



Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme

Call update: 18th of September 2026

The following sentence has been included in section 4.2: "If selected for funding, SMEs will be asked to set-up a PIC number."

Open Call for Proposals
Guide for Applicants

Grant Agreement Number: 101236201

Project Acronym: ECDI



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1. Introduction

European Cluster for Drone Innovation (ECDI) is a project funded by the European Commission under the Euroclusters Programme. It supports innovative EU SMEs operating in the drone ecosystem in their transition towards Dual-use products and business models, as well as in their digital and green (twin) transition.

To achieve these objectives, the ECDI consortium launches its second Open Call, “Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme”, targeting Dual-use drone manufacturing SMEs. The Open Call is a competitive selection process granting access to a structured Programme combining tailored services and direct financial support. The Programme is designed to help SMEs that already belong to the Dual-use market to develop drone projects that adapt their business models, processes and products to address civil, digital, social and environmental needs.

This Guide for Applicants provides an overview of the Programme and detailed instructions on how to apply. It is provided for information purposes only and does not replace applicable legal or contractual documents.

1.1. The ECDI Consortium

The ECDI project is implemented by a European consortium of organisations active in the drone, aerospace and innovation ecosystems. The consortium brings together four (4) clusters:

- [Aerospace Valley](#) (AV), France, as coordinator
- [Andalucia Aerospace](#) (AAERO), Spain
- [Silesian Aviation Cluster](#) (SAC), Poland
- [All-Ukrainian Association of Innovative Space Clusters](#) (OIKK), Ukraine

Consortium partners are responsible for the design and implementation of the Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme. They provide expertise, mentoring, assessments and tailored services to selected SMEs through qualified staff members and affiliated experts within their respective organisations. The consortium operates in close coordination to ensure a consistent, transparent and fair implementation of the Programme across all participating countries.

1.2. Programme Overview and Objectives

Selected SMEs will be asked to implement their Innovation Plan, which defines the objectives, activities and expected results of their participation in the Programme. It is meant to describe how the applicant will develop its product towards the next Technical Readiness Level during the 6-month period of the Programme, what is the SME strategy in terms of Green and Digital Transition and how it can be applied during the Programme, and finally what is the possible impact the project can have on their company.

The Innovation Plan will serve as the main reference document for the implementation of activities and will guide the delivery of mentoring, tailored services and training support provided by the ECDI consortium.

How selected SMEs will benefit from the Programme

During the six-month Programme, selected SMEs are expected to actively implement the Innovation Plan submitted during the application phase. Beneficiaries will work towards advancing their product to the next Technology Readiness Level (TRL), participate in the mandatory assessment, mentoring and training activities, engage with the tailored support services provided by the consortium, and contribute to the Programme's digital and green transition objectives. SMEs are also expected to monitor progress against their Innovation Plan and submit mid-term and final reports describing the activities carried out, results achieved and use of the financial support received. Progress towards the targeted TRL advancement will be monitored through mentoring activities and assessed through the reporting process.

Indicative Programme Journey

- Month 1: onboarding, assessment and service package definition.
- Months 1 to 6: implementation of the Innovation Plan supported by mentoring, training and tailored services.
- Month 4: mid-term progress report.
- Month 7: final report and administrative closure.

Calendar and Finances

Applications to the Open Call will open on **30 June 2026** and will end on 30 September 2026 at 17:00 pm CEST.

Following the evaluation process, selected SMEs will be invited to sign a contract with the Programme Coordinator, acting on behalf of the ECDI consortium, and will then enter the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme.

Selected SMEs will receive up to €35,000 in equity-free funding, complemented by a mandatory co-financing of at least 20% from SMEs provided by **private financial sources** (in form of debt or own financial resources), thus crowding in private capital into the projects. This co-financing must be explained during the application phase, justified in the final report as stated in Section 6.2 and cannot consist of in-kind contributions.

In addition to financial support, SMEs will benefit from tailored services provided by the ECDI consortium. These services aim to support the integration of digital and green transformation practices, through expert assessment, mentoring, testing and business support.

Relevant Links and Contacts

Project website: <https://www.ecdi-euroclusters.eu/#>



ECDI Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme Guide for Applicants, June 2026.

Open call application form: <https://3742003280.wiin.io/en/applications/dual-use-drones-innovative-programme>

Help desk: carbon@aerospace-valley.com or vidal@aerospace-valley.com

2. General Information

2.1. Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants must be **manufacturing SMEs operating in the drone sector** that seek to upgrade their product technologically and to develop or strengthen Dual-use applications. They need to meet all of the following conditions:

- Be an SME according to EU rules (Recommendation 2003/361/EC¹), which means:
 - Be independent or compliant with EU definitions of autonomous partner or linked enterprises.
 - Employ fewer than 250 persons and
 - have an annual turnover ≤ €50 million, **or** an annual balance sheet total ≤ €43 million.

To ensure you have the correct status, Applicants are asked to fill in the [SME self-assessment](#) from the European Commission and upload the result on the Application Form.

- Have at least **one drone product at TRL 6 or higher** and commit to upgrading the TRL by **at least one level** during participation in the Programme (a proof of TRL will be required during the application process).
- Be legal entities established and operating in:
 - An EU Member State, or
 - A country participating in the [EU Single Market Programme/COSME Strand](#)
- Submit a full application in English including all required proofs as detailed in Section 3.2

SMEs will remain eligible throughout the Programme even if they temporarily exceed SME financial thresholds during project implementation.

NOT eligible for the ECDI Dual-Use Innovative Programme are:

- Applications focused solely on market access without product development
- Companies such as: Software-only companies (including SaaS providers), Companies providing drone-based services or operations, Data processing, analytics, or AI companies without a proprietary drone-related hardware product, Consultancy, engineering, or training providers, Companies commercialising solutions based exclusively on third-party drone hardware, Companies that do not develop and manufacture a tangible drone-related product, component, subsystem, or infrastructure
- SMEs without an eligible product (below TRL 6)

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=celex%3A32003H0361>

- Applications that are not from the Dual-use market or do not comply with the requested proof of belonging to this market as detailed in Section 3.2

Applicants must not:

- Be bankrupt, under liquidation, or considered an “enterprise in difficulty” under Regulation (EU) No 651/2014.
- Have convictions for fraud, financial irregularities, or illegal business practices.
- Be subject to exclusion from EU funding or double funding restrictions.

2.2. Number of Companies to be Supported

The programme seeks to support around 10 SMEs in total and has a total available budget of €350.000. However, we reserve the right not to award all available funds depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

It is to be noted that the ECDI consortium aims to reach the goal of at least 10% of selected SMEs established outside the countries represented in the ECDI consortium. To ensure this principle, applications with the same total score after the evaluation will be ranked according to criteria as specified in section 4.2.

2.3. Support Provided

Selected SMEs will receive a combination of **services and direct funding**, including:

- Individual assessment and roadmap definition.
- Mentorship throughout the Programme.
- Tailored technical, regulatory, business and testing services as explained in Annex 3.
- Access to training and internationalisation support.
- Possibility to participate in the Innovation Drone Alliance.
- Equity-free funding of up to €35,000 per SME.

Distinction between mentorship, tailored services and training

Within the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme, support activities are structured as follows:

- **Mentorship** refers to continuous, one-to-one support provided to each SME throughout the Programme. Mentors follow project progress, support implementation, ensure quality and act as the main contact point between the SME and the consortium.
- **Tailored services** consist of targeted, needs-based interventions delivered upon assessment results. These services address specific technical, regulatory, business or market-related challenges and are provided on a case-by-case basis.

- **Training activities** are collective learning actions, such as workshops or webinars, aimed at strengthening SMEs' knowledge and skills on topics of common interest (e.g. Dual-use innovation, emerging technologies, market trends).

These three support modalities are complementary and address different stages and needs of SMEs during the Programme. Finally, some support activities are mandatory to ensure a common framework and consistent outcomes across all selected SMEs, while others are optional and activated based on the SME's needs and strategic objectives.

In summary, the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme includes:

- **Mandatory activities:** individual assessment, mentorship, participation to at least 3 consortium services (selected during the application) and explained below.
- **Optional activities:** internationalisation support and membership in the Innovation Drone Alliance
- **Direct funding:** up to €35,000 linked to the Innovation Plan equalling to maximum 80% of the total costs of the Innovation Plan. Minimum **20 % of the costs of the innovation plan will be supported by the manufacturing SME**, which corresponds to €8 750 if an SME requests the full grant of €35 000.
 - If an SME requests the maximum grant amount of €35,000, the total Innovation Plan budget must be at least €43,750. In this case:
 - ECDI contribution: €35,000 (80%)
 - SME own financial contribution: €8,750 (20%)

An SME that was selected for the Civil Drones Innovative Programme and is still underway cannot apply or participate in this Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme. An SME that was selected for the Civil Drones Innovative Programme and finalised successfully the Programme, can apply within the following limit: an SME cannot receive more than 60,000€ in grants under ECDI project. This threshold is relevant for SMEs that have applied for previous calls for proposals.

These services are explained in the following section

Support Services Provided by the Consortium

The Dual-use service catalogue is built around **6 services listed below**. Applicants will be asked to indicate up to three preferred service tracks in the application form. Following the initial assessment, the final package of tailored services will be defined jointly by the SME and the ECDI consortium according to the SME's needs and the Programme objectives.

1. Certification, Regulation & Compliance

For SMEs requiring support with aviation, safety, cybersecurity or Dual-use regulatory requirements.

Indicative services may include:

- EASA readiness support

- Regulatory roadmap development
- Export-control awareness
- Dual-use compliance guidance
- Standards and certification support

2. Technology Validation & TRL Advancement

For SMEs seeking to demonstrate, validate or further mature their products.

Indicative services may include:

- Validation planning
- Demonstration preparation
- Test environment access
- User validation activities
- TRL progression support

3. Internationalization & Market Expansion

For SMEs preparing entry into new European or international markets.

Indicative services may include:

- Market-readiness assessment
- Partner search
- Soft-landing support
- International matchmaking
- Trade mission participation

4. Access to Finance & Investment Readiness

For SMEs preparing to engage with investors, lenders or public funding programmes.

Indicative services may include:

- Investor readiness assessment
- Pitch preparation
- Funding strategy development
- Investor matchmaking
- Public funding opportunities

5. Green & Digital Transformation

For SMEs wishing to improve sustainability, digitalization, cybersecurity or AI integration.

Indicative services may include:

- Green-transition assessment
- Digital-transformation assessment
- AI adoption opportunities
- Cybersecurity readiness

- Sustainability planning

6. Industrial Partnerships & Supply Chain Integration

For SMEs seeking industrial partners, manufacturing partners or supply-chain integration opportunities.

Indicative services may include:

- Industrial matchmaking
- Supply-chain integration support
- OEM engagement
- Consortium-building
- Strategic partnership development

Direct Funding

Selected SMEs will receive up to €35,000 direct funding to implement their Innovation Plan. Eligible costs must be directly related to the approved project activities. Eligible cost categories include:

- External services and procurement (e.g. testing, certification, consulting, specialised technical services),
- Equipment, components and consumables,
- Personnel costs of staff directly involved in the project,
- Prototype development, pilot testing and validation activities,
- Travel costs, only when directly linked to approved internationalisation activities, such as participation in international events or meetings related to market access. Travel costs are capped at €5,000 per SME and must be justified in the application and validated by the consortium during the selection process. These travel costs must describe why they could be of interest for the innovation of the applicants' product, how they will reach a new international market thanks to them and the concrete impact it can have on their organization. If these activities don't fit the requirements they will be removed from the Innovation Plan along with the linked costs.

Subcontracting vs external procurement

A clear distinction is made between external procurement of services or equipment and subcontracting:

- External procurement refers to the purchase of specific services, equipment or expertise that support the project (e.g. laboratory tests, certification services, specialised consulting). These costs are eligible, provided they do not replace the SME's core innovation activities.
- Subcontracting refers to the outsourcing of specific project tasks to a third party when the SME lacks the required capacity or expertise.

Subcontracting is allowed up to a maximum of 10% of the total project budget, subject to justification and validation upon selection process. The subcontracting of core Dual-use innovation tasks is not eligible. In particular, tasks related to the design, development and ownership of the Dual-use innovation must remain under the responsibility of the SME. If these activities don't fit the requirements they will be removed from the Innovation Plan along with the linked costs.

Examples of tasks that may be subcontracted include:

- specialised testing or validation activities,
- non-core engineering support,
- regulatory or certification support,
- specific studies or analyses not central to the innovation.

The SME remains fully responsible for the project implementation and results. Financial support and payments will be linked to the implementation of the Innovation Plan and the achievement of the associated milestones.

2.4. Absence of Conflict of Interest

Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the ECDI partners. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case by a review committee. ECDI consortium partners, their affiliated entities, employees, and permanent co-operators cannot become a recipient of support via the Open Call.

2.5. Ethical Issues

ECDI complies with the fundamental ethical issues particularly those outlined in the “European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity”. All applicants must submit a self-assessment ethics questionnaire, which is part of the Proposal Template, to confirm that their proposal does or does not have ethical issues. If the SME must answer “Yes” to any of the questions in the template, the SME needs to contact the ECDI Helpdesk for guidance.

2.6. Data Protection

To process and evaluate applications, ECDI will need to collect Personal and Industrial Data. Aerospace Valley, as the Open Call Coordinator will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the [Wiin.io platform](#) for these purposes. The [Wiin.io](#) platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with The General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the [Wiin.io](#) terms to ensure coverage. Please refer to the [Wiin.io](#) Contract annex and security measures.

3. Submission Process

Applications to the Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme must be submitted electronically via the online application platform following this link: <https://3742003280.wiin.io/en/applications/dual-use-drones-innovative-programme>. Applications submitted by any other means or after the deadline will not be considered.

3.1 Application Timeline

The timeline of the Open Call is as follows:

- Opening of the Open Call: 30 June 2026
- **Deadline: 30 September 2026, 17:00 pm CEST**

Evaluation results will be communicated to applicants after the evaluation period. The exact dates of communication and Programme start may vary depending on the number of applications received and the completion of the evaluation process.

3.2 Application Form and Required Information

Applicants are required to complete the online application form and provide all requested information and supporting documents. Incomplete applications will be rejected. The application form includes, at minimum, the following elements:

- General information about the SME
- Description of the innovation and its digital, social and environmental potential
- Description of the belonging of the company to the Dual-use market
- Current development stage and objectives of the proposed activities
- Innovation Plan outlining the main activities to be implemented during the Programme
- Expected results and impact
- Requested financial support and indicative budget
- Information related to eligibility and compliance requirements

Applicants are responsible for ensuring the accuracy and completeness of the information provided. In addition to the information provided in the application form, applicants will be required to fill-in and upload supporting documents via the submission platform. These annexes are mandatory and include:

- [Proof of SME status](#),
- [the Ethics Questionnaire](#),
- [The Declaration of Honour](#),
- Proof of co-funding.

ECDI Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme Guide for Applicants, June 2026.

- The 20% co-financing must be covered either by the SME's own financial resources (equity) or by guaranteed external financing. It cannot consist of contributions in kind, personnel costs or non-monetary contributions.

Examples of acceptable supporting documents:

- The latest annual financial statements demonstrating sufficient liquidity.
 - Recent bank statements.
 - The official accounting certificate confirming the internal funds available.
 - The signed loan agreement or bank commitment letter.
 - The signed investment agreement or documents relating to the capital increase.
 - The official grant award letter (if compliant with rules on double funding).
 - Documents demonstrating planned or future fundraising without a formal commitment are not considered sufficient.
- Proof of belonging to the Dual-use market
 - A "Dual-use item" means items, including software and technology, which can be used for both civil and military applications and which are listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2021/821. A company that declares having a Dual-use product must provide proofs such as
 - Regulatory compliance statement,
 - A declaration of conformity with EU Dual-use regulation
 - A letter of interest from a Military Unit/Ministry of Interior/Ministry of Defence from an EU Member State or COSME country.
 - A mandatory "TRL Evidence" annex requiring one or more of: flight-test reports, demonstration videos, pilot customer reports, certification documents, operational deployment records, and/or independent validation reports.

The exact list of required documents is specified on the submission platform. All templates are available on the submission platform and at the end of this document. All documents listed on the submission platform are mandatory. If not done during the application process, the SMEs will be contacted by the ECDI consortium and will have to submit them within a deadline of 3 working days. Failure to do so, the application will be considered ineligible.

3.3 Submission Rules

Each SME may submit only one application. Multiple submissions within the same Open Call are not allowed. In the case of multiple submission, it is to be noted that only the latest one submitted will be considered. Applications must be written in English. Supporting documents may be requested during the evaluation process. Applicants may be contacted by the ECDI consortium for clarification purposes during the evaluation. Failure to respond within the specified timeframe

may result in ineligibility of the application. Applicants may modify or withdraw their application at any time **before the deadline** through the submission platform.

Requests to modify an application after submission must be sent via the submission platform or helpdesk no later than two (2) calendar days before the relevant deadline. In such cases, the consortium may reopen the application to allow resubmission. Requests received less than two (2) calendar days before the deadline will not be processed, and no resubmission will be possible. After the deadline, applications can no longer be modified.

4. Evaluation and Selection

All applications submitted before the deadline will be evaluated by the ECDI consortium in accordance with a transparent and fair evaluation process. Only applications that meet the eligibility requirements will be admitted to evaluation. Following submission, applications will first undergo an eligibility check to verify compliance with the eligibility criteria defined in this Guide for Applicants in Section 2.1.

4.1. Proposals Evaluation

Eligible applications will be evaluated by evaluators appointed by the ECDI consortium. Evaluators will be selected based on their expertise and will be required to comply with confidentiality and conflict of interest rules. Together, they form the Evaluation Committee of the Dual-Use Drones Innovative Programme.

The application will be evaluated by two persons that are part of two partners of the consortium. The overall score of an application is the average of the scores given by both evaluators rounded to the nearest higher value. In case of a difference larger than 20 point between both evaluators scores, a third evaluator will be designated to ensure consistencies. Eligible applications will be assessed against the following evaluation criteria and maximum scores:

1. Excellence and Innovation (30 points)
 - Degree of innovation of the proposed solution (10 points)
 - Dual-use belonging and relevance to digital, social and environmental needs (10 points)
 - Technical feasibility, profile/capacity of the team and maturity of the solution (10 points)
2. Quality and Implementation (40 points)
 - Coherence of the Innovation Plan with the SME business model (10 points)
 - Feasibility of the proposed activities, budget and timeline (15 points)
 - Capacity of the SME to implement the proposed activities and potential risks and mitigation measures (15 points)
3. Impact (30 points)
 - Expected impact on the SME's competitiveness and growth (10 points)
 - Market potential and relevance of the project for the market and ECDI programme (10 points)
 - Contribution to digital and green transition objectives (10 points)

To be considered for selection, applications must:

- achieve a minimum overall score of 50 points out of 100, AND
- score at least: criterion 1- 15/30, criterion 2 - 20/40 and criterion 3 - 15/30.

The evaluation may include a clarification phase, during which applicants may be requested to provide additional information. Failure to respond within the specified timeframe may result in a lower score. Based on the evaluation results, applications will be ranked after the end of the evaluation period.

4.2. Selection and Notification

Applications will be selected in descending order of score, subject to the available budget. The criteria for the ranking will follow the rules:

- I. Rule 1; The Applications will be ranked based on their **overall score** (sum of the criterion I to III).
- II. Rule 2: In case following Rule 1 there are Applications with the same total score, priority will be given to Applications that have higher scores in the criterion **Feasibility of the project**.
- III. Rule 3: In case following Rule 2 there are Applications in the same position, priority will be given to Applications that have a higher score in the criterion **Impact**.
- IV. Rule 4: In case following Rule 3 there are Applications in the same position, priority will be given to the one situated **outside of the countries of the consortium**.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of the evaluation. Selected SMEs will receive an invitation to enter the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme and to proceed with the contractual process. Unsuccessful applicants will receive feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of their application.

If selected for funding, SMEs will be asked to set-up a PIC number.

4.3. Redress Process

Any complaints against the project selection process must be submitted by the applicant to carbon@aerospace-valley.com AND vidal@aerospace-valley.com within 5 calendar days after the announcement of the Open Call results. Your email should include the following information:

- Application name and reference
- Lead contact name and details
- Object of your complaint
- Information and evidence of the alleged breach

The Evaluation Committee will examine the complaint based on the information brought forward by the applicant, will assess the case, and decide whether the complaint is justified or not and will inform the applicant on the decision taken. If the complaint is considered justified, the Evaluation Committee will notify the evaluators to re-evaluate the application. The evaluators will then provide the Evaluation Committee with an updated assessment. The final decision on the complaint will be communicated by the Evaluation Committee to the applicant in writing within 20 working days from the date of submitting the complaint. This decision will be final, binding to all

parties and not subject to any further complaint proceedings within the programme if the complaint is based on the same grounds.

5. Responsibilities of the Beneficiaries

As already mentioned, during the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme, SMEs will implement their Innovation plan submitted for evaluation and selected for support.

5.1. Implementation Responsibilities

Beneficiaries are responsible for implementing their Innovation Plan as agreed with the ECDI consortium. They must ensure that activities are carried out in a timely manner, using adequate resources and in compliance with the approved scope, budget and timeline. Activities will be monitored throughout the Programme to assess progress against the Innovation Plan, validate milestones and ensure compliance with the contractual conditions. SMEs remain fully responsible for the technical, operational and financial execution of their project.

5.2. Reporting Obligations and Procedures Related with Direct Funding

The granted SMEs will be called to deliver two progress reports (mid-term and final) where they will describe the status of their project and their results. These reports should be written in accordance with the reporting schedule, templates and requirements defined by the ECDI consortium and must accurately reflect the activities carried out, the use of financial support and the results achieved.

The mid-term progress report is due by the end of month 4 of the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme. The final progress report is due at the end of the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme, by the end of month 7. While the Programme duration is six (6) months, the final progress report is due one month after the end of the Programme for administrative closure purposes.

Payments will be made after positive assessment of the progress reports. The consortium commits to evaluate all reports within one (1) month of delivery and complete payment procedures within three weeks after the acceptance of the report. Payment scheme will be as follows:

- 40% as pre-financing after contract signature
- 30% as midterm payment after the acceptance of the interim progress report.
- 30% as final payment after the acceptance of the final progress report.

5.3. Financial and Administrative Responsibilities

Beneficiaries are responsible for the proper use of the financial support received and for maintaining adequate records to justify costs, in line with the contractual conditions and applicable EU rules. Supporting documents and evidence of expenditure may be requested by the consortium or competent authorities for audit and control purposes.

5.4. Promoting the Action and Give Visibility to the EU Funding

The beneficiary SMEs are obligated to promote the sub-project, the ECDI project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC. The ECDI Communication team will guide and support these communication activities.

Unless the European Commission or the ECDI coordinator requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must:

- I. display the EU emblem.
- II. display the ECDI logo
- III. include the following text: This project is co-funded by the European Union's Single Market Programme under grant agreement No.**101236201**

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the Beneficiary is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page.

Any publicity made by the beneficiary SME in respect of the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify the following disclaimer:

“Co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA) or European Cluster for Drone Innovation (ECDI). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority nor the ECDI project can be held responsible for them.”.

- i. The EC and the ECDI consortium shall be authorized to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:
- ii. the name of the beneficiary SME.
- iii. contact address of the beneficiary SME.
- iv. the general purpose of the project.
- v. the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the project; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received.
- vi. the geographic location of the activities carried out.
- vii. the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground.
- viii. the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the sub-project, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication.
- ix. the publishable reports submitted to ECDI.
- x. any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and ECDI in the framework of the project.

The beneficiary SME shall ensure that all necessary authorizations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and ECDI does not infringe any rights of third parties. Upon a duly substantiated request by the sub-project coordinator, if such permission is provided by the EC, the ECDI, may agree to embargo project publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

5.5. Financial Audits and Controls

The European Commission (EC) will monitor that ECDI beneficiaries, and the beneficiary SME comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 of the ECDI grant agreement and may take any action foreseen by the grant agreement in case of non-compliance vis à vis the beneficiary concerned.

Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the ECDI project and up to four years after the end of the ECDI project, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such audits may cover financial, systemic, and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The beneficiary SME shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorised by it, with a view to verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise, complete, and effective.

The beneficiary SME shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the ECDI project (April 2028). These shall be made available to the EC were requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

To carry out these audits, the beneficiary SME shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the sub-project applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the project. They shall ensure that the information is readily available on the spot at the moment of the audit and, if so requested, that data be handed over in an appropriate form.

Based on the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorized representative to the beneficiary concerned, which may make observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The Commission may decide not to consider observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the beneficiary concerned within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

Based on the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures which it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of November 11th, 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

The EC is creating a survey specifically dedicated to the SMEs that will be selected in the Programme. An answer to this survey is mandatory in a timely manner.

5.6. Internal Communication

Formal and informal communications channels will be agreed with SMEs selected on onboarding to the ECDI Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme. Indicative rules are as follows:

Formal communications will be performed via email. Beneficiaries will need to notify the project coordinator of updates in contact persons and email addresses.

Informal communications, day-to-day communications, will be performed via email, teams or webex depending on the preference of the SME. A monthly meeting will be held between each beneficiary and its mentor. To facilitate the internal communication, all beneficiaries will be asked to appoint a contact person.

Three persons from the consortium will be the contact points for the beneficiaries:

AV Coordination team – for all administrative and legal matters

SAC Communication team – for publication and dissemination on the Programme

Mentor – day-to-day contact for any other matters.

6. Annexes

6.1. Ethics Questionnaire

ETHICAL ISSUES TABLE

	YES
Informed Consent	
• Does the proposal involve children?	
• Does the proposal involve patients or persons not able to give consent?	
• Does the proposal involve adult healthy volunteers?	
• Does the proposal involve Human Genetic Material?	
• Does the proposal involve Human biological samples?	
• Does the proposal involve Human data collection?	
Research on Human embryo/foetus	
• Does the proposal involve Human Embryos?	
• Does the proposal involve Human Foetal Tissue / Cells?	
• Does the proposal involve Human Embryonic Stem Cells?	
Privacy	
• Does the proposal involve processing of genetic information or personal data (e.g. health, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinion, religious or philosophical conviction)	
• Does the proposal involve tracking the location or observation of people?	
Research on Animals	
• Does the proposal involve research on animals?	
• Are those animals transgenic small laboratory animals?	
• Are those animals transgenic farm animals?	
• Are those animals cloned farm animals?	
• Are those animals nonhuman primates?	
Research Involving Developing Countries	

• Use of local resources (genetic, animal, plant etc)	
• Benefit to local community (capacity building i.e. access to healthcare, education etc)	
Dual Use	
• Research having direct military application	
• Research having the potential for terrorist abuse	
ICT Implants	
• Does the proposal involve clinical trials of ICT implants?	
I CONFIRM THAT NONE OF THE ABOVE ISSUES APPLY TO MY PROPOSAL	YES/NO

ETHICS

If you have entered any ethics issues in the ethical issue table, you must:

- submit an ethics self-assessment, which:
 - describes how the proposal meets the national legal and ethical requirements of the country or countries where the tasks raising ethical issues are to be carried out;
 - explains in detail how you intend to address the issues in the ethical issues table, in particular as regards:
 - research objectives (e.g. study of vulnerable populations, dual use, etc.)
 - research methodology (e.g. clinical trials, involvement of children and related consent procedures, protection of any data collected, etc.)
 - the potential impact of the research (e.g. dual use issues, environmental damage, stigmatization of particular social groups, political or financial retaliation, benefit-sharing, malevolent use, etc.).
- provide the documents that you need under national law (if you already have them), e.g.:
 - an ethics committee opinion;
 - the document notifying activities raising ethical issues or authorizing such activities

⚠ If these documents are not in English, you must also submit an English summary of them (containing, if available, the conclusions of the committee or authority concerned).

⚠ If you plan to request these documents specifically for the project you are proposing, your request must contain.

SECURITY

Please indicate if your project will involve:

- Activities or results raising security issues: _____(YES/NO)
- 'EU-classified information' as background or results: _____(YES/NO)
- Any potential “dual use” of results: _____(YES/NO)

6.2. Declaration of Honour

APPLICANT DECLARATION OF HONOUR

Project title: _____

Project acronym: _____

On behalf of _____ [Company/ organisation name] established in _____, [Official address], VAT number² _____, represented for the purposes of signing and submitting the proposal and present Declaration of Honour by _____ [Name of legal representative].

By signing this document, I declare that:

1. I have the power of legally binding the above-mentioned organisation upon submitting this proposal.
2. Neither the above-mentioned company/ organisation nor any linked company/ organisation or any individual member of the proposal team has submitted any other proposal under the ECDI Innovation Programme. In case the above-mentioned company/ organisation or any individual member of the team has submitted more than one proposal to this open call, all associated proposals will be automatically excluded from the evaluation process.
3. I and the above company/ organisation that I legally represent are fully aware and duly accept all ECDI rules and conditions as expressed in the respective open call documents and Annexes and will respect any evaluation decision and proposal selection.
4. The information included in the SME self-assessment questionnaire document is true and legally binding (*applicable to SMEs*).
5. All provided information in this declaration is true and legally binding.
6. I give the consent and permission to the ECDI coordinator to use the attached information to contact me for any issue associated with the associated proposal.

² VAT is mandatory during the contract preparation. Failure to provide a valid VAT of the specific SME will result in automatic rejection of the proposal.

Company/ organisation contact information:

Title (Mr., Ms., Dr.)	
Name	
Surname	
Full address	
Country	
E-mail address	
Telephone/ Mobile phone	
Signature/ Date	

DECLARATION OF HONOUR ON EXCLUSION CRITERIA AND ABSENCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

By signing this declaration of honour, I declare that all provided information below is true and legally binding both for me and for the company/ organisation that I legally represent:

1. I declare that the mentioned company/ organisation is not in one of the following situations:
 - a. Is bankrupt or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations.
 - b. It or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been convicted of an offense concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata.

- c. Has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organizations.
 - d. Is not in compliance with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed, to be proved by the deliverance of official documents issued by the local authorities, according to the local applicable rules.
 - e. It or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests.
 - f. Is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresenting the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in a grant award procedure or another procurement procedure or failing to supply this information or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under contracts or grants covered by the Union's budget.
- 2. I declare that the natural persons with power of representation, decision-making or control over the above-mentioned company/ organisation are not in the situations referred to in (a) to (f) above.
- 3. I declare that:
 - a. Neither any person nor I that I know is subject to an ECDI project conflict of interest.
 - b. Neither any person or I that I know participates, controls, submits, or is associated in any way with more than one proposal to the ECDI Innovation Programme
 - c. I have not made false declarations in supplying the information required by participation in the open calls of the ECDI project or does not fail to supply this information.
 - d. I am not in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in the above-mentioned points (a) to (f).
 - e. I am aware and fully accept all ECDI conditions and rules as expressed in the open call documents.
- 4. I certify that the company/ organisation that I represent:
 - a. Is committed to participate in the above-mentioned project.
 - b. Has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout its participation in the above-mentioned project and to provide any counterpart funding necessary.

- c. Has or will have the necessary resources as and when needed to carry out its involvement in the above-mentioned project.

Full name: 	Signature and stamp (if applicable)
Done at (place) , on the (day) (month) (year)	

6.3. Glossary of Terms and Definitions

Term / Expression	Definition
Application Eligibility Criteria	Criteria used to assess if an application can be considered for the programme. Possible values (Yes/No)
Application Eligible or Non-Eligible	Application that is or is not compliant with eligibility criteria
Application Time stamp	Time stamp of the final submission of an application. If the application is reopened and resubmitted the last date will be considered.
Application Form	Application form available under the Wiin.io Platform .
Contract Deadline	Date and time until when the selected SMEs need to provide contractual information.
Digital Transition	The digital transition, as defined by the European Union, refers to the overall process by which societies, economies, administrations and businesses adopt and exploit digital technologies – infrastructure, skills, public services, business models – in order to increase their performance, resilience, inclusiveness and sustainability, in line with the objectives set out in the Digital Decade 2030 Programme (Decision (EU) 2022/2481).
Dual-use	A "dual-use item" means items, including software and technology, which can be used for both civil and military applications and which are listed in Annex I to Regulation (EU) 2021/821. A company that declares having a dual-use product must provide proofs such as Regulatory compliance statement, a declaration of conformity with EU dual-use regulation and a

Term / Expression	Definition
	letter of interest from a Military Unit/Ministry of Interior/Ministry of Defence from an EU Member State or COSME country. This proof will be asked in the Application Form.
Green Transition	The Green Transition is a process supported by the European Commission, the European Parliament and Council and EU Members States through the European Green Deal (Regulation (EU) 2021/119). The Green Transition is defined as a new growth strategy that aims to transform the Union into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy, where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050 and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. The Green Transition also implies to protect, conserve and enhance the Union's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. At the same time, this transition must be just and inclusive, leaving no one behind.
Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme	Set of services and direct funding provided by the ECDI project to support drone SMEs in their transformation.
Innovation Plan	Project of the SME as explained in the Application Process, that will be implemented during the 6-months duration of the Dual-use Drone Innovative Programme.
Open Call	Competitive application process to access the Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme.
Open Call Deadline	Date and time when possibility to apply closes.
Open Call Evaluation and Selection	Rules used to order applications and select for funding.
Platform	Platform provided by Wiin.io
SME Selected SME	- SME that will receive the invitation to participate in Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme. An incorporated enterprise that complies with the rules defined by the European Commission to be qualified as an SME³
Score SME Selected	The maximum score that can be attributed to an application is 100 points. A minimum threshold of 50/100 points is required to

³<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/sme?tab=overview>

Term / Expression	Definition																				
	be considered for selection. SME that will receive the invitation to participate in Dual-use Drones Innovative Programme.																				
TRL Score	Technology readiness levels (TRLs) are a method for estimating the maturity of technologies during the acquisition phase of a program. TRLs enable consistent and uniform discussions of technical maturity across different types of technology. TRL is determined during a technology readiness assessment (TRA) that examines program concepts, technology requirements, and demonstrated technology capabilities. TRLs are based on a scale from 1 to 9 with 9 being the most mature technology. <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>TRL Level</th><th>Definition</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td><td>Basic principles observed</td></tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>Technology concept formulated</td></tr> <tr> <td>3</td><td>Experimental proof of concept</td></tr> <tr> <td>4</td><td>Technology validated in lab</td></tr> <tr> <td>5</td><td>Technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)</td></tr> <tr> <td>6</td><td>Technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)</td></tr> <tr> <td>7</td><td>System prototype demonstration in operational environment</td></tr> <tr> <td>8</td><td>System complete and qualified</td></tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>Actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)</td></tr> </tbody> </table> The maximum score that can be attributed to an application is 100 points. A minimum threshold of 50/100 points is required to be considered for selection.	TRL Level	Definition	1	Basic principles observed	2	Technology concept formulated	3	Experimental proof of concept	4	Technology validated in lab	5	Technology validated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)	6	Technology demonstrated in relevant environment (industrially relevant environment in the case of key enabling technologies)	7	System prototype demonstration in operational environment	8	System complete and qualified	9	Actual system proven in operational environment (competitive manufacturing in the case of key enabling technologies; or in space)
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