolerant by-wire actuation systems that will enable the unrestricted deployment of safe, fully autonomous vehicles; setting the new state-of-the-art and complying with the new EU legislation. Their technology enables a safer approach to AVs, since without their technology, without fail-operational steering and braking systems, the market would not achieve significant growth because the vehicles would not be safe to operate safely at higher speeds.



Thomas Li

Co-founder and CTO at Chassis Autonomy (UK)

"It was a very positive experience: the team was key to translating our vision and technical strategy into the appropriate work plan format; they were very understanding and they clearly did a very good job. The help and support from Strata was fundamental and the reason why we managed to succeed on the first attempt".

 [Read the full article here](#)

Levistor has developed a low-cost, durable energy storage technology that will enable super-fast charging of electric vehicles

Based in London, Levistor was founded in 2021 by Matt Journee, Tom Andrews, Ivan Roitch and Keith Pullen, with a focus on clean-tech through electrification. Levistor's mission is to electrify major industries such as automotive as soon, efficiently and low-cost as possible.

Levistor has developed an innovative Flywheel Energy Storage System (FESS) that can boost the electric grid at local charging points to achieve ultra-fast charging for EVs, providing a cheaper, safer, more environmentally friendly and faster solution than existing alternatives – mostly lithium-ion batteries.



LEVISTOR

Tom Andrews

Commercial Director at Levistor (UK)

"We wouldn't have been able to apply without Strata. Applying for European grants without a partner like Strata would have been a waste of time. It's a very tough process and to be honest when we were going on to the EIC website we were quite lost, so we found that we definitely needed a partner like Strata".

 [Read the full article here](#)

Oxyprem launches a medical device that ensures a high-precision measurement of the oxygen in premature babies' brains

OxyPrem's device solves the difficulty of monitoring the oxygen supply in these delicate and challenging cases in which being aware of the smallest variations is of vital importance. "The oximeter consists of a near-infrared spectroscopy sensor embedded in biocompatible silicone". This makes it flexible, adaptable and comfortable for the babies to be applied on their heads.



Alexander Nitsch
CEO at OxyPrem (Switzerland)

"I think that the collaboration with the Strata team has always been really good. We've been in touch with several team members over the years, and the whole experience was a very positive one. We've always had the impression that the Strata team is convinced that they can make it happen and, in the end, it worked".

 [Read the full article here](#)

Strolll has developed a revolutionary technology to help people living with neurological disorders

Strolll's mission is to transform the everyday reality of mobility for the millions of people living with motor-disabling neurological disorders and their families by developing intelligent digital therapeutics AI software solutions for Augmented Reality (AR) glasses that empowers movement therapy.



Jorgen Ellis
CEO at Strolll (UK)

"We really liked Strata's approach and their track record. We worked with Strata for 18 months, and the support from Strata has been fundamental and makes it all worth it".

 [Read the full article here](#)

Ready to apply for the EIC Accelerator?

Get in touch with us

hello@strata.team

