

# GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

## CALL FOR LOCAL ORGANISERS

EUDIS Defence Hackathon and Mentoring program 2026 – Autumn Edition



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## 1. Glossary

<p><b>CENTRAL HUB:</b> The main coordination hub for the EUDIS Defence Hackathon and local events. The Hub ensures smooth communication and is equipped with quality tech and staff to manage streaming and inquiries.</p>
<p><b>DEFIS:</b> Directorate-General for Defence Industry and Space</p>
<p><b>DISCORD:</b> A real-time messaging platform used as the primary community hub for the hackathon.</p>
<p><b>EC:</b> European Commission</p>
<p><b>EDA:</b> European Defence Agency</p>
<p><b>EMS Platform:</b> CARSA’s platform – Evaluation Management System (EMS) – will be used to organise and manage in an efficient and dependable fashion the open call for expression of interest for selecting the local organisers for the EUDIS Defence Hackathons – centralising the data collection, evaluation and scoring/selection process.</p>
<p><b>EUDIS:</b> European Union Defence Innovation Scheme</p>
<p><b>EUDIS implementation team:</b> It is a consortium of entities responsible to implement the EUDIS Defence Hackathon and mentoring programme 2026 on behalf of DEFIS. Led by CIVITTA, its partners are CARSA, CECOFORMA and TEHNOPOL. More information is to be found on the website <a href="https://eudis-hackathon.eu/">https://eudis-hackathon.eu/</a></p>
<p><b>EU:</b> European Union</p>
<p><b>IDEA MENTOR:</b> These are local experts recruited by the local hackathon organisers who assist teams in their hackathon journey up till the mentoring programme. They have a vast knowledge of startups, lean practices, agile processes, coaching, and innovation.</p>
<p><b>LOCAL ORGANISER:</b> Local Hackathon Organisers are dedicated facilitators and coordinators of the EUDIS Defence Hackathon on a regional level. Selected through an open call process, these entities play a pivotal role in orchestrating the success of the hackathon within their respective localities.</p>
<p><b>LOCAL ORGANISER SELECTION BOARD:</b> A group of Hackathon/Innovation experts responsible for evaluating and choosing the 8 local organisers for the EUDIS Defence Hackathon.</p>
<p><b>MS:</b> EU Member States</p>
<p><b>MoD:</b> Ministry of Defence</p>
<p><b>NO:</b> Norway</p>
<p><b>NOTION:</b> A versatile, workspace used to host event information. For our hackathons, it serves as a central "command center" where local organisers can publish schedules, resource links, and FAQs.</p>
<p><b>PARTICIPANTS:</b> Enthusiastic teams who actively engage in the EUDIS Defence Hackathon, bringing their diverse skills, creativity, and problem-solving capabilities to the event. These include startups or startup founders who have already existing MVP which they want to develop further for defence purposes.</p>
<p><b>TALLY:</b> A minimalist, flexible webform used to register participants.</p>

## 1. Background and objectives of the Call for EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 Local Organisers

The European Union (EU) is strengthening its defence sector in response to the evolving security challenges and changing geopolitical landscape. The EU Commission has taken significant steps to support defence industry, innovation, cooperation, research and development, and strategic autonomy – through initiatives such as the European Defence Fund (EDF) and the European Defence Industry Reinforcement through common Procurement Act.

The EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS) is an instrument enabled by the EDF to strengthen defence innovation in the European Union. EUDIS offers a set of instruments for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including start-ups, and other non-traditional players in defence industrial ecosystem to ensure more opportunities to access the European Defence Fund. It aims to lower entry barriers into the defence domain for smaller players and innovators, focusing on technological readiness and market maturity. EUDIS supports innovators throughout the development cycle to mature, scale-up, demonstrate their use-case, grow and successfully enter the market. The funding for **Defence Hackathons** is one of the targeted innovation support tracks of EUDIS.

**The EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 – Autumn Edition aims to continue strengthening Europe's defence innovation ecosystem through the organisation of a large-scale hackathon hosted by experienced entities across eight regional locations in EU Member States and Norway.** This event will gather at least 400 participants (at least 50 per location), ensuring a diverse and inclusive environment that brings together enthusiastic teams made of startups or startup founders with a working product. The hackathon will run for two and a half days, with experienced local organisers providing physical venues and the Central Hub overseeing coordination. Participants will work on defence related challenges and hardware innovation to attract a broader range of participants. The DG DEFIS EUDIS Defence hackathons aim to develop skills, attract new talent to the defence sector, and connect young researchers with industry experts and defence end-users.

The objective of this Call is to **select eight organization to host Autumn Edition of the EUDIS 2026 Hackathon located in 8 different EU Member States/Norway.** In other words, this Call for proposals shall identify and select eight **proficient local organisers across the EU/Norway** who possess the expertise to successfully execute the envisaged hackathons while ensuring seamless implementation.

## 2. Hackathon themes and challenges

This Open Call offers potential Local Organisers to focus their Hackathon proposals on the following Theme and Challenges:

### **Theme 1: “Autonomy in the battlefield”**

This theme focuses on **autonomous systems and robotics** designed to deliver an **operational advantage** across air, land, sea and space domains. It addresses the development of resilient,

scalable autonomy capable of operating effectively in contested and degraded operational environments. The theme is subdivided into three challenges which will be supported with capabilities by local organisers to enable rapid development and prototyping whenever possible. These challenges are the following:

#### **Challenge 1: GNSS denied navigation**

Autonomous systems that can navigate and operate effectively without GNSS, using onboard sensors and real-time perception. Develop or use data from quantum sensors (e.g. accelerometers, gravimeters and quantum imaging), which offer advantages such as navigation without GPS, the detection of underground structures, and enabling non-line-of-sight perception

#### **Challenge 2: Next swarm coordination and autonomous reconnaissance and logistics**

Develop a multi-agent drone or robot swarm that can collaborate to complete a mission (e.g. search and rescue, mapping or target tracking) with minimal human control and include optimisation using quantum simulation.

In addition to the above common challenges under the Defending Airspace theme, Local Organisers will have the possibility to define a third challenge tailored to their specific local or regional context.

#### **Challenge 3: Local Organiser – Defined Challenge**

This challenge will be designed by each Local Organiser to reflect local defence ecosystems, industrial strengths, research capabilities, and operational realities. By allowing Local Organisers to propose a dedicated challenge, the Hackathon encourages solutions that are closely aligned with regional needs and opportunities, while remaining connected to the overarching objective of strengthening European airspace defence. This approach supports greater relevance, stakeholder engagement, and the development of practical solutions that can be tested, demonstrated, or further developed at local level.

### **3. Hackathon timeline and framework**

#### **3.1. Key dates**

- Opening of the Call: **27<sup>th</sup> April 2026**
- Deadline for submitting applications: **31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 at 23:59h (CET)**
- Online Info session: **6<sup>th</sup> May 2026**
- Decision on the selected organisers: **16<sup>th</sup> of June 2026** (*selected Local Organisers will be informed in that week, so it is recommended to regularly check email inbox*)
- Kick-off with the local organisers selected: **29<sup>th</sup> June – 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026**
- Signing of the contracts with LOs: **by 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2026**
- Call for participants and selection: **18<sup>th</sup> August 2026 – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2026**
- **Hackathon: 15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> October 2026 (2.5 days)**
- Mentoring programme: **Kick-off with winning team's: 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2026**
- Live pitching for EU-wide competition: **31<sup>st</sup> November – 4<sup>th</sup> December 2026**

#### **3.2. Hackathon**

The **proposed Hackathon weekend schedule** is the following:

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3	
<b>Thursday-Opening</b>		<i>Friday-activities are up to local organisers</i>		<i>Saturday-Closing and award ceremony</i>	
<b>16:00</b>	Opening ceremony, welcome speeches, intro to challenges and checkpoints	<b>9:00</b>	Opening session by Local Organisers Inspirational speaker	<b>9:00</b>	Opening session by Local Organisers
<b>19:00</b>	Checkpoint #1	<b>9:30</b>	Mentor meetings	<b>12:00</b>	Submission deadline
		<b>13:00</b>	Checkpoint #2	<b>12:00</b>	Jury briefing
		<b>15:30</b>	Mentor meeting	<b>13:00</b>	Pitching (LOs)
		<b>18:00</b>	Checkpoint #3	<b>15:30</b>	Jury deliberation
		<b>20:00</b>	Social networking (optional)	<b>16:30</b>	Winner announcement/awarding ceremony (Central Hub)

### 3.3. Funding

Selected **EUDIS 2026 Defence Hackathon local organisers will be provided with a lump-sum financial support up to 60,000€** to carry out all the required activities for a successful hackathon implementation.

An amount of **one-third of the general expense budget (20,000€) will be paid in advance** as a pre-payment once the Service Agreement has been signed to kickstart the hackathon preparations immediately.

The remaining 40,000€ will be paid upon:

- successful completion of the Local Hackathon, including meeting KPIs, submission of the Final Report on time, and confirmation that prizes have been awarded to the winners;
- approval of the Hackathon Implementation Final Report by DEFIS; and
- receiving the payment by the EUDIS implementation team.

Details about the technical, financial, and timing requirements will be described in the Service Agreement.

### 3.4. Supporting materials

Local hackathon organisers and participating teams will **receive comprehensive briefing materials** covering key elements such as event objectives, theme, rules, and evaluation criteria.

To support engagement and creativity, the materials will also include inspirational case studies, expert insights, and practical resources that teams can use throughout the event.



### 3.5. IT Platforms

Each local organiser will have direct access to their specific Tally form to manage and view their relevant participant registrations, ensuring full compliance with GDPR regulations.

To provide a seamless experience for attendees, local organisers will also manage a dedicated Notion page, serving as the primary landing page to share essential updates, schedules, and resources with both prospects and active participants. Discord will be utilised as the central communication hub, enabling organisers to facilitate real-time networking and provide technical support.

Additionally, the **EUDIS defence hackathon Central Hub will support local organisers with standardised participant onboarding materials and communication/promotion resources**. By this offering, local organisers can ensure that participants receive a consistent, uniform, and informative introduction to the hackathon process, also reducing the administrative workload of the local organisers.

## 4. Obligations of Local Organisers

The selected EUDIS 2026 Hackathon local organisers will be committed to implement the following tasks during their hackathons:

### Core Operational Responsibilities

- **Event Management:** Organisers hold full responsibility for all activities, including the initial preparations and the overall organisation of the hackathon.
- **Recruitment and Onboarding:** Organisers are expected to use their expertise to reach their communities and secure qualified participants. This includes managing a central 'Call for Participants' to onboard motivated teams.
- **Stakeholder Liaison:** Organisers must engage with and find necessary stakeholders, including relevant defence and space actors from their local innovation ecosystem.
- **Central Hub Collaboration:** Local teams must ensure a seamless digital connection for collaboration and content streaming with the Central Hub.

### Strategic and Talent Objectives

- **Talent Cultivation:** Attracting and developing the next generation of skilled talent to enhance the innovative capacity of the defence sector.
- **Nurturing Innovation:** Engaging a diverse spectrum of start-ups and innovators to provide breakthrough solutions for European defence needs.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** Connecting young researchers with industry experts and communities to facilitate cooperation and the exchange of ideas.
- **Awareness Building:** Raising the profile of EUDIS and defence initiatives while finding new opportunities to grow the European defence ecosystem.



## Key Performance Indicators and Commitments

- **Participant Targets:** Each organiser must host at least 50 participants (approximately 10–15 teams), at their local event.
- **Grant Compliance:** Meeting the participant recruitment target is a KPI commitment included in the Grant Agreement and is a mandatory condition for the final grant payment.
- **Vetting and Eligibility:** Ensuring all participants, mentors, and board members are adult citizens residing in the EU, Norway, or Ukraine, and partnering with local authorities to enable this process.
- **Post-Hackathon Support:** Providing winning teams with additional skills and implementing a sustainability plan for post-hackathon support.

Right after the selection process has finalised and the selected Hackathon organisers have been informed and validated, the following onboarding and supporting activities will be launched for them:

- **Kick-off and Meetings:** At the beginning of the process, selected local organisers will participate in a kick-off meeting where expectations, roles and responsibilities will be defined. Subsequent onboarding meetings will delve into the details of materials, tools and support. This will ensure that the selected local organisers have a holistic understanding of the hackathon process.
- **Ongoing Coaching and Communication:** Following the initial onboarding, the EUDIS Defence Hackathon implementation team will maintain continuous contact with the selected local organisers through regular coaching calls and check-ins. A dedicated communication channel, such as Teams, and Discord, will be established to facilitate ongoing discussions, troubleshooting and information sharing. Peer-to-peer learning sessions will be included in the coaching to stimulate the sharing of best practice across various locations and countries.
- **Accessible Online Guides:** In addition to meetings and coaching, local organisers will have access to comprehensive written guides available online. These guides will serve as a reliable reference point, offering clarity on hackathon activities and procedures.
- **Standardised Templates and Materials:** Standardised templates and materials will be provided to reduce the administrative burden on local organisers. By offering ready-to-use resources for marketing, communications, and coordination, local organisers can focus on value-added tasks like participant, mentor, and partner engagement.
- **Shared cloud space:** The EUDIS Defence Hackathon implementation team will provide the awarded local organisers with a dedicated shared space in SharePoint to ensure that every organisation has access to shared information, can work in a secure system and collaborate with the Central Hub in all the necessary inputs needed during the preparation, execution of the hackathon and after.

The selected local organisers will be responsible for promoting teamwork, innovation, and communication within their local communities.

#### 4.1. Mentors

A crucial part of a successful hackathon is to have high-quality mentors, selection board members and partners within defence, innovation and business expertise. Therefore, the **selected local organisers**, with the support of the EUDIS consortium team responsible for EUDIS defence hackathon 2026 implementation, **will also commit official partners for the local hackathons and all mentors and Selection Board members.**

**Mentors will play a pivotal role in guiding hackathon participants**, offering insights into emerging defence technologies, global security trends and practical considerations. Their prolonged and continuous mentoring to the winning teams later during the mentoring programme will enhance the quality of the solutions, pushing them to be not just innovative but also at the forefront of cutting-edge defence ecosystems.

#### 4.2. Participants and their journey

The success of a hackathon is determined by putting the right people in the right setting. Participants will have six main milestones in their journey: Call for participation, Registration and confirmation, Meet-Your-Mentor session, Hackathon, Post-hackathon Mentoring program and the EU-Wide pitching.

Participant registration will be managed through Tally, while the selection and attendance confirmation processes will be handled directly via email to ensure personalised communication.

Not long after registering, local organisers will select the teams to join the hackathon. These teams will immediately receive an acceptance email from the local organiser along with a request to confirm their participation. This process allows local organisers to determine the actual attendance of the hackathon and prepare the physical location to accommodate all participants effectively.

The confirmed participants will also receive calendar invites for the pre-hackathon **info-session** and the hackathon dates. Activities for onboarding and supporting participants will then commence.

#### 4.3. Attraction of participants to the EUDIS Defence Hackathon

Local organisers will play a fundamental role in running communication campaigns to promote and attract at least 50 participants (approx. 10-15 teams) to the hackathon. These campaigns will be carried out in close coordination with the EUDIS implementation team and DG DEFIS to ensure consistent messaging and alignment with overarching program goals.

As part of these efforts, local organisers will be **required to host at least one virtual information session or webinar in English.** These sessions will complement a series of centrally planned events, including an EU-wide webinar organised by the EUDIS Implementation team, which will kick off the registration period and focus on the program, themes and eligibility criteria.

The local organisers' webinars should highlight local strengths and excellence as well as improve the skills of the already registered participants with training. Also, local organisers will have some autonomy to tailor topics if they align with the theme and challenges of the hackathon, the implementation team guidelines and are approved by DG DEFIS. Suggested topics include:

- Understanding the challenges with insights from experts or stakeholders.
- Inspirational founder stories.
- Insights from previous EUDIS Hackathon participants and winners.
- Strategies for succeeding in a hackathon.
- Identifying innovative ideas in defence.
- Navigating the defence market.
- Supporting young startups in the defence industry.

Each session must include

- An information point to address questions about the initiative and actively promote registrations.
- A promotional point to gain registrations

These local organisers' webinars must be conducted in English to ensure inclusivity and accessibility for all participants. However, additional sessions in local languages are permitted to cater to regional audiences, provided they align with the consortium's guidelines and are approved by DG DEFIS.

## 5. Eligibility criteria for applicants

### 5.1. Who can apply?

Any **private or public entity legally established in the European Union or Norway** and not being subject to control by a non-associated third country or by a non-associated third-country entity will be eligible to submit a proposal to this Call for organisers. Please note that this requirement will have to be validated even after the selection, and you might be required to provide additional information (see section 6.4).

**Multiple organisations may jointly co-host the Hackathon.** In such cases, the participating organisations shall designate one coordinating organisation, which will be responsible for the preparation and submission of the application. Applications may only be submitted by the designated coordinator on behalf of all partners.

### 5.2. Technical and organisational requirements

To be considered eligible, **applicants must comply with all following technical and organisational requirements:**

1. The physical **location is suitable for hosting the event, with the capability to have at least 50 participants** as well as mentors, selection board members, visitors, experts and speakers from EU Member States, Norway or Ukraine. This includes:
  - Main stage with screens and speakers where people gather around with seating for 50 people, which can be used to stream the main sessions from the Central Hub.
  - Hacking area: 10 tables & 50 chairs for approximately 50 participants (approx. 10-15 teams), with spares to add more if needed.
  - Meeting rooms: about 3-5 private meeting rooms
  - Catering area: Participants shall be provided with 5 meals (dinner on Friday, breakfast, lunch and dinner on Saturday, breakfast and lunch on Sunday).
  - Snack & coffee area
  - Chill-out area to chat, relax. (Optional)
  
2. Local Organisers must ensure **a basic but reliable setup to enable connection with the Central Hub**. The purpose of this setup is to ensure smooth participation in key shared moments, while avoiding unnecessary technical complexity. This should include:
  - A stable, high-speed internet connection suitable for video calls and livestreaming
  - At least one laptop dedicated to Central Hub connection
  - A camera and microphone to enable two-way communication when required
  - A large screen and audio system at the venue to allow participants to follow Central Hub moments collectively
  
3. **Technical support capacity:**
  - The entity must have access to fast and reliable internet connectivity, capable of supporting uninterrupted video calls and basic streaming (recommended minimum: ~100 Mbps upload/download).
  - To ensure reliable execution, organisers must guarantee at least one technically competent person is present on-site throughout the hackathon, who will be responsible for setting up, managing, and troubleshooting the connection with the Central Hub
  
4. All the information, communication, associated facilities, relevant assets and applied resources are only located within the EU Member State or Norway territory. This territorial requirement encompasses all infrastructure, including servers, cloud services and data processing facilities, that will be used for the purposes of the hackathon. No data or operational resources may be hosted, stored, or processed outside of these designated jurisdictions.
  
5. The entity must have a minimum **project team of 3 people including: a project manager, marketing/communication manager and event production manager. At**

- least 1 of these persons should be present during the hackathon and at least one person must have experience in the field of defence.
6. **Every staff member involved** in the organisation of the EUDIS Defence Hackathon is an **EU or a Norwegian citizen residing in the EU Member States or Norway.**
  7. All **hackathon participants, mentors, selection board members and speakers** must be **citizens of one of the EU Member States, Norway or Ukraine** and must be residing in the EU, Norway or Ukraine. All participants must be adults.
  8. The entity must demonstrate **proven experience in organising at least 1 hackathon, accelerator (TRL 4+) or other forms of open innovation programmes with minimum 30 participants and 5 startups/innovative teams.**
  9. The entity must have the capability to run a hackathon in the given timeline. This includes all different phases from sponsor and partner recruitment, participant recruitment, a recorded webinar and other pre-hackathon sessions to the preparations and facilitation of the actual hackathon.
  10. The entity must have the financial capability to host the hackathon within the given budget and payment timeline.
  11. The entity must **secure additional sponsorship of at least 10,000 € net to be allocated as a monetary prize for the local winners.** This can be complemented with in-kind, discount, or skills development perks (in addition to cash prizes).
  12. The entity must have the capability to execute and facilitate prototype testing to validate the teams' final projects, as included in the provided event schedule (*see key dates section of this Guide*).
  13. The entity must have access to 10-15 of the region's relevant key research & innovation stakeholders (University faculties, RTOs, startups, etc.) and defence end-users as well as defence technical mentors and judges to support and evaluate the teams.
  14. The entity must have autonomous capability to conduct communication and promotion activities with a marketing/communications specialist having experience in digital marketing/communications, and in the production of professional communications products.
  15. The organising entity must have suitable channels for promotion with demonstrable reach (social media, website, newsletters). **Content creation capabilities, including an on-location professional photographer/videographer are considered a must as well.** The organiser must execute adequate communication and promotional activities to reach the needed participants, mentors, selection board members and partners.



16. The entity must ensure the **technical setup for streaming Central Hub content to participants and for live recording of the physical hackathon venue for the Central Hub**, including the provision of a videographer and any necessary camera equipment. The streaming server and related training will be provided by the Central Hub
17. The entity must consider risk mitigation measures for the hackathon date in their country and foresee any potential risks in terms of lack of participation.
18. In terms of security and data protection, local organiser's key people working on the project must be trained on up-to date cybersecurity measures and Data Protection management and compliance.

All these questions which are included in the online application form must be answered with YES in order to be an eligible applicant. Evidence for some of them will be required to be submitted in the application (see next section 5.3 of this Guide).

### 5.3. Eligible proposals

To be considered eligible, proposals must be **submitted by May 31<sup>st</sup> 2026 using CARSA's EMS Platform** – <https://eudis.carsa.es/> and includes 3 following parts:

1. A **complete and readable technical project description** included (.pdf document) in English which follows the template provided.
2. **Resumes (in English) of the 3 team members** involved, including the resume of the marketing/communication specialist.
3. **Ownership Declaration** duly filled in, signed and scanned, following the template provided in the EMS Platform. Private entities must submit a duly completed and signed Ownership Control Declaration (OCD). Public entities are exempt from this requirement. However, they must provide supporting documentation confirming their status as a public body under the law of an EU Member State or Norway (e.g. legal statute, official act, or registration document).

### 5.4. How to apply

1. Applicants will **first have to register in the EMS Platform (a cloud-based tool)** by accessing the following URL: <https://eudis.carsa.es/>
2. General information about the person registering and the entity he/she is representing will be required (first name and family name, email address, telephone, full legal name of the organisation, short name of the organisation, VAT nr., City and Country of location). Access to the EMS platform needs to be established by creating a username and a password.
3. Once the registration is completed, **applicants may start preparing and submitting their applications** directly on the EMS Platform. This process consists in 3 simple steps:

- **Filling in the online application form** by providing replies to a set of questions (only YES/NO answers) + declaration/commitments.
- **Introducing the candidate's Name-Acronym and uploading a Technical Project Description** (*template is provided to all applicants in the EMS Platform and in EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 website. Also, as annex to this Guide*), **the required 3 resumes** (the team for the hackathon and the marketing/communication specialist) **as well as the Ownership Declaration** filled and signed.
- **Pressing the “Submit” button.** Each time an application is submitted, the platform will automatically send a confirmation email to the applicant, acknowledging that the proposal has been successfully received and registered. This might take a couple of minutes. Please check also the “spam” folder. Applicants can save their progress and submit their application as many times as they want until the call is closed (until the application deadline). Only the last submitted version of the application will be evaluated.

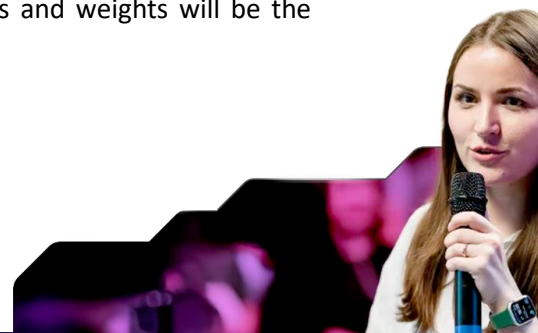
## 6. The evaluation process

### 6.1. Eligibility check and preparations

1. Once the Call closes, the evaluation phase will first start with the **eligibility check** and will then move to the assessment of the proposals, scoring, and ranking of the applications (based on the evaluation criteria described below).
2. **Only eligible proposals** (see the 3 requirements above) **will be evaluated further.**
3. The **selection board will be composed of 3 experts (+2 in reserve list)** in Innovation/Hackathon experts with experience in similar innovation competitions, innovation management, or start-up support schemes. The European Commission may also be participating in the selection board.
4. **Avoiding conflicts of interest** is essential to ensure fairness and transparency in the selection process. That is why – before receiving access to the application files, the evaluators from the Board shall make and sign a specific written declaration of absence of conflict of interest to pursue their work as a member of the Selection Board. Where received applications present a potential situation of conflict of interest for a Board Member (e.g., personal/ financial/professional relation with the applicant) He/She will be replaced by a member in the reserve list.

### 6.2. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluations will be fair, impartial, transparent and carried out in a standardised/consistent manner following the below-outlined evaluation criteria, thresholds and weights will be the following:



Criteria	Scoring	Threshold	Weight
Quality of the hackathon’s communication and promotion plan as well as the activities proposed to achieve the committed number of participants. Excellence of the program envisaged, its activities and the means proposed to encourage engagement and active participation during the hackathon.	<b>10 points max.</b> 1-2: Inadequate 3-4: Poor 5-6: Fair 7-8: Good 9-10: Excellent	6	20%
Excellence of the plan to engage relevant defence and space stakeholders of the local and regional innovation ecosystem. Their level of involvement and relevance of their previous experience in organising defence hackathons. Quality of the sustainability plan or strategy to leverage outcomes after the hackathon.	<b>10 points max.</b> 1-2: Inadequate 3-4: Poor 5-6: Fair 7-8: Good 9-10: Excellent	6	60%
Experience and capability to run a high-quality onsite defence hackathon ensuring seamless digital connection/collaboration with the Central Hub. Capability to facilitate prototype-testing as well as tools and equipment that can help mature ideas, solutions or prototypes. Adequacy and feasibility of the foreseen budget presented.	<b>10 points max.</b> 1-2: Inadequate 3-4: Poor 5-6: Fair 7-8: Good 9-10: Excellent	6	20%

The specific detailed elements associated with each evaluation criteria will be the following:

CRITERIA	
<p><b>1. Quality of the hackathon’s communication and promotion plan as well as the activities proposed to achieve the committed number of participants (implying that the designated period will not be national/regional/public holiday in their states/regions concerned). Excellence of the program envisaged, its activities and the means proposed to encourage engagement and active participation during the hackathon.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Excellence of the communication and outreach strategy:</b> Assessment of implemented activities and initiatives designed to attract ~50 participants (10-50 teams). Review of channel selection, social media strategy, and alignment with the previous campaigns/websites provided.</li> <li>▪ <b>Quality of promotional materials and branding:</b> Appropriateness of the preliminary list of promotional items (posters, rollups, badges, etc.) and the clarity of how each item contributes to effective event communication.</li> <li>▪ <b>Excellence of the program and participant engagement:</b> Quality of the envisioned location-specific program. Assessment of activities proposed to foster active participation, encourage engagement, and manage the general organization of the hackathon within the given timeline.</li> <li>▪ <b>Appropriateness of prize structure:</b> Evaluation of the incentives provided for the Top 3 teams, including cash prizes, consulting services, or business development opportunities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Excellence of the plan to engage relevant defence and space stakeholders of the local and regional innovation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Excellence of the ecosystem engagement plan:</b> Assessment of how local and regional innovation actors, space/defence stakeholders, and sponsors are leveraged to support the hackathon. Appropriateness of the plan for securing partners</li> </ul>

<p>ecosystem. Level of involvement of national/regional defence agencies (including Ministry of Defence, Armed Forces, procurement, defence innovation agencies) and contributing partners (companies, universities, incubators, accelerators, public entities etc.) that can deliver support (e.g. defence and business-oriented mentoring) to the participants. Relevance of those stakeholders' previous experience in organising defence hackathons. Also, quality of the sustainability plan or strategy to leverage outcomes beyond and after the hackathon (e.g. matchmaking, follow-up support, integration into innovation pipelines).</p>	<p>and sponsors, as well as the amount of sponsorship that will be required and how it will be allocated; how relevant actors from the defence end-users (Ministry of Defence or Defence innovation agencies) are involved in the hackathon? Specification of actors the team will partner with and the plan for securing them as partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Relevance and quality of mentors and selection board members:</b> Access to defence and technical mentors as well as selection board members to support and evaluate the teams. They should also have experience in organising a defence hackathon and the skills to test and evaluate prototyped solutions, sanity-check code, etc. How the right profiles with industry-specific knowledge are secured. List already secured profiles, if any.</li> <li>▪ <b>Eligibility and Compliance Vetting:</b> Appropriateness of the plan to confirm that all participants, mentors, speakers, and selection board members are adult citizens residing in EU Member States, Norway, or Ukraine. Quality of explanations regarding partnerships with local authorities for this vetting process.</li> <li>▪ <b>Appropriateness of the post-hackathon support strategy:</b> Evaluation of the sustainability plan to support winning teams after the event. This includes descriptions of prizes such as consulting or business development programs designed for the Top 3 teams to ensure long-term impact.</li> </ul>
<p>3. Experience and capability to run a high-quality onsite defence hackathon ensuring seamless digital connection/collaboration with the Central Hub. Capability to provide technical tools, access to prototyping facilities, testing equipment, databases or other resources that can help participants to mature their ideas, solutions or prototypes. Adequacy and feasibility of the foreseen budget presented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <b>Proven experience and capability for onsite delivery:</b> Assessment of the organizer's track record in defence hackathons or open innovation programs. Review of provided CVs to ensure three required competencies are met: Project Management, Event Production Management, and Marketing Management. Verification that at least two people share these tasks and at least one team member has confirmed experience in the field of defence.</li> <li>▪ <b>Quality of digital collaboration and streaming plans:</b> Evaluation of the technical plan for streaming Central Hub content to local participants and live-recording the physical venue for the Central Hub. Assessment of the proposed camera equipment budget and the plan to ensure robust digital connectivity supporting smooth HD video services for 50+ concurrent users.</li> <li>▪ <b>Appropriateness of the physical location and facilities:</b> Suitability of the venue to host 50 participants plus mentors and selection board members. Review of logistical arrangements including catering (meals and snacks), audio systems, electricity, and dedicated workstations for each team.</li> <li>▪ <b>Adequacy of prototyping and testing resources:</b> Evaluation of the specific means and plans put at the disposal of participants to build and test their prototypes onsite.</li> </ul>

- **Appropriateness of the presented budget:** Assessment of budget alignment with all foreseen tasks to ensure successful implementation.

The **threshold** for each criterion will be **6 out of 10** and will be weighted as indicated above. The **total weighted score for all criteria will be out of 100 points**. The **total threshold score is 60**. Only the applications above the minimum threshold (6 out of 10 for each criterion) will be eligible for selection.

### 6.3. Assessment of applications

1. All evaluators will be registered on the EMS platform and will be able to evaluate the applications assigned to them.
2. The evaluation and scoring of the applications will also be documented using a standardised online template on the EMS platform which will include brief qualitative comments on the assessment of the proposal and the score for each evaluation criterion. The total score for each application will be calculated and once all applications have been assessed, it will **a ranking is created according to the evaluation scores**.
3. All applications received will be evaluated individually and then, the evaluators will meet online to reach a consensus and produce an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) per each application. In case of even scores, the ranking will also take into consideration the capacity to allocate prizes. These cases will be discussed and assessed with the European Commission.

### 6.4. Final selection

1. The Selection Board together with the European Commission will hold a consensus meeting to complete and decide about the selection of local organisers.
2. The selection of local organisers will be completed by selecting the best 8 proposals of the ranking list making sure that all the chosen hackathons will be hosted in 8 different EU/Norway countries. In other words, **a final exclusion criterion will be implemented to ensure that none of the selected EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 hosts comes from the same country and doesn't compete for the same participants.**
3. Up to 3 applicants will also be put on a back-up list in case the contractual/administrative procedure fails with any of the selected local organisers.
4. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to all eligible applicants. Selected applicants will receive an official award letter and the details and conditions of the contract agreement with the notification email. Please note that the results of the evaluation letter might also require you to proceed with additional validation of the eligibility.

5. The entities will have to confirm officially their interest in being a local organiser and provide without delay the necessary documentation which will be validated by the consortium and transmitted to DG DEFIS for confirmation.

## 7. Support to applicants

1. Interested applicants may contact EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 Open Call for organisers' helpdesk on [contact@eudis-hackathon.eu](mailto:contact@eudis-hackathon.eu) at any time if they wish to receive further information on the procedures, terms, and conditions.
2. EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 implementation team fully complies with the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR) on the protection of natural persons with regards to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data. The EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 consortium is responsible for the personal data processing, under automated and analogical means, from its collection, through its organisation and storage, up to its deletion. The EUDIS Defence Hackathon 2026 Consortium keeps a continuous and thorough registry of all its personal data processing activities. The applicants' data will be retained in the EUDIS Defence
3. Applicant data will be retained in the EUDIS Hackathon 2026 project archives for the duration necessary for the implementation and management of the application related activities. Personal data will not be transferred to third parties or to countries outside the EU/EEA unless adequate data protection safeguards are in place in accordance with applicable legislation.

## Annex 1: Technical Project Description

***Please be aware of the page's limitations per section. Content provided outside these limits will not be considered for evaluation***

### **1. Organisation and structure of your hackathon – The envisaged communication and promotion plan [10 pages max]**

#### **1.1. Communication and outreach strategy for participant recruitment**

*What specific activities and initiatives will you implement to attract 50 participants (approx. 10-50 teams) to the hackathon? Describe your plan to communicate and promote the hackathon to ensure maximum participation. Outline a detailed communication strategy, including the channels you intend to use for promotion, your forecasted budget, and a list of partners willing to contribute in this regard. Also, provide a list of social media channels (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.) and the official website used for previous events or campaigns.*

#### **1.2. Promotional materials and branding approach**

*Please indicate a preliminary list of the relevant promotional items (e.g. posters, rollups, backdrop banners, badges, t-shirts, etc.) you intend to use for the promotion of the Hackathon. For each product you list, please explain why it is needed and how it will contribute to the event's communication and outreach efforts. Note: EUDIS Defence hackathon consortium will support with the design of the promotional items.*

#### **1.3. Hackathon programme and participant engagement approach**

*Provide an overview of the program you envision for the hackathon in your location. How will it encourage engagement and foster the active participation of 50 individuals (approx. 10-50 teams)?*

#### **1.4. Prize structure and incentives for participants**

*What prizes such as cash or consulting services, or a business development programme to the best teams (Top 3) will you be able to provide to the hackathon teams? Describe your plan.*

### **2. Involvement of relevant contributing partners, sponsors, mentors, and selection board members as well as the local/regional innovation ecosystem [5 pages max]**

#### **2.1. Engagement of ecosystem partners, sponsors, and defence stakeholders**

*Describe how you will engage and leverage the relevant ecosystem to support the Hackathon, including local and regional innovation actors, defence stakeholders, and technical experts. Your response should explain your overall strategy for identifying,*

*securing, and involving partners and sponsors as well as how these collaborations will contribute to the delivery and impact of the Hackathon.*

*You should also outline how you will ensure the participation of relevant defence-sector stakeholders (e.g. Ministries of Defence, Armed Forces, defence innovation agencies, or other public authorities) as end-users and contributors. In addition, describe how you will attract and appoint qualified defence-related mentors and selection board members who will support, guide, and evaluate participating teams. Include any profiles already confirmed.*

*Please fill in the following table with at least 4 stakeholders:*

No	Name of the region's key Research & Innovation stakeholder	Type of relation you have with it (Collaborated in past hackathons; Collaborated in past R&D and innovation projects; Client-provider; Other)	Foreseen role during EUDIS Defence Hackathon/Contribution expected
1			
2			
3			
4			

## 2.2. Participant eligibility verification and compliance approach

*Provide a plan to confirm that all participants, mentors, speakers and selection board members must be citizens of one of the EU Member States, Norway or Ukraine and must be residing in the EU, Norway or Ukraine. All participants must be adults. Explain what local authorities you will partner with to enable this process.*

## 2.3. Post-hackathon impact and follow-up strategy

*Describe how you will ensure that the outcomes of the hackathon will have an impact beyond the event itself. In particular, explain:*

- *How you will support participants after the hackathon (e.g. mentoring, matchmaking, incubation opportunities, links to defence stakeholders).*
- *How you will maintain engagement with stakeholders after the event.*
- *Any partnerships, programmes, or funding schemes you plan to connect participants to (if any).*
- *How you will capture and disseminate results (e.g. reports, success stories, KPIs, integration into wider innovation ecosystems).*

## 3. Capability to run a high-quality onsite defence hackathon, to facilitate prototype-testing and to ensure digital connection/collaboration with the Central Hub. Overview of the budget foreseen for the action [6 pages max]

### 3.1. Organisational capacity, team structure, and implementation approach

*Describe your experience of organising defence hackathons, other forms of open innovation programs or hybrid events and explain how you will run EUDIS Defence hackathon 2026 in the given timeline including all the different phases required for a successful implementation. Please also describe how the given budget and payment schedule fit your current financial situation. Finally, present your team (brief profile description with competence, role and experience) and how they will work together to implement this project. Please consider eligibility requirement c) and upload the corresponding CVs in the EMS Platform.*

### 3.2. Digital infrastructure and Central Hub integration

*Provide a plan for streaming the Central Hub content to your participants and recording your own physical hackathon venue live for the Central Hub to see, including the potential budget for camera equipment.*

### 3.3. Venue selection and event infrastructure

*Describe the capabilities of the event location(s) you have in mind, highlighting factors contributing to the overall quality of the venue. Provide up to 3 venue hosting options – including the name of the location, photos, and a clear explanation of how the venue will meet the requirements. What measures will you put in place to ensure a seamless and secure digital experience for the participants? Please consider for your description what's included in the eligibility requirement b)*

### 3.4. Prototype testing facilitation approach

*Explain how you plan to facilitate prototype testing during the hackathon.*

### 3.5. Budget

*Please, using the table below only, provide an overview of the costs that will be covered by the general expense budget. You can request an amount up to 60.000,00 €.*

#	Description	Amount (€)
1	Personnel costs (event staff, coordinators)	
2	Other costs (e.g. venue rental, catering, equipment rental, printing, etc)	
3	...	

**Important: This table *cannot include costs related to financial prizes* provided to the local hackathon winners. All listed amounts must be **VAT-exclusive!****