EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

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eureka fast track

Eureka Fast Track to the EIC Accelerator

Guidelines for experts and panel members

Contents

Version 1.4

HISTORY OF CHANGES		
Version	**Publication date**	**Changes**
Version 1.1	31 July 2024	Original version
Version 1.2	2 September 2024	Details on the platform to be used by experts
Version 1.3	12 November 2024	Order of two sections ("You will make sure your assessment fulfils our quality standards" and "How will your evaluation feed into the application's results?") inverted on pages 12 – 13. The maximum amount of the investment component was updated from €12.5 ML to €10 ML. The maximum funding provided by the EIC Accelerator was updated from €17.5 ML to €12.5 ML. To be eligible for investment only, the company does not need to have already received an eligible grant support. Clarification regarding the TRL: applicants must have completed all aspects of TRL 5 (validation in a relevant environment) and currently be at least in TRL 6. Sub-criterion "Excellence of the company" was removed. The minimum point threshold for the sub-criterion "Timing" changed from 60 to 70, and the weight from 10% to 20%. Formulation of the sub-criteria of Excellence changed in line with formulation in the 2025 EIC Work Programme.
Version 1.4	22 July 2025	Entry of Switzerland to the list of eligible countries

Useful contacts

For any questions on these guidelines and the evaluation process, please email experts-fasttrack@eurekanetwork.org.

What is the EIC Accelerator?

The **EIC Accelerator** is a funding programme under Horizon Europe developed and implemented by the European Innovation Council and the SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA). The programme supports companies (principally SMEs, including start-ups) that have a **high-risk/high-impact innovative technology**, product, service or business model with the potential to **create new markets** or **disrupt existing ones** in **Europe or worldwide**.

The programme focuses in particular on innovations building on scientific discovery or technological breakthroughs ("**deep tech**") and where **significant funding** is needed over a long timeframe before returns can be generated ("patient capital").

EIC Accelerator funding supports the later stages of technology development, as well as scale up. The technology component of the innovation must therefore have been tested and validated in a laboratory and other relevant environment; innovation activities must be at least in **Technology Readiness Level 6**[1] or above.

The EIC Accelerator offers a combination of funding from EUR 0.5 to EUR 12.5 million and tailored-made Business Acceleration Services, including access to coaching and mentoring support, corporates, investors and ecosystem actors.

Awardees are single companies from EU Member States and third countries associated to Horizon Europe. They may choose to apply to one of the following types of funding:

- grant only,
- blended finance, consisting of an investment and grand component, and
- investment only.

[1] To be interpreted as the applicant has completed all aspects of TRL 5: validation in relevant environment.

Grant component only (*'Grant only'*)	Blended finance	Investment component only (*Equity-Only*)
It covers **Innovation Activities only, from TRL 6 to TRL 8**. It will take the form of a lumpsum contribution of **up to less than EUR 2.5 million** (equal to a maximum of 70% of the company's total eligible costs). The company must provide evidence that they have sufficient financial means (e.g. revenue flow, existing investors or shareholders) to finance the deployment and scaling up of their innovation. Small mid-caps are not eligible for grant only support. UK companies are only eligible for grant only support.	It covers **Innovation Activities (TRL 6-8) and Market Deployment Action (TRL 9 and onwards)**. The EIC Grant component covers a maximum of 70% of the company's total eligible costs of TRL 6-8 activities in the form of lump sum contribution of **up to less than EUR 2.5 million**. The EIC Investment component covers the rest, and it can range **from EUR 0.5 million to EUR 10 million**.	It covers **Market deployment and scale up (TRL 9)** and can be used to **co-finance Innovation Activities (TRL 6-8).** It consists of investment **from EUR 0.5 million to EUR 10 million** in the form of direct equity or quasi-equity such as convertible loans via an investment agreement.

The application process of the EIC Accelerator includes 3 steps:

1. ***Short proposal*:** At any time, a company can submit a short proposal consisting of a summary of their solution, company and team, a pitch deck of up to 10 slides, and a video pitch of up to three minutes where the core members of the team provide their motivation for their proposal. Each proposal will receive a GO or NO GO to progress to the next step.
2. ***Full proposal*:** If successful, the applicant is invited to submit a full proposal in the following 12 months. EIC business coaches will help them prepare their full proposal.
3. ***Interview*:** If successful, the applicant is invited to an interview with an EIC jury. Jury members will decide if the proposal should be funded (GO) or not (NO GO).

What is the Eureka Fast Track to the EIC Accelerator?

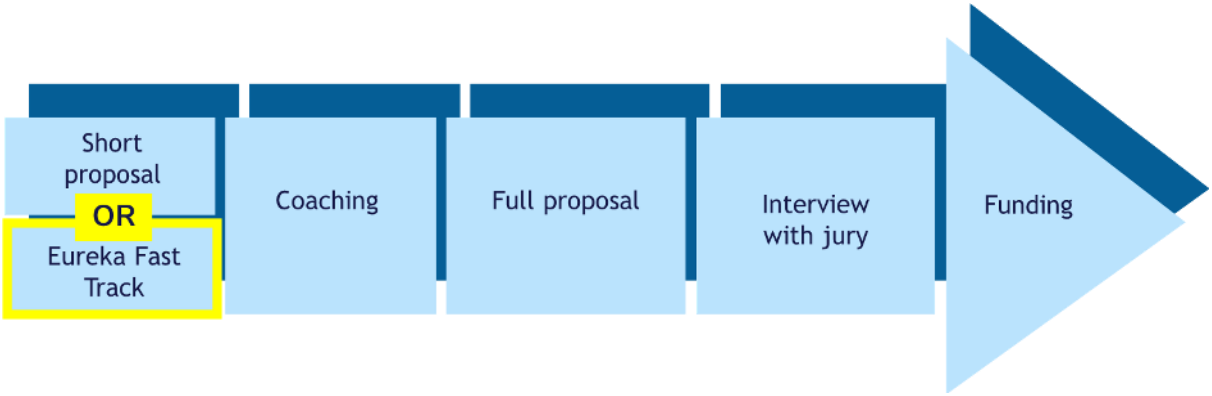
The **Eureka Fast Track to the EIC Accelerator** is a programme launched in partnership between Eureka, the European Innovation Council (EIC) and the SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

The programme is **open only to SMEs, start-ups and small mid-caps who have finished or are finalising a Eurostars-3 project**. By submitting an application to the Eureka Fast Track, these companies have the chance to:

- Receive an expert evaluation on their proposal, and
- In case of a successful project review, skip the short proposal stage of the EIC Accelerator and be invited directly to the second stage, where they can submit a full proposal to the EIC Accelerator.

Eureka performs the project review using award criteria equivalent to the ones set out for the short application stage of the EIC Accelerator, and an evaluation process that guarantees an independent assessment of the applications in compliance with Article 48 of the Horizon Europe Regulation.

Successful companies that are invited to the second stage of the EIC Accelerator will be treated equally to any other EIC Accelerator applicant. They will be entitled to receive coaching support to prepare a full proposal from one the EIC business coaches, and they will be able to submit their full proposal to any of the cut-offs foreseen by the EIC Accelerator in the 12 months following Eureka's communication of the Fast Track call results to EISMEA.



Applying to the Fast Track offers Eurostars-3 alumni significant advantages, such as competition against fewer EIC Accelerator applicants, the possibility to practice pitching their business idea to a panel of experts, and a no-risk evaluation of their application (they gain an extra shot to the EIC Accelerator, where companies can normally only submit up to three unsuccessful applications).

To apply for the Eureka Fast Track, a company must:

1. Be a legal entity established in an EU Member State, Iceland, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, Türkiye or the United Kingdom.
2. Be a single startup, SME or a small mid-cap.
3. Have completed a Eurostars-3 project in the two years prior to the Fast Track submission deadline or be in a Eurostars-3 project finishing, at most, 6 months after the Fast Track submission deadline.

4. Have an innovative business concept resulting from their Eurostars-3 project.
5. Possess or have rights to the intellectual property the innovation is based on.
6. Have submitted complete documentation.

Companies can apply only if they have **not**:

- submitted another application in parallel,
- have another application approved and running,
- or if they have already submitted three unsuccessful applications to the EIC Accelerator.

Only companies that fulfil the eligibility criteria will undergo a project review.

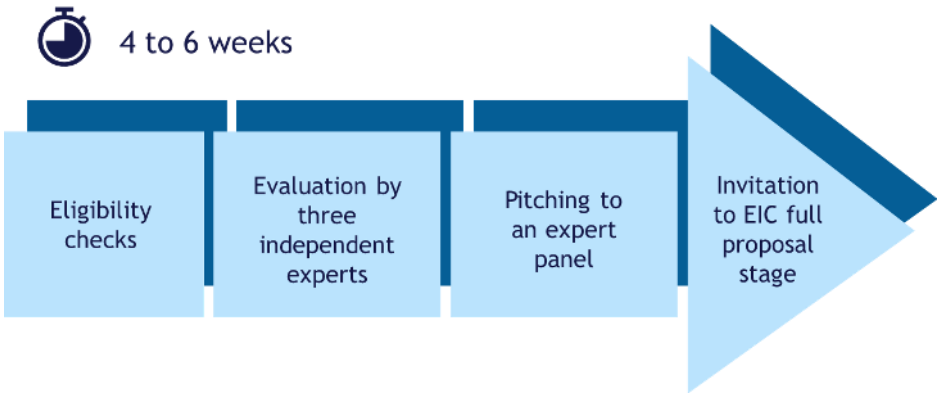
Fast Track evaluation process

Companies that apply will submit:

- an application form equivalent to around 5 pages, where they answer questions about their project,
- a pitch deck of up to 10 slides, where they briefly pitch the company and their solution.

The evaluation process starts immediately after the submission deadline and takes between 4 and 6 weeks to complete. It includes the following steps, in order:

- **Eligibility checks on all applicants.** These checks are performed by the Eureka Secretariat. Only eligible applications will progress to the next step.
- **Evaluation by three independent experts.** Each eligible application is assessed by three experts selected from the Eureka Expert Community. Experts comment on and score the applications. Applications that score high enough will progress to the next step.
- **Online pitching to a panel of three independent EIC experts.** Applicants are invited to a face-to-face interview with a panel of three experts from the EIC expert pool. The panel takes a GO/ NO GO decision on each application. Only those that receive a GO will be invited to the second stage (full proposal) of the EIC Accelerator.



A maximum number of 20 Fast Track applicants per year can be awarded access to the EIC Accelerator full proposal stage. The maximum number of awardees is established prior to each call and can vary from call to call. Awarded projects will undergo further project review conducted by EISMEA.

Two sections follow in this document: one section containing instructions for **experts who participate in the second step of the Fast Track evaluation process** (*Evaluation by three independent experts*), and one section containing instructions for **EIC experts who participate in the pitching sessions**.

Evaluation by three independent experts: guidelines for expert evaluators

This section contains guidelines for experts who work in the second step of the Fast Track evaluation process: *Evaluation by three independent experts*.

How will I be selected to assess applications?

A few weeks before the start of the evaluation process, Eureka invites experts registered in the Eureka Expert Community to express their interest in participating in the upcoming Fast Track call. Eureka will invite experts to attend an online briefing session about the Fast Track process.

To participate in Fast Track, experts need to have experience in innovation, investments, and/or business coaching and mentoring. *

*Eureka has identified and invited for the first Fast Track call (submission deadline: 6 September 2024) a first batch of experts whose profile reflect the criteria above. If you are in the Eureka Expert Community and you have not received an invitation to the first Fast Track call, **but you have the experience required to evaluate Fast Track applications**, please contact experts-fasttrack@eurekanetwork.org to ask to be invited to future calls.

Eureka will allocate applications to experts between one and three weeks after applicants' submission deadline. Three experts will be assigned to each application. Eureka will try to assign each expert a minimum of 5 applications, subject to the expert's availability.

Eureka will appoint experts considering professional background (experience in innovation, investment and business coaching/mentoring), geographical and gender balance, and in compliance with rules regarding conflict of interest:

- An application cannot be assessed by an expert whose nationality is the same as that of the applicant organisation.
- Experts must immediately declare any conflict of interest. These experts will be excluded from the current call.

A conflict of interest undermines everything that we are trying to achieve. **You must openly and honestly inform Eureka if there is any reason that you cannot or might not be able to perform an objective evaluation.**

Experts who inform us of such an issue will be unable to evaluate applications during that period but will be welcome to participate again in the future.

Occasionally, it is not clear that a conflict exists until after the initial invitation. Do not worry – if you inform us as soon as you are aware of the fact, we can take steps to correct this.

However, we have a zero-tolerance approach to individuals who fail to declare a conflict which we later discover:

- You will be excluded from working for Eureka in the future.

- We will seek reimbursement of all fees paid to you for your work.
- We will inform the Ministries in the affected countries.
- We will inform the European Commission and its Executive Agencies, and those responsible for managing their expert evaluation processes.

If you discover that your assigned application raises a conflict of interest, you are under the obligation to declare this to the Eureka Secretariat immediately.

If you have any doubts, email us immediately at experts-fasttrack@eurekanetwork.org.

Types of conflict of interest:

DISQUALIFYING:	POTENTIALLY DISQUALIFYING:
The expert	The expert
> was involved in the preparation of an application;	> was employed by one of the applying legal entities within the previous two years;
> stands to benefit directly should an application be accepted;	> is employed by one of the Eureka NPC or funding bodies;
> has a close or other family relationship with any person representing an applicant legal entity;	> is involved in the management or coordination of one or more of the Eureka initiatives;
> is a director, trustee or partner of an applicant legal entity, or is affiliated with them in any other way;	> is involved in a contract or research collaboration with an applicant legal entity, or had been so in the previous two years;
> is employed by one of the applying legal entities;	> is in any other situation that could cast doubt on their ability to evaluate the applications impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party;
> is in any other situation that compromises their ability to evaluate the applications objectively.	> other circumstances which may arise but are not specifically listed above.

What should I do if I am selected to assess applications?

If you are selected to assess one or more applications, Eureka will notify you by email. You will receive two emails:

- One email from experts@eurekanetwork.org listing the applications you have been assigned to and asking you to submit your Master Service Agreement (MSA) – if you do not have one yet – and a Statement of Work (SOW), containing terms and conditions for your collaboration with Eureka.
- One email with instructions on how to login to the Fast Track platform, where you will be required to contact us if you want to reject your assignment/s or declare a conflict of interest.

You must submit your SOW (and MSA if required) and contact us if you want to reject your assignment/s **within 24 hours** of receiving the notification of your assignment(s). You must

reject an assignment if you have a conflict of interest. If you are no longer available to assess applications, please let us know immediately by emailing experts-fasttrack@eurekanetwork.org.

Note: If you fail to respond within 24 hours, we may withdraw the invitation and seek alternative experts.

You will complete your assessment(s) on the Fast Track platform, where you will have access to the project documentation submitted by the applicant and your assessment for.

You are expected to submit **all** your assessments **within 10 days of being informed of your first assignment**.

Although we aim to allocate all applications on one day, **you may receive additional assignments over the entire duration of the process**. To ensure that you submit all your assessments on time, please **start working as soon as possible** and **aim to submit most of your assessments within 4 or 5 days**.

Repeatedly declining assignments due to unavailability, although you have expressed your availability for the call, or late delivery of your assessments can result in your exclusion from the Eureka Expert Community.

How do I assess and score applications?

You will work independently and objectively

Eureka assigns three experts to each eligible application. The experts work remotely and independently of each other, i.e. they do not know each other's identity, and produce three separate individual assessments.

You will evaluate each application assigned to you independently and objectively, giving sufficient time and effort to the process.

You will screen for the best companies that fit the purpose of the EIC Accelerator

As an expert evaluator, your role is to look at the company, the innovativeness/disruptiveness of the business idea and its potential impact on the market.

Remember that the EIC Accelerator funds companies that:

- have a **game-changing** technology, built on **scientific discovery** or technological **breakthroughs** (‘**deep tech**’), with the potential to **disrupt an existing market or create a new one ≠ not incremental technologies**,
- have a **high-risk** technology, where significant funding is needed over a long timeframe before returns can be generated,
- target a **European or even global market ≠ not a national market**,
- have a **commitment and ambition to scale up**.
- The technology can target **any market and technology areas**, including areas that are critical to achieving **EU’s technological sovereignty**, and must have already reached **TRL 6** (to be interpreted as the applicant has completed all aspects of TRL 5).

We want you to use your technical and business expertise to screen for the SMEs (including start-ups) and small mid-caps that reflect this description.

We want you to be selective and demanding. The purpose of your evaluation is to screen for the best innovations and business ideas and allow these ones to progress to the next step of the Fast Track evaluation process (the pitching sessions).

You will not assess formal eligibility

The Eureka Secretariat verifies applicants' fulfilment of eligibility criteria prior to the experts' evaluation; as an expert evaluator, **you are not requested to verify applicants' eligibility**. However, if you have any doubts regarding an applicant's eligibility, feel free to contact the Eureka Secretariat at experts-fasttrack@eurekanetwork.org.

You will base your assessment only on documentation submitted by the applicant

Your assessment will be based on the documentation that each applicant submits:

- an application form of around 5 pages, where they provide information and answers about their project,
- a pitch deck of up to 10 slides, where they pitch and further expand on their business idea.

You will assess the application using information contained in the application form and the pitch deck as your sole official source.

Applications and pitch decks are self-contained documents; applicants have limits regarding the length of their application and pitch deck. You must **ignore hyperlinks to external information** that are designed to expand the content of the application.

Remember that any information available online, such as LinkedIn page etc., might be incomplete or out to date.

Evaluation criteria and scoring system

You will assess each application against two criteria, **Excellence** and **Impact**, which comprise of six sub-criteria. For **each sub-criterion**, you will provide a score and a comment justifying your score.

Scores range from 1 to 100 points, where 1 is the lowest score and 100 is the highest score (these are integer values, no fractions or decimals are allowed). Make sure you use the entirety of the point scale.

Each sub-criterion has a minimum point threshold, below which an application is automatically disqualified from the process.

Notice that the scores you give to the sub-criteria will weigh differently in the calculation of the total score of the application.

You must perform your assessment using the table below. *

*** The sentences in light blue are not official sub-criteria but further guidance that you will use to guide and formulate your assessment.**

Criteria	Sub-criteria	Score	Weight
Excellence Weight: 50%	**Novelty and breakthrough nature of the innovation:** Is the proposed innovation highly novel, deep tech breakthrough compared to existing solutions? Consider, for example: Why is the innovation novel compared to the existing solutions?	1 – 100 Minimum threshold: 70	20%

	• Is it a high-risk/high-potential innovation idea that has something that nobody else has? • Does its high degree of novelty come with a high chance of success? • Is it a game-changing or breakthrough innovation? • Is it a deep tech innovation? • Please note: Developing an innovation competing with an existing one is not a problem as long as it brings novelty, in particular if the competitor is non-European.		
	Technology readiness level: Is there sufficient demonstration that the innovation has completed all aspects of TRL 5 (validation in a relevant environment for the application of the technology) and therefore the innovation is currently at TRL 6?	1 – 100 Minimum threshold: 60	10%
	Timing: Is the innovation at the cutting edge of new market, societal or technological trends? Consider, for example: Why is this the right time? • Does the applicant sufficiently explain the "necessity" and "urgency" of the proposed innovation? • Will the innovation lose the first-mover advantage or its competitive edge if not funded now?	1 – 100 Minimum threshold: 70	20%
Impact Weight: 50%	**Competitiveness and demand:** Is the innovation better than what the competition proposes, and is the solution bringing sufficient added value to trigger demand from potential customers? Consider, for example: • Is the business model convincing? • Does the company well describe its competition and target market? • Why is the innovation better than the existing/alternative solutions? How strong is its unique selling point? Is it strong enough for customers to be willing to pay for the solution? Please note: You should not assess whether the company demonstrates market traction. This will be assessed only in the full proposal stage of the EIC Accelerator.	1 – 100 Minimum threshold: 70	20%

	Market development: Does the innovation have the potential to develop new markets or significantly transform existing ones? Consider, for example: Do you believe that the innovation will be adopted by the potential customers at such a scale that a new market will be created, or existing markets will be transformed? Please note: You should not assess whether the company demonstrates market traction. This will be assessed only in the full proposal stage of the EIC Accelerator.	1 – 100 Minimum threshold: 60	10%
	Broader impact: Will the innovation, if successfully commercialised, achieve positive societal, economic, environmental or climate impacts? Consider, for example: Will the innovation have broader positive **societal, economic, environmental or climate impacts**? Will it make life better?	1 – 100 Minimum threshold: 70	20%

Important: your assessment must be based exclusively on the evaluation criteria explained above.

There are some elements that will only be assessed at the EIC Accelerator full proposal stage, and that applicants are not requested to elaborate on in their Fast Track application. **Your assessment cannot be based on the fact that any of the following elements is missing in the application**:

- A detailed business plan.
- Detailed financial projections.
- Detailed presentation of the applicant's financial needs.
- Complete team in place.
- Gender balance in the current team.
- Demonstration of market traction.

Note that, although applicants are asked to describe their financing needs and why they have not been able to raise enough investment to carry out the project, the need for the **EU's funding support** is not an evaluation criterion at this stage of the process and thus **should not be taken into consideration in your evaluation**. The figures provided by applicants in their application are indicative and will be described in more detail in the full proposal.

Note that you **do not have to assess whether the type of funding requested by the applicant is the appropriate one**.

Whether the team has the necessary capacity or whether it is gender-balanced will also be assessed only at the full proposal stage. Although applicants are asked to indicate in their Fast Track application the company CEO's gender, this information is only needed by Eureka and the EIC for statistical purposes and should not be taken into account in your assessment.

You will make sure your assessment fulfils our quality standards

Your assessment must be clear, constructive, and respectful. You are here to truly help SMEs, startups and small mid-caps with your expertise and advice.

You must ensure that your assessment fulfils our set of quality standards. If not, your assessment will be reopened, and you will be asked to make corrections.

1. Do not use disrespectful language (offensive, dismissive, ironic, rhetorical questions).
2. Avoid categorical/unequivocal statements that do not accurately explain what you mean; make sure all your statements are qualified and in context. For example, if you believe that applicants should have described something better or in more detail, do not write a categorical statement like "the description of X is missing," if what you mean is that, although applicants did provide a description, the description is not satisfying.
3. Ensure consistency between your scores and comments. In your comments, you must explain the strengths and weaknesses that you have identified in the application; your score must well reflect your comment.
4. Check any language errors (grammar, syntax, incomplete sentences). Make sure that all you write is clear and can be easily read and understood.
5. You will answer six questions, corresponding to the six sub-criteria. Make sure that you address all the sub-criteria; your assessment cannot be incomplete.
6. Provide convincing justifications. Do not just rephrase the guidelines questions or simply answer "yes" or "no" to them. You must provide an objective assessment that contains real opinions and explains the reasons why you think something is a strength/weakness. For example: do not just say "the project will have a big impact on the market;" you must also explain *why* it will have such an impact.

Note: repeatedly failing to comply with the quality standards will result in your exclusion from the Eureka Expert Community.

How will your evaluation feed into the application's results?

The application's score will be calculated by Eureka after all experts have completed their evaluations.

The score is calculated as follows:

- For each sub-criterion, the points given by the three experts are averaged.
- The average per sub-criterion is compared to the minimum threshold. Applications that receive a sub-criterion average score below the minimum threshold are disqualified.
- For those where all sub-criterion average scores are above the minimum threshold, these scores are multiplied by the sub-criterion's weight.
- The results are summed up to give the total score of the application, expressed out of 100.
- A ranking list is established based on the total scores of the applications, from highest scores to lower scores.

The highest scoring applicants will be invited to pitch their business idea to a panel of three experts from the EIC expert pool. The number of applicants invited to the pitching sessions is approximately 1.5 times the maximum number of Fast Track applicants who can be awarded access to the EIC Accelerator's full proposal stage (established prior to the specific call). If the last application has the same total score as other applications, all applications with that score will progress to the pitching sessions.

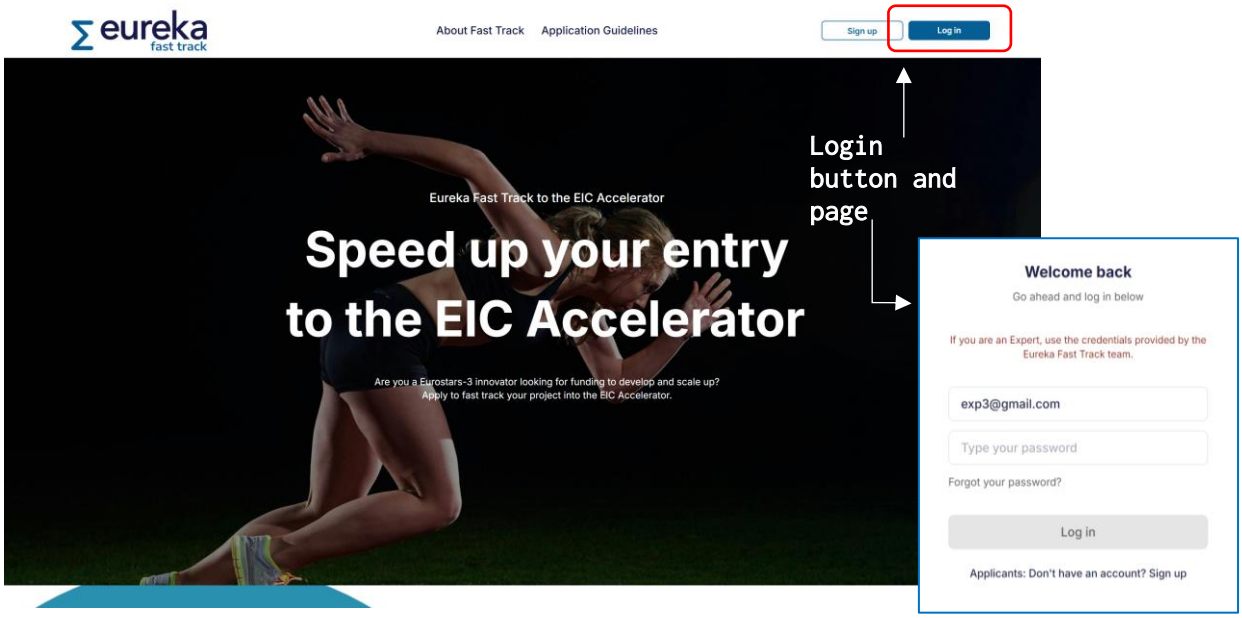
For example: if the maximum number of applicants who can be awarded access to the EIC Accelerator full proposal stage is 10, the 15 highest scoring applicants in the ranking list are invited to the pitching session. If the 15th applicant has the same total score as some other applicants, all applicants with that score will be invited to the pitching sessions.

Make sure you are reachable for the duration of the evaluation process

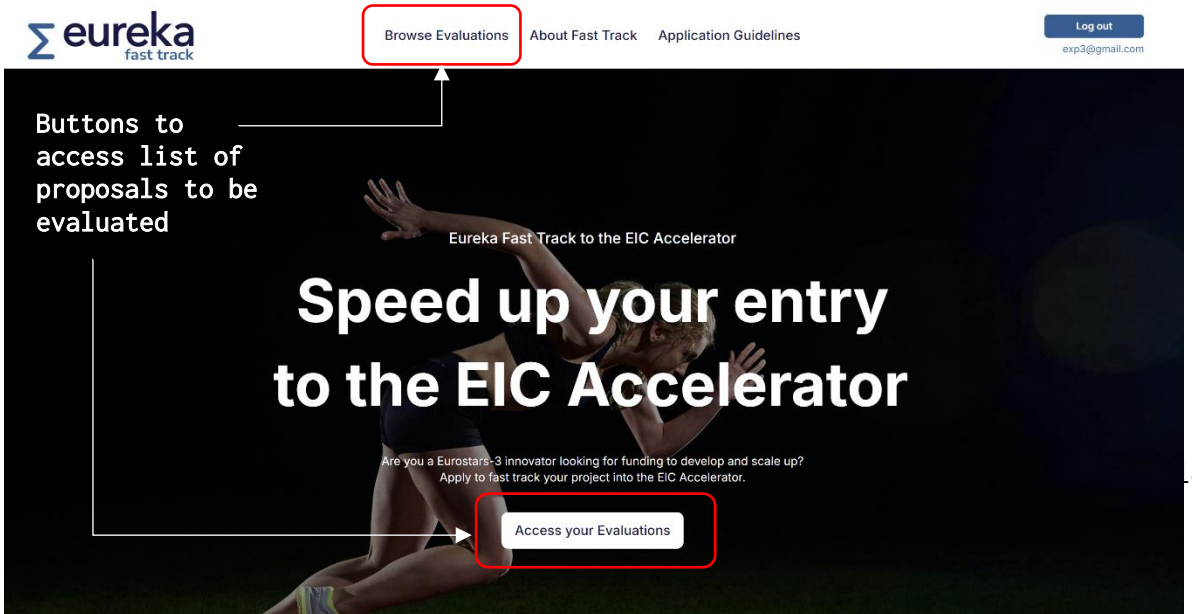
Please make sure that you are reachable for the entire duration of the evaluation process. The Eureka Secretariat may contact you for various reasons (assignment of additional applications, clarifications about your assessment, etc.). Please respond promptly.

How does the Fast Track platform work?

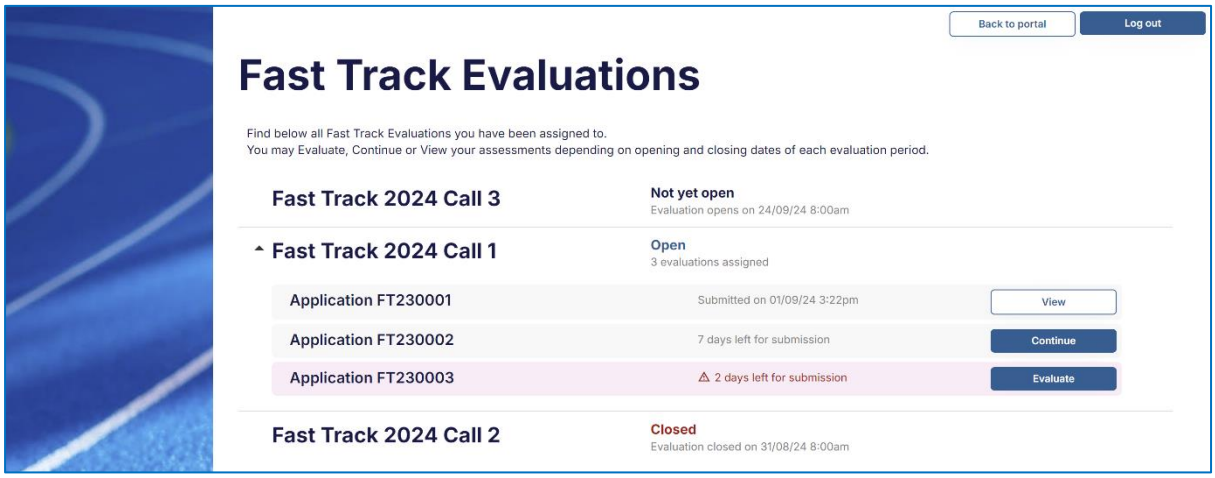
The Fast Track application platform can be accessed at https://fasttrack.eurekanetwork.org/.
As an expert, you will be sent a login by the Eureka team.



Once logged on, you will need to navigate to the list of assigned applications by clicking on the "Access your evaluations" button. This will take you to a listing of your evaluations under the current call. Note that all evaluations you have been assigned will be available on the platform. They will all be considered accepted for evaluation unless you reject one or more in the 24 hours following the assignment by emailing experts-fasttrack@eurekanetwork.org.



On the platform, you can select “Evaluate” to start your assessment of an individual proposal. The evaluation form thus triggered is auto-saved every time you make changes to it, so you can close it an come back to it later on by clicking on the “Continue” button. Please note that you cannot revert to an earlier version of your input.

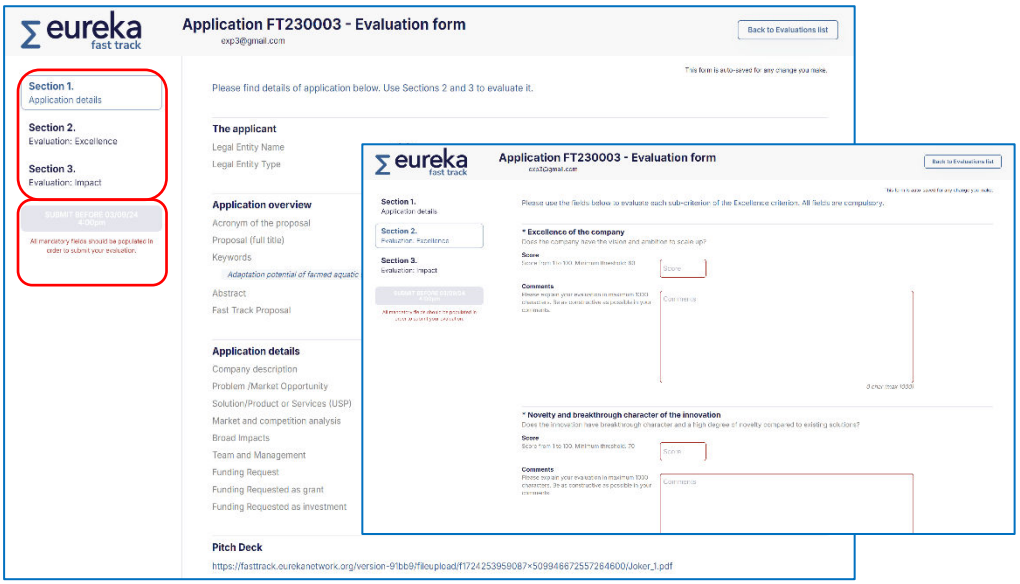


The list of evaluations also features the deadlines by which you need to provide your assessment of each application. For applications that were assigned to you from the beginning, you will have around one week to complete your evaluation. In case other experts declare conflicts of interest or reject assignments and one or more of their assigned proposals are then re-assigned to you, you will have until the end of the evaluation period to provide your assessment of these later additions. Therefore, you might have applications in your list with two different deadlines for evaluation. Please respect all deadlines, as we will need to re-assign applications that were not assessed by the date featured on the platform.

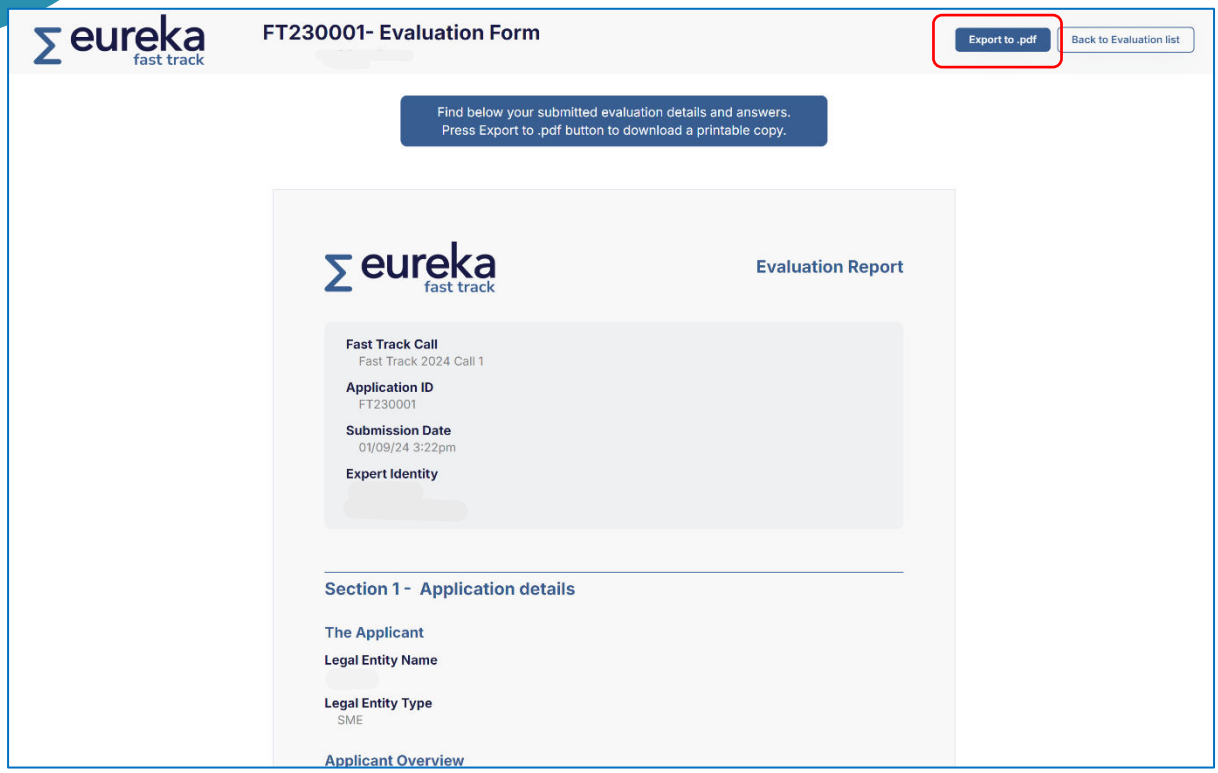
Individual evaluation forms (covering one application) feature three sections: Section 1 covers the application details, while Sections 2 and 3 will need to be filled in with your assessment under the Excellence and Impact criteria, along with their individual sub-criteria. For every sub-criterion, you will need to provide a score between 1 and 100, as well as a justification for your score in the dedicated sections on the form. You can only submit your assessment once all fields in Sections 2 and 3 have been filled.

The left-hand-side **navigation bar** allows you to move between sections

The **submit button** becomes active when all required fields are filled



Once you have submitted your assessment, you will have the option to view your submission by clicking on the "View" button in your evaluation list. The platform then offers you the option to export your assessment in PDF format, through the "Export to .pdf" button.



Pitching to an expert panel: guidelines for panel members

How are panel members selected?

Only experts officially registered in the EIC pool of experts can be appointed as panel members.

Eureka's fast track panel consists of three members and Eureka will select them from the EIC pool. An invitation will be sent in the weeks prior to the start of the evaluation process.

Panel members are selected considering gender and geographical balance. They must be free from any conflict of interest (as defined previously in this document) and are under the obligation of declaring any conflict of interest as soon as it arises. Panel members cannot also participate as expert evaluators in the *Evaluation by three independent experts* step within the same call.

What is my role as a panel member?

The panel conducts an online interview, or pitching session, with each applicant that successfully passed the evaluation by three independent experts and scored high enough to qualify for the pitching sessions.

Prior to the pitching sessions, panel members receive access to all project documentation for all applications included in the interviews:

- the full application submitted by applicants, including the pitch deck that applicants will use to pitch their business idea during the interview,
- the assessments produced by the three independent experts, including their scores and comments.

During the pitching session, the panel listen to the applicant's presentation, ask them questions about their application, and provide them with feedback about strengths and weaknesses of their application, including any suggestions on how to make improvements. **Feedback will be provided "on the spot", during the session itself.**

After all pitching sessions have been concluded, the panel will make a GO/ NO GO decision on each application; only the applications that receive a GO will be invited to the second stage (full proposal) of the EIC Accelerator.

Only a maximum number of 20 Fast Track applicants per year can be awarded access to the EIC Accelerator full proposal stage and can therefore receive a GO from the panel. The maximum number of awardees is established prior to each call and can vary from call to call.

Structure of the pitching sessions and panel's assessment

Pitching sessions will be held online over a period of between one and three days, depending on the number of applications that progress to this step.

Applicants are allowed to have up to 2 company representatives in the pitching session, preferably from their executive team.

A pitching session lasts between 25 and 40 minutes, divided as follows:

- During the first 10 minutes, applicants pitch their business and idea to the panel, using the pitch deck that they submitted as attachment to their application form.
- During the next 15 to 30 minutes, the panel ask questions to the company, to clarify or add detail on outstanding points, and provide them with feedback on their application.

The panel may focus the interview on any element of the application based on the evaluation performed by the three independent experts, details from the interview itself, and the panel's own considerations.

While keeping in mind the EIC Accelerator criteria, the three EIC experts on the panel will advise the pitching team on how their proposal can be improved, both with regards to their application and to their presentation. The tone will be positive and the aim is to focus on things that the team can realistically change. Suggestions for areas to consider are included below.

Area	Points of potential constructive feedback
Market opportunity, risks and competition	Size of the market Market disruption/creation Timing it right: responding to risks and competition
Business model	Improving the business model and the commercialization strategy Scale-up potential
Idea maturity	Technological and business maturity

Pitch	Presentation impact Delivery of the pitch

After the conclusion of the pitching sessions, the panel will make a GO/NO GO decision in line with the evaluation criteria and the evaluation framework below.

Criterion	Sub-criteria	Decision
Excellence	Is the proposed innovation highly novel, deep tech breakthrough compared to existing solutions? Is there sufficient demonstration that the innovation has completed all aspects of TRL 5 (validation in a relevant environment for the application of the technology) and therefore the innovation is currently at TRL 6? Is the innovation at the cutting edge of new market, societal or technological trends?	If the panel believes that the overall idea is outstanding and it has potential to become an excellent project with high impact in the market, **GO**. If the panel believes that the idea requires significant improvement before it can have an impact on the market, **NO GO.**
Impact	Is the innovation better than what the competition proposes, and is the solution bringing sufficient added value to trigger demand from potential customers? Does the innovation have the potential to develop new markets or significantly transform existing ones? Will the innovation, if successfully commercialised, achieve positive broader societal, economic, environmental or climate impacts?	

Confidentiality

The Eureka Secretariat

As a general rule, only the employees of Eureka and the national funding bodies in Eureka's network can match specific evaluations to the experts who wrote them. We do not comment on the status of individual experts, and if you contact us and request a reference, we will only confirm whether or not you have performed any evaluations; we will be unable to provide an endorsement of your abilities, and we will not publicly acknowledge your role in the evaluation of a particular project.

The Eureka Fast Track, like most publicly financed initiatives, is subject to performance reviews. Undertakings of this nature require the disclosure of certain information to organisations or individuals. Within this context, it may be possible to identify the specific work of specific individuals. Such information may be available to:

ORGANISATIONS:

- the European Commission and its executive agencies,
- auditors of the above organisations, and
- organisations charged with analysing the effectiveness of the Eureka Fast Track.

Experts are required to treat information contained within applications with the strictest confidentiality and to declare any potential conflict of interest.

The expert

Experts are required to treat information contained within applications with the strictest confidentiality and to declare any potential conflict of interest. The expert is responsible for ensuring and maintaining confidentiality of any data, documents or other material related to the evaluation process, during and after completion of the evaluation. In the case of a breach of those obligations, Eureka reserves the right to suspend any payment or compensation, and in serious cases, to undertake legal action.

Use of generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The use of generative AI is prohibited in the evaluation of the application content. Using AI in the evaluation means sharing information from applications with third parties, and this is a breach of confidentiality. In the case of a breach of confidentiality due to use of AI, Eureka reserves the right to suspend any payment or compensation, and in serious cases, to undertake legal action**.**

Eureka reserves the right to carry out random sampling on submitted evaluations to ensure that there are no evaluations which have used AI capabilities to make the evaluation.

Please note that the use of generative AI in the application preparation is *not* prohibited. Therefore, applicants **cannot** be penalised in the expert assessment for the use of AI. Please note that it is the applicant's responsibility to ensure the content in the submitted application is factually correct and within required legal standards.

Information Security

Electronic submission of application documents

The electronic submission of applications uses https, which encrypts and decrypts the requests and information between the applicant's browser and the server to which applications are submitted, using a Secure Socket Layer (SSL). SSL allows an SSL-enabled server to authenticate itself to an SSL-enabled client and vice versa, enabling the machine to establish an encrypted connection.

Data Protection Act

The Eureka Association is situated in the Kingdom of Belgium and governed by Belgian and EU data protection laws. More information can be found (in English, Dutch, and French) on http://www.privacycommission.be.

Any queries on issues relating to data protection should be addressed to:

Eureka Association, Avenue de Tervueren 2, 1040 Brussels, Belgium or to privacy@eurekanetwork.org.