

# Selection Principles, Rules, and Process for the AI for Military Decision-Making Pitch Battle

**Final Event: Krakow, Poland – 16th May 2025**

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## 1. Objective

The European Defence Agency (EDA) is organizing a pitch battle to support and promote innovative EU-based startups developing **AI solutions for military decision-making**.

This initiative aims to:

- Identify and support cutting-edge defence startups in the AI sector.
- Reinforce EDA's role in fostering innovation within the European defence ecosystem.
- Provide a platform for startups to gain visibility and engage with defence stakeholders, investors, and technical experts.

## 2. Eligibility Criteria

To ensure alignment with the event's objectives, applicants must meet the following requirements:

- Be a **startup** (early-stage companies are eligible). The definition of a startup follows the **50-100-500 rule**, meaning the company must have fewer than 50 employees, less than €100 million in revenue, and a valuation under €500 million.
- Be **based in the EU, Switzerland, or Ukraine** (companies from non-EU countries, including NATO members outside the EU, are not eligible).
- Have a **clear defence focus** (dual-use technologies are acceptable, but the primary application must be military).
- Have a **minimum Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of 4** (early-stage innovations with demonstrated feasibility).

### 3. Selection Process

The selection will be conducted through an **open call** with the following steps:

#### 3.1. Application Submission

- **Deadline:** 4th April 2025
- **Submission Requirements:**
  - Pitch deck (no more than 12 slides) covering:
    - Problem statement and defence relevance
    - Technical solution and AI capability
    - TRL level and current stage of development
    - Business model and scalability
    - Team expertise
    - Existing defence partnerships or potential use cases
  - Supporting materials (optional) such as demo videos, technical documentation, or letters of support

#### 3.2. Evaluation & Selection

- The selection process will be based on a holistic scoring system without weighted categories.
- Applications will be reviewed by:
  - EDA experts
  - Technical defence AI specialists
  - Venture capitalists specializing in defence investments
- The key evaluation factors include:
  - **Innovation (0-10 points):** Novelty and uniqueness of the AI solution, differentiation from existing technologies, and level of technological advancement.

- **Military Relevance (0-10 points):** Direct applicability to defence use cases, alignment with European defence priorities, and potential to enhance military decision-making.
  - **Scalability (0-10 points):** Ability to adapt and expand across various defence environments, ease of integration into existing systems, and feasibility for mass deployment.
  - **Technical Feasibility (0-10 points):** Trustworthy, reliable and ethical AI model, reliability under operational conditions, cybersecurity robustness, and adherence to EU defence regulations.
  - **Team & Execution (0-10 points):** Strength of the team, relevant experience in AI and defence sectors, and ability to execute the proposed solution effectively.
- No interviews or Q&A rounds will be conducted.
  - Refinement of Pitch Deck: The pitch deck submitted for evaluation may be refined after selection.

### 3.3. Notification & Invitation

- Selected startups (6) will be notified via email and invited to pitch at the final battle in Krakow.
- Backup candidates will be identified, and in case of withdrawal, the next highest-ranked startup will be invited.
- Companies that meet the minimum quality criteria but are not selected as finalists will be invited to attend the event at their own cost.
- Non-selected applicants will be informed via email with a brief feedback summary.

### 4. Pitch Battle Details

- The pitch battle will take place on the **morning of May 16, from 9:00 to 11:00.**
- Each finalist will be given **20 minutes in total:**
  - 10 minutes for their pitch
  - 10 minutes for a Q&A session with the jury

- The jury will consist of representatives from:
  - Military Representatives (including cyber defence and battlefield operations experts)
  - NATO DIANA
  - Venture capital & Industry Leaders specializing in defence investments
  - European Innovation Council
  - EDA Experts
- **Presentation Format:**
  - Two people per company are expected to be present and on stage.
  - Finalists may use a slide deck for their presentation.
  - A laptop can be connected to the screen for showing a video of a prototype if needed.

## 5. Event Participation & Reimbursement

- **Finalists (6 selected startups)** will receive **reimbursement** of travel and accommodation costs **up to €1,000 per person** (for up to **two people per company**).
- Other invited attendees (meeting the minimum quality criteria but not selected for pitching) will attend at their own expense.
- Prize for the winner: The startup that wins the pitch battle will receive a **monetary reward of €15,000**.

## 6. Compliance & Confidentiality

- All submitted materials will be treated confidentially and used only for evaluation purposes.
- Participants are responsible for ensuring their AI solutions comply with EU defence regulations and ethical AI principles.
- Selected startups must confirm their attendance by a given deadline; failure to do so will result in the next eligible startup being invited.