

EDF

European Defence Fund



The European Defence Fund (EDF) is the European Union's flagship funding instrument aimed at fostering an innovative, competitive, and collaborative European defence industrial base. Launched under the EU's 2021–2027 Multiannual Financial Framework, the EDF provides around €8 bn in co-financing to support research and development (R&D) activities in defence technologies and capabilities across the EU.

Objectives

The EDF aims to:

- Enhance the EU's strategic autonomy and freedom of action in defence
- Promote cross-border cooperation across the European defence value chain
- Develop interoperable, state-of-the-art defence capabilities aligned with agreed EU priorities
- Support disruptive technologies and dual-use innovations with high impact on future military operations

Total Budget

€7.953bn for 2021–2027 - €2.7 billion for collaborative defence research and €5.3 billion for collaborative capability development projects that complement national funding.

Who Can Apply

Consortia of at least 3 legal entities from 3 different EU Member States or Norway (standard eligibility).

Exceptions:

- Disruptive Technologies Call (LS-RA-DIS): Minimum 2 entities from 2 Member States or Norway
- SME-focused Calls (LS-RA-SMERO & LS-DA-SME): Exclusively for SMEs (and RTOs in LS-RA-SMERO)
- Spin-in Calls: Must build upon results from civil EU-funded R&I
- Ukrainian entities eligible under specific EUD-IS & FSTP measures

Funding Rate

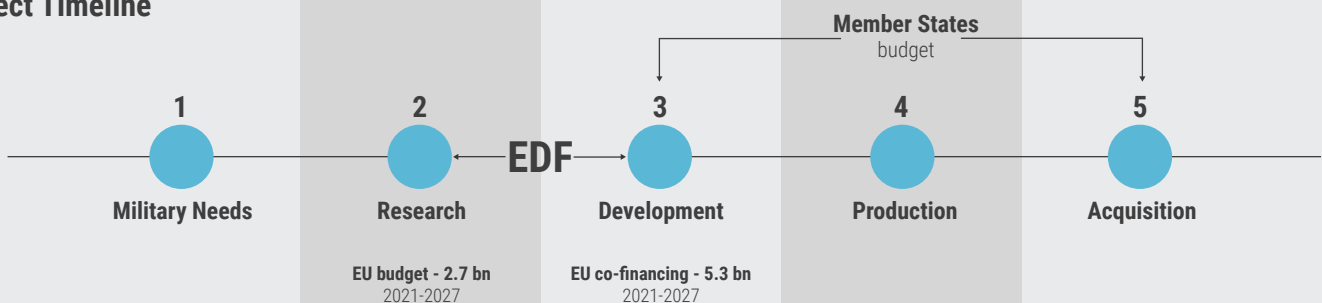
- Up to 100% funding for collaborative research projects (non-profit)
- Up to 80% co-funding for development projects, including prototypes, testing, and certification

Other

- Bonus incentives for involving SMEs, cross-border supply chains and PESCO-linked projects
- Cascade Funding: Available via FSTP (~€60k per third-party) for startups, SMEs, and Ukrainian entities



Project Timeline



Key Dates

- Call Opening: 28 January 2026
- Submission Deadline: 25 March 2026

Duration

The typical duration of a European Defence Fund (EDF) project is: 36 to 48 months (3 to 4 years)

However, the exact duration depends on the type of action and technology maturity level (TRL) targeted:

- **Research Actions (low TRL, e.g. TRL 2–4):** Typically 36 months
Focus: Early-stage research, proof of concept, feasibility.
- **Development Actions (higher TRL, e.g. TRL 5–7):** Can last up to 48 months
Focus: System prototyping, testing, validation, or pre-certification.

Eligible Countries

All 27 EU member states and Norway. Ukraine (specific eligibility under EUDIS and FSTP schemes)

Eligible Areas

EDF supports a wide range of domains, including:

- Cyber defence and information superiority
- Artificial intelligence, autonomy and decision support
- Next-generation weapon systems and effectors
- Space, ISR and surveillance / situational awareness
- Unmanned systems (UAVs, UGVs, USVs, UUVs)
- Energy and environmental resilience in defence for deployed forces
- Secure communications, microelectronics, sensors, quantum and other EDTs

In addition there's an emphasis on industrial competitiveness, supply chain integration, and technological sovereignty.

What Type of Projects are Supported?

- Collaborative defence research
 - Early-stage and applied research, feasibility studies and concept validation
 - TRLs typically from 2–4 (concept to proof-of-concept / lab validation)
- Capability development actions
 - System/subsystem design, integration, prototyping, testing and validation
 - TRLs progressing from mid-range towards pre-production (typically 5–7)
- Defence innovation / EUDIS actions
 - SME-oriented and non-thematic calls
 - Spin-in and disruptive technology actions leveraging civilian R&I results for defence applications

Control and Security

- Beneficiaries and key subcontractors must be established in the EU or associated countries.
- Executive management and decision-making must be in these countries.
- Entities controlled by non-associated third countries may participate only under strict security guarantees approved by the Commission and relevant Member States.
- Strong alignment with EU Capability Development Priorities and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO).



Why Work With Us?

Nordic Innovators Supports

- Defence primes and system integrators
- Mid-caps and high-potential SMEs
- RTOs, universities and specialist suppliers

We bring

- Deep understanding of EDF rules, evaluation logic and security constraints
- Experience in structuring complex, multinational consortia and industrial workshare
- Strong track record in EU funding and defence-related instruments

Services

- Opportunity scanning and funding strategy
- Concept shaping and proposal architecture
- Full proposal writing, review and challenge
- Support through Grant Agreement Preparation

