EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 17.12.2025
C(2025) 8719 final

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION

of 17.12.2025

on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2026 and amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 568 final on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2025 - Part 2

(as amended by C(2026) 690 final of 04.02.2026)

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THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union[1] ('the Financial Regulation'), and in particular Article 110(1) thereof,

Having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/697 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the European Defence Fund and repealing Regulation (EU) 2018/1092[2], and in particular Article 24 thereof,

Whereas:

(1) In order to ensure the implementation of the European Defence Fund for the year 2026, it is necessary to adopt an annual financing decision, which constitutes the annual work programme for 2026 in accordance with Article 110(2) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 ('the Financial Regulation').

(2) The envisaged assistance is to comply with the conditions and procedures set out by the restrictive measures adopted pursuant to Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

(3) It is appropriate to authorise the award of grants without a call for proposals and to provide for the conditions for awarding those grants.

(4) It is necessary to allow for the payment of interest due for late payment on the basis of Article 116(5) of the Financial Regulation.

(5) In order to allow for flexibility in the implementation of the work programme, it is appropriate to determine the changes, which should not be considered substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Financial Regulation.

(6) Pursuant to Article 62(1), first subparagraph, point (c), of the Financial Regulation, indirect management is to be used for the actions specified in the work programme.

(7) The Commission is to ensure a level of protection of the financial interests of the Union with regard to persons and entities entrusted with the implementation of Union funds by indirect management as provided for in Article 157(3) of the Financial Regulation. To that end, and before a contribution agreement can be signed, such persons and entities are to be subject to an assessment of their systems and procedures

[1] OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024, ELI

[2] OJ L 170, 12.5.2021, p.149

in accordance with Article 157(4) of the Financial Regulation and, if necessary, to appropriate supervisory measures in accordance with Article 157(5) of the Financial Regulation.

(8) The measures provided for in this Decision are in accordance with the opinion of the European Defence Fund Programme Committee.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1
The work programme

The annual financing decision, constituting the annual work programme for the implementation of the European Defence Fund for 2026, as set out in the Annexes 1, 2 and 3 is hereby adopted.

Article 2
Union contribution

The maximum Union contribution for the implementation of the European Defence Fund for 2026 is set at EUR 1 005 978 500, and shall be financed from the operational appropriations entered in the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

(a) budget line 13.0201 - Capability development: EUR 676 099 033;

(b) budget line 13.0301 - Defence research: EUR 329 879 467.

The appropriations provided for in the first paragraph may also cover interest due for late payment.

In addition, administrative appropriations should be considered from the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

(a) budget line 13.010100 - Support expenditure for the European Defence Fund – Non-research: EUR 3 800 000;

(b) budget line 13.010203 - Other management expenditure for the European Defence Fund – Research: EUR 3 600 000.

The implementation of this Decision is subject to the availability of the appropriations provided for in the draft general budget of the Union for 2026, following the adoption of that budget by the budget authority or as provided for in the system of provisional twelfths.

Article 3
Flexibility clause

Cumulated changes to the allocations to specific actions not exceeding 20% of the maximum Union contribution set in Article 2, first paragraph of this Decision shall not be considered to be substantial for the purposes of Article 110(5) of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509, where those changes do not significantly affect the nature of the actions and the objective of the work programme.

The authorising officer responsible may apply the changes referred to in the first paragraph. Those changes shall be applied in accordance with the principles of sound financial management and proportionality.

Article 4
Methods of implementation and entrusted entities or persons

The implementation of the actions carried out by way of indirect management, as set out in Annex 1, may be entrusted to the entities or persons referred to or selected in accordance with the criteria laid down in that Annex.

Article 5
Grants

Grants may be awarded without a call for proposals in accordance with the conditions set out in the Annex 1.

Article 6
Financial instruments

An amount of EUR 20 000 000 from the European Defence Fund in 2026 shall be allocated to actions under blending operations as set out in Annex 1.

Blending operations shall be implemented under indirect management by the European Investment Fund.

Article 7
Amendment to Implementing Decision C(2025) 568 final

A new paragraph is added to Article 2:

"In addition, administrative appropriations should be considered from the following lines of the general budget of the Union:

(a) budget line 13.010100 - Support expenditure for the European Defence Fund – Non-research: EUR 3 342 000;

(b) budget line 13.010203 - Other management expenditure for the European Defence Fund – Research: EUR 3 101 306."

Done at Brussels, 17.12.2025

For the Commission
Andrius KUBILIUS
Member of the Commission

EUROPEAN
COMMISSION

Brussels, 17.12.2025
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ANNEX 1

ANNEXES

to the

Commission Implementing Decision

on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2026 and amending Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 568 final on the financing of the European Defence Fund and the adoption of the work programme for 2025 - Part 2

(as amended by C(2026) 690 final of 04.02.2026)

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1. INTRODUCTION

The European Union (EU) is faced with increasing geopolitical instability and a complex set of conventional and new security threats, while the defence sector is fragmented and lacks investments in important research and capability development projects. The EU is therefore taking steps to bear more responsibility for its security and defence as highlighted in the White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030 and the Defence Readiness Roadmap 2030([1]). This aims to strengthen its strategic autonomy and freedom of action and help create a more competitive and integrated European Defence Technology Industrial Base. This should in turn reduce its dependencies.

Following the Preparatory Action on Defence Research (PADR) and the European Defence Industrial Development Programme (EDIDP), the European Defence Fund (EDF) has been created to boost the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European Defence Technology Industrial Base throughout the EU. It should complement, leverage and consolidate collaborative efforts and cross-border cooperation between legal entities in developing defence capabilities that respond to security challenges, while strengthening and improving the agility of both defence supply and value chains.

The defence capability needs and shortfalls remain significant throughout the EU, in particular on next generations of large-scale capabilities, but also in critical cross-cutting and enabling areas such as space and cyber. This includes making best use of existing EU/European space systems by contributing to the development of their military applications. The EDF should also promote better exploitation of the industrial potential of innovation, research and technological development at each stage of the industrial life cycle of defence products and technologies, including through cross-fertilisation with civilian innovations in various domains such as digital, AI and cyber.

In addition, the ecological transition is likely to reshape geopolitics, including global economic, trade and security interests. State and non-state players compete for access to scarce resources (e.g. critical raw materials). This affects the EU and requires a common response to avoid crises and conflicts. Against this backdrop, the EU has adopted a new Circular Economy Action Plan as one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal, Europe's new agenda for sustainable growth. The plan can deliver substantial material savings throughout value chains and production processes, generate extra value and unlock economic opportunities. Defence activities, particularly those supported by the EDF, therefore need to address, wherever relevant, the reduction of waste by developing and integrating innovative technologies (e.g. waste management, safe use of chemicals, component tracing, environmental protection, water management) and green military components through design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing and recycling.

The Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) launched in March 2024 aims to boost investments in critical technologies in Europe: clean technologies, deep and digital technologies, biotechnologies and defence technologies ([2]). STEP mobilise funding from existing EU programmes to support the development and manufacturing of these critical technologies, while safeguarding and strengthening the respective value chains as well as associated services critical for and specific to the development and manufacturing of the final

([1]) https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/white-paper-european-defence-readiness-2030_en
([2]) Regulation (EU) 2025/2653 introduced defence technologies as the fourth investment area under STEP.

products. In particular, the EDF benefits from EUR 1.5 billion under STEP for 2024-2027, which will be used to fund R&D of critical technologies in the defence sector.

Published in March 2024, the EU Defence Industrial Strategy aims to create the conditions for EU industry to meet Member States' needs in terms of time and volume by ensuring the availability of defence products under all circumstances, as well as the longer-term competitiveness of the European Defence Technology Industrial Base. To achieve the latter, the strategy calls for a sustained R&D effort, building on and strengthening existing instruments, e.g. the EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS) under the EDF. It also proposes supporting the industrialisation of prototypes resulting from collaborative R&D efforts (e.g. EDF) to bridge the commercialisation gap.

The EDF is implemented through annual work programmes from 2021 to 2027. Priorities identified in them are in line with the EU capability development priorities commonly agreed by Member States, in particular through the Capability Development Plan ([3]) and Priority Capability Areas as set out in the White Paper for European Defence Readiness 2030. This applies to the work programme for 2026 in particular. Due consideration has also been given to legacy PADR and EDIDP work programmes, to existing proposals from the Permanent Structured Cooperation framework, and to the Common Security and Defence Policy capability shortfalls.

This work programme sets out in detail the actions to receive financial support from the Fund in 2026 (see table below) through calls for proposals. The work programme identifies 16 thematic categories of actions, among which R&D topics are identified, where appropriate. The contribution of each category of actions to the three fields defined in the EDF Regulation ([4]) is also indicated.

EDF thematic categories of actions	**Fields covered**		
	(a)	**(b)**	**(c)**
1.Defence medical response, Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear, biotech and human factors	X		
2. Information superiority		X	
3. Advanced passive and active sensors	X	X	
4. Cyber		X	
5. Space		X	
6. Digital transformation	X	X	
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	X		
8. Materials and components	X	X	X
9. Air combat	X		X
10. Air and missile defence	X	X	X
11. Ground combat	X	X	X

([3]) The purpose of the plan is to increase coherence between Member States' defence planning and to encourage European cooperation by looking at future operational needs and defining common capability development priorities. The latest version of the plan was endorsed in 2023.

([4]) Pursuant to Article 24(3) of Regulation (EU) 2021/697, the research topics and categories of actions shall cover products and technologies in the fields of: (a) preparation, protection, deployment and sustainability; (b) information management and superiority and command, control, communication, computers, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (C4ISR), cyber defence and cybersecurity; and (c) engagement and effectors.

12. Force protection and mobility	X	X	
13. Naval combat	X	X	X
14. Underwater warfare	X	X	X
15. Simulation and training	X		
16. Disruptive technologies	X	X	X

In addition to the calls for proposals that address these thematic categories of actions, there are:

- Non-thematic calls for proposals focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that target R&D actions in order to stimulate innovation as a key objective of the EDF. Successful SME beneficiaries in all EDF calls may be offered business coaching sessions.
- Calls for proposals that target other types of actions.

Each category of action may be addressed through one or more calls for proposals, as described in Appendix 1. The list of calls for proposals and associated topics addressed in this annual work programme is set out in Section 1. Each topic targets one or more activities in accordance with Article 10(3) of the EDF Regulation. The table below indicates which activities are eligible for research actions and which for development actions. In addition, tables 1 and 3 in Section 5 set out their associated funding rates. A topic can focus more specifically on one or more mandatory activities but can allow additional optional activities that would lead to (upstream activities) or result from (downstream activities) these activities.

Types of activities		**Short name**	**Coverage**	
			Research action	**Development action**
(a)	Activities that aim to create, underpin and improve knowledge, products and technologies, including disruptive technologies for defence, which can achieve significant effects in the area of defence	Generating knowledge	Eligible	Not eligible
(b)	Activities that aim to increase interoperability and resilience, including secured production and exchange of data, to master critical defence technologies, strengthen the security of supply or enable the effective exploitation of results for defence products and technologies	Integrating knowledge	Eligible	Eligible
(c)	Studies such as feasibility studies to explore the feasibility of new or upgraded products, technologies, processes, services and solutions	Studies	Eligible	Eligible
(d)	The design of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology as well as the definition of the technical specifications on which such a design has been developed, including any partial tests for risk reduction in an industrial or representative environment	Design	Eligible	Eligible
(e)	The system prototyping of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	System prototyping	Not eligible	Eligible
(f)	The testing of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	Testing	Not eligible	Eligible
(g)	The qualification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	Qualification	Not eligible	Eligible
(h)	The certification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	Certification	Not eligible	Eligible
(i)	The development of technologies or assets that increase efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies	Increasing efficiency	Not eligible	Eligible

2. LEGAL BASIS

All actions that will be funded under this work programme have their legal basis in the EDF Regulation. In addition, this work programme will contribute to the STEP objectives as defined in Regulation (EU) 2024/795 (the STEP Regulation).

3. ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE WORK PROGRAMME IN 2026

This section lists the calls for proposals and their associated topics, together with their main characteristics. These calls for proposals and topics result from a discussion with the EDF Programme Committee composed of representatives from the Member States and EDF associated countries as set out in Article 5 of the EDF Regulation.

Management mode:

Under Article 8(1) of the EDF Regulation and unless otherwise provided for in the present work programme, the actions set out in this work programme are to be implemented in direct management by the Commission.

By way of derogation, in accordance with Article 8(2) of the EDF Regulation, specific actions may, in substantiated cases, be carried out under indirect management by bodies as referred to in point (c) of Article 62(1) of the Financial Regulation, for example in the case of complex actions where a project manager has been appointed by Member States, taking into account in particular the complexity of the action and the experience of the proposed body.

The change of management mode set in the present work programme will be assessed after the selection of proposals retained for funding and will be subject to the prior assessment of the bodies in accordance with Article 157 of the Financial Regulation in order to ensure the protection of the EU's financial interests. The responsible Authorising Officer is authorised to conclude a contribution agreement with entities that have satisfactorily passed the prior assessment referred to in Article 157 of the Financial Regulation. If the terms of a contribution agreement cannot be successfully agreed with a pillar assessed entity in due time, the project(s) concerned may be managed in direct management by the Commission.

Calls for proposals:

Nine calls for proposals will be launched in 2026, covering 15 of the 16 thematic categories of actions, in addition to one call for proposals not related to thematic categories of actions as set out in Section 3.2:

1) EDF-2026-RA:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions
   - **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals
   - **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
   - **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 110 000 000 for seven call topics that address seven categories of actions.
2) EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions
   - **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals

- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
- **Specific provisions for the call:** The proposals must build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or several projects that were funded under an EU programme call with a focus on civil applications. This previous project(s) may be completed or may still be active. The submitting consortium does not need to be constituted of or even to include participants or result owners of the previous project(s). However, applicants must confirm that they have or will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results of the previous project(s).
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 50 000 000 for two call topics that address two categories of actions.

3) EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE:

- **Targeted type of actions:** Research actions (technological challenges)
- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 30 000 000 for two call topics that address one category of actions.

3-a) EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO:

- **Targeted type of actions**: Research actions addressing disruptive technologies for defence (dedicated to SMEs and research organisations).
- **Form of funding**: Lump sum grants following the call for proposals.
- **Targeted type of applicants**: Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation. Members of the consortium need to be SMEs (as defined in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC) or research organisations. The coordinator of the consortium needs to be an SME. The budget allocated to research organisations cannot exceed 40% of the total requested grant amount.
- **Indicative budget:** EUR 35 000 000 for one call topic that addresses one category of actions.
- **Specific call conditions:** Proposals will be evaluated against the three award criteria set out in points (a), (b) and (f) of Article 12 of the EDF Regulation. As set out in the call documentation, the evaluation process may be carried out in stages. Proposals may require a passing score for each of the award criteria before they can progress to the next stage.

4) EDF-2026-DA:

- **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions
- **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals

- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 422 000 000 for 11 topics that address 8 categories of actions.

5) EDF-2026-DA-EXP:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions (expedited call)
   - **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals
   - **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
   - **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 40 000 000 for one topic that addresses one category of actions.
   - **Specific call conditions:** Proposals should be submitted within a shorter timeframe than for EDF-2026-DA, and the evaluation process should be faster.
6) EDF-2026-DA-ACC:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions (accelerated call)
   - **Form of funding:** Actual costs grants following the call for proposals
   - **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation
   - **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 100 000 000 for one topic that addresses one category of actions.
   - **Specific call conditions:** Proposals should be submitted according to the same timeframe as for EDF-2026-DA, but the evaluation process should be faster.
7) EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions (dedicated to disruptive technologies for defence)
   - **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals
   - **Targeted type of applicants:** Any consortium of eligible entities as defined in Article 9 of the EDF Regulation and involving at least two legal entities established in at least two different Member States or EDF associated countries. At least two of the eligible legal entities established in at least two Member States or EDF associated countries must not, during the entire period in which the action is carried out, be controlled, directly or indirectly, by the same legal entity, and shall not control each other.
   - **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 29 000 000 for one call topic that addresses one category of actions.
8) EDF-2026-LS-DIS:
   - **Targeted type of actions:** Actions dedicated to disruptive technologies for defence

- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any consortium of eligible entities as defined in Article 9 of the EDF Regulation and involving at least two legal entities established in at least two different Member States or EDF associated countries. At least two of the eligible legal entities established in at least two Member States or EDF associated countries must not, during the entire period in which the action is carried out, be controlled, directly or indirectly, by the same legal entity, and shall not control each other.
- **Indicative budget for the call:** EUR 27 000 000 for one call topic that addresses one category of actions.
- **Specific call conditions:** Proposals will be evaluated against the three award criteria set out in points (a), (b) and (f) of Article 12 of the EDF Regulation. As set out in the call documentation, the evaluation process may be carried out in stages. Proposals may require a passing score for each of the award criteria before they can progress to the next stage.

STEP:

All call topics included in this work programme, except two ([5]), support the STEP objectives as set out in the amended STEP Regulation. Proposals that meet the minimum requirements indicated in the specific call conditions will be awarded a STEP Seal ([6]).

3.1. Actions to be funded through grants and related to the categories of actions

3.1.1. Defence medical response, Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN), biotech and human factors (MCBRN)

This category of actions will be addressed through (i) the implementation of the Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) related to the Alliance for Defence Medical Countermeasures; (ii) one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-RA; and proposals will be called for one topic.

3.1.1.1. EDF-2026-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM: Defence medical countermeasures alliance – Research actions

Within the FPA following the call topic EDF-2022-FPA-MCBRN-MCM to establish and support the Alliance for Defence Medical Countermeasures, the selected consortium will be invited to submit a proposal that will implement the 2026 research actions of the action plan defined in the above FPA.

The objectives and tasks to be performed will be those defined in the FPA.

The standard EDF eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, thresholds and weighting will apply according to the research nature of the action.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of biotechnologies.

([5]) EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAO and EDF-2026-RA-UWW-FUWN.
([6]) The STEP Seal is the Sovereignty Seal defined in Regulation (EU) 2024/795.

Type of action: Specific grant agreement awarded without a call for proposals in relation to an FPA.

Indicative budget: EUR 6 500 000 for this topic.

3.1.1.2. EDF-2026-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM: Defence medical countermeasures alliance – Development actions

Within the FPA following the call topic EDF-2022-FPA-MCBRN-MCM to establish and support the Alliance for Defence Medical Countermeasures, the selected consortium will be invited to submit a proposal that will implement the 2026 development actions of the action plan defined in the above FPA.

The objectives and tasks to be performed will be those defined in the FPA.

The standard EDF eligibility criteria, evaluation criteria, thresholds and weighting will apply according to the development nature of the action.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of biotechnologies.

Type of action: Specific grant agreement awarded without a call for proposals in relation to an FPA.

Indicative budget: EUR 18 500 000 for this topic.

3.1.1.3. EDF-2026-RA-MCBRN-DST: CBRN decontamination systems and technologies

Current military decontamination processes are manual and time-consuming, while automation could improve efficiency, safety and control. Clearance decontamination, which ensures that equipment is safe for transport and disposal, is a challenging process that may require advanced technologies. A new approach to CBRN decontamination is needed that is simple, safe, reliable and uses minimal water. New technologies such as catalysts and UV radiation are being considered to neutralise agents without damaging equipment. Decontamination is also critical in the management of biological emergencies, including epidemics and pandemics, and is not limited to military scenarios. Solid sorbents, including nanosorbents, are promising, with advantages such as low toxicity and non-corrosiveness. Clearance decontamination should conform to nationally established standards and guidelines so that the equipment can be transported through non-EU countries and/or returned to its country of origin or final destination.

This topic aims to explore solutions for the thorough decontamination of large military equipment, in particular for post-mission decontamination. It focuses on the development of nanosorbents capable of effectively absorbing CBRN agents even in the presence of water. These sorbents can be applied using portable backpack devices and larger mobile devices, enabling efficient decontamination on both a small and large scale.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 15 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.2. Information superiority (C4ISR)

This category of actions will not be addressed under this annual work programme.

3.1.3. Advanced passive and active sensors (SENS)

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-RA and EDF-2026-DA, with the following two topics:

3.1.3.1. EDF-2026-RA-SENS-MSDT: Multidomain sensors demonstrator and test

The high speed and significant manoeuvrability of hypersonic vehicles, particularly hypersonic glide vehicles, create difficult conditions for target detection and tracking, which are exacerbated by changes in radar cross section characteristics. Radar waveforms and signal processing become essential to counter the effects induced by hypersonic threat dynamics. In addition, the last decade has seen a global increase in the use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) for battlefield intelligence gathering and reconnaissance. Anti-UAV radars therefore need to be developed to detect, identify and track such systems. Innovative approaches (e.g. AI and cognitive methods) can provide the means to select the best waveform receiver filter combination to maximise radar detection and tracking performance also using a feedback loop between the received and transmitted signal characteristics.

This topic therefore focuses on the development of an engineering development model (i.e. demonstrator) capable of supporting tasks such as demonstrating the maturity of innovative technologies in the radar domain and supporting the feasibility of implementing such technologies in terms of time, investment cost, complexity and applicability to military operations. The ultimate aim is to reduce the risks associated with future full sensor development that includes these features.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating and integrating knowledge, studies and design.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.3.2. EDF-2026-DA-SENS-CEW: Enhanced cognitive EW system with intelligent RESM CESM signal analysis

The increasing complexity of military operations requires more advanced electronic warfare (EW) systems capable of dealing with multiple threats and operating in electromagnetic congested scenarios. Current solutions are partially effective and require the complex integration of different sensors and frequency bands. As a result, there is a growing need for automated EW systems that can rapidly identify and respond to threats, especially given the limited availability of qualified personnel.

To meet this challenge, this topic aims to further develop and integrate technologies to develop a more robust, cognitive and operational EW system. Cognitive EW systems that use AI and machine learning can detect, learn and interact with the environment, accelerating the development and implementation of next-generation EW threat detection, suppression and neutralisation technologies. These systems can interpret large amounts of data from multiple sources, operate autonomously and provide faster and better-quality data, ultimately automating system decisions and improving response time in critical situations.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 24 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.4. Cyber (CYBER)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, EDF-2026-RA, with the following topic:

3.1.4.1. EDF-2026-RA-CYBER-QSTN: Quantum secured tactical networks

The next generation of tactical military networks are being developed using software defined radio solutions and software defined network solutions to provide secure and resilient communications against cyberattacks. More agile and flexible than traditional approaches, these solutions make it much easier to integrate additional devices, including mobile devices, and innovative technologies into military networks such as quantum key distribution, post-quantum cryptography and physical unclonable functions. In particular, quantum key distribution aims to provide a higher level of trust in information sharing and cyber defence operations by ensuring that all intrusions and hacking attempts are detected in real time using quantum principles.

Building on previous and ongoing EDF R&D activities in this area, this topic aims to develop software defined network technologies and solutions for a network architecture framework based on quantum technologies that will provide EU armed forces with a technological edge in secure tactical networks.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating and integrating knowledge, studies and design.

Indicative budget: EUR 14 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.5. Space (SPACE)

The EU is funding and running the space flagships Galileo and Copernicus and is further developing new initiatives (EU-SST, GOVSATCOM, Secure connectivity), all of dual-use interest. At the same time, the commercial sector is booming, with a growing number of projects from both established players and newcomers proposing disruptive concepts and services (e.g. constellations of small satellites) whose potential for defence applications has not been fully explored yet. Military operations rely heavily on space-based or space-enabled capabilities, including dual-use ones. Space capabilities provide fast, continuous and discreet services for situational awareness worldwide (including in space itself), as well as support to decision-making, conduct of military operations and the assessment of their specific results. In particular, military-class space capabilities have to provide secure, available and high-performance services in an evolving threat environment. Against the backdrop of the EDF, joint R&D actions in this category will allow consolidation of the demand for capabilities, access to higher-performance services (e.g. increased bandwidth, increased areal access, continuity of surveillance) and increased interoperability, while helping develop a European space culture and strengthen EU strategic autonomy.

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-DA, with the following topic:

3.1.5.1. EDF-2026-DA-SPACE-PRS: Integration of Galileo PRS receivers on weapon systems and NAVWAR operational centres in military C2

Taking into consideration the ongoing activities in this area funded by the EU, EU Member States and EDF associated countries, the general objective of this topic is to support the developments necessary for the integration and qualification of Public Regulated Service (PRS) receivers into existing military operational platforms as well as the enhancement of navigation warfare (NAVWAR) capabilities. In particular, this topic will focus on the development of Galileo PRS receiver technology and the NAVWAR information management system, taking into account the need to also support guided munitions and missiles in operational environments.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Design, system prototyping, testing and qualification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 50 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.6. Digital transformation (DIGIT)

Digital transformation, due to the production and use of ever larger amounts of data and the increasing involvement of AI in defence systems and decision-making processes, is becoming critical for defence operations. While AI is a dual-use technology, defence application-driven R&D is essential to steer progress towards military needs and more generally to strengthen the innovation ecosystem.

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE and EDF-2026-DA, with the following three topics:

3.1.6.1. EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAP: AI-based tactical situational awareness using swarms of small robots and drones – participation in a technological challenge

Assisting soldiers with robots and drones that can provide accurate tactical situational awareness by using AI becomes essential for soldier protection. This call topic aims to follow on and complement previous activities in the field of hidden threat detection and explore solutions involving various combinations of intelligent robots, drones and sensing technologies for advanced detection and recognition of threats, in view of their avoidance or neutralisation.

These solutions should be tested under realistic scenarios in a comparable and objective manner to reach up to Technical Readiness Level (TRL) 6 ([7]). For that purpose, each consortium supported through this call topic will benefit from a common testing environment set up as part of a technological challenge and will have to participate in the experiment campaigns organised with this objective.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 23 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

Range of the financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 4 600 000.

3.1.6.2. EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAO: AI-based tactical situational awareness using swarms of small robots and drones – organisation of a technological challenge

The automatic analysis of tactical situations using fleets of robots, drones and AI is an important research topic that lacks standardised benchmarks and objective evaluation campaigns.

This call topic aims to set up a testing environment and organise a technological challenge in which research teams will participate, supported by another topic (EDF-2024-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAP-STEP) and possibly other sources of funding. The testing environment should enable objective comparisons between different approaches. Data should be collected during field tests, annotated and shared to enable the validation of the system performances based on precise evaluation criteria and plans, to be provided as part of the call document.

([7]) A functional version of the product working on a realistic environment able to draw conclusions on the technical and operational capabilities of the product (see Horizon Europe definitions).

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 7 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic.

3.1.6.3. EDF-2026-DA-EXP-DIGIT-MDOC: Military multi-domain operations cloud services

Military operations require higher flexibility and mobility to gain and maintain the initiative. A collaborative, more efficient and digitised secure, cyber-resilient battlespace across land, air, maritime and space domains is key for information superiority, future mission management, spectrum dominance and smart decision support. The development of a common shared information space with a 'cloud of clouds' approach, leading to multi-domain operations cloud services, is therefore needed.

The objective of this topic is to follow on and complement previous activities in the field of multi-domain operation cloud services and combine actual existing and future multi-level community-of-interest (COI) and COI-enabling services into a federated, multi-national service mesh. The aim is to enable and support multi-level situational awareness and command and control capabilities for multi-domain operations, therefore providing the capability for an improved battle rhythm for military operations in collaborative multi-domain warfare.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping, testing and qualification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 40 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.7. Energy resilience and environmental transition (ENERENV)

As stated in the EDF Regulation, the EDF should contribute to the anchoring of climate actions in EU policies and to the achievement of an overall target of 30% of EU budget expenditure to support climate objectives. The EDF Regulation also states that relevant actions will be identified during EDF preparation and implementation. The Commission embarks on twin ecological and digital transitions, which are clear challenges in the field of energy and environmental transition when conducting defence affairs.

This category of actions will be addressed though two calls for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI and EDF-2026-DA, with the following three topics:

3.1.7.1. EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NTFE: New turbofan engine

An unmanned aerial vehicle used as unmanned loyal wingman/unmanned combat aerial vehicle requires specific performance for a variety of mission profiles to meet storage,

deployment and operational requirements. In particular, an engine that provides optimum thrust and electrical power capabilities is required to meet these performance requirements.

Against this background, the aim of this topic is to investigate a new turbofan engine in the range of approximately 25-35 kN that meets all feasible military requirements and is capable of operating on kerosene, hydrogen (H_2) and sustainable aviation fuel.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, integrating knowledge, studies and design.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA-SI call.

The proposals need to build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or several projects funded following an EU programme call with a focus on civil applications and for which applicants will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.7.2. EDF-2026-DA-ENERENV-HPES: High-performance energy systems

This topic aims to follow up and complement previous activities in the field of high-performance energy systems, with a particular focus on unexplored technologies such as hydrogen (conversion, storage and logistics). New use cases for stationary military applications will therefore be identified and defined, while innovative building blocks and functional modules will be developed and evaluated. The demonstrators' power and energy targets and other key performance indicators, including life cycle considerations, are expected to be improved, while the operability and connectivity to the energy grid systems of operational bases will be improved.

In addition, this topic aims to advance the creation, revision or consolidation of military standards for products and processes for energy generation, distribution and storage.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of clean and resource efficient technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding other activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.7.3. EDF-2026-DA-ENERENV-AWC: Ammunition Waste Collection and Disposal Unmanned Platform

This topic aims to develop a prototype of a semi-autonomous remote management system, integrated with adaptive hardware that continuously learns and improves its ability to identify and dispose of potential objects. The primary objective is to detect and dispose of ammunition waste and residues from military training areas and battlefields. This will significantly reduce

the risk factor associated with human involvement, ultimately contributing to a cleaner environment and in line with the 'green military' concept.

The performance of the system to be developed is expected to improve over time, allowing it to expand its capabilities and cover larger areas.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of clean and resource-efficient technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping, testing, qualification and certification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 10 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.8. Materials and components (MATCOMP)

Materials and components are enablers for a large spectrum of solutions at the core of the development of military capabilities. Access to critical materials and components is a challenge common to space, defence and security sectors. This category supports technologies for a large spectrum of products and systems strongly linked with other categories of the EDF work programme.

The sustainability of strategic supply chains in the fields of critical materials and components is challenging, and new materials have been identified as one of the technologies able to influence the reshaping of defence markets.

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-DA, with the following topic:

3.1.8.1. EDF-2026-DA-MATCOMP-SMT: Smart and multifunctional textiles

See Section 3.3.1.

3.1.9. Air combat (AIR)

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-RA and EDF-2026-DA, with the following three topics:

3.1.9.1. EDF-2026-RA-AIR-A4R: Autonomous and automatic air-to-air refuelling

Air-to-air refuelling enhances military operations by enabling long-range missions. Refuelling currently requires manual coordination between tanker operators and receiving pilots, which is complex and labour-intensive. Automated air-to-air refuelling solutions are expected to reduce workload and increase safety for both crews, while also being essential for future unmanned aerial systems.

The objective of this topic is to explore the development of sensor systems, in particular hardware and sensor fusion, to enable accurate relative navigation between tanker, receiver and refuelling systems, even in adverse conditions. In addition, enhanced optical sensors,

advanced image processing, flight control algorithms and pilot assistance interfaces will play a crucial role in improving the docking and refuelling process, increasing safety and time efficiency.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.9.2. EDF-2026-DA-AIR-SPS: Self-protection systems

The aim of this topic is to follow up and complement previous activities in the field of the next generation self-protection systems in order to increase the survivability of fixed wing and rotary wing, combat or non-combat aircraft in hostile environments.

This topic is aimed at modular integration with both fixed and rotary wing aircraft, providing protection against direct and indirect threats based on open architecture and international standards, while protecting sensitive data and ensuring compatibility with other platforms. Key features include automatic coordination of countermeasures, threat detection and classification, and the ability to operate in complex environments. For indirect threats, the system should gather intelligence, disrupt enemy tracking and enable collaborative protection with other platforms.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Design, system prototyping, testing and qualification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 24 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.9.3. EDF-2026-DA-AIR-STFS: Smart technologies for next generation fighter systems

The objective of this topic is to follow up and complement previous activities in the field of smart technologies for next generation fighter systems. It aims to explore future architectures and develop key technologies, including with proofs of concept, demonstrations and prototypes, for the next generation of military integrated modular avionics for use on a variety of military aerial platforms, both manned and unmanned aircraft, in the context of a defence air cloud.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Integrating knowledge, studies, design and system prototyping, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 25 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.10. Air and missile defence (AIRDEF)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-20265-DA, as well as through a direct award, with the following two topics:

3.1.10.1. EDF-2026-RA-EUCI-IBA-DS-AIRDEF-CHGV: Countering hypersonic glide vehicles

See Section 3.4.1.

3.1.10.2. EDF-2026-DA-ACC-AIRDEF-EATMI: High-end endo-atmospheric interception

See Section 3.3.2.

3.1.11. Ground combat (GROUND)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-20265-DA, with the following two topics:

3.1.11.1. EDF-2026-DA-GROUND-MRL: Multiple rocket launcher

Due to the changing overall geopolitical context, Member States, EDF associated countries and their land forces need to improve their indirect fire and rocket artillery capabilities in particular, as many have been relying on non-European systems that are already approaching the end of their operational life.

Against this background, this topic aims to develop multiple rocket launcher solutions capable of countering the latest threats by increasing the range and precision of indirect fire, maximising interoperability and optimising the cost-effectiveness of operations in a high-intensity and GNSS-contested battle scenario.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 25 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.11.2. EDF-2026-DA-GROUND-MBT: Future main battle tank platform systems

Main battle tanks (MBTs), with their unique combination of protection, mobility and firepower, remain a key element of land military manoeuvre, particularly in the context of conventional warfare. Existing MBT fleets in EU Member States and EDF associated countries are ageing, and new MBT technologies need to be developed and their operational effectiveness in all future scenarios thoroughly tested in order to maintain the current technological edge.

This topic therefore aims to follow up and complement previous activities for the development of future MBT systems. These will need to be based on enhanced operational capabilities in all kinds of environments, e.g. in terms of higher multi-spectrum protection and survivability, advanced all-terrain mobility, superior firepower, long-range threat detection and advanced command and control systems, the ability to operate with a reduced crew and, in the future, unmanned, improved logistical sustainability and affordability of manufacturing costs, which are key to the ability to deploy large numbers of platforms in a short time if required.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping, testing and qualification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 125 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic.

3.1.12. Force protection and mobility (PROTMOB)

This category of actions will be addressed through two calls for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-RA and EDF-2026-DA, with the following two topics:

3.1.12.1.EDF-2026-RA-PROTMOB-FMLA: Future multirole light aircraft

There is a need for a new multirole light aircraft that can bridge the gap between today's battlefield and modern technology, as most of the fleet in this segment across the EU is ageing.

The future multirole light aircraft (FMLA) concept must not duplicate or create fragmentation of existing systems of turboprop and tactical military transport aircraft and associated electronic systems. By exploiting the existing platforms, technologies and innovations in Europe, this research topic can reduce the risks associated with the development of FMLA capabilities for air-to-ground operations. FMLA should also be effective in specific combat roles such as light attack, anti-drone interception and close air support.

The objective of this topic is therefore to develop a low-cost, turboprop aircraft capable of operating in a variety of operational environments, providing direct air support, ground targeting, intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance with combat elements, and air strike coordination and reconnaissance with air traffic control support in a forward position in hostile environments during counter-terrorism missions.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 15 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.12.2. EDF-2026-DA-PROTMOB-DMM: Secure digital military mobility system

Reducing administrative barriers remains a challenge for the rapid movement of armed forces across the borders of EU Member States and EDF associated countries, especially in a constantly deteriorating geopolitical environment. The digitisation of the military mobility permit and clearance landscape is therefore crucial for rapid and efficient deployments.

Against this background, this topic aims to follow up and complement activities in this area with the objective of developing a resilient system, including with a mobile application, capable of operating under adverse conditions when not all system nodes are available. This will require the implementation of advanced encryption methods to protect sensitive and urgent information exchanges, as well as embedded tracking and monitoring capabilities.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, prototyping, testing, qualification and certification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 9 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.13. Naval combat (NAVAL)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-DA, with the following topic:

3.1.13.1. EDF-2026-DA-NAVAL-EMSAS: Enhanced medium-size semi-autonomous surface vessels

The aim of this topic is to follow up and complement previous activities already supported by the EDF in the field of medium-size semi-autonomous surface vessels, with a view to developing a universal fast-moving platform for the specific conditions of the littoral environment, providing enhanced coastal defence capabilities based on different mission modules, but also adaptable to other future naval warfare missions.

In particular, this topic aims to review concepts and designs developed and implemented following the EDF call topic EDF-2022-DA-NAVAL-MSAS, while enabling new design, prototyping, testing and qualification activities concerning the platform and its autonomy package, and addressing information/data management and specific mission modules.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping, testing and qualification, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 90 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.14. Underwater warfare (UWW)

Recent hostile activities against critical underwater infrastructure have underlined that naval capabilities for the protection of seabed infrastructure and for freedom of action remain key aspects of naval capabilities and constitute a cornerstone of maritime security and freedom of movement for the EU. This requires enhanced underwater situational awareness and engagement capabilities. Solutions that use uncrewed systems with autonomous features are expected to be a technological multiplier in this area. These include operational features that bring significant synergies with the EU-wide need for enhanced protection of critical underwater infrastructure.

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-RA, with the following two topics:

3.1.14.1. EDF-2026-RA-UWW-FUWN: Development and validation of models predicting flow-related underwater noise

This topic aims to improve the design of underwater platforms and the proper integration of sonars, including the verification of existing tools and the development of better tools for modelling underwater flow-generated noise that can support the placement of sonars and the simulation of radiated noise from underwater platforms. The models to be developed for both sonar design and radiated noise will include the generation of high-quality verification data and would support the design of underwater platforms and the placement and design of sonars.

Targeted types of activities: Generating knowledge, integrating knowledge and studies, not excluding downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 10 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.14.2. EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI-UWW-CSBI: Layered critical seabed infrastructure protection

This topic aims to improve the protection of seabed infrastructure through a comprehensive system, including unmanned assets, advanced sensors, underwater observation, detection, acquisition and communication systems, and integrated command and control. This initiative focuses on the development and validation of such a system for future operations, integrated with maritime command centres for coordinated responses. The approach combines operational levels and innovative technologies to effectively mitigate risk and ensure continuity of operations.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 30 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI call.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 15 000 000.

The proposals need to build upon or integrate results that have been achieved within one or several projects funded following an EU programme call with a focus on civil applications and for which applicants will have the necessary rights to use and commercialise the results.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.15. Simulation and training (SIMTRAIN)

This category of actions will be addressed through one call for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-RA, with the following topic:

3.1.15.1. EDF-2026-RA-SIMTRAIN-MSAI: Modelling & simulation supported AI framework for military decision-making and training

The objective of this topic is to assess the feasibility of creating an AI framework for defence applications as a springboard for developing future tactical intelligence concepts by providing military simulation capabilities, historical data sets, a rich scenario and benchmark database, access to doctrinal models and output from previously developed AI services. This would also enable a common simulation framework for war games/combat simulations with the potential to similarly facilitate improved learning support in mission planning and execution, including through AI-enabled battlespace simulation.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 16 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-RA call.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 8 000 000.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: Several proposals may be funded for this topic.

3.1.16. Disruptive technologies (DIS)

This category of actions will be addressed through three calls for proposals in 2026, namely EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO, EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS and EDF-2026-LS-DIS, with the following three topics:

3.1.16.1. EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO-NT: Non-thematic research actions by SMEs and research organisations

See Section 3.3.3.

3.1.16.2. EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS-OTHR: New abilities in over-the-horizon sensing

In order to increase situational awareness and operational superiority, improved detection, tracking and identification capabilities over large areas with increased range and minimum latency are required. High-frequency (HF) over-the-horizon (OTH) systems therefore need to be improved, while an EU concept for a cognitive and scalable network of HF OTH sensors could be further explored.

The objective of this topic is to follow up and complement previous activities in the field of OTH, in particular the development of technologies for an EU OTH radar network concept providing deep cooperation and data sharing for strategic surveillance. In this context, both HF surface (active, cooperative and non-cooperative passive) and skywave radar technologies should be explored and integrated for their respective advantages in terms of area covered at long ranges and as a gap filler in an agile network.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of deep and digital technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 29 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS call.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the proposals submitted and the budget available, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.1.16.3. EDF-2026-LS-DIS-NT: Non-thematic actions targeting disruptive technologies for defence

See Section 3.3.5.

3.2. Actions to be funded through grants but not related to the categories of actions

One call for proposals not related to the categories of actions will be launched in 2026:

3.2.1. EDF-2026-LS-DA-SME: Call for proposals dedicated to SMEs

- **Targeted type of actions:** Development actions (dedicated to SMEs).
- **Form of funding:** Lump sum grants following the call for proposals.
- **Targeted type of applicants:** Any eligible consortium as defined in Articles 9 and 10(4) of the EDF Regulation. Members of the consortium need to be SMEs (as defined in Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC).
- **Indicative number of proposals to be funded**: Several proposals may be funded (see Section 3.3.4).

3.3. Actions implemented under indirect management

The following six topics may lead to actions to be implemented under indirect management:

3.3.1. EDF-2026-DA-MATCOMP-SMT: Smart and multifunctional textiles

Smart and multifunctional textiles allow various components and devices to be integrated into uniforms and soldier systems. This extends their range of functions, which can include environmental and physiological monitoring of the soldier, localisation, communication, protective functions (e.g. concealing a soldier's visual, radar and electromagnetic signatures from enemy sensors and surveillance technologies, fire protection and neutralisation of hazardous chemicals). Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine has highlighted the critical

operational need for protection of dismounted soldiers, particularly against drones, and triggered the definition of updated soldier system requirements.

The objective of this topic is to follow up and complement previous activities in the field of smart and multifunctional textiles with a view to developing an individual camouflage solution, both static and dynamic, against drone surveillance using innovative technologies capable of ensuring soldier survivability in hostile environments.

Beyond defence technologies, this topic also contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of clean and resource efficient technologies.

Management mode: Action implemented in indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of actual cost grants following a competitive call.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 20 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA call and EUR 700 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic. However, depending on the quality of the submitted proposals and the available budget, more than one proposal may ultimately be funded for this topic.

3.3.2. EDF-2026-DA-ACC-AIRDEF-EATMI: High-end endo-atmospheric interception

This topic aims to follow up and complement previous activities for the development of an endo-atmospheric interceptor by maturing key technologies required to successfully counter hypersonic and ballistic threats up to TRL 6. It should build on specific concept designs and advance the required technologies by developing dedicated demonstrators, e.g. for airframe, propulsion, platform separation, lethality, threat tracking and acquisition.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Management mode: Action implemented in indirect management by the Organisation for Joint Armament Cooperation.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of actual cost grants following a competitive call.

Targeted types of activities: Studies, design, system prototyping and testing, not excluding upstream and downstream activities eligible for development actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 100 000 000 for this topic under the EDF-2026-DA-ACC call and EUR 2 000 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Indicative number of proposals to be funded: One proposal is to be funded for this topic.

3.3.3. EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO-NT: Non-thematic research actions by SMEs and research organisations

The proposals must demonstrate their disruptive impact on defence applications and address innovative technologies and solutions for defence, including those that can improve the readiness, deployability, reliability, safety and sustainability of forces in defence tasks and missions, for example in terms of operations, equipment, infrastructure, energy solutions, surveillance systems or digital solutions.

Proposals must address disruptive knowledge, products and technologies in any area of defence interest ([8]) reaching at least TRL 4 ([9]).In addition, to best complement R&D efforts that already target civil applications and encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge, innovation and technological development to the defence sector, this topic also welcomes proposals for add-on research actions to adapt solutions originally developed for civilian applications and previously not applied in defence.

Management mode: Action implemented in indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of lump sum grants, as decided by the Commission at the time of the awards following the competitive call EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO-NT.

Targeted types of activities: Any activities eligible for a research action. However, proposals must not be limited to studies.

Indicative budget: EUR 35 000 000 to support this topic and EUR 1 225 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 5 000 000.

Other indication: The expected duration of each funded action is between 12 and 36 months. Projects of other durations may be accepted in duly justified cases.

3.3.4. EDF-2026-LS-DA-SME-NT: Non-thematic development actions by SMEs

The proposals must address innovative defence products, solutions and technologies, including those that can improve readiness, deployability, reliability, safety and sustainability of forces in defence tasks and missions, for example in terms of operations, equipment, infrastructure, energy solutions, surveillance systems or digital solutions.

([8]) As described in the two Guidance Notes on the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) – C(2024) 3148 final of 8.5.2024 and C(2025) 6798 of 23.12.2025 available here: STEP documents - European Union.

([9]) The definition of TRLs is shared with other EU programmes, such as Horizon Europe. A reference to this definition is publicly available at https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/sites/default/files/2022-12/trl-assessment-tool-guide-final.pdf.

Proposals must address disruptive knowledge, products and technologies in any area of defence interest ([10]) reaching at least TRL4 ([11]).

In addition, to best complement R&D efforts that already target civil applications and encourage the efficient spinning-in of knowledge, innovation and technological development to the defence sector, this call topic also welcomes proposals for add-on development actions to adapt solutions originally developed for civil applications and previously not applied in the defence sector.

Management mode: Action implemented in indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of lump sum grants, as decided by the Commission at the time of the awards following the competitive call EDF-2026-LS-DA-SME-NT.

Targeted types of activities: Any activities eligible for a development action. However, the proposals must address at least one activity among design, system prototyping, testing, qualification, certification and increasing efficiency.

Indicative budget: EUR 30 000 000 to support this topic and EUR 1 050 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal: The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 6 000 000.

3.3.5. EDF-2026-LS-DIS-NT: Non-thematic actions targeting disruptive technologies for defence

Proposals must demonstrate their disruptive impact on defence applications in order to accelerate the creation and deployment of novel solutions for armed forces and support the uptake of new civilian innovations in the defence sector. Proposals must focus on enhancing operational readiness and effectiveness, improving strategic decision-making and addressing emerging threats through cutting-edge technologies or products. Solutions must embrace disruption to enable armed forces to gain a technological edge and adapt to rapidly evolving security challenges, ultimately ensuring radical technological superiority over potential adversaries.

Proposals must address disruptive knowledge, products and technologies in any area of defence interest ([12]) reaching at least TRL4 ([13]).

([10]) As described in the two Guidance Notes on the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) – C(2024) 3148 final of 8.5.2024 and C(2025) 6798 of 23.12.2025 available here: STEP documents - European Union.
([11]) The definition of TRLs is shared with other EU programmes, such as Horizon Europe. A reference to this definition is publicly available at https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/sites/default/files/2022-12/trl-assessment-tool-guide-final.pdf.
([12]) As described in the two Guidance Notes on the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform (STEP) – C(2024) 3148 final of 8.5.2024 and C(2025) 6798 of 23.12.2025 available here: STEP documents - European Union.

The funded actions should aim to achieve a rapid time-to-market.

Management mode: Action implemented in indirect management by the European Defence Agency.

Form of funding: Contribution Agreement.

Entrusted tasks:

Implementation of lump sum grants, as decided by the Commission at the time of the awards following the competitive call EDF-2026-LS-DIS:

- **Indicative number of proposals to be funded:** Several proposals may be funded.
- **Range of financial contribution of the EU per proposal:** The requested funding cannot exceed EUR 3 000 000.

Targeted types of activities: At least generating knowledge or integrating knowledge combined with design or increasing efficiency.

Indicative budget: EUR 27 000 000 for this topic and EUR 945 000 for the remuneration of the entrusted entity.

Other indication: The expected duration of each funded action is between 12 and 24 months. Projects of other durations may be accepted in duly justified cases.

3.4. Actions implemented without a call for proposals

3.4.1. EDF-2026-RA-EUCI-IBA-DS-AIRDEF-CHGV: Countering hypersonic glide vehicles

Article 198(e) of the Financial Regulation provides for the possibility that grants may be awarded without a call for '*research and technological development, to bodies identified in the work programme referred to in Article 110, where the basic act expressly provides for that possibility, and on condition that the project does not fall under the scope of a call for proposals.*'

Scope of the action to be awarded without a call for proposal

This topic aims to contribute to the development of more effective countermeasures against hypersonic threats, including cruise missiles.

The objective of this topic is to complement previous activities in this field, with a view to building, testing and flying a basic hypersonic glide vehicle (HGV) demonstrator with improved manoeuvrability. The aim is to collect the relevant signatures and kinematic data in order to gain an accurate understanding of the requirements and enable counter HGV systems to successfully detect and engage the threat.

Justification for a direct award

With the introduction of the competitive call topic EDF-2024-DA-EUCI-AIRDEF-CHGV in the EDF annual work programme for 2024 – Part 2, it was agreed with the EU Member States

([13]) The definition of TRLs is shared with other EU programmes, such as Horizon Europe. A reference to this definition is publicly available at https://horizoneuropencpportal.eu/sites/default/files/2022-12/trl-assessment-tool-guide-final.pdf.

and EDF associated countries that, due to the limited budget available for the topic in 2024, this R&D action would be split into two successive tranches. No competition is therefore envisaged for the second tranche in this EDF work programme for 2026 as only the consortium initially selected will be able to complement its activities towards the expected results.

Targeted type of action: Research action (EU classified information).

Form of funding: Actual costs grants following the call for proposals.

Beneficiaries: MBDA Deutschland GmbH; Aalborg University; Airbus Space and Defence, S.A.U.; Andøya Space Defence AS; Avio S.p.A.; Centro Italiano Ricerche Aerospaziali (CIRA); Diehl Defence GmbH & Co. KG; Tallinn University of Technology; Fraunhofer-Gesellschaft zur Förderung der angewandten Forschung e.V.; Hensoldt Sensors GmbH; IABG Industrieanlagen-Betriebsgesellschaft mbH; Kongsberg Defence & Aerospace AS; Leonardo S.p.A; MBDA Italia S.p.A; Nederlandse Organisatie voor toegepast-natuurwetenschappelijk onderzoek TNO; Indra Sistemas; Indra Espacio; OHB Systems; Saab AB; Sener Aeroespacial, S.A.; Sistemas de Misiles de España, S.L.; Stichting Koninklijk Nederlands Lucht- en Ruimtevaartcentrum; Thales Nederland B.V.

Specific provisions:

The foreground information generated during the implementation of the proposals selected for EU funding will be classified up to the level of SECRET UE/EU SECRET, under the Commission's responsibility (Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 and implementing rules).

In accordance with the above-mentioned Commission Decision and national security rules, facility security clearances and personnel security clearance at the level of SECRET UE/EU SECRET or equivalent issued by the national security authorities of the EU Member State or EDF associated country of establishment, is required for infrastructure and personnel involved in the preparation of the proposals and, if selected for EU funding, subsequent implementation of the action. Furthermore, the communication and information system used to handle such EUCI up to SECRET UE/EU SECRET must be accredited by the national competent authority.

This topic contributes to the STEP objectives as defined in the STEP Regulation in the target investment area of defence technologies.

Targeted types of activities: Studies and design, not excluding upstream activities eligible for research actions.

Indicative budget: EUR 68 000 000 for this topic.

3.5. Other actions

EDF outreach, IT systems and studies

- As referred to in Article 32(3) of the EDF Regulation, EDF outreach actions will contribute to communication activities on the political priorities related to the EDF, dissemination activities, matchmaking events and awareness-raising activities. EU Member States and EDF associated countries as well as the recipients of EDF funding

as referred to in Article 32(1) of the Regulation should aim to implement similar communication efforts.

- Development and support of IT systems adapted to EDF specificities.
- Support to matchmaking for investors, SMEs and mid-caps, allowing these entities to showcase their innovative products and services to end-users in the EU Member States and EDF associated countries as well as to large corporates and investors. This matchmaking will strengthen the companies' development by facilitating access to follow-on financing, government contracts or corporates' supply chains.
- Studies, including on skills in the defence sector.

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 2 086 669

External expertise and audits

- Recruitment of external expertise necessary for the evaluation of proposals submitted following the EDF calls for proposals: contracts of remunerated experts referred to in Article 242 of the Financial Regulation.
- Cost arising from carrying out the audits referred to in Article 30 of the EDF Regulation (contracts).

Form of funding	Contracts
Indicative budget	EUR 1 300 000

Business coaching in the European Defence Fund

SMEs play a role in achieving more innovative solutions. To reduce the time of bringing the results of R&D funded actions to the next phase – whether the next phase consists of development or bringing the final product to market – the Commission will provide business coaching to the successful SME beneficiaries under all EDF calls for proposals. This action will support:

- the setting up of a pool of experts that can provide targeted business coaching;
- a mechanism for matching the skills offered by the coaches, the requirements for coaching by the SME, and the actual assignment of the coaches.

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 1 800 000

Business accelerator for the European Defence Fund

The business accelerator aims to improve SMEs, including start-up and scale-up companies' abilities to achieve sustained commercial growth by strengthening their business development and go-to-market capabilities, improving their access to risk financing, and strengthening their networks to other markets, larger companies, end-users and investors.

Implemented through a multi-year framework contract, the accelerator provides new defence companies with tailored support, including expert coaching, training, access to specialised testing environments, particularly through a series of on-site boot camps held across Europe. The European Commission also provides non-dilutive seed vouchers.

The EUDIS Business Accelerator will support two cohorts annually, each comprising a minimum of 20 companies..

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 6 200 000

Defence equity facility under InvestEU for SMEs and mid-caps

The lack of risk capital in the EU for SMEs or mid-caps that develop innovative defence technologies hampers their growth capacity. This market failure has been underlined in the conclusions of the expert group on the EDF Financial Toolbox. To tackle this market failure, the *Roadmap on critical technologies for security and defence* published by the Commission on 15 February 2022 announced the creation of a defence innovation scheme, including the establishment of a defence equity facility under InvestEU.

The aim of the initiative is to allow the Commission to support equity investments made by private funds in innovative and strategic defence SMEs. It allows the EU, through the European Investment Fund (EIF), to financially support private funds investing in SMEs and mid-caps across the EU. The facility has no bearing on EIF/European Investment Bank policy and guidelines. Support is made through direct investments in funds which allow crowding-in additional investors through signalling effects associated with the EIF's participation. It is in line with Article 8.3 of the EDF Regulation and implemented, in indirect management, by the EIF according to InvestEU regulation and investment guidelines.

Enabling better access to equity funding for innovative defence SMEs and mid-caps support their growth. It reduces their exposure to non-EU investors and contributes to the EU's strategic autonomy. The instrument also sends a positive message to private investors about the attractiveness of the defence sector within the EU.

A global EDF contribution of EUR 100 million is expected over 2022-2027, with a final contribution of EUR 20 million in 2026. The EIF contributes with its own resources, in view of reaching an investment capacity of EUR 175 million. Financial intermediaries selected by the EIF and entrusted with the funds have to invest at least twice the amount in eligible SMEs or mid-caps to reach a global volume of EUR 350 million. This Defence Equity Facility is expected to attract additional private investments in the funds it supports, thereby mobilising, in total, around EUR 500 million in support of European companies.

The guarantee agreement between the Commission and the EIF sets out the terms and conditions according to which (i) the EIF will select financial intermediaries (private funds); (ii) the financial intermediaries will implement equity operations. These conditions, including

on the eligibility conditions for beneficiaries, or the transfer and exclusive licensing of ownership of intellectual property rights to non-associated third countries are defined in accordance with the investment guidelines of the InvestEU fund. In addition, both financial intermediaries and final beneficiaries must be established and have their executive management structure in the EU or EDF associated countries and must not be controlled by non-associated third country entities. Beneficiaries which are established and have their executive management structure in a Member State or in a country associated to the EDF which are controlled by non-associated third country entities must be eligible if they have received a guarantee approved by the Member State in which they are established.

The InvestEU guarantee agreement mirrors the categories of activities in the EDF's annual work programme, ensuring that supported SMEs are relevant to the objective of the programme and that the competitiveness of the European Defence Technology Industrial Base is supported.

Form of funding	Blending operations
Indicative budget	EUR 20 000 000

EDF Hackathon event

Hackathons are events where individuals from Member States and EDF associated countries come together and form teams to develop solutions. In line with the awareness and outreach objectives, hackathons should promote skills development and attract the next generation of defence innovators and talent for the defence sector as well as encourage and bridge different relevant communities, e.g. by connecting young researchers and innovators with experts from the defence industry and defence end-users from the Member States and EDF associated countries. Additionally, these events aim to provide a stimulating environment for creating innovative defence solutions to support the needs of the Member States/EDF associated countries and EDF objectives with a view to contributing to a more competitive and innovative European defence industrial ecosystem.

The themes for the hackathons will be selected by the Commission, in coordination with Member States, EDF associated countries and the European Defence Agency, in line with the priorities set out in the EDF annual work programmes. At least one EUDIS hackathon in multiple locations in Member States/EDF associated countries will be organised every year in 2025-2027. Each hackathon will be followed by a mentoring programme for the winning teams. In addition, a joint defence and space hackathon (EUDIS and CASSINI) will be organised every year, building on the success of the CASSINI Space for Defence and Security Hackathon in March 2023. EDF funding for the joint hackathon will be required twice a year, i.e. in 2027.

Form of funding	Public procurement
Indicative budget	EUR 1 300 000

4. INDICATIVE BUDGET FOR 2026

Reference of the operational budget lines: 13.03 for Research and 13.02 for Development

EU actions	Total budget and percentage of 2026 appropriations (in EUR)					
	Research		**Development**		**TOTAL**	
- Grants*	311 500 000	94.43%	629 500 000	93.11%	941 000 000	93.54%
**Among which:*						
benefiting the cross-border participation of SMEs	*35 000 000*	*11.24%*	*30 000 000*	*4.77%*	*65 000 000*	*6.91%*
supporting disruptive technologies for defence	*53 500 000*	*17.17%*	*37 500 000*	*5.96%*	*91 000 000*	*9.67%*
for grants implemented under indirect management	*53 500 000*	*17.17%*	*158 500 000*	*25.18%*	*212 000 000*	*22.53%*
for coordination and support actions						
- Framework partnership agreement	6 500 000	1.97%	18 500 000	2.74%	25 000 000	2.49%
- Prizes						
- Public procurement ([14])	2 484 467	0.75%	10 274 033	1.52%	12 758 500	1.27%
- Blending operations	7 000 000	2.12%	13 000 000	1.92%	20 000 000	1.99%
- Other actions ([15])	2 395 000	0.73%	4 825 000	0.71%	7 220 000	0.72%
TOTAL	**329 879 467**	**32.79%**	**676 099 033**	**67.21%**	**1 005 978 500**	**100.00%**
Among which contribution from EDF associated countries	*7 825 902*		*16 039 448*		*23 865 350*	

Appendix 2 to this work programme provides detailed figures per *category of actions*.

Appendix 3 to this work programme provides detailed figures per *call for proposals*.

Appendix 5 to this work programme provides a multiannual indicative budget summary for each *category of actions*.

([14]) Costs arising from business coaching, the business accelerator, EDF outreach activities, the corporate information technology system and studies as well as from the organisation of EDF hackathons.

([15]) Costs arising from evaluation and audit activities as well as the provision for costs that arise from indirect management.

5. SUMMARY INFORMATION AND FUNDING PRINCIPLES

Summary information

In 2026, the Commission will take the following actions:

- 10 competitive calls for proposals, among which 4 to support research actions, 3 to support development actions and 1 specific call to support actions for disruptive technologies.
- 2 specific grant agreements (one targeting research actions and one targeting development actions).
- 1 direct award.

Grants will be awarded to consortia after the publication of calls for proposals.

Funding principles

Under Article 13 of the EDF Regulation, maximum funding rates that will apply to eligible costs of funded actions will be determined for each activity covered by the action and will be composed of:

- a baseline funding rate (see **Table 1** below);
- an increase in the baseline funding rate ('bonus') where conditions are met (see **Table 2** below).

The overall increase in the baseline funding rate following the application of the increase of funding rates listed in Table 2 cannot exceed 35% of the total eligible costs of the activity.

EU financial assistance provided under the programme, including the increased funding rates, cannot exceed the values in **Table 3**.

By a way of derogation from the baseline funding rate set out in Table 1, the activities carried out under the specific actions that target disruptive technologies under the EDF-2026-LS-DIS call and aim to develop technologies or assets that increase efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies (Article 10.3(i) of the EDF Regulation) will be funded at 100%.

Indirect eligible costs must be determined by applying a flat rate of 25% of the total direct eligible costs, excluding direct eligible costs for subcontracting and financial support to third parties and any unit costs or lump sums that include indirect costs.

As an alternative, indirect eligible costs may be determined in accordance with the recipient's usual cost accounting practices on the basis of actual indirect costs provided that those cost accounting practices are accepted by national authorities for comparable activities in the defence domain, in accordance with Article 188 of the Financial Regulation, and that they have been communicated to the Commission by the recipient. By way of indication, this optional regime will be implemented as follows:

- Before the signature of the grant agreement:
    - usual accounting practices of the opting applicant to calculate their indirect costs, to be described in detail in the application;
    - the national authority to certify that these accounting practices are accepted at national level for comparable activities in the defence domain;

- the Commission to check if the indirect costs calculated by the applicant do not contain ineligible costs within the meaning of Article 189 of the Financial Regulation and make adjustments, where applicable, for the calculation of the maximum grant amount.

- At the end of the action:
  - the opting beneficiary declares their actual indirect costs calculated following the methodology agreed e*x ante*;
  - the financial statement of the opting beneficiary to be accompanied by a Certificate of Financial Statement (CFS) provided by an external auditor as envisaged in the Model Grant Agreement;
  - the auditor providing the CFS will follow the methodology agreed *ex ante* to certify the amount of the actual indirect costs;
  - possibility for the Commission to audit the actual indirect costs following the methodology agreed *ex ante* (the Internal Audit Service or external mandated auditors).

The necessary details and forms will be part of the call documents published by the Commission on its website.

No profit rule: To ensure the continuity of the development actions after the period of EU financing provided for in the grant, potential revenue to be generated by these actions will not be taken into consideration in accordance with point (a) of Article 195(3) of the Financial Regulation.

Rights to use or have used the results of EDF actions: Where Member States or EDF associated countries have confirmed co-financing to some legal entities of a consortium, all legal entities of the selected consortium are expected to provide such Member States or EDF associated countries with rights to use or have used the results generated during the action for their defence purposes, to be agreed upon between the Member States or EDF associated countries and the legal entities of the selected consortium.

Financial support to third parties (FSTP): In line with Article 207 of the Financial Regulation, FSTP (or cascade funding) may be included as part of any grants upon request from beneficiaries. The aim of such FSTP is to contribute to innovative technologies or specialised knowledge relevant to the topic in question and encourage the inclusion of various smaller players – including those not previously active in the defence sector – by allowing them to identify and increase potential business opportunities in this sector. If the beneficiaries opt for FSTP, they must comply with the following conditions:

- The maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 60 000.
- FSTP in the proposals must not exceed 5% of the requested EU contribution under the call topic concerned.

- Third parties must be established in the EU, in EDF associated countries or in Ukraine (16).

- Third parties must be subject to control by the EU, EDF associated countries or Ukraine, or by entities from the EU, EDF associated countries or Ukraine (17).

- FSTP must target as a priority SMEs, including start-ups. Applicants for FSTP must have self-assessed their SME status. The consortium should perform checks on the basis of random sampling in accordance with the criteria defined in Article 2 of the Annex to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. The participation of entities other than SMEs can only be accepted where no SMEs are available to demonstrate the capacity or expertise needed for the project during its lifetime.

- A range of entities from different EU Member States, EDF associated countries or Ukraine as well as different industry sectors, including those not active in the defence sector, should be involved.

- The consortium is expected to issue FSTP dedicated sub-calls for proposals with a target of minimum 3 recipients of FSTP per sub-call, depending on the research and industrial landscape of the target domain, with a view to giving the third parties the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge, technologies, capabilities and products/solutions within a maximum 6-month cooperation programme that encompasses the associated tasks.

- The following activities, but not limited to this list, may be considered for cascade funding:

    - customised support by providing battlefield proven knowledge, technology-specific expertise or innovative tools;
    - support the manufacturing of technology test samples or components necessary for assessment;
    - proof of concept; technology modification or demonstration;
    - analysis and measurement;
    - participation in a hackathon or technological challenge;
    - technology showcase.

- The recipients of FSTP may be involved in any type of eligible activity within the proposal.

(16) The inclusion of entities established in Ukraine among those eligible to receive financial support is in line with the general objectives of the EDF, as established by Article 3 of the EDF Regulation, i.e. fostering the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European Defence Technology Industrial Base throughout the EU. The support to third parties established in Ukraine would contribute to the general objective of the fund thanks to the expertise that the Ukrainian defence industry has developed in recent years on the battlefield.

(17) The inclusion of entities controlled by Ukraine or by Ukrainian entities among those eligible to receive financial support is in line with the general objectives of the EDF, as established by Article 3 of the EDF Regulation, i.e. fostering the competitiveness, efficiency and innovation capacity of the European Defence Technology Industrial Base throughout the EU. The support to third parties controlled by Ukraine or Ukrainian entities would contribute to the general objective of the fund thanks to the expertise that the Ukrainian defence industry has developed in recent years on the battlefield.

- If FSTP is envisaged, the proposals must describe the associated management and implementation tasks for this FSTP, including the following ones:
    - Screening and identifying the landscape of suitable candidates from various sectors, including those that have not been active in the defence sector before, for the FSTP-related sub-calls organised by the consortium.
    - Providing a clear methodology so that the FSTP's contribution to the innovation performance of the supported SMEs in the short term can be measured, e.g. via indicators such as numbers of new or significantly improved products (goods and/or services), processes, new marketing methods or new organisational methods, together with its impact on resource efficiency and/or turnover.
    - Preparing the call documentation to issue the sub-calls for FSTP.
    - Organising up to two sub-calls for FSTP, including:
        - the method for calculating the exact amount of financial support requested by the third parties;
        - the payment arrangement options available to third parties;
        - the possible types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support;
        - the potential results to be obtained;
        - the roles and responsibilities of the consortium with regard to FSTP management.
    - Selecting and awarding FSTP recipients.
    - Describing how the support to FSTP recipients may contribute to any type of task within the proposal, while clearly delineating the expected contributions from the main beneficiaries as well as from the FSTP recipients to ensure their coherence and impact.

Table 1. Applicable baseline funding rates

Types of activities		Short names	Baseline funding rate	
			Research action	Development action
(a)	Activities that aim to create, underpin and improve knowledge, products and technologies, including disruptive technologies for defence, which can achieve significant effects in the area of defence	**Generating knowledge**	100% of eligible costs	*Not applicable*
(b)	Activities that aim to increase interoperability and resilience, including secured production and exchange of data, to master critical defence technologies, strengthen the security of supply or enable the effective exploitation of results for defence products and technologies	**Integrating knowledge**	100% of eligible costs	Up to 65% of eligible costs
(c)	Studies such as feasibility studies to explore the feasibility of new or upgraded products, technologies, processes, services and solutions	**Studies**	100% of eligible costs	Up to 90% of eligible costs
(d)	The design of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology as well as the definition of the technical specifications on which such a design has been developed, including any partial tests for risk reduction in an industrial or representative environment	**Design**	100% of eligible costs	Up to 65% of eligible costs
(e)	The system prototyping of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**System prototyping**	*Not applicable*	Up to 20% of eligible costs
(f)	The testing of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**Testing**	*Not applicable*	Up to 45% of eligible costs
(g)	The qualification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**Qualification**	*Not applicable*	Up to 70% of eligible costs
(h)	The certification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**Certification**	*Not applicable*	Up to 70% of eligible costs
(i)	The development of technologies or assets that increase efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies	**Increasing efficiency**	*Not applicable*	Up to 65% of eligible costs

Table 2. Increase of funding rates (bonus) for development actions

Condition to be fulfilled to get the corresponding bonus	**Bonus** (additional number of percentage points to the baseline funding rate)
PESCO bonus	
Action developed in the context of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) framework	+ 10%
SME bonus	
Proportion of eligible costs allocated to SMEs established in the EU (for the activity concerned)	Proportion of eligible costs allocated to non-cross-border SMEs established in the EU (up to maximum 5%) + Twice the proportion of eligible costs allocated to cross-border SMEs established in the EU
Mid-cap bonus	
Proportion of eligible costs allocated to mid-caps established in the EU (for the activity concerned)	+ 10%

Table 3. Applicable maximum funding rates

Types of activities		Short names	Maximum funding rate	
			Research action	Development action
(a)	Activities that aim to create, underpin and improve knowledge, products and technologies, including disruptive technologies for defence, which can achieve significant effects in the area of defence	**Generating knowledge**	100% of eligible costs	*Not applicable*
(b)	Activities that aim to increase interoperability and resilience, including secured production and exchange of data, to master critical defence technologies, strengthen the security of supply or enable the effective exploitation of results for defence products and technologies	**Integrating knowledge**	100% of eligible costs	Up to 100% of eligible costs
(c)	Studies such as feasibility studies to explore the feasibility of new or upgraded products, technologies, processes, services and solutions	**Studies**	100% of eligible costs	Up to 100% of eligible costs
(d)	The design of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology as well as the definition of the technical specifications on which such a design has been developed, including any partial tests for risk reduction in an industrial or representative environment	**Design**	100% of eligible costs	Up to 100% of eligible costs
(e)	The system prototyping of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**System prototyping**	*Not applicable*	Up to 55% of eligible costs
(f)	The testing of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**Testing**	*Not applicable*	Up to 80% of eligible costs
(g)	The qualification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**Qualification**	*Not applicable*	Up to 80% of eligible costs
(h)	The certification of a defence product, tangible or intangible component or technology	**Certification**	*Not applicable*	Up to 80% of eligible costs
(i)	The development of technologies or assets that increase efficiency across the life cycle of defence products and technologies	**Increasing efficiency**	*Not applicable*	Up to 100% of eligible costs

APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF CALL TOPICS PER CATEGORY OF ACTIONS

Categories of actions	Research call topics	Development call topics
	14	16
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	EDF-2026-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM	EDF-2026-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM
	EDF-2026-RA-MCBRN-DST	
2. Information superiority		
3. Advanced passive and active sensors	EDF-2026-RA-SENS-MSDT	EDF-2026-DA-SENS-CEW
4. Cyber	EDF-2026-RA-CYBER-QSTN	
5. Space		EDF-2026-DA-SPACE-PRS
6. Digital transformation	EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAO	EDF-2026-DA-EXP-DIGIT-MDOC
	EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAP	
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NTFE	EDF-2026-DA-ENERENV-HPES
		EDF-2026-DA-ENERENV-AWC
8. Materials and components		EDF-2026-DA-MATCOMP-SMT
9. Air combat	EDF-2026-RA-AIR-A4R	EDF-2026-DA-AIR-SPS
		EDF-2026-DA-AIR-STFS
10. Air and missile defence	EDF-2026-RA-EUCI-IBA-DS-AIRDEF-CHGV	EDF-2026-DA-ACC-AIRDEF-EATMI
11. Ground combat		EDF-2026-DA-GROUND-MRL
		EDF-2026-DA-GROUND-MBT
12. Force protection and mobility	EDF-2026-RA-PROTMOB-FMLA	EDF-2026-DA-PROTMOB-DMM
13. Naval combat		EDF-2026-DA-NAVAL-EMSAS
14.Underwater warfare	EDF-2026-RA-UWW-FUWN	
	EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI-UWW-CSBI	
15. Simulation and training	EDF-2026-RA-SIMTRAIN-MSAI	
16. Disruptive technologies	EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO-NT	EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS-OTHR
	EDF-2026-LS-DIS-NT	
Out of the scope of categories of actions		EDF-2026-LS-DA-SME-NT

APPENDIX 2: 2026 ANNUAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS PER CATEGORY OF ACTIONS

Categories of actions	Budget (in € m)								
	Research			Development			Research and Development		
	Total			Total			Total		
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	21.5			18.5			40		
2. Information superiority									
3. Advanced passive and active sensors	20			24			44		
4. Cyber	14						14		
5. Space				50			50		
6. Digital transformation	30			40			70		
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	20			30			50		
8. Materials and components				20			20		
9. Air combat	20			49			69		
10. Air and missile defence	68			100			168		
11. Ground combat				150			150		
12. Force protection and mobility	15			9			24		
13. Naval combat				90			90		
14.Underwater warfare	40						40		
15. Simulation and training	16						16		
16. Disruptive technologies	53			39			92		
Non- thematic calls for innovative and future-oriented defence solutions focused on SMEs				30			30		
Other actions	11.4			27.6			39		
TOTAL	***329.9***	Among which		***676.1***	Among which		***1006***	Among which	
		Disruptive	SMEs		Disruptive	SMEs		**Disruptive**	SMEs
		53	**(35 under DIS)**		**39**	**30**		**92**	**30 (+35 under DIS)**

APPENDIX 3: 2026 ANNUAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS PER CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Call ID	Call topic ID	Budget (in € m)
EDF-2026-RA	EDF-2026-RA-MCBRN-DST	15
	EDF-2026-RA-SENS-MSDT	20
	EDF-2026-RA-QSTN	14
	EDF-2026-RA-AIR-A4R	20
	EDF-2026-RA-PROTMOB-FMLA	15
	EDF-2026-RA-SIMTRAIN-MSAI	16
	EDF-2026-RA-UWW-FUWN	10
EDF-2026-RA-EUCI	EDF-2026-RA-EUCI-DS-AIRDEF-CHGV	68
EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI	EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NTFE	20
	EDF-2026-LS-RA-SI-UWW-CSBI	30
EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE	EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAO	7
	EDF-2026-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-AISAP	23
EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO	EDF-2026-LS-DIS-RA-SMERO-NT	35
EDF-2026-DA	EDF-2026-DA-SENS-CEW	24
	EDF-2026-DA-SPACE-PRS	50
	EDF-2026-DA-ENERENV-HPES	20
	EDF-2026-DA-ENERENV-AWC	10
	EDF-2026-DA-MATCOMP-SMT	20
	EDF-2026-DA-AIR-SPS	24
	EDF-2026-DA-AIR-STFS	25
	EDF-2026-DA-GROUND-MRL	25
	EDF-2026-DA-GROUND-MBT	125
	EDF-2026-DA-PROTMOB-DMM	9
	EDF-2026-DA-NAVAL-EMSAS	90
EDF-2026-DA-EXP	EDF-2026-DA-EXP-DIGIT-MDOC	40
EDF-2026-DA-ACC	EDF-2026-DA-ACC-AIRDEF-EATMI	100
EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS	EDF-2026-LS-DA-DIS-OTHR	29
EDF-2026-LS-DA-SME	EDF-2026-LS-DA-SME-NT	30
EDF-2026-LS-DIS	EDF-2026-LS-DIS-NT-STEP	27
EDF-2026-RA-SGA	EDF-2026-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM	6.5
EDF-2026-DA-SGA	EDF-2026-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM	18.5

APPENDIX 4: EDF MULTIANNUAL INDICATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY PER CATEGORY OF ACTIONS

Categories of actions	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	Total	
	in € m	in € m	in € m	in € m	in € m	in € m	in € m	in € m	in %
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	57.8	24.9	40	25	35	40		**222.7**	3.50%
2. Information superiority	70	68.8	99	181	39			**457.8**	7.19%
3. Advanced passive and active sensors	38	40	69	62	58.5	44		**311.5**	4.89%
4. Cyber	37.9	69.9	60	48	54	14		**283.8**	4.46%
5. Space	49.4	148.7	125	50	115	50		**538.1**	8.45%
6. Digital transformation	68.5	48.2	45	15	27	70		**273.7**	4.30%
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	82.8	19.3	25	40	93	50		**310.1**	4.87%
8. Materials and components	34.6	44.9	50	25	25	20		**199.5**	3.13%
9. Air combat	189.8	40	63	150	103	69		**614.8**	9.66%
10. Air and missile defence	100		123	78		168		**469.0**	7.37%
11. Ground combat	154.7	48.7	47	130	192	150		**722.4**	11.34%
12. Force protection and mobility	49.1	30	45	30	35	24		**213.1**	3.35%
13. Naval combat	103.5	130	154.5	45	54	90		**577.0**	9.06%
14.Underwater warfare		25	90	54	45	40		**254.0**	3.99%
15. Simulation and training		29.6		25	43	16		**113.6**	1.78%
16. Disruptive technologies	64.5	37.6	41	40	43	91		**317.1**	4.98%
Undefined categories. including SME calls	54.1	25.2	72	67	67	30		**315.3**	4.95%
Other actions	8.1	25	30.6	33.2	37.2	40		**174.1**	2.73%
TOTAL	1162.8	855.8	1179.1	1098.2	1065.7	1006		**6 367.46**	100.00%