EU · SMES AND START-UPS · GRANTS UP TO €60,000

EDF Cascade Funding

Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)

Small grants from EDF projects for companies that cannot reach a large consortium

Consortia running European Defence Fund (EDF) projects can pass part of their grant to smaller companies through their own sub-calls. The aim is to open EDF to SMEs and start-ups, including those with no previous defence experience. Sub-calls are run by **EDF project consortia, not the European Commission**. The scheme sits under the EUDIS initiative.

EU · SME · START-UPS · UKRAINE

WHAT IT IS

1. A grant of **up to €60,000** per company; total support to third parties is capped at 5% of the EU contribution requested under the EDF topic
2. Cooperation with the EDF consortium lasts **up to 6 months**
3. Activities: proof of concept, technology modification or demonstration, manufacturing of test samples and components, analysis and measurement, hackathons and technological challenges, technology showcases
4. Each sub-call targets at least 3 recipients; priority goes to SMEs including start-ups (SME status is self-declared and spot-checked by the consortium)
5. From the EDF 2026 work programme, **any EDF project** can offer cascade funding, so the number of sub-calls is growing
6. Beyond the money, usually access to the project ecosystem (BattleVerse, for example, offers technical coaching and mentoring by the consortium)

WHO IT IS FOR

SMEs and start-ups established in an EU Member State, an EDF associated country (e.g. Norway) or Ukraine, and controlled by entities from those countries. Non-SMEs only exceptionally, where no SME can provide the capacity needed. Companies from different countries and from non-defence sectors are welcome.

AT WHAT STAGE

For companies with a technology that can be **validated, adapted or demonstrated within 6 months**. You do not need your own consortium or prior defence experience; the topic and conditions are set by each sub-call.

MAXIMUM GRANT PER COMPANY

€60,000

up to 6 months of cooperation · at least 3 recipients per sub-call · third-party support capped at 5% of the EU contribution per topic

HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY

1. Watch for sub-calls on *eudis.europa.eu* (Cascade funding section) and on the websites of individual EDF projects
2. Check the sub-call topic and your eligibility (establishment, control, SME status) in the consortium documentation
3. Apply **directly to the consortium** through its portal (the EMS platform for BattleVerse), not to the Commission
4. If selected, cooperation runs for up to six months; BattleVerse pays the grant as a lump sum

TIMING

Open now: BattleVerse Open Call 1 (EDF 2024, simulation and AI), deadline **16 November 2026, 17:00 CET**, up to €60,000 per company and €180,000 per experiment, consortia of 1 to 3 companies. MaJoR (EDF 2023, materials and components) closed its first call on 25 March 2026 with over 200 proposals.

NOTE / TIP

Sub-call topics are **narrowly defined** by the needs of the EDF project (BattleVerse: LLMs for planning, multi-physics simulation, distributed AI for UxV swarms; MaJoR: materials and structures for defence platforms). Read the specific sub-call, not just the programme name.

FREE CONSULTATION · INDEPENDENT

Does cascade funding fit your company?

Defence Hub CzechInvest will help you pick the right sub-call and work through the application, free and independent.

defencehub@czechinvest.org

eudis.europa.eu/eudis-tracks/cascade-funding_en

Book a consultation