

EIC Pathfinder



Guide for 2025



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Introduction

About these guidelines

The present guide provides an overview of the European Innovation Council (EIC) Pathfinder programme, Europe's flagship innovation programme that provides funding to breakthrough deep tech projects with a high degree of scientific and technological ambition and risk and potential to create new markets (TRL 1-4).

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

The guide has been updated with the recent changes introduced by the European Commission. Readers are encouraged to read our [EIC Accelerator guide](#) if looking for information about

funding for higher TRLs (Technology Readiness Levels).

This guide also includes a summary of the results from the latest calls: a statistical analysis of the last call with a focus on its success rates, the most popular funding options, the geographic focus, and the most prominent areas.

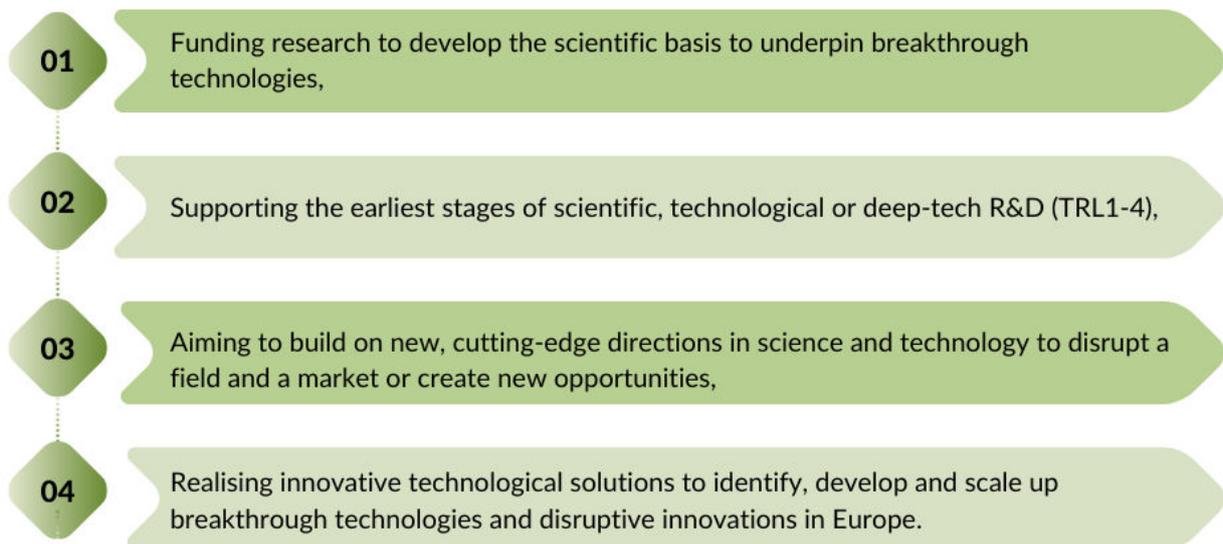
This document also dives deeper into the requirements applicants need to fulfill, as well as a brief explanation of how the application process works. Finally, it includes Strata's unique offering for those applicants willing to hire a professional and trustworthy consultancy firm.

In case further assistance is needed, please contact Strata through email at hello@strata.team

General information

What is the EIC Pathfinder?

With a total budget of **€262 million in 2025**, the EIC Pathfinder is a funding programme under Horizon Europe that offers support to research teams by:



Apart from the EIC Pathfinder, the EIC also offers the EIC Transition, offering funding for technology validation and spin-out, to validate technologies and develop business plans for specific applications (TRL 3-6), as well as the EIC Accelerator, which offers blended finance to develop and scale up innovations with the potential to create or disrupt markets (TRL 6-8) under the patient capital principle.

EIC Pathfinder Schemes

The EIC Pathfinder is divided into two schemes:

- **EIC Pathfinder Open (€142 million):** it is open to support projects in any field of science, technology or application without predefined thematic priorities.
- **EIC Pathfinder Challenges (€120 million):** it aims to support coherent portfolios of projects within predefined thematic areas with the aim to achieve specific objectives for each Challenge. During 2025, the EIC Pathfinder Challenges fall within the following topics:



Biotech for Climate Resilient Crops and Plant-Based Biomanufacturing

To enhance adaptation pathways for the production of **climate-resilient crops** and develop alternative pathways to produce high value ingredients in plants by **increasing nutrient profile** of crops based on plant native and/or non-native ingredients.

Budget: €30 million

Expected project size: €4M

Deadline: October 29, 2025



Generative-AI based Agents to Revolutionize Medical Diagnosis and Treatment of Cancer

The Challenge will support **early-stage groundbreaking research** projects that will develop and validate novel approaches and concepts for **integrating and interpreting multidimensional medical imaging and health data**.

Budget: €30 million

Expected project size: €4M

Deadline: October 29, 2025



Towards autonomous robot collectives delivering collaborative tasks in dynamic unstructured construction environments

Enabling autonomous robot collectives to collaboratively perform complex construction tasks in dynamic, unstructured environments. **Advancing robotic collaboration** and electrification to revolutionize on-site building processes and enhance efficiency, safety, and sustainability.

Budget: €30 million

Expected project size: €4M

Deadline: October 29, 2025



Waste-to-value devices: Circular production of renewable fuels, chemicals and materials

The Challenge focuses on currently **non- or hard-to-recycle types of synthetic polymer** materials (including among other mixtures of different types of plastics, polymeric composite materials, micro-/nanoplastics, untreated plastic waste, diapers, rubber, etc.), flue gases, wastewater and seawater desalination brines. Proposals must **target real-life industrial and household waste**.

Budget: €30 million

Expected project size: €4M

Deadline: October 29, 2025

Objectives of the EIC Pathfinder

EIC PATHFINDER OPEN

To demonstrate the **feasibility of the core concepts** behind a proposed future technology, thereby establishing a solid scientific and technological foundation.

DISCLAIMER

Projects **are not required to immediately address or achieve broader impacts**—such as creating new markets, enhancing quality of life, or solving global challenges.

EIC Pathfinder Open involves **interdisciplinary research and development**. To create new products and open new areas of research, applicants **must bring diverse areas of research together**, often with different perspectives, terminologies and methodologies, within individual projects and within a portfolio of projects.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES



1. To **create high-quality scientific publications**, ideally in open access journals.
2. To **present a compelling vision** for their potential future impact.
3. Projects are expected to take steps to **ensure their findings** can be further developed and adopted in the future. This includes:
 - securing appropriate intellectual property rights, and
 - considering regulatory, certification, and standardization requirements.

EIC PATHFINDER CHALLENGES

To **build on new cutting-edge directions** in science and technology to disrupt a field and a market or create new opportunities by realising innovative technological solutions grounded in high-risk/high-gain research and development.

With each specific Challenge:

A portfolio of projects will be selected that explore different perspectives, competing approaches or complementary aspects of the Challenge. The complexity and high-risk nature of this research will require multidisciplinary collaborations.

Budget

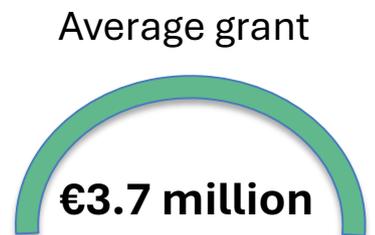
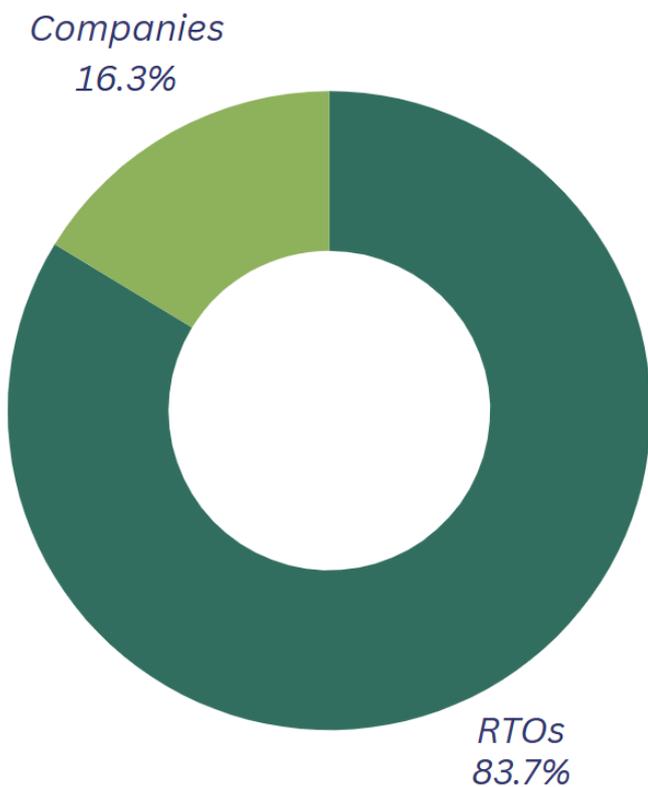
<p>GENERAL FUNDING</p> 	<p>Non-reimbursable grants of €3 to €4 million to support early-stage development of future technologies (e.g. various activities at low TRL 1-3), up to proof of concept.</p>	
<p>EIC PATHFINDER OPEN</p>		<p>EIC PATHFINDER CHALLENGES</p>
<p>€142 million in funding. Up to €3 million per project.</p> <p>Any field of science, technology or application without predefined thematic priorities.</p> <p>Grant for a Research and Innovation Action to cover the eligible costs, necessary for the implementation of their project.</p> <p>The funding rate is 100% of the eligible costs.</p>	   	<p>€120 million in funding. Up to €4 million per project.</p> <p>Fields fall within 4 challenges (see above)</p> <p>Grant for a Research and Innovation Action to cover the eligible costs, necessary for the implementation of your project, including the portfolio activities.</p> <p>The funding rate of this grant is of the eligible costs.</p>
<p>This does not preclude applicants from requesting larger amounts if duly justified.</p>	<p>This does not preclude applicants from requesting larger amounts, if duly justified or stated otherwise in the specific Challenge.</p>	

Latest results

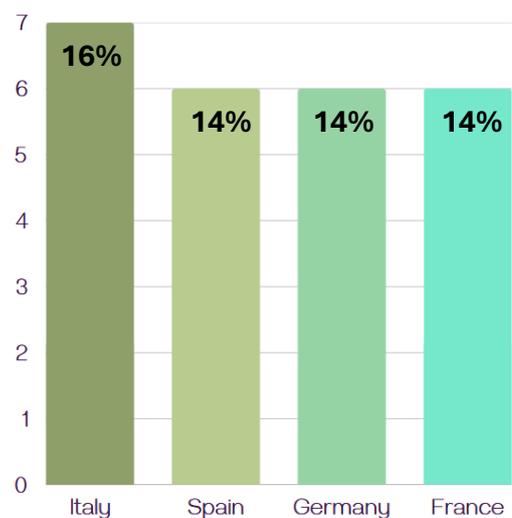
As of the date of publication of this guide, the latest results published correspond to the 2023 Challenges call (October 2023) and the 2024 Open call (March 2024).

October 2023 call

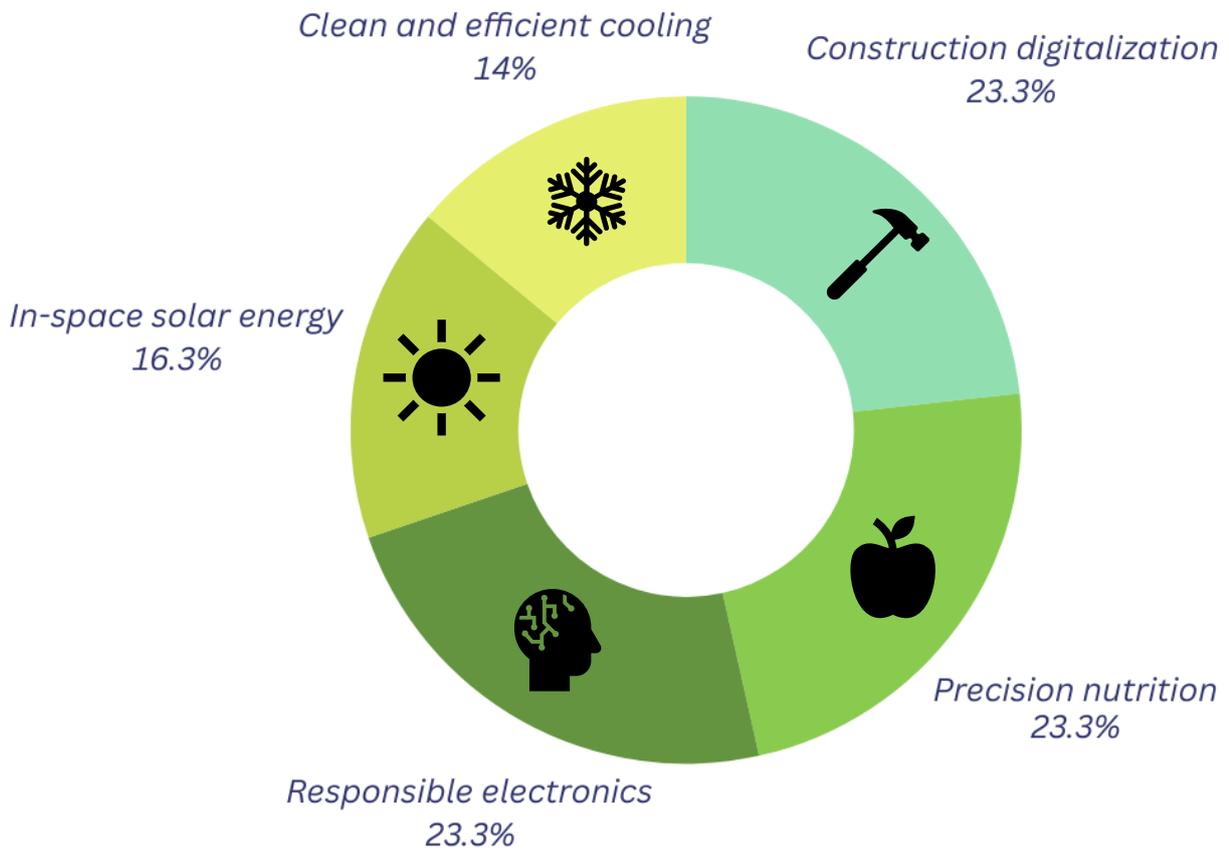
With a total **budget worth €159 million**, the EIC (European Innovation Council) announced the new **43 winners** from 368 evaluated proposals under the October 2023 EIC Pathfinder call, leading to a success rate of 11.68%, relatively high for EIC funding programmes.



Awardees spread across 30 countries



The funding among sectors has been distributed as follows:



March 2024 call

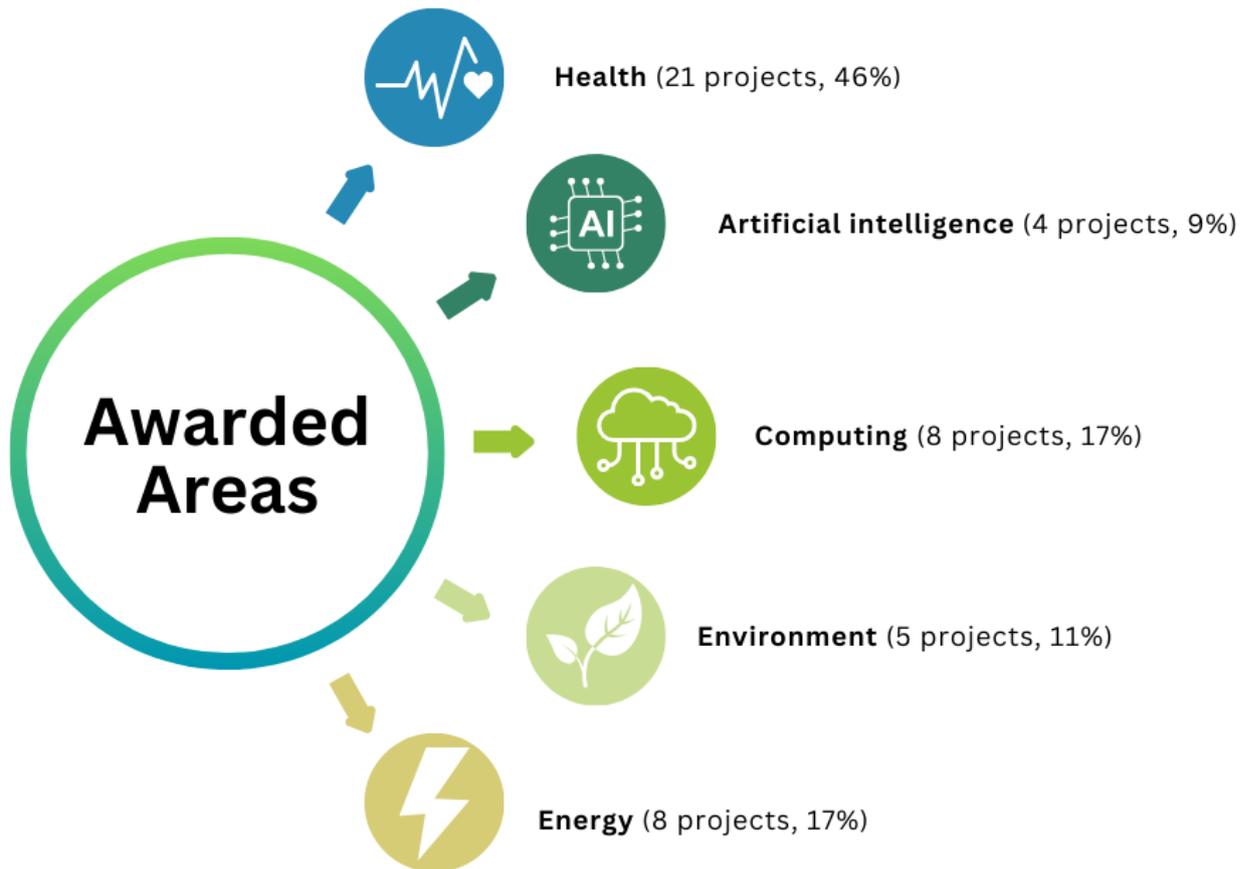
If we look at the EIC Pathfinder Open call in March 2024, there were important changes in the results obtained:



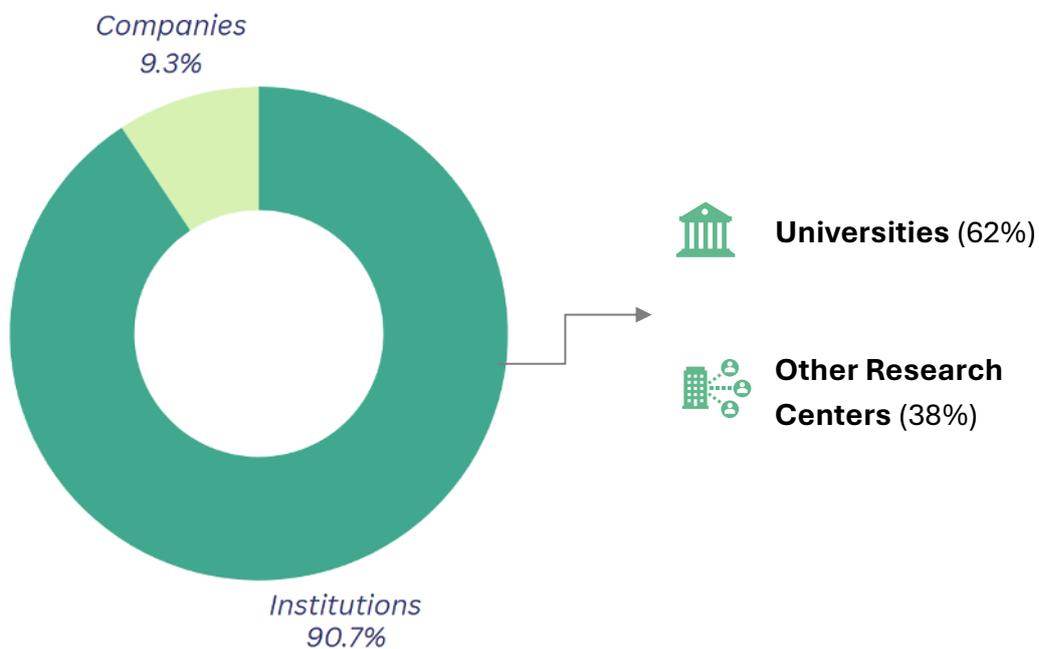
Winners spread across 25 countries



The most awarded area was **health**:



From the 43 winners, 39 were institutions and 4 were private companies:



Requirements for Applicants

Who can apply?

Consortia from EU Member States and countries associated to the Horizon Europe programme can apply to the EIC Pathfinder as long as:

- At least three different independent legal entities are present,
- At least one legal entity is established in a Member State,
- At least two other independent legal entities, each established in different Member States or Associated Countries,
- Additionally, single applicants or small consortia (two partners) can apply for EIC Pathfinder Challenges only.

For Pathfinder Open, proposals must be submitted by 21/05/2025 at 17h00 Brussels local time; for Pathfinder Challenges deadline for submitting proposals is 29/10/2025 at 17h00 Brussels local time.

Funding Conditions

The funding rate for EIC Pathfinder grants is 100% for eligible costs from TRL1 to 4.

Besides, projects funded through EIC

Pathfinder may be eligible:

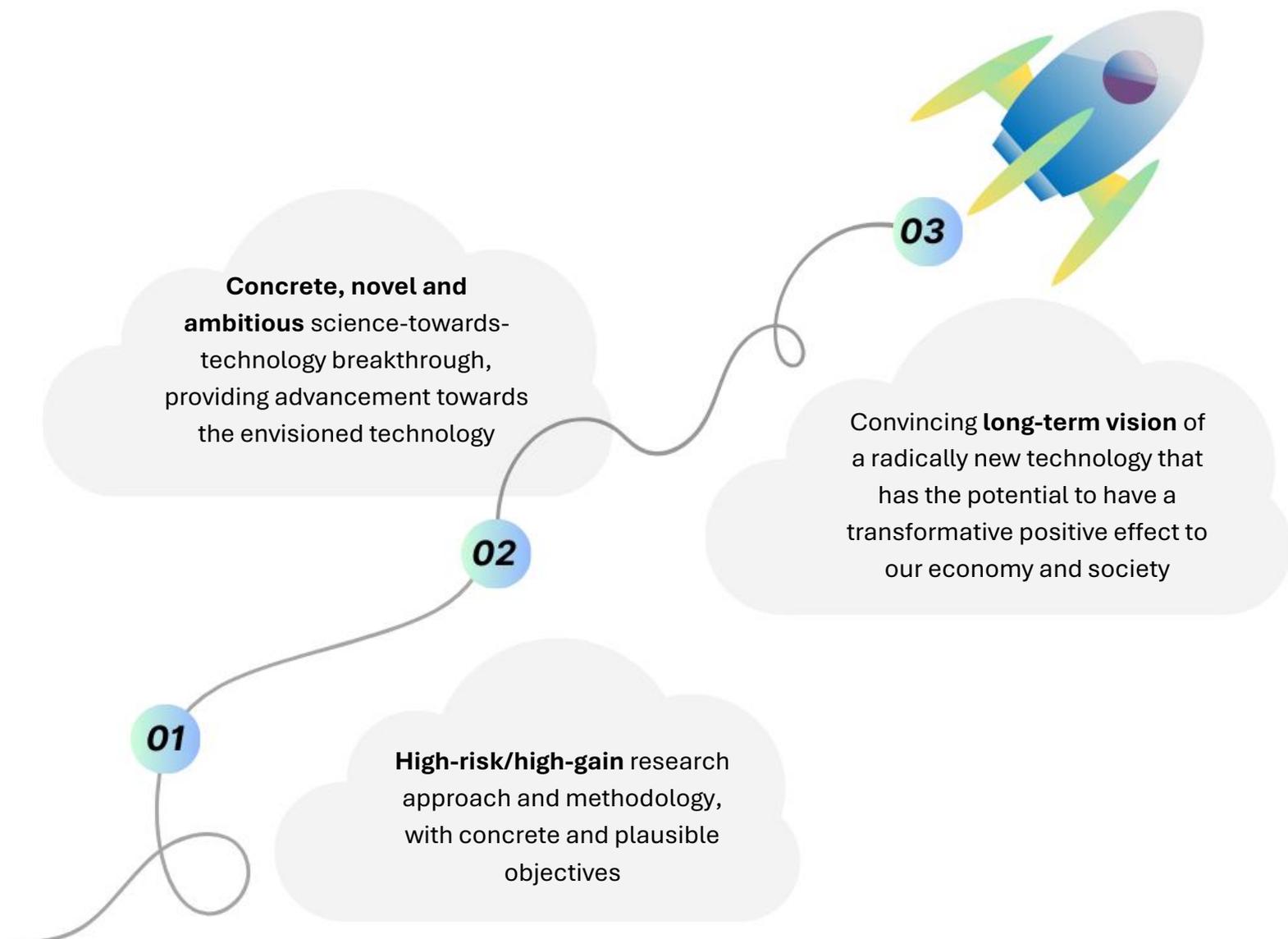
- to receive EIC Booster grants of a fixed amount not exceeding €50.000 to undertake complementary activities to explore potential pathways to commercialisation or for portfolio activities;
- to submit an EIC Transition proposal;
- to submit an EIC Accelerator proposal via the Fast Track scheme;
- to participate in the 'Next Generation Innovation Talents' scheme. The personnel costs of researchers participating in this scheme are eligible under your Pathfinder grants.

Submissions must be made via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal before the deadline. Sections 1 to 3 of the part B of proposals, corresponding respectively to the award criteria Excellence, Impact, and Quality and Efficiency of the Implementation, must consist of a maximum of 20 pages (A4 format). Results are published within 5 months from the call deadline (indicative) and proposals selected for funding shall be signed by 8 months after the call deadline (indicative).

How the Application Process Works

Eligibility

Proposals must meet all the following essential characteristics in order to apply for the **EIC Pathfinder**:

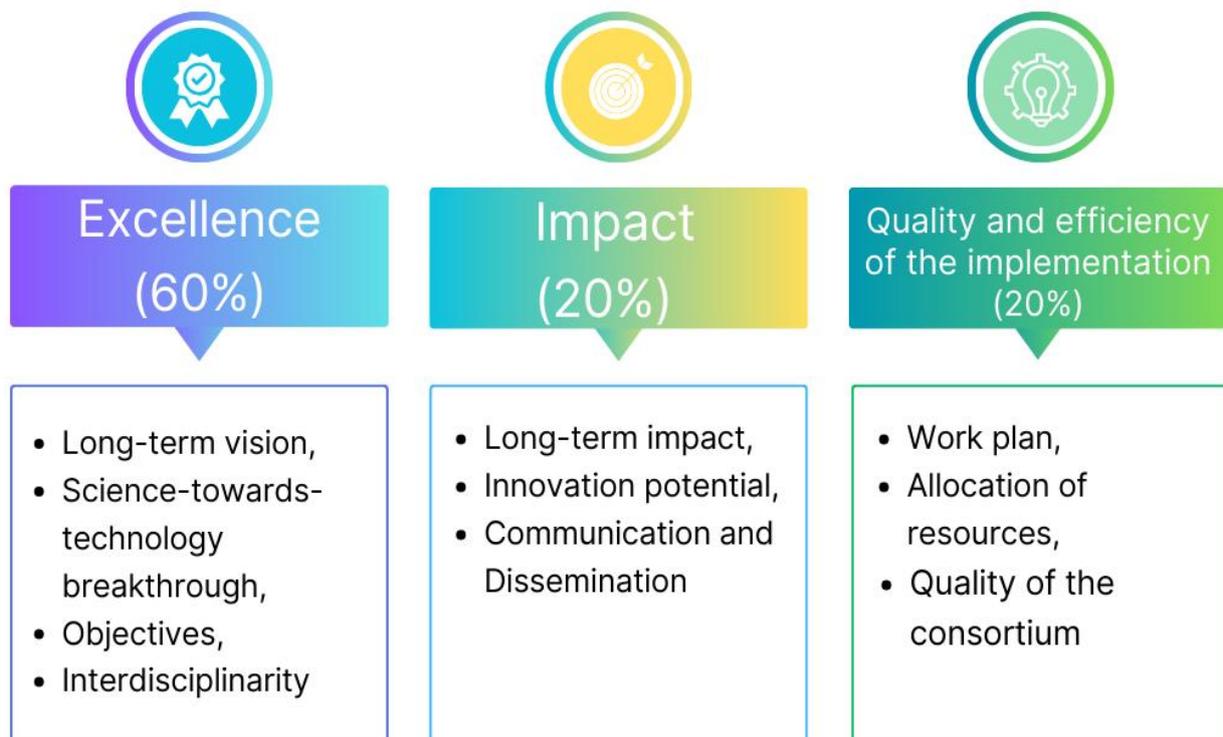


Proposals must be submitted by the coordinator, on behalf of a consortium for the Open Call but single applicants are allowed if applying to the Challenges call as described above.

Evaluation

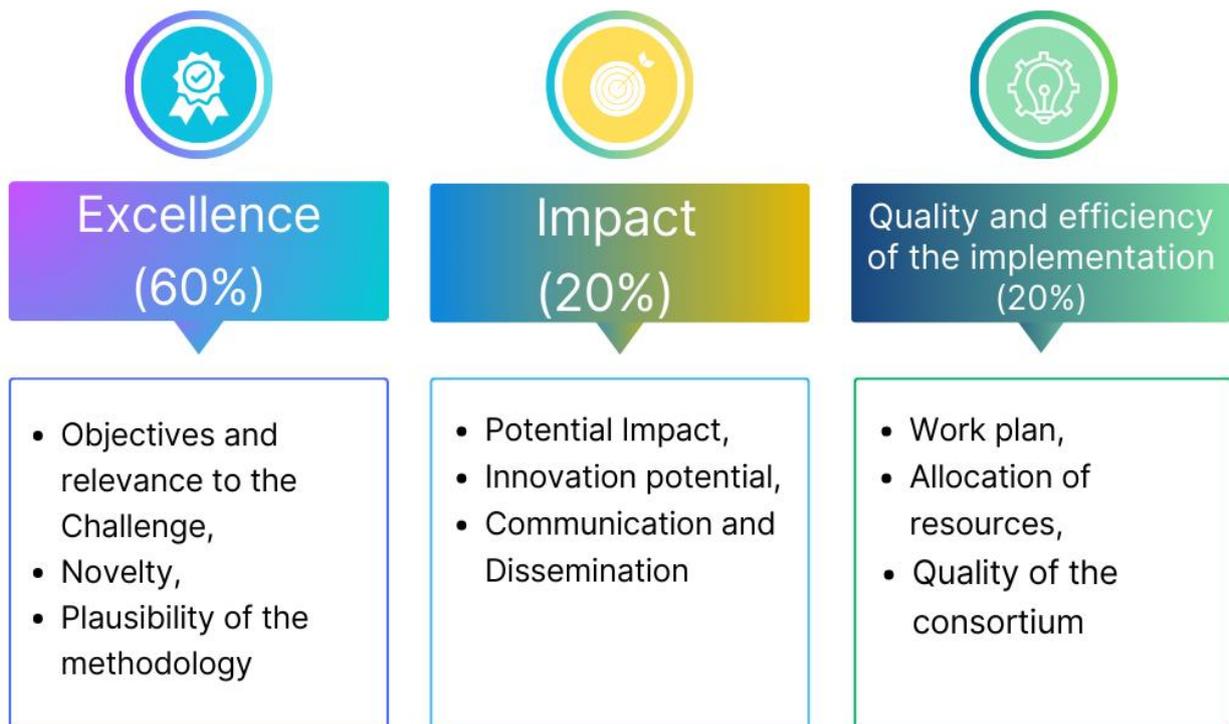
Proposals for the **EIC Pathfinder Open** will be first evaluated and scored individually with respect to the award criteria by at least four EIC expert evaluators. The score for each award criterion will be the median of the evaluators' scores. The overall score from this individual evaluation phase will be the weighted sum of the three median scores from the three award criteria.

The evaluation committee, which will be composed of EIC expert evaluators different from those who evaluated the proposals individually, will decide on the final score on the basis of the score from the individual evaluation phase and the outcome of its consensus discussions.



For the **EIC Pathfinder Challenges**, proposals will be evaluated in two steps:

- EIC expert evaluators will assess each proposal separately against the award criteria;
- an EIC evaluation committee will consider all proposals passing the first step together in order to assess the best portfolio of projects to achieve the specific objectives of the Challenge (so called portfolio considerations). The evaluation committee will be composed of EIC expert evaluators and EIC Programme Managers.



The EIC Pathfinder in 2025

Main changes for 2025

The 2025 Work programme includes some adjustments, improvements and simplifications compared to the 2024 Work Programme, based on advice from the EIC Board. For the EIC Pathfinder, additional emphasis on the potential applications of the technologies to be developed is encouraged.

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.

Ready to apply for the EIC Pathfinder?

Get in touch with us

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