

**European Defence Agency Call for
Proposals 24.RTI.PRZ.088
“EDA Defence Innovation Prize 2024”**

**Technologies for Situational Awareness
&
Technologies for Communication
and Information Systems**

RULES OF CONTEST

1. THE INNOVATION FOR DEFENCE PRIZE

1.1. OBJECTIVES

Through this “**EDA Defence Innovation Prize 2024**” contest, the European Defence Agency (**EDA**) aims to stimulate engagement of all R&T communities and innovators¹ to accelerate development and implementation of emerging and potentially disruptive research results, as well as to identify areas in which additional investment is needed to fully address future defence capability needs, following anticipated technology progress.

The objective of the contest is to reward innovative defence-related operational-technical ideas which could be in the future implemented through a collaborative R&D effort within an EDA framework. It is expected that the prize will stimulate involvement of innovative industrial and research entities within the EDA R&T framework and will contribute to the generation of new defence research projects by exploiting all the possible defence research funding instruments, in accordance with their respective provisions.

The contest will also provide a good opportunity to small and medium sized enterprises, research organizations, universities, and companies, non-traditionally involved in defence R&D activities, to demonstrate their know-how, maximize dual-use synergies and to form valuable partnerships with key players in the defence field.

The EDA Defence Innovation Prize is organized under the umbrella of HEDI (Hub for EU Defence Innovation)², the new platform for innovation led by EDA that was established in March 2022 derived from “Strategic Compass for EU Defence and Security”, as one of its main recommendations. HEDI’s objective is to foster innovative solutions following a systematic approach from an idea towards cutting-edge military capabilities. HEDI is to serve as a platform to stimulate and facilitate cooperation on defence innovation while ensuring synergies with related European Commission activities, notably the EU defence innovation scheme, coherence of output with NATO innovation and other EU Defence Innovation organizations. This Call for Proposals complements other HEDI’s services such as the EDA Research, Technology, and Innovation Papers Awards, proofs-of-concept, and uptake of innovation (fast concept development and field experimentation cycles).

This contest will focus on innovative defence-related ideas inside the following major categories:

- 1) **Critical maritime infrastructure protection.**
- 2) **Smart sensing.**

The prize winners are expected to propose ideas which would, if implemented between now and 2030, contribute to improving and enhance specific EU defence capabilities. A total of two prizes (one prize per category) will be awarded for the best innovative ideas. Specifically, proposals must be in the scope of one of the following topics:

Topic 1: *Innovative concepts, technologies, and solutions for critical maritime infrastructure protection.*

Topic 2: *Cognitive sensing for enhanced ISTAR systems performance in defence applications.*

¹ Albeit no defence specific expertise and/or background is required to participate to the contest, the participation of entities already involved in defence-related activities is not excluded.

² HEDI (Hub for EU Defence Innovation) is accessible through the following website <https://eda.europa.eu/news-and-events/news/2022/05/17/hub-for-eu-defence-innovation-established-within-eda>

Topic 1: Innovative concepts, technologies, and solutions for critical maritime infrastructure protection

Recently, an increase in the threats to critical maritime infrastructure (e.g., underwater pipelines, communication cables, ports, ashore and offshore energy harvesting, processing, and storage systems) from both state and non-state actors have created serious concerns among both civilian and military experts' communities worldwide. The safeguarding of such crucial infrastructure and associated resources demands robust measures to ensure their security and resilience to provide the essential functioning of a country or a region.

In this regard, the Strategic Compass has echoed these requirements, reiterating the need to protect them by enhancing joint capacity and operational capability by developing adequate technological solutions and systems. Moreover, the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) emphasises the need to enhance the overall resilience of the EU's critical maritime infrastructure. However, similar threats can affect also concentrated naval assets (e.g., groups of ships in ports and anchorages) and cause significant military losses and the degradation of defence capabilities; thus, are of special attention of military planners.

Tailorable, stationary, and deployable solutions should therefore be provided to ensure persistent, efficient, and cost-effective protection of various assets against a wide range of threats originating from both military and non-military, state, and non-state actors – during war time and below its threshold. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Enemy's warships and other manned and unmanned (including swarms of) maritime platforms' engagement,
- Floating and navigable mines,
- Sabotage actions (physical damage/destruction, cyber-attacks),
- Unintended maritime accidents, but also
- Airstrike with various weaponry (e.g., missiles and rockets, bombs, loitering munitions),

and other unlisted maritime threats.

EDA is seeking innovative and potentially disruptive concepts, technological solutions and systems that prioritize enhancing maritime situational awareness through Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance (ISTAR).

Additionally, contributions in the fields of Command, Control, Communication, Computers, and Cyber (C5) architectures, as well as effective kinetic and non-kinetic countermeasures, logistics & engineering are desirable, all geared towards defensive maritime operations against the mentioned threats, according to systemic approach proving durability, interoperability, integrability, interchangeability, modularity & adaptability of the proposals, contributing to collaborative EU defence.

It is desired, that the proposals contribute to recently identified European Capability Development Priorities, in particular to:

- Critical infrastructure protection & energy security,
 - Civil-Military cooperation and Enhanced Information Exchange for Critical Infrastructure Resilience: Civil-military cooperation with the aim to further enhance interoperability and synergies and improve joint and comprehensive responses will lead to a more resilient and effective defence-related critical infrastructure. Periodic vulnerability assessments should be undertaken to identify interdependencies and cascading effects based on experiences, technology watch & foresight, and latest knowledge in the field. EU MS cooperation, given the interlinked nature of critical infrastructure protection and the issues related to ensuring continuity of supply, is also important. In addition, a structured approach to information exchange, which enables continuous information and intelligence sharing on threat-related issues, is important. Finally, the development

of multinational and/or multi-sectoral exercises or relevant training is also a key activity to improve capabilities.

- Advanced Critical Infrastructure Protection Systems: including the development of permanent detection systems through the integration of manned, unmanned, and fixed-sensor systems into a Common Operational Picture for critical infrastructure protection on land, at sea and on the seabed which will be used to detect, track, and identify threats across a wide area of operations. Creating the integrated systems for data fusion, and the dedicated networks for early warning will be key. Thus, the development of DEW and the integration of EDTs will enhance MS capability to identify threats and respond through kinetic and non-kinetic means.
- Maritime domain awareness, in such key areas as:
 - Next Generation Maritime Situational Awareness Capabilities: from a data collection and analysis perspective, capabilities will be improved through developing technology and creating an agile framework for cooperative use of data sources for maritime surveillance such as sensors (e.g. High-Altitude Platform Systems- HAPS, long-range radars, satellites, manned and unmanned aerial platforms), and open sources and databases, along with multinational fusion centres with supporting tools based on EDTs.
 - Comprehensive Underwater Surveillance Capabilities: Improvement of the capabilities for collection of information on underwater threats. This includes both the development of technology (e.g., digital barriers, multi-static systems, distributed optical sensing, unmanned systems, etc.) and multinational architectures and procedures. The work will be coupled with development of shared databases on signatures, seabed, and water column characteristics. Gradual establishment of a flexible and resilient underwater surveillance architecture and integrating the underwater surveillance.
- Underwater and seabed warfare, in such key area as:
 - Underwater Force Protection Systems: focusses on the employment of technologies and manned and unmanned systems to enable and enhance underwater situational awareness as well as the capability to protect naval forces and seabed installations. Improvements in diving capabilities will enable improved reach in terms of depth, as well as better interoperability to allow multinational teaming. Enhanced unmanned maritime systems with enhanced sensor technologies and long endurance will enable coordinated efforts among MS with the employment of the full set of available capabilities. Future capabilities include the use of swarms of networked UMS in a system of systems configuration which will deter, guard, observe and protect seabed installations and respond to underwater threats.

Topic 2: Cognitive sensing for enhanced ISTAR systems performance in defence applications.

Over the last few years, extensive innovative research has been done on smart sensing based on cognitive principles to enhanced Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR), both in terms of hardware improvement, signal/image/data processing, source management, as well as in multidimensional heterogeneous sensors data fusion and mining (information extraction). As information superiority is considered a force multiplier, ISTAR is a critical factor of every military operation, regardless of the chain of command level. It provides commanders with situational awareness information and enables effective decision-making process, as well as target detection, classification, and engagement – according to the golden war rule of cost-value ratio. While improving the hardware sensitivity remains of high value, cognition on various layers can enhance the performances of the sensory systems much more significantly, providing constant ISTAR (or even C5ISTAR) towards the best resources management. The integration of AI algorithms into ISTAR systems introduces a paradigm shift in conducting successful military operations.

A concrete example is the cognitive multiband radiofrequency (RF) system performing many simultaneous functions– target detection, recognition, identification, and tracking, communication, and even electronic warfare. At the same time, the most advanced C5 systems build a deep, detailed situational awareness on information collected from various sensors (seismic/acoustic, electrooptical, radiofrequency) – dismounted soldiers', and combat platforms' organic sensors, and finally ISR-dedicated platforms (e.g., airborne, space assets). They perform cognitive decision support process on every command level, basing on time-sensitive, mission related information, taking advantage of ability to process and analyse in real-time vast amounts of data (overwhelming now for humans), reducing cognitive load of human operators, decreasing the level of routine and tiredness failure.

However, although significant advances have been achieved by the scientific community, innovative solutions for defence applications are still open and at the early stage. As the dominance in the information domain is considered crucial, this competition aims at discovering the last research and innovative ideas on cognitive sensing for ISTAR in military operations: in optronics, radar, position, navigation and timing, communication, intelligent ammunition, data fusion and information extraction and other not mentioned military applications for AI hardened wargaming and decision-making support in man/man-machine/autonomous crisis management and war time operations.

It is desired, that the proposals contribute to recently identified European Capability Development Priorities in a cluster of STRATEGIC ENABLERS & FORCE MULTIPLIERS, in particular to persistent and resilient ISTAR, in such a key area as information sources: developing an integrated network systems-of-systems that provides a timely shared situational awareness and early warning in a multi-domain environment. In addition, making use of AI-supported and algorithm-based tools for increasing the accuracy and reliability of sensor data evaluation.

1.2. REQUIREMENTS

Proposed ideas must originate from applicants. They may propose new or improved ways to implement existing solutions, combine them, or adapt them to a different context or target group, but they cannot be exact copies of those. The applicants must demonstrate the novelty of their solution, in comparison with those already developed/implemented by themselves or by others in their context. The proposed ideas need to be innovative, but implementable through a collaborative project, and affordable in development and exploitation.

The applicants are also expected to indicate how the participation in the contest may benefit their idea (e.g., prize, mentoring, networking, visibility, or other related benefit).

1.3. AMOUNT OF THE PRIZE

EDA will reward 60 000 € (30 000 € per winner). In addition, EDA will cover the travel expenses and accommodation, for up to two representatives per winner to attend the award ceremony for an amount of up to 1 000€ per representative (4 000 € in total).

1.4. ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

The contest has been conceived to offer more than just the financial prize. Specifically, other incentives include:

- The winners will have the possibility to promote their ideas through a dedicated article in one of the publications of the EDA magazine (Defence Matters);
- The final award ceremony will be delivered in a formal EDA ceremony with press release coverage;
- The Innovation Prize will receive a significant coverage on the EDA website and social medias (the name(s) of the winner(s) will be published on EDA channels);
- The prize winners will be given access to the EDA network of experts, having the opportunity to form valuable partnerships to leverage on some of the EDA and EU R&T funding opportunities (e.g., the winners will be also provided with the opportunity to present the ideas to the CapTech communities for potential implementation through a MS funded Cat. A or Cat. B project or be a foundation for further HEDI proof-of-concept instrument, or inspiration for EDF Work Programme topic).
- Proposals passing a quality threshold to be set by the Evaluation Committee (including the winners) will be presented to the CapTechs Moderators in a dedicated workshop to explore the applicability of their proposals within CapTech's areas of responsibility and interest.

2. THE PROCEDURE

This contest is governed in accordance with Article 37 (1) of the Council Decision (EU) 2016/1353.

2.1. PREPARATION OF PROPOSALS

EDA shall not reimburse expenses incurred in preparing and submitting proposals in response to this contest.

2.2. FORM AND CONTENT OF A PROPOSAL

- Proposals shall be perfectly legible and correct so that there can be no doubt as to words and figures.
- Proposals shall be clear and concise. They must be consistent with all the requirements and instructions laid down in the rules of contest.
- Proposals shall be written in English.
- Proposals shall consist of the following sections:

Section	Content
Section one (Administrative Information)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Proposal Submission Form (Annex 4.1)</u> (EDA will use the contact details provided in the proposal submission form to communicate with the applicants about the contest. EDA is not responsible for inaccuracies in the details submitted by the applicants)• Legal Entity Form• Financial Identification Form• Exclusion Criteria Form (Annex 4.2)
Section two (Proposal)	EDA Defence Innovation Prize Proposal Form (Annex 4.4)

2.3. CONTACTS BETWEEN THE APPLICANTS AND EDA

Before the final date for the submission of proposals

Regarding clarifications or corrections, contacts between EDA and the applicants before the final date for submission of proposals may take place only in exceptional circumstances and under the following conditions only:

* EDA may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission, or other clerical error in the text of the contest documents occur.

This information will be published solely on EDA's website under the link used to access the contest documents.

* Potential applicants may request clarifications regarding the contest documents.

The requests for additional information must be made in writing only through the dedicated functional mailbox (procurement@eda.europa.eu).

If the requests for additional information are timely submitted, the responses to the requests for additional information will be published solely on EDA's website (under the link used to access the contest documents) as soon as possible and no later than six days before the proposal submission deadline.

Applicants are encouraged to formulate, at least six calendar days before the time limit to submit proposals, any remark, complaint, or objection they would have in relation to all aspects of these contest documents in order that EDA can evaluate the need for corrective measures and implement them before the submission of proposals.

EDA is not bound to reply to requests for additional information made less than six working days before the deadline for submission of proposals.

Any other contacts are prohibited and can lead to the exclusion of the applicant.

After the opening of the proposals

Contacts between EDA and the applicants after the opening of proposals may take place only in exceptional circumstances and under the following conditions only:

- If clarification or additional evidence in relation to the administrative information is required.
- If clarification is requested or if obvious clerical errors in the proposal need to be corrected, provided that the terms of the proposal are not modified as a result.

In the above mentioned cases, EDA may contact the applicant and request a response within a time-limit stipulated in its request.

Any other contacts are prohibited and can lead to the exclusion of the applicant.

2.4. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS - TIMELINES

Proposals shall be solely submitted by e-mail to the following e-mail address: 24.RTI.PRZ.088@eda.europa.eu.

Proposals sent after the deadline and/or to a different e-mail address, proposals sent on paper or by fax will be non-admissible.

The deadline for the receipt of proposals ("Receipt Time Limit") is <u>14/06/2024, at 17h00 (Brussels time)</u>.

Following submission of a proposal to the above given e-mail address, applicants will receive a receipt confirmation in their mailbox. This receipt is considered as the proof of compliance with the deadline (Receipt Time Limit).

Please inform EDA whether you intend to submit a proposal, by sending an e-mail at the following e-mail address: procurement@eda.europa.eu

Timelines	
<u>Deadline for Submission</u> Applicants to submit their proposal (with supporting documentation) by e-mail to: 24.RTI.PRZ.088@eda.europa.eu	14 June 2024 at 17h00 (Brussels time)
<u>Evaluation of proposals</u> Eligible proposals are evaluated by the appointed Evaluation Committees against the award criteria described in section 2.7.4 of this document	June-October 2024³
Notification Letters to the applicants	Mid November 2024⁴
Award ceremony	5 December 2024
Defence Innovation Prize Workshop	April-May 2025

2.5. ACCEPTANCE OF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Submission of a proposal implies acceptance of the terms and conditions set out in the contest documents and, where appropriate, waiver of the applicant's own general or specific terms and conditions. It is binding on the applicant to whom the prize is awarded.

2.6. PROCESSING OF PROPOSALS

2.6.1. PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

If processing your reply to this contest involves the recording and processing of personal data (such as your name, address, and CV), such data will be processed by EDA in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725, pursuant to Article 31 of Council Decision (CSFP) 2015/1835.

Unless indicated otherwise, personal data will be processed by EDA solely for evaluation purposes in accordance with the rules of contest. Details concerning the processing of your personal data are available in the privacy statement at:

<http://www.eda.europa.eu/docs/default-source/procurement/privacy-statement.pdf>

You are informed that for the purposes of safeguarding the financial interest of the Union, your personal data may be transferred to EDA's Internal Auditor, to the College of Auditors or to any other body to ensure the adequate implementation of Checks and Audits.

Personal data may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 136 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union. For more information see the Privacy Statement on:

http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE

2.6.2. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PROPOSALS

Once EDA has accepted the proposal, it shall become the property of EDA and shall be treated confidentially.

³ This timescale is indicative and may be subject updates by the European Defence Agency

⁴ This timescale is indicative and may be subject updates by the European Defence Agency

2.7. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

2.7.1. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants shall be excluded if they do not have access to the contest, in accordance with the provisions laid down here.

The Contest is open on equal terms to all natural and legal persons **established within the European Defence Agency participating Member States (+ Switzerland)**. When applying the rules of access to the competition, it is the state where the applicant is established which is to be considered. As regards a natural person, it is the state in which the person has his domicile.

Access to the competition/market will be evaluated promptly upon submission of the applications. At this stage, other eligibility criteria will solely be assessed on their conformity. Only before the award of the Innovation Prize, the top three ranked applications, for each topic, will undergo a complete evaluation of the eligibility criteria.

Proposals from all sources, sectors and all types of organisations including for-profit, non-for-profit, or private companies are welcome. Proposals involving several organisations and/or from different EDA participating Member States (+CH) are valid. In case of joint proposals by a group of participants the participants must appoint a "Lead participant" to represent them towards EDA. The participants will be jointly responsible and must all fulfil and respect the conditions set out in these rules of contest.

Applicants that have already received any other Union prize that is the subject of the current contest cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

Applicants may submit more than one proposal and be named as a partner in more than one proposal.

Evidence relating to the identity of the applicant (Section One - Administrative Information)

A. The Legal Entity Form is to be signed by the call for applicant.

A standard template shall be submitted in English:

- For natural persons: [EN - PP revised.xlsx \(europa.eu\)](#)
- For legal persons: [BUDG-20161006-EN.xls \(europa.eu\)](#)
- For public bodies: [EN - PUB revi.xlsx \(europa.eu\)](#)

Detailed instructions on how to fill in the form is available on the following link: [Instructions Financial Identification Form.](#)

The Legal Entity Form shall be accompanied by all the information indicated in the form. Where the paper involves more than one legal entity, each entity shall provide the form.

B. The Financial identification form shall be duly filled in and signed by the applicant and his or her banker (or to be accompanied by a recent bank statement).

Detailed instructions on how to fill in the form is available on the following link: [EN - BA revised.xlsx \(europa.eu\)](#) Additional information on how to fill in the form is available on the following link: [Instructions Financial Identification Form.](#)

2.7.2. EXCLUSION CRITERIA

In accordance with Article 141 of the Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and the Council of 1825 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union, amending Regulations (EU) No 1296/2013, (EU) No 1301/2013, (EU) No 1303/2013, (EU) No 1304/2013, (EU) No 1309/2013, (EU) No 1316/2013, (EU) No 223/2014, (EU) No 283/2014, and

Decision No 541/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012, a prize may not be awarded to an economic operator who:

- is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with Article 136 of the Financial Rules;
- has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the contest or has failed to supply that information;
- was previously involved in the preparation of the prize documents where this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise.

Evidence relating to the exclusion criteria (Section One)

Applicant or their representatives shall provide a declaration on their honour, duly signed, and dated in which they:

- state whether or not they are in one or more of the situations referred to in Articles 136 and 137 of the Financial Regulation and detailed in the form;
- undertake to submit to EDA any additional document relating to the exclusion criteria, that EDA considers necessary to perform its checks, within fifteen calendar days following the receipt of EDA's request.

To this end, applicants shall fill in and sign the declaration in annex to the rules of contest. Where the proposal involves more than one legal entity, each entity shall provide the form.

2.7.3. COMPLIANCE WITH THE RULES OF CONTEST

Proposals deviating from the requirements of the contest will be rejected and will not be further evaluated.

2.7.4. AWARD CRITERIA

The applicants must demonstrate the innovation of their proposal in comparison with the current state of play of defence capabilities. The prizes will be awarded to the entity(s) demonstrating a solution that best addresses the qualitative criteria defined in a multi-steps evaluation process done by the evaluation committee, as described below.

The evaluation of the proposals will be carried out by a cross-functional Evaluation Committee composed by EDA staff members. External experts from other institutions may be invited to join the Evaluation Committee (e.g., ESA, NATO, EC, etc.) with an external independent expertise.

All eligible proposals will be evaluated based on the submitted proposal and according to incremental procedure defined below. Upon completion of the evaluation, the Evaluation Committee will provide an evaluation report based on which EDA will decide on the award of the prize.

The prizes will be awarded to the entities that, based on the evaluation of the Evaluation Committee, demonstrate a solution that best addresses the following cumulative criteria (receives the highest total points). The criteria which will be used in the evaluation and ranking will be the following:

STEP	Criterion	Sub-criterion	Pts	TH
I	Conformity	The proposal must be within the scope of one of the contest's topics.	Y/N	Y
II	INNOVATIVENESS			
	1. Innovation	Disruptiveness shaping the battlefield of the future will be assessed on both technological and operational level. A radical innovation will be highly scored; however, incremental innovation, if applicable, with clearly described significant battlefield capability improvement, will be scored positively as well. The proposal should clearly explain, to what extent it differs from comparable products/projects/ideas, from state-of-the-art, and how it can change a future concept of operations.	30	20
III	BUSINESS CASE			
	2. Capability value	Applicability in Member States' defence and security area shall be provided by authors and will be evaluated. Compliance with EU Capability Defence Priorities, as well as with revealed national capability development plans and procurement programs will be assessed.	15	
	3. Market value	Expected economic impact of the project proposal on the EU and its industrial capacity growth will be evaluated, in terms of saturation of battlefield, the level of complexity and technical advancement. Dual-use spin-in or spin-out potential (economy of scale) will be an added value of the proposal.	15	
	SUM		30	
IV	FEASIBILITY STUDY – ORAL PRESENTATION⁵			
	4. Resource management	Practicability of achieving the main and specific goals of the project in terms of availability of resources at EU level will be assessed. Such aspects as basic resources planning: financial costs, workforce, required infrastructure, equipment, and materiel will be assessed. Critical technologies and raw material dependencies on non-EU parties may affect the final score negatively. Cross-border EU collaboration, especially essentially involving non-traditional EDA ⁶ partners will be an added value of the proposal.	15	
	5. Project structure	A work breakdown structure for both R&D and the project implementation phase shall be provided. The assessment will focus on completeness, logical order, timetable, and consistency. Additionally, a technical and organizational risks assessment of the project planning shall be provided	15	
	SUM		30	
V	6. SME bonus	The proposals presented solely by a technological Small or Medium Enterprise (refer to EC definition ⁷) will receive the additional bonus of 10 points.	10	
TOTAL			100	

⁵ The submission will be treated as a reference information.

⁶ A non-traditional EDA partner (NTEP) is an entity that is not currently a member of EDA's R&T or capability/industrial communities (CapTechs and Project Teams). Additionally, the engagement of the NTEPs should reach at least 50% of the essential work within the project.

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

2.7.5. STEP-BY-STEP EVALUATION PROCEDURE

The evaluation of the proposals will be based on a six-step approach, as detailed hereunder.

- **Step 1:** Only proposals assessed being to be within the scope of the contest and compliant with the required format will be further scored.
- **Step 2:** Focus on Criterion (1) Innovation. Only the proposals that reached and passed the threshold 20 out of 30 points move to the next step.
- **Step 3:** Focus on Criteria (2) Capability value, and (3) Market value. The proposals that reached and passed the threshold 20 out of 30 points move to the next step. The applicants will be invited for an oral presentation to the Evaluation Committee to clarify and possibly extend information provided in the form (part 4 – Feasibility).
- **Step 4:** Focus on Criteria (4) Resource management, and (5) Project structure. Only the proposals that reached and passed the threshold 15 out of 30 points move to the next step.
- **Step 5:** In the step 5 the applicants will be examined in terms of compliance with SME definition to be awarded additional 10 points.
- **Step 6:** The three best ranked proposals, for each topic, will undergo an assessment of the eligibility criteria (and the compliancy with the exclusion criteria). Only the best ranked applicant (meeting the eligibility criteria), for each topic will be granted with the Innovation Prize.

2.8. PROPOSAL

Applicants must present their ideas in a manner as concise as possible. Proposals must be up to 6 pages in length in total (in **word or converted to pdf** file). If more pages are submitted, only the first six pages will be considered within the evaluation process. The use of the technical proposal template (Annex 4.4) is **mandatory**.

2.9. AWARD OF PRIZE AND NOTIFICATION TO APPLICANTS

EDA will inform applicants of decisions reached concerning the award of the prize, including the grounds for any decision not to award the prize or to recommence the procedure.

All applicants will be informed of the outcome of this procedure by e-mail. It is the applicant's responsibility to provide a valid e-mail address together with their contact details in their proposal and to check their e-mail regularly. Please make sure that the communication from EDA is not classified as spam mail.

This invitation to submit a proposal in response to this contest is in no way binding on EDA. The contracting authority may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize without any obligation to indemnify the applicants if no proposals are received, the Evaluation Committee does not find a winner, or the winner is not eligible or must be excluded.

This decision shall be substantiated, and the applicants notified. No compensation may be claimed by applicants whose proposal has not been accepted, including when EDA decides not to award the prize.

3. OTHER CONDITIONS

3.1. PAYMENTS

The prize will be paid by EDA to the Prize(s) winner(s) after the award ceremony by bank transfer in one instalment.

3.2. OWNERSHIP OF THE RESULT-INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

The applicant shall have ownership of the idea and of its implementation results, including industrial and intellectual property rights, as well as the reports and other documents relating to it.

Without prejudice to the previous paragraph, the participants grant EDA the right to display, reproduce by any technical procedure, translate, or communicate the summary idea and its results by any medium, including on the contest webpage, provided it does not thereby breach its confidentiality obligations or existing industrial and intellectual property rights.

By submitting a proposal, applicants declare that they have obtained, all authorizations, consents, and permissions necessary to submit their proposal, carry out their proposal and comply with these rules of contest and, to the best of their knowledge, that their proposal will not infringe any intellectual property or other third-party rights or breach any contractual obligation.

The European Defence Agency assumes no responsibility for disputes between persons claiming copyrights on any sort in relation to a proposal submitted for the contest.

Where industrial and intellectual property rights, including rights of third parties, exist prior to the Competition ("pre-existing intellectual property rights"), applicants shall establish a list which shall specify all rights of ownership and use in the pre-existing intellectual property rights and may be asked to disclose it to EDA - should they be proposed as winners - at the latest prior to the commencement of implementation of their idea.

The winners of the contest shall ensure that they have all rights to use any pre-existing intellectual property rights in implementation of their idea.

3.3. PUBLICITY

3.3.1. PUBLICITY BY THE WINNER OF THE PRIZE

Unless EDA requests or agrees otherwise, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.) is subject to prior approval by EDA and must:

(a) display the EDA's logo and

(b) include the following text:

This action has been awarded the "EDA Defence Innovation Prize 2024" from the European Defence Agency.

3.3.2. PUBLICITY BY EDA

By entering the contest, applicants authorize EDA to use their name and the summary of their proposal for its communication and publish activities and to present the project to the relevant CapTechs.

If an entry is submitted by a group of individuals or organizations, the person completing the entry form is responsible for compliance with these rules of contest by other group members.

EDA shall also be authorized to publish (in whatever form and medium) the name of the winner and the finalists, their locality, the amount of the prize and its nature and purpose and that the applicants may request EDA to waive such publication if disclosure risks threatening its security and safety or harm its commercial interest.

Photos and videos taken by EDA either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of EDA and might be used for its communication and publicizing activities, while respecting Intellectual Property Rights.

3.4. LIABILITY

The European Defence Agency may not be held responsible for any claim relating to the activities carried out in the framework of the contest by the applicant.

The European Defence Agency shall not be held liable for any damage caused or sustained by any of the participants, including any damage caused to third parties as a consequence of, or during the implementation of the activities related to the prize.

3.5. APPLICABLE LAW

The contest is governed by the applicable European Union law complemented, where necessary, by the law of Belgium.

The General Court or, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union, shall have sole jurisdiction to hear any dispute between the Union and any participant concerning the interpretation, application, or validity of the rules of this contest, if such dispute cannot be settled amicably.

3.6. CHECKS AND AUDITS

The applicants accept that, if they are awarded a prize, EDA, OLAF and the College of Auditors may carry out checks and audits in relation to the contest and the received prize.

3.7. WITHDRAWAL OF PRIZE-RECOVERY OF UNDUE AMOUNTS

EDA may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made in the following case:

- The winner is in serious breach of its obligations under this Rules of Contest (is under an exclusion situation, has provided false information etc.).

4. ANNEXES

(Enclosed as separate documents)

4.1. Proposal Submission Form & Checklist of documents to be submitted

4.2. Exclusion Criteria Form

4.3. Reimbursement of expenses

4.4. Technical proposal template