

MAJOR

Maintenance, Joining, and Repair
innovation in multidomain defence



Version 2

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MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL #1

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Disclaimer: This guide aims to support potential applicants to the MaJoR Cascade Funding Open Calls. It is provided for information purposes only and is not intended to replace consultation of any applicable legal sources. Neither the European Commission (EC), the European Defence Agency, the MaJoR consortium (or any person acting on their behalf) can be held responsible for the use made of this guidance document. Note that the Sub-Grant Agreement and its annexes shall prevail in case of discrepancies.

Q1: Are Ukrainian entities (based in Ukraine) eligible and how can Ukrainian entities meet the ownership requirement if they are owned and controlled in Ukraine?

Ukrainian entities are eligible for funding as per Article 6.1 of Commission Implementing Decision of 29.1.2025 C(2025) 568¹.

Likewise Ukrainian entities that comply with ownership control restrictions as per Article 6.2 Commission Implementing Decision of 29.1.2025 C(2025) 568² are eligible.

Q2: If the applicant participates in the EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS), can it participate in MaJoR Cascade Funding program as well?

Yes. Applicant participating in EUDIS 2026 are encouraged to participate in the MaJoR program. However, projects receiving an EU grant for the work or that will be given notice of any future EU grants related to the proposed work AND of any EU operating grant(s)³ given to the organization are not considered as eligible for funding under this call.

**Q3: What is the target TRL requirements? Is it the same across the Topics?
Is TRL 3 the expected entry point and TRL 6 the target outcome? If so, how does the 60k Euro budget align with those expectations?**

The TRL requirements are the same for all topics. We are looking for technologies ranging from TRL3 to TRL6. The project must respond to all eligibility and selection criteria indicated in the call, and must stay within the maximum budget of EUR 60 000 for the project/ legal entity.

Q4.1: How can universities and research organisations participate as they are neither SME nor startup?

For each topic, participation of entities other than SMEs⁴ can only be accepted where no SMEs are available to demonstrate the capacity or expertise needed for the project during its lifetime (i.e. only in absence of eligible application submitted by SMEs).

Q4.2: Can universities be part of an application of a SME/startup as subcontractor?

Subcontracting costs (i.e. outsourcing project activities) are not eligible activities.

¹ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c2784284-edfc-49c8-894e-ec173679d8c6_en?filename=EDF-Work-Programme-2025-PartII.pdf

² https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c2784284-edfc-49c8-894e-ec173679d8c6_en?filename=EDF-Work-Programme-2025-PartII.pdf

³ See Article 183 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:L_202402509

⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

Q5: Does Cluster organisations, which legal bodies are SMEs according the EU legislation, are eligible to submit proposal? Clusters may be needed to involve the SMEs.

To be eligible for funding, you need to be a legal private entity qualifying as SME within the meaning of Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003⁵. Consortia are not eligible.

Q6: Should applications be done by single SME's or by a consortium of companies of a certain size?

Consortia are not eligible. The application shall be proposed by a single legal private entity qualifying as SME within the meaning of Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC of 6 May 2003⁶.

Q7.1: Are SMEs existing for more than 5 years eligible?

There is no time limitation when it comes to the existence of the applicant's legal entity. Therefore, any SME that exists for more than five years is eligible.

Q7.2: What definition will apply for Deep Tech startups? They usually take more than 5 years to establish

For the meaning of this call, a startup is a SME that has maximum 5 years of existence at the closure of the call (to be demonstrated via a registration document if selected for funding). Entities with more than 5 years of existence will then be considered as SME if they continue to meet the criteria⁷.

Q8: If a European SME is 100% a subsidiary of a US company, is it eligible for funding?

Such SME will not meet eligibility criteria due to the ownership and control restrictions as per Article 6.2 Commission Implementing Decision of 29.1.2025 C(2025) 568⁸.

Q9: Can civil companies or SMEs without clearances submit proposals?

Yes, the participation in MaJoR cascade funding does not require the obtention of a security clearance. The proposed project must be kept at sensitive level (unclassified/non-releasable to the public) and shall thus not include any Classified Information¹. If a

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

⁶ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32003H0361>

⁸ https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/c2784284-edfc-49c8-894e-ec173679d8c6_en?filename=EDF-Work-Programme-2025-PartII.pdf

recipient comes into contact with information which is classified, then it must be handled in accordance with specific security rules.

Q10: Can we propose more than 1 idea? Our products and services would allow us to propose projects in Topics 1 and 2., can we submit two proposals?

Multiple submissions to the same topic are not allowed. It is nevertheless possible for a given legal entity to apply to several topics within the call. Please be aware that the financial support will account for a maximum of EUR 60 000 funding per legal entity. Even if several of your applications are evaluated favourably, the maximum amount of funding provided to a legal entity cannot exceed the EUR 60 000 limitation in total.

Q11: If the financial situation of the company is poor, will you get the grant?

Before the submission, the applicant shall perform a financial capacity check using the tool provided by the EC⁹. Applicants with a score lower than “acceptable” will not be considered for prefinancing but could still receive a sub-grant. This applies also to startups as defined in section 3.1. of the MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1 – Call Conditions.

If requested, the applicant will provide the necessary elements during the Sub-Grant Agreement preparation to the MaJoR consortium (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.).

Q12: Who owns the foreground IP rights that are created in this program? Can you please explain how the IPR will be regulated?

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are stipulated in the Article 8 of the Model Sub-Grant Agreement (MSGGA). As per Article 8.2 of MSGGA, 8.2. Results are owned by the Party/Parties or by the MaJoR Beneficiary that generate them.

Q13: Is it possible to participate as a mechanical machining company? We machine superalloys and HRSA material, which may be eligible for topic 1/2. Moreover, it would be interesting to collaborate with other participants.

Providing that you met the eligible criteria as described in the MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1 – Call Conditions Section 3, you can be eligible for funding. Nonetheless, consortia are not eligible.

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/lfv/lfvSimulation.do>

Q14: Concerning the budget; are there any different rules for different countries? Like costs which cannot be part of the budget?

The cost definition is same for all recipients wherever their entity is based – see MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1 – Call Conditions Section 4, as well as the Annex 1: Proposal template for the budget calculation. The budgeted costs will be paid by a lump sum sub-grant.

Q15: If a company has a turnover of less than 50M€ but is part of a group with a turnover of more than 150M€, can it participate?

To be eligible for the MaJoR call, the recipient must be a Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise (SME) at the time of signing the Sub-Grant Agreement. SMEs are defined by the staff headcount and either turnover or balance sheet total based on the Commission Recommendation of 6 May 2003 concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (2003/361/EC). Applicants applying to CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL must have self-assessed their SME status by using the SME self-assessment tool¹⁰.

Q16: What about the confidentiality of the proposals?

All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence.

Q17: If the expertise of an SME is relatively low, will this be a reason for rejection?

The expertise of an entity shall be explained in your proposal (see Annex 1: Proposal template). The reviewers will then evaluate this against the awarding criteria according to the rules stated in the MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1 – Call Conditions Section 5.

Q18: If selected, will the company have to travel to Belgium?

The recipient of the cascade funding will have to attend several mandatory events, namely:

- Bootcamp 1: On accelerator site – IGNITY In Belgium
- Bootcamp 2: Land domain focus – Rheinmetall in Germany
- Bootcamp 3: Naval domain focus – Damen in the Netherlands
- Bootcamp 4: Air domain focus – Airbus in Germany
- Final Demonstration Day (place to be decided)

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/sme/public/organisation-name>

Q19: Regarding the selection process, how are the proposals evaluated? Based on which criteria?

Please refer to MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1 – Call Conditions section 5.3.

Q20: Does an ongoing R&D project qualify for the €60,000 MaJoR grant if we utilize the funding to accelerate a specific 6-month work package (e.g., specific TRL 6 to TRL 7 validation of the integration)?

Actions and activities are not considered eligible for funding under this call if the proposed project is receiving an EU or national grant for this action or that will be given notice of any future EU or national grants related to this action AND of any EU operating grant(s) (See Articles 184(4) and 194 EU Financial Regulation 2024/2509)³ are given to the organization. This would be considered as double financing.

Q21: Our primary motivation for joining MaJoR is the access to Primes (Tier 1 suppliers) and Ministries of Defence (MoD) across the EU. To what extent does the MaJoR Innovation Test Hub and mentoring phase facilitate direct networking, end-user feedback, and technology demonstrations with these European defense stakeholders?

Direct networking with Primes (members of the consortium), MoD or any relevant Defense related stakeholders can happen during MaJoR bootcamps or dedicated final demonstration events, where startups might pitch and demonstrate their solutions and receive feedback. During the mentoring phase, we also foresee targeted one-to-one introduction by connecting the recipient to pre-identified contacts based on its specific needs.

Q22: The call mentions validation on MaJoR demonstrators (UAV fuselage, naval mast, land vehicle cabin). Can our 6-month project focus on one demonstrator rather than all three? Is cross-domain applicability valued, or should we focus on one domain?

For the demonstrator integration, your 6-month project can focus on one MaJoR demonstrator as long as the scope and validation plan are clear. That said, we cannot guarantee integration into any demonstrator; if your technology proves relevant and feasible for the demonstrator owner, then additional synergies and integration opportunities may arise.

For multi-domain testing, cross-domain applicability is valued since MaJoR is designed as a cross-domain initiative (air/sea/land). If your solution can credibly create value across multiple platforms, you should highlight the transferable elements and propose added value for the other domains where applicable; if not, it is also acceptable to focus on a single domain where you can deliver the strongest impact within 6 months.

Q23: What is the typical budget allocation for approved projects?

There is no typical budget allocation. To maintain financial transparency, each funded entity must provide a detailed budget breakdown as part of their application submission. This must include estimated costs for personnel, equipment, and other relevant expenses. The budget should align with project objectives and proposed work and reflect a cost-effective approach to achieving measurable results. The budget will be evaluated for its alignment to the proposed concept and methodology in criterion implementation. The maximum budget is EUR 60 000 per legal entity.

Q24: Would our proposal be strengthened by securing a letter of interest from military stakeholders (e.g., Navy, Air Force, etc.) or is civilian operational heritage sufficient for a feasibility study?

Only the documents requested in the call are required and will be considered during evaluation of the application to MaJoR funding. The proposal will be evaluated as it is, additional documents will not be taken into account in the assessment. You are nonetheless free to propose any arguments that you deem necessary to strengthen your proposal.

Q25: General questions regarding the technical details of the MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1

To establish a fair and transparent process, we could not interpret the content described in the technical topics. For specific technical guidance, please refer to the MaJoR_Cascade Funding_Description_of_the_technical_topics document.

Q26: General questions regarding the submission of mandatory documents in the MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1

The applications that have not used the official templates for the submission, meaning the Application Proposal template (future Annex 1 to the Sub Grant Agreement), and Declaration on Honour (DoH) template (future Annex 4 to the Sub Grant Agreement), will be qualified ineligible. For more information, please refer to MaJoR CASCADE FUNDING OPEN CALL#1 – Call Conditions.