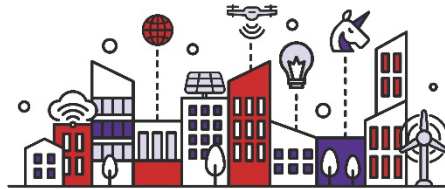
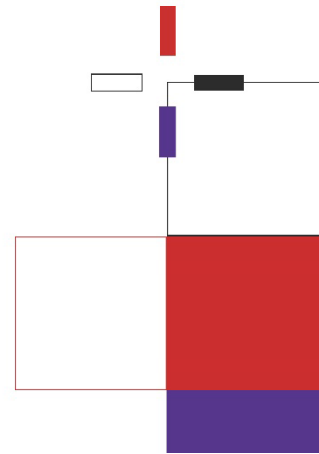
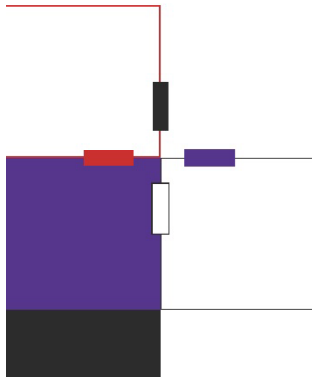




#iCapitalAwards



**THE EUROPEAN
CAPITAL OF
INNOVATION**



Horizon Europe

Call for a prize — Rules of Contest

The European Capital of Innovation Awards 2026

(iCapital)

HORIZON-EIC-2025-PRIZE-2-01

HORIZON-EIC-2025-PRIZE-2-02

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EUROPEAN INNOVATION COUNCIL AND SMEs EXECUTIVE AGENCY (EISMEA)

EISMEA I - Innovation Ecosystems, SMP / Entrepreneurship and Consumers
I.01 EU and place-based Innovation Ecosystems

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS – RULES OF CONTEST

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0. Introduction

This is a call (contest)¹ for an EU recognition **prize** in the field of innovation under the **Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#)²),
- The basic act (Horizon Europe Regulation(EU) 2021/695³).

The call is launched in accordance with the [2025 European Innovation Council \(EIC\) Work Programme](#)⁴ and is managed by the **European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency** ('Agency').

We invite you to read the **call documentation** on the Funding & Tenders Portal Topic page carefully, and in particular these Rules of Contest as well as the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) (Rules of Contest) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - available budget and timetable (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents, sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - other conditions (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the procedures to register and submit applications online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal').

¹ For ease of reference and consistency on the Funding & Tenders Portal, the terms 'call', 'project' and 'participant' are used as equivalent to 'contest', 'application' or 'contestants/applicants'.

² Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>.

³ Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013 (OJ L 170/1 of 12.05.2021), ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/695/oj>, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/795 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 February 2024.

⁴ Commission Implementing Decision C(2024)7451 of 29 October 2024 on the financing of the European Innovation Council component of the Specific Programme implementing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027) and on the adoption of the Work Programme for 2025.

1. Background

Cities and/or towns⁵ are faced with most severe societal and sustainability challenges, but do also have the means to develop, promote, and apply effective innovative solutions. They are the place where ideas, people, public and private actors meet and engage to improve the quality of life of citizens. They are the natural playground where breakthrough innovations flourish and nourish. They provide ground to experiment new technologies and products in a real environment. This allows to examine how innovations interact with people, integrate into daily life, and deliver tangible value to communities.

With their capacity to connect people, places, public and private actors, cities can substantially boost innovation in Europe while ensuring a better future for all. New approaches to undertake and deploy innovative practices are gaining support, making the shift from traditional top-down schemes to more open and bottom-up practices.

2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities– Expected results

Objectives

The traditional city innovation ecosystem is opening up to new models of innovation engaging citizens, ensuring their involvement in the decision-making process, and reinforcing democracy and rights. An increasing number of cities are acting as test beds for innovation and run people-driven initiatives to find solutions to societal challenges, such as climate change, digitalisation, sustainable growth or social cohesion, including through new endeavours such as nature-based solutions and EU Missions.

The public domain is particularly challenged with finding effective ways to ensure the mainstreaming of these practices into the ordinary urban development process. Successful practices are particularly crucial to enhance the city's capacity to attract and retain new resources, funds and talents to stimulate the growth of breakthrough innovations. Moreover, collaboration and strengthening synergies among innovation ecosystems boost cities' development and resilience to tackle urban challenges and inspires many other cities follow a similar path.

The publication of the Competitiveness Compass⁶ announced the development of an EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy. The Strategy aims at creating a friendly environment for young companies to start and expand, by improving framework conditions for startups and scaleups in order to close the innovation gap.

For this reason, the European Capital of Innovation Awards will recognize the cities' ability to foster local innovation ecosystems and an innovation-friendly environment that makes it simpler, cheaper and faster for innovative companies to grow and scale up.

Expected results

The European Capital of Innovation Awards aim to **champion** inspiring cases of municipality-enabled innovation flourishing in cities. The Awards are a **prestigious**

⁵ For the purposes of this call, the term "town" or "city" is used to refer to a geographical subnational jurisdiction ("local administrative unit") such as a town or a city that is governed by a local government as the legal entity of public administration, understanding that the institutions of local governments may vary from country to country and terminology used in national contexts may differ. See also the definition under section 6. Eligibility, footnote (7).

⁶ Published on 29 January 2025, '[A Competitiveness Compass for the EU | European Research Area Platform](#)'.

recognition for city administrators who are courageous enough to open up their governance practices to experimentation, to boost innovation by all means, to be a role model for other cities, and to push the boundaries of technology for the benefit of their citizens.

In addition to the monetary reward, the prize brings **high visibility** in the form of renewed public interest and increased media coverage.

The expected results include the recognition of the most innovative city ecosystems through a European prize. The award will raise the profile of the cities that have developed and implemented innovative policies; established frameworks that boost breakthrough innovation; enhanced the city attractiveness towards investors, industry, enterprises and talents; helped to open up connections and strengthen links with other cities, promoting the replication of best practices in the innovation field; enhanced citizens' involvement in the decision-making process; and supported cities resilience.

Categories

The Awards will feature two categories:

A) European Capital of Innovation 2026 category:

- **One winner:** the winner (ranked 1st) will be named the **European Capital of Innovation 2026** and will receive a **prize of EUR 1 million**. The prize is dedicated to **recognise** the winning city's innovative practices, **raise its international profile**, and enhance its capacity as a widely recognised **role model city** for urban innovation.
- **Two runners-up cities:** top two cities (ranked 2nd and 3rd) will be awarded each a **prize of EUR 100 000**.

B) European Rising Innovative City 2026 category:

- **One winner:** the winner (ranked 1st) will be named the **European Rising Innovative City 2026** and will receive a **prize of EUR 500 000**. The prize is dedicated to **recognise** the winning city's innovative practices, **raise its international profile**, and enhance its capacity as a widely recognised **role model city** for urban innovation.
- **Two runners-up cities:** top two cities (ranked 2nd and 3rd) will be awarded each a **prize of EUR 50 000**.

3. Available budget

One first prize for the winner of the European Capital of Innovation category of EUR 1 000 000 (ranked 1st), and two runner-up prizes of EUR 100 000 each for the top two cities (ranked 2nd and 3rd).

One first prize for the winner of the European Rising Innovative City category of EUR 500 000 (ranked 1st), and two runner-up prizes of EUR 50 000 each for the top two cities (ranked 2nd and 3rd).

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines	
Call opening	20 March 2025
<u>Deadline for submission</u>	<u>18 June 2025 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)</u>
Evaluation	June - October 2025
Information on evaluation results & Award	November – December 2025

5. Admissibility

Applications must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Applications must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section). Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Applications (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Applications must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application form Part A — contains administrative information about the applicant organisations (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application form Part B — contains the technical description of the application (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded as PDF in the system*)
- Mandatory annex (*to be uploaded as PDF file*): Each application must contain a **specific endorsement to apply, signed by the city Mayor** (or the equivalent highest political representative) of maximum 2 pages. The required level of representation has to be respected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible, printable**.

Applications are limited to maximum **30 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, bank account validation, ethics review, declaration of honour, etc*).

- ❗ For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants

In order to be eligible, the applicant has to be a city⁷ and must comply with the following criteria:

1. The candidate cities must be located in one of the EU Member States or [Associated Countries to Horizon Europe](#).
2. For the category of **European Capital of Innovation**, the candidate city must have a minimum population of 250 000 inhabitants. In countries where there are no such cities, the city coming closest to 250 000 inhabitants is eligible to apply for the European Capital of Innovation category, provided that it has a minimum population of 50 000 inhabitants and that the city is not applying at the same time for the European Rising Innovative City category.

For the category **European Rising Innovative City**, the candidate city must have a population comprised between 50 000 and 249 999 inhabitants⁸. In countries where there are no such cities, the largest city by number of inhabitants is eligible.

3. Winners of former European Capital of Innovation Awards editions, as well as runners-up of the edition 2024 are not eligible. This does not apply to previous finalist cities.
4. Applicants that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.

Joint applications by a group of applicants are not accepted and will be rejected as ineligible.

All applicants must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before the call deadline — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, you will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Specific cases

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their

⁷ A city is a Local Administrative Unit or a group of Local Administrative Units where a majority of the population lives in an urban centre of at least 50 000 inhabitants. Local Administrative Units and their respective population figures should be those set out in the latest available validated or partially validated LAU correspondence table published by Eurostat (Local administrative units (LAU) - Eurostat (europa.eu)) at the time of the submission of the application. Local authorities may represent one city defined as a Local Administrative Unit, or a "greater city" or Metropolitan region, taking account of Functional Urban Areas when relevant. Legal entities with separate legal personality from cities, even if founded and funded by the cities, are not eligible to apply.

⁸ For population data in both categories, Eurostat will be the source of reference. For countries not covered by Eurostat, the Agency will perform specific checks when assessing the eligibility criteria, and might ask any concerned cities to prove they comply with this requirement.

representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons⁹.

Third countries currently negotiating association agreements to Horizon Europe

— Applicants established in third countries with ongoing negotiations may participate in the call and can receive a prize if the Horizon Europe association agreement with the third country concerned applies at the time when the award decision is taken (see Annex 2 General conditions- B Eligibility in the EIC Work Programme 2025).

EU restrictive measures — *Special rules apply for entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*¹⁰. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity and can NOT receive a prize.

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092¹¹. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity and can NOT receive a prize. Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

- ❗ For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Geographic location (target countries)

Applications must relate to activities in an EU Member State or an [Associated Country to Horizon Europe](#).

Ethics and values

Activities must comply with the highest ethical standards and the applicable EU, international and national law on ethical principles.

Moreover, they must respect basic EU values (such as respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and human rights, including the rights of minorities).

The activities must comply with:

- ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity), and
- applicable international, EU and national law.

⁹ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁰ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

¹¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94). ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/req/2020/2092/oj>

Applications involving ethics issues will have to undergo an ethics review to authorise funding. Applications that did not respect the above ethical principles and standards cannot be awarded a prize.

Security

Applications involving EU classified information must comply with Decision [2015/444](#)¹² and its implementing rules. Applications that are too security-sensitive cannot be awarded a prize.

7. Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate¹³:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct¹⁴ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

¹² See Commission Decision 2015/544/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53. ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/444/oj>

¹³ See Articles 138 and 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁴ 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of intellectual property rights (IPR); attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the prize)

- intentionally and without proper justification resisted¹⁵ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO), or the European Court of Auditors (ECA).

Applicants will also be refused if it turns out that¹⁶:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information,
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

Applications will be subject to a formal evaluation by a **jury** in each category.

If there are more than 60 applications in one category, there will be a **pre-selection** phase in that category to select the best 60 applications to pass to the jury review. Otherwise, all eligible applications will pass directly to jury review.

The pre-selection panel and jury usually have a different composition, but jury members may participate in the pre-selection panel.

The pre-selection panel/jury will evaluate each application against the award criteria.

For applications with the same score, the pre-selection panel/jury will determine a **priority order** according to the following approach: the score for the criterion No 5 will be given a weight of 2 and the score for criterion No 2 will be given a weight of 1.5.

If two or more applications still tie for any rank or category at the pre-selection phase, those applications will be admitted to the next phase of the evaluation.

If two or more applications still tie for any rank or category at the jury review, those applications will be admitted to the hearings.

The six best ranked applications in each category will be invited for a **hearing** with the jury in Brussels. This hearing may take place remotely.

If two or more applications still tie for any rank or category, the prize will be equally divided and awarded to all applications with the same score.

On the basis of the evaluation by the jury (and after the mandatory checks: *ethics review, security scrutiny, legal entity validation, non-exclusion, double funding and plagiarism, etc*), the awarding authority will decide on the award of the prize.

¹⁵ 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation, check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

¹⁶ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

All applications will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful applications will be awarded the prize; the not successful ones will be rejected.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications are deemed to have been accessed (and received) 10 days after sending and that deadlines will be counted from then (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)).

9. Award criteria

If admissible and eligible, the applications will be evaluated and ranked against the following **award criteria**:

- **award criterion 1: Experimenting** – innovative concepts, processes, tools, and governance models proving the city's commitment to act as a test-bed for innovative practices, while ensuring the mainstreaming of these practices into the ordinary urban development process.

The applicant is expected to provide details on concrete results of the showcased initiatives as those will be evaluated by the jury.

- **award criterion 2: Escalating** – promoting the acceleration of the different actors of the local innovation ecosystem, supporting growth of highly innovative start-ups and SMEs, establishing innovation friendly legal framework, creating an environment that stimulates growth and attracts private and public investments, resources, diversity and talents; and driving innovation demand through efficient innovation public procurement.

The applicant is expected to provide details on concrete results of the showcased initiatives as those will be evaluated by the jury.

- **award criterion 3: Ecosystem building** – unlocking cities potential as local innovation ecosystem facilitators by fostering synergies among different innovation ecosystem players, from public, industry, startups, civil society, citizens to academia, to contribute to the development of an innovation ecosystem within the city.

The applicant is expected to provide details on concrete results of the showcased initiatives as those will be evaluated by the jury.

- **award criterion 4: Expanding** – acting as a role model for other cities by supporting the dissemination and replication of tested solutions that boost the local innovation ecosystem; by promoting mutual learning, knowledge transfer and capacity building; and by enhancing cooperation and synergies between cities that are front-runners in driving the local innovation ecosystem, and those that are still exploring and testing their role as innovation enablers.

The applicant is expected to provide details on concrete results of the showcased initiatives as those will be evaluated by the jury.

- **award criterion 5: City innovative vision** – applicants should demonstrate their long-term strategic vision/plan, highlighting the innovative initiatives that have positively contributed to the transformation of the city and which will further support the development of a sustainable and resilient innovation ecosystem ensuring the green and digital transition.

The applicant is expected to provide details on concrete results of the showcased initiatives and to provide information on how all showcased activities follow the innovative vision/strategy as those will be evaluated by the jury.

- **award criterion 6: Citizens’ rights** – the use of innovation to strengthen democracy, to protect citizens' rights, to foster social cohesion, and ensure integration with a special view on minorities, gender, disability, or race.

The applicant is expected to provide details on concrete results of the showcased initiatives as those will be evaluated by the jury.

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Experimenting	6	10
Escalating	6	10
Ecosystem building	6	10
Expanding	6	10
City innovative vision	6	10
Citizens’ rights	6	10
Overall (pass) scores	36	60

Maximum points: 60 points.

Individual thresholds: 6/10 points.

Overall threshold: 36 points.

Applications must pass both all the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold. The prize will be awarded to the applications ranked 1st, 2nd, and 3rd with the best scores in each category. Other applications will be rejected.

10. Other conditions

Payment arrangements

The prize money will be paid to the prize winners after the award ceremony, provided all the requested documents have been submitted.

Communication — Dissemination — Visibility of funding

Prize winners must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective

manner.

Communication activities related to the prize (*including media interviews, press statements, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.*), must acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages, where appropriate):



Funded by the
European Union



Co-funded by the
European Union



Funded by the
European Union



Co-funded by the
European Union

The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text, except for the iCapital visual identity.

Apart from the emblem and the iCapital visual identity, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support. The Agency will provide the winning cities of each category with Communication guidelines and may request the iCapital visual identity to be used within publications and events as necessary.

When displayed in association with other logos (*e.g. of winners or sponsors*), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of these obligations, the winners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from the awarding authority. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

Any communication or dissemination activity related to the prize must use factually accurate information.

Moreover, it must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or of the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the awarding authority can be held responsible for them.”

The winning cities (ranked 1st in each category) will be invited to sign a **declaration of intent** to commit on a series of actions to promote iCapital during the year¹⁷.

IPR – Rights of use

The awarding authority does not obtain ownership of the results produced in the context of the prize.

The awarding authority has the right to use non-sensitive information relating to the prize and materials and documents received from the winners (*such as pictures or audio-visual material, in paper or electronic form*) for information, communication, dissemination and publicity purposes.

Photos and videos taken by the awarding authority either in preparation of the award ceremony or during the award ceremony are the sole property of the awarding authority.

Additional communication, dissemination and exploitation obligations

Following the announcement of finalist cities after the hearings, all finalist cities will be requested to provide pictures and a one-minute video displaying the city’s innovative practices in an attractive way. The European Commission and the Agency will use those videos and pictures at the award ceremony and other relevant occasions to promote the prize and the finalist/awarded cities.

Checks, audits and investigations

The awarding authority, the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (EPPO) and the European Court of Auditors (ECA) may carry out checks, audits and investigations in relation to the prize¹⁸.

¹⁷ Declaration of intent will be signed on a voluntary basis, providing detailed information about the use of the iCapital visual identity, the organisation and participation of events such as the opening and / or award ceremonies, info days, or the knowledge sharing with other cities, among other actions.

¹⁸ For the powers of OLAF, EPPO and ECA, see Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 883/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 September 2013 concerning investigations conducted by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1073/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (Euratom) No 1074/1999 (OJ L 248, 18/09/2013, p. 1), Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/1996 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities (OJ L 292, 15/11/1996, p. 2), Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office (‘the EPPO’) and Article 287 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and Article 263 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

Withdrawal of the prize – Recovery of undue amounts

The awarding authority may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made, if it finds out that:

- false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it,
- the prize winners were not eligible or should have been excluded, or
- the prize winners are in serious breach of their obligations under these Rules of Contest.

11. How to submit an application

All applications must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

You can access the Portal [here](#), or by clicking 'Apply now' on the official prize webpage.

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EULogin user account](#).

Once you have an EULogin account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the application

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section.

Submit your application in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations. Fill it in directly online.
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the application. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file.
- Annexes (if any, *see section 5*). Upload them as PDF files.

The application must keep to the **page limits** (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the application might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The application must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and applications can no longer be submitted.

Once the application is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your application has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the

Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the application (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

Additional information can be found:

- [Online Manual](#)
- [European Capital of Innovation Awards website](#)
- [EIC FAQs](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates.

You are also encouraged to visit the official EIC prizes [website](#) for additional information.

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: EISMEA-ICAPITAL@ec.europa.eu.

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc.*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all applicants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all applicants must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per applicant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **No double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double funding from the EU budget. Applications that have already received an EU or Euratom prize cannot receive a second prize for the same activities.
- **Resubmission** — Applications may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission. For first past the post prizes with cut-off dates, applications can be changed and re-submitted until the cut-off date; the re-submission may however let you use your position as first in place.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this these Rules of Contest (and the documents they refer to). Applications that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire application will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — The awarding authority may cancel the contest or decide not to award the prize — without any obligation to compensate participants (*e.g. no applications, jury cannot determine winner, winner is not eligible or must be excluded, objectives have already been achieved, etc*). In this case, you will be informed via a call update.
- **Language** — You can submit your application in any official EU language. However, for reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU prizes awarded and the winners (name, address and amount awarded) is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — Any processing of personal data in the context of this prize will be done in accordance with Regulation [2018/1725](#). It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your application (and subsequent management of your prize and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication). Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).

By submitting the application, all applicants accept that the awarding authority will publish information on the finalists and winners.