Introduction to the European Defence Fund (EDF)

Understanding Opportunities and Participation Requirements

Dr Orestis Mavropoulos

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Introduction to EDF

- The European Defence Fund (EDF) is a financial instrument established by the European Union to foster an innovative and competitive defence industrial base.

- It aims to enhance the EU's strategic autonomy by supporting collaborative defence research and development projects among Member States and associated countries.

- The fund is part of a broader strategy to improve interoperability and reduce duplication in European defence capabilities.

Objectives of the EDF

- The EDF seeks to promote collaborative projects that strengthen the EU's defence technological and industrial base.

- It finances actions throughout the entire lifecycle of defence products, from **research** to **development**, with an emphasis on innovation, cross-border cooperation, and strategic capability gaps.

- It also supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), start-ups, and new entrants in the defence sector.

Structure and Budget of the EDF

- Under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021–2027, the EDF has a budget of €8 billion.

- Approximately one third is allocated to collaborative defence research and two thirds to capability development projects.

- Annual work programmes define specific priorities and calls for proposals, aligned with the EU's capability development plan and coordinated annual review on defence.

Results of the EDF 2023 Calls for Proposals

KEY FIGURES OF EDF 2023

High interest from EU defence industry: **236 proposals received** covering **all topics** published

670 unique legal entities from 26 Member States and Norway

Strong SME involvement: **42% of all entities selected** with **18% of total funding to SMEs**

EDF 2023

17 entities from 8 Member States on average participating in each project

14 projects are **linked to PESCO**

The 2023 Calls of EDF will fund **61 projects** for a Union funding of **€1.15 billion**

Image source: Link

Results of the EDF related to Greece

- Approximately 80 million of grants have been received by beneficiaries based in Greece

- Greek based companies such as INTRACOM DEFENSE AE, ISD, SATWAYS, SPACE HELLAS are leading the European efforts with their number of project participation and coordination

- Total of 75 beneficiaries have participated so far
  - 72% are Industry beneficiaries
  - 16% are Academic beneficiaries
  - 57% are SMEs

Participation Requirements

- Participation in EDF-funded actions must involve at least three entities from at least three different Member States or associated countries.

- These entities must collaborate on the same project. Additional emphasis is placed on geographic diversity, cross-border integration, and the inclusion of SMEs.

- Projects must be framed around cooperation, not duplication, and should address defence-specific objectives.

- Project must demonstrate **Financial** and **Operational** Capacity

Eligibility Conditions

- Only entities established in the EU or associated countries and controlled by them are eligible for EDF funding.

- Companies with non-EU ownership may participate under specific conditions, provided they ensure no unauthorised access to sensitive information and comply with EU security interests.

- Eligible activities span from early research to prototype development and testing, provided they do not receive double funding from other EU instruments.

Types of Activities Funded

- The EDF supports a range of defence-related activities, including feasibility studies, design and prototyping, testing, qualification and certification of defence products.

- It promotes disruptive technologies and open calls for innovative solutions, particularly those that have the potential to improve the EU's future defence capabilities.
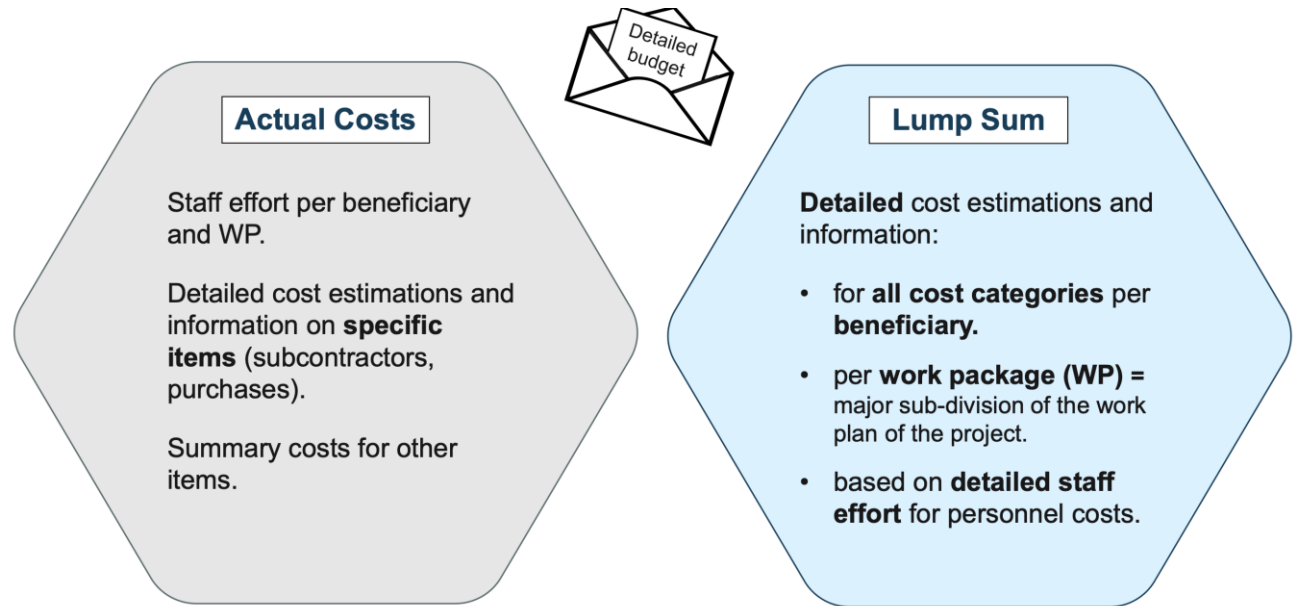
Actual Costs

Staff effort per beneficiary and WP.

Detailed cost estimations and information on **specific items** (subcontractors, purchases).

Summary costs for other items.

Detailed budget

Lump Sum

Detailed cost estimations and information:

- for **all cost categories** per **beneficiary.**
- per **work package (WP)** = major sub-division of the work plan of the project.
- based on **detailed staff effort** for personnel costs.

Image Source: Link

2025 EDF Work programme

- Allocation of allocating €1.065 billion
- Addresses **33** topics in total, organized around
    - 7 thematic calls for proposals
    - 2 non-thematic calls for proposals
    - 2 actions in support of the Alliance for Defence Medical Countermeasures

2025 Topics [Link]

Categories of actions	Research call topics 16	Development call topics 16
1. Defence medical support, CBRN, biotech and human factors	EDF-2025-RA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP	EDF-2025-DA-SGA-MCBRN-MCM-STEP
	EDF-2025-RA-MCBRN-ATE	
2. Information superiority	EDF-2025-RA-C4ISR-MIDS-STEP	
3. Advanced passive and active sensors		EDF-2025-DA-SENS-MB4DR-STEP
		EDF-2025-DA-SENS-IRD-STEP
4. Cyber	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-CYBER-3RAV-STEP	EDF-2025-DA-CDOC-STEP
5. Space		EDF-2025-DA-SI-SPACE-3OS
		EDF-2025-DA-SPACE-SBISR
6. Digital transformation	EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDP-STEP	
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-CHALLENGE-DIGIT-HAIDO	
7. Energy resilience and environmental transition	EDF-2025-RA-ENERENV-PSR	EDF-2025-DA-ENERENV-APEM
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SI-ENERENV-NH2PS-STEP	
8. Materials and components	EDF-2025-RA-MATCOMP-CDA-STEP	
9. Air combat		EDF-2025-DA-AIR-CAC
		EDF-2025-DA-AIR-EPE
10. Air and missile defence		
11. Ground combat	EDF-2025-RA-GROUND-CBC	EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-FM2LP
		EDF-2025-DA-GROUND-LCC-STEP
		EDF-2025-DA-SI-GROUND-DAMM
12. Force protection and mobility		EDF-2025-DA-PROTMOB-SS
13. Naval combat		EDF-2025-DA-NAVAL-DSNCC-STEP
14. Underwater warfare	EDF-2025-RA-UWW-SOASW	EDF-2025-DA-UWW-AUWN-STEP
15. Simulation and training	EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-DAFAS	
	EDF-2025-RA-SIMTRAIN-LVC-STEP	
16. Disruptive technologies	EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-GDET	
	EDF-2025-LS-RA-DIS-NT	
Out of the scope of categories of actions	EDF-2025-LS-RA-SMERO-NT	EDF-2025-LS-DA-SME-NT
	EDF-2025-CSA-NFP	

EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS)

- EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS) is part of the EDF 2025 Work Programme.
- It includes dedicated calls specifically for **SMEs**
- It supports the integration of outcomes from other EU programmes through **spin-in initiatives**.
- Start-ups and SMEs can benefit from cascade funding mechanisms, which are open to Ukrainian entities.
- EUDIS 2025 will also provide support services including:
  - EUDIS Business Accelerator
  - Matchmaking opportunities
  - SME Coaching
  - Funding for the organisation of the EUDIS Defence Hackathon.

Conclusion and Key Takeaways

- The EDF represents a significant opportunity for entities across the EU to jointly shape the future of European defence.

- By meeting eligibility and administrative requirements, participants can access substantial funding while contributing to EU strategic autonomy.

- Proactive engagement, early preparation for calls, and strategic partnerships are essential for success in the EDF framework.

Thank you for your time.

Q&A