



Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPA)

Call for proposals

Innovative User Terminals for European Secure Satellite Communication
Service
(PPPA-2026-IRIS²-UT-INDREADY)

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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Secure and Connected Space
Secure Connectivity and Space Surveillance

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for **action grants** in the field of space policy.

When adopting the 2025 Union Budget, the Council and the European Parliament decided to finance a preparatory action, within the meaning of Article 58(2), point (b) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 and entitled “Innovative user terminals for European secure satellite communication service”.

This preparatory action is intended to enable timely adoption of the space secure connectivity services provided by the Union secure connectivity programme, IRIS², and GOVSATCOM, filling the gap in Union industrial capability to develop high-performance, affordable and secure satellite user terminals.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))¹

The call is launched in accordance with the Financing Decision² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space (DG DEFIS)**.

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **PPPA-2026-IRIS2-UT-IND-READINESS — Cost reduction for affordable Ka-band user terminals**
- We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:

¹ 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 (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 3868 final of 24.06.2025 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2025 and the financing decision for the implementation of the pilot projects and preparatory actions in the space area for 2025.

- procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
- recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

As part of the Union secure connectivity programme, the IRIS² (infrastructure for resilience, interconnectivity and security by satellite) satellite constellation is being deployed to enable a broad range of governmental and commercial applications. In parallel, Europe is advancing a strategic initiative to ensure the availability of **innovative, more affordable and deployable user terminals** for the forthcoming secured satellite communication services.

European efforts to advance the development of IRIS² user terminals include a range of activities, currently ongoing and planned, focusing on integrated terminal development, shared-aperture antenna technology demonstration, and supporting R&D on physical-layer processing, automated calibration and a shared user terminal pre-conformance test infrastructure.

While these activities already cover integrated terminal development and selected enabling technologies, a gap remains in industrial readiness – specifically, the need to reduce cost, improve manufacturability and prepare next generation Ka-band user terminals for follow-on integration and deployment.

This topic is therefore not intended to develop a specific end-to-end terminal product but rather to support terminal-relevant technologies, sub-systems and industrial-readiness measures that can improve affordability, manufacturability and deployment readiness for future secure Ka-band user terminals, without requiring dependence on a specific terminal design, manufacturer or ongoing programme.

2. Objectives — Themes and priorities — Activities that can be funded — Expected impact

Objectives

The aim of this call for proposals is to advance the industrial readiness of European Ka-band user terminal technologies, subsystems and manufacturing processes, with a view to enabling cost-effective production of user terminals for services provided under the Union secure connectivity programme (IRIS²) and GOVSATCOM.

The target reference for this call is the Ka-band user terminal segment of IRIS², operating with non-geostationary satellite constellations in low Earth orbit (LEO) and medium Earth orbit (MEO). Proposed activities shall be relevant across the full Ka-band frequency range, covering both commercial Ka-band (17.7-20.2 GHz downlink, 27.5-30.0 GHz uplink) and military Ka-band (20.2-21.2 GHz downlink, 30.0-31.0 GHz uplink). Proposals should leverage commonality between governmental and commercial terminal variants to maximise production volumes and cost reduction.

Themes and priorities (scope)

Submitted proposals shall address a coherent approach to improving the affordability, manufacturability and production readiness of future Ka-band user terminals, with a

focus on technologies and subsystems that are sufficiently mature to support near-term industrialisation (at least TRL5 or above at the start of the action) and consistent with production scenarios on the order of 1000 units per month at scale, on a multi-year horizon. All proposed activities must demonstrate a clear and credible link to the cost, manufacturability or deployment readiness of a complete Ka-band user terminal aligned with 5G NR NTN terminal development paths, including where relevant phased array or other advanced antenna subsystem technologies.

These actions shall address one or more of the following:

- Antenna-subsystem industrial readiness, including assembly, calibration and test processes, as the antenna subsystem represents the dominant cost driver in Ka-band terminal production
- Manufacturing processes and equipment enabling improved throughput, repeatability and unit-cost reduction
- Supply-chain measures reducing critical dependencies on non-European sources and strengthening European industrial capability for terminal components
- Modem and baseband industrial readiness for 5G NR NTN compliant solutions, including industrialisation of baseband processing subsystems and migration paths towards volume-production architectures

Activities that can be funded

Eligible activities include:

- Industrial-readiness measures for cost-critical terminal technologies, subsystems and components, including adaptation and qualification of building blocks for volume production, and design-for-manufacturing and design-for-integration actions
- Pilot production runs demonstrating manufacturing feasibility, yield and repeatability at representative scale
- Calibration, test or pre-conformance activities directly linked to user terminal manufacturability
- Acquisition of advanced manufacturing equipment, facility upgrades or industrial process improvements relevant to terminal production readiness
- Supply-chain optimisation and non-EU dependency-reduction measures for terminal components

In all cases, proposed activities shall not be designed exclusively for a single proprietary terminal configuration. Applicants shall describe how the industrial processes, methods and knowledge developed under this action can be adapted for or transferred to different Ka-band terminal variants.

Proposed activities may be complementary to relevant national or European activities, including supported by the European Space Agency and under the Concession Contract implementing the IRIS² programme. Where complementarities exist, applicants shall clearly identify and describe the related activities, explain how their proposal builds on or complements them without duplication, and demonstrate that the specific activities and outputs proposed are not already funded under any other EU, ESA, or national programme. The grant authority reserves the right to request supporting documentation during grant preparation to verify the absence of duplication.

Applicants shall present a credible business case for the proposed activities, covering the rationale for the cost reduction targeted, the production scale-up pathway beyond the grant period, and the alignment with foreseeable demand for Ka-band user terminals serving IRIS2 and GOVSATCOM, including where applicable adjacent commercial segments.

Applicants shall include a dedicated section describing their supply-chain arrangements, identifying any dependencies on non-European sources and the mitigation measures foreseen.

Applicants shall propose a detailed estimated budget for the work to be carried out under the action. That detailed budget must approximate the underlying eligible costs of the action and show the estimated eligible costs for each beneficiary and affiliated entity by budget category and work package.

Expected impact

Projects funded under this call are expected to deliver tangible industrial outputs that demonstrably advance the readiness and affordability of future governmental Ka-band user terminals for IRIS² and GOVSATCOM services. Expected outputs include, for example: qualified production processes, calibrated sub-assemblies, pilot-run units, validated manufacturing equipment chains or manufacturing cost models.

Purely analytical deliverables (studies, design reports) are not sufficient as primary outputs but may complement the above.

Where relevant, outputs shall include documented design assumptions, interface parameters or process specifications enabling adaptation to different terminal configurations with limited re-engineering, so as to support uptake in follow-on integration, pilot deployment and scale-up activities.

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 20 000 000**.

We expect to fund up to three projects.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	27 May 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>26 August 2026 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	September-October 2026
Information on evaluation results:	October 2026
GA signature:	November/December 2026

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*template to be downloaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*)
 - Ownership and Control Declaration

Please be aware that since the detailed budget table serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include MUST comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (*see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)*). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).


Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (*especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc*). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable** (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages. Shorter proposals with clear and concise description are welcome.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e. EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - Respect the following eligibility and participation conditions, in order to achieve the expected outcomes, and safeguard the Union’s strategic assets, interests, autonomy as well as to preserve security, integrity and resilience of the EU systems in light of the approach of Article 24 of the Space Regulation (EU) 2021/696 and Article 22 of the Secure Connectivity Regulation (EU) 2023/588:
 - (a) the executive management structures are established in Member States of the EU;
 - (b) the resulting activities are carried out in one or more EU Member States; and
 - (c) the legal entity is not subject to control by a third country or by a third country entity.

For the purpose of these conditions,

‘executive management structures’ means the body of a legal entity appointed in accordance with national law, and which, where applicable, reports to the chief executive officer or any other person having comparable decisional power, and which is empowered to establish the legal entity’s strategy, objectives and overall direction, and oversees and monitors management decision-making;

‘control’ means the ability to exercise a decisive influence over a legal entity directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediate legal entities.

A mandatory [declaration of ownership and control](#) is to be filled by all project participants as part of the application. All declarations must be assembled by the coordinator and uploaded in a single file in the portal submission system. For successfully evaluated proposals that enter into Grant Agreement Preparation, an assessment of the ownership and control shall take place by the granting authority.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (see section 13). In case they do not comply with the above eligibility conditions, they may request a waiver in line with *Article 24 of the Space Regulation (EU) 2021/696*. No such waivers are allowed for the main beneficiaries and affiliated entities.

Specific cases and definitions

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

International organisations — International organisations are NOT eligible.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons³.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'⁴. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)⁵. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092⁶. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see , as of 16 December 2022).], as of 16 December 2022).

For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Consortium composition

Although consortium composition is not formally required, applicants are encouraged to assemble teams covering complementary competences across the relevant value chain.

Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above. Activities must be carried out in eligible countries (see above).

If projects takes into account the results of past or pending relevant projects supported by other EU funding programmes or the European Space Agency, the complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form)

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities*

³ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁴ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁵ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

⁶ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

Duration

Projects should normally range between 18 and 36 months.

Projects of longer duration may be accepted in duly justified cases. Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment of the Grant Agreement.

Project budget

Project budgets (requested grant amount) are expected to range between EUR 7 000 000 and EUR 20 000 000 per project.

This does not however preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

Security

Projects involving EU classified information must undergo security scrutiny to authorise funding and may be made subject to specific security rules (detailed in a security aspects letter (SAL) which is annexed to the Grant Agreement).

These rules (governed by Decision [2015/444](#)⁷ and its implementing rules and/or national rules) provide for instance that:

- projects involving information classified TRES SECRET UE/EU TOP SECRET (or equivalent) can NOT be funded
- classified information must be marked in accordance with the applicable security instructions in the SAL
- information with classification levels CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above (and RESTREINT UE/ EU RESTRICTED, if required by national rules) may be:
 - created or accessed only on premises with facility security clearance (FSC) from the competent national security authority (NSA), in accordance with the national rules
 - handled only in a secured area accredited by the competent NSA
 - accessed and handled only by persons with valid personnel security clearance (PSC) and a need-to-know
- at the end of the grant, the classified information must either be returned or continue to be protected in accordance with the applicable rules
- action tasks involving EU classified information (EUCI) may be subcontracted only with prior written approval from the granting authority and only to entities established in an EU Member State or in a non-EU country with a security of information agreement with the EU (or an administrative arrangement with the

⁷ See Commission Decision 2015/444/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

Commission)

- disclosure of EU CI to third parties is subject to prior written approval from the granting authority.

Please note that, depending on the type of activity, facility security clearance may have to be provided before grant signature. The granting authority will assess the need for clearance in each case and will establish their delivery date during grant preparation. Please note that in no circumstances can we sign any grant agreement until at least one of the beneficiaries in a consortium has facility security clearance.

Further security recommendations may be added to the Grant Agreement in the form of security deliverables (*e.g. create security advisory group, limit level of detail, use fake scenario, exclude use of classified information, etc*).

Beneficiaries must ensure that their projects are not subject to national/third-country security requirements that could affect implementation or put into question the award of the grant (*e.g. technology restrictions, national security classification, etc*). The granting authority must be notified immediately of any potential security issues.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality and efficiency of the implementation' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*).

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate⁸:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct⁹ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)

⁸ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

⁹ 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted¹⁰ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that¹¹:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

The ex aequo proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Industrial impact and cost-reduction potential'.

If still necessary, any further prioritisation will be established by the evaluation committee. These factors will be documented in the panel report.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

¹⁰ 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

¹¹ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

1. Relevance and strategic fit (30 points):

- Alignment with the objective of industrial readiness and cost reduction for affordable Ka-band user terminals to be used with IRIS².
- Relevance to 5G NR NTN Ka-band terminal architectures, including phased-array antenna subsystems.
- Coverage of one or more of the priority themes set out in Section 2.

2. Quality and efficiency of the implementation (30 points):

- Technical soundness and maturity of the proposed technologies, subsystems and industrial processes, and quality and relevant experience of the project team
- Effectiveness of the work breakdown structure, including the definition of the work packages, their timing, inter-relation and the measurability of associated deliverables
- Realism of milestones, identification and treatment of risks, and adequacy of resources allocated to the work plan

3. Industrial impact and cost-reduction potential (40 points):

- Expected contribution to terminal cost reduction, quantified where possible, with clear identification of the magnitude and basis of expected improvement
- Expected contribution to enabling European industrial readiness for volume production of Ka-band user terminals
- Credibility of the business case and of the production scale-up plan beyond the grant period, including supply-chain risk assessment and demonstrated industrial commitment to maintain and exploit the developed capabilities
- Contribution to strengthening European industrial capability of the Ka-band terminal value chain

- Potential for reuse of outputs across governmental and commercial Ka-band terminal variants

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance and strategic fit	15	30
Quality and efficiency of the implementation	15	30
Industrial impact and cost-reduction potential	20	40
Overall (pass) scores	60	100

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 15/30, 15/30 and 20/40 points.

Overall threshold: 60 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the [Grant Agreement](#) together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (requested grant amount): *see section 6 above*.

The grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated eligible costs and a funding rate of 100%.

The action is nevertheless expected to involve additional costs not covered by the lump sum, thereby ensuring co-financing of the action. The existence of such costs will be assessed during the evaluation of the proposed budget.

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- Lump sum contributions¹²

Specific cost eligibility rules for this call:

- the lump sum amount must be calculated in accordance with the methodology set out in the lump sum authorising decision and using the detailed budget table/calculator provided (if any)
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
 - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#))
 - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- the lump sum breakdown must comply with the following:
 - The proposal shall identify each work package and specify the corresponding contribution amounts for each
 - Each work package shall correspond to a single lump sum amount
 - The detailed budget table shall additionally show, for each work package, the breakdown of the estimated eligible costs by beneficiary and affiliated entity and by budget category
 - The number and scope of work packages shall be proportionate to the project size and duration, with each work package defined around a coherent set of activities producing verifiable deliverables

Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally up to **50%** of the maximum grant amount). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.


The proposal shall contain a payment plan, identifying one or more interim payments **linked to the satisfactory completion of work packages**.

¹² Decision of DG DEFIS of May 2026 authorising the use of lump sums for actions under the preparatory action "Innovative user terminals for European secure satellite communication service".

You will be expected to submit progress reports at intervals to be determined during grant preparation, typically every six to twelve months. Some of these reports may not be linked to payments.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum*

grant amount for the action

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- rights of use on results: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5):*

- durability: Yes

Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal may be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: DEFIS-GOVSATCOM@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles** — When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).

Organisations may participate in several proposals.

BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).

- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).