EU · START-UPS & SMES · RAPID DEFENCE INNOVATION · 2027

AGILE

Programme for Agile and Rapid Defence Innovation

A new EU programme for fast defence innovation, aimed at SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups.

Budget of **€115 million** for 2027, up to 100 % of eligible costs, target time-to-grant of four months. The regulation was approved by the European Parliament on 6 October and by the Council on 12 October 2026. The first call is expected in early 2027.

WHAT IT IS

1. Fast development, testing and deployment of emerging and disruptive defence technologies, including the adaptation of civil (dual-use) solutions
2. Grants preferably as lump sums, up to 100 % of costs; costs incurred up to three months before the call deadline are eligible
3. Accelerated award: decision based on a self-declaration, target time-to-grant of four months, payment after the final check
4. Calls as “challenges” built on the capability needs of member states' armed forces (Capability Development Plan, CARD, EDA), partly bottom-up
5. Fast-track access to EU testing facilities and the EUDIS Business Accelerator, matchmaking with primes, listing in the Military Sales Catalogue (EDIP)
6. Goal: a product armed forces can procure and field within one to three years. Low-cost, scalable solutions: UAS and C-UAS, software, sensors, communications, components, space

WHO IT IS FOR

SMEs under the EU definition (start-ups and scale-ups) established and managed in the EU or an associated country (EEA, Ukraine), not controlled by a non-associated third country. Single applicants without a consortium; subcontracting and small consortia with RTOs, universities and incubators are possible.

AT WHAT STAGE

High TRL: a solution that can reach deployment and procurement within the project. Rapid upgrades of existing products are supported too. No basic research.

BUDGET FOR 2027

€115 million

Up to 100 % of eligible costs, lump-sum grants, the Commission expects 20 to 30 projects. Member states may add their own resources.

HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY

1. Check your SME status and ownership structure (no control from outside the EU and associated countries) and register a PIC on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal
2. Describe the solution in the language of operational need: the problem it solves for armed forces, fielding within one to three years, cost. Ideally with an interested end user
3. Prepare a testing and demonstration plan, a lump-sum budget and cybersecurity-by-design documentation (an eligibility condition)
4. Watch the Commission work programme and the challenges, then submit through the portal (AGILE programme filter)

TIMING

Commission proposal 25 March 2026, Parliament and Council agreement 15 July, Parliament plenary 6 October, Council 12 October 2026. The regulation awaits signature and publication in the Official Journal (in force 20 days later). The programme runs from 1 January to 31 December 2027, first call in early 2027.

NOTE / TIP

Topics, grant sizes and deadlines will be set by the Commission work programme. Until then: EUDIS calls and the EUDIS Business Accelerator as a bridge, the EIC Accelerator for dual-use, EDIP for production. Results must not be controlled by a non-associated third country; IP transfers outside the EU within three years need approval.

FREE CONSULTATION · INDEPENDENT

Could AGILE fit your technology?

Defence Hub CzechInvest will help you pick the right programme and work through the whole application, free and independent.

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Book a consultation

Sources: AGILE regulation (EP position A10-0188/2026, Council 12 Oct 2026), defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu