

# Early-Stage Investment Mechanism

Information session for participants

20/1/2026



# Session agenda

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## Presentation (30 mins)

- Context and call overview
- Sectors and budget allocation
- Priorities of the call
- Eligibility requirements
- Evaluation process
- Timeline and deadlines

## Q&A (90 mins)

Please submit questions via the chat

All questions will be answered and published in written format to ensure equal treatment of all participants

For detailed information, please refer to the Guidelines for Grant Applicants.

# Strategic context

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## Global Gateway

**EU strategy to address global infrastructure investment gaps** by aligning partner-country needs with EU strategic interests and promoting sustainable development.

## Role of EU companies

EU companies have the expertise and technology to address this gap but often lack **financial tools to de-risk initial phases** and make projects bankable.

## New instrument

**Early-Stage Investment Mechanism:** direct EU financial support to mobilize private sector know-how, reduce project risk, and unlock sustainable infrastructure investments aligned with EU standards and Global Gateway objectives.

# Objective of the call for proposals

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## Global objective

Support **increased EU private sector investment in strategic infrastructure projects**, thereby fostering the green transition of partner countries and promoting their socio-economic development

## Specific objectives:

1. Increase the **involvement of EU private sector** in preparing sustainable infrastructure projects
2. Enhance the **quality and bankability of infrastructure projects** in strategic sectors
3. Facilitate the **implementation of sustainable infrastructure projects** aligned with beneficiary countries' priorities and EU strategic interest and policy

# Call for Proposals at a glance

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TOTAL BUDGET

**€40.58M**

GRANT RANGE

**€0.5–2M**

ACTION DURATION

**12–36  
months**

LEAD APPLICANT

**Established  
in EU**

# Five lots – strategic sectors

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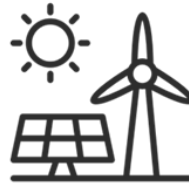
Lot 1  
Transport

€7.800.000



Lot 2  
Artificial  
intelligence

€4.000.000



Lot 3  
Energy

€14.283.770



Lot 4  
Urban  
development

€4.500.000



Lot 5  
Railways  
LAC

€10.000.000

If the allocation indicated for a specific lot cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the contracting authority reserves the **right to reallocate** the remaining funds **to (an)other lot(s)**.

# Five lots – strategic sectors

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Focus on **pre-investment actions** that allow improved decision-making and guide the next steps leading to **higher-quality and bankable investments** in line with European values.

**Indicative list** of sub-sectors and early-stage project generation actions is provided for guidance purposes only and is not prescriptive.

Applicants are encouraged to propose and justify additional sub-sectors and pre-investment actions aligned with the objectives and priorities of the call.

# Lot 1: Transport (€7.8M)

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- Railway, tramway & BRT shadow operators
- Port and airport peer support
- E-buses pilot projects
- Smart urban mobility systems
- Renewable and low-carbon fuels
- Road safety and resilient road management
- Innovative road transport solutions

## Lot 2: AI for Green Transition (€4M)

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- Satellite & sensor monitoring: deforestation, biodiversity, disaster early warning
- Predictive maintenance: optimize renewable energy asset performance
- Smart optimization: water and energy distribution using AI algorithms

## Lot 3: Energy (€14.28M)

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- Onshore and offshore wind
- Renewable hydrogen
- Hydroelectric power plants
- Grid modernization
- Electricity transmission and distribution
- Energy efficiency projects
- Geothermal
- Biomass
- Solar manufacturing or assembly
- Batteries manufacturing

# Lot 4: Urban Development (€4.5M)

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- Sustainable and smart cities applications
- Waste management and circular economy
- Water supply, treatment, and wastewater solutions

# Lot 5: Railways in LAC (€10M)

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Support to origination and structuring of railway and tramway projects\*:

- Market analysis and research
- Strategic planning and project development
- Project appraisal
- Project development and structuring
- Preliminary design work

\*See Guidelines for the list of priority projects

# Priorities of this Call for Proposals – 360° approach

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**Alignment with  
SDGs and Global  
Gateway**



**Alignment with  
beneficiary country's  
priorities**



**Link to EU  
strategic interest**



**Local engagement**



**EU know-how  
transfer**



**Development  
impact**



**Sustainability**



**Financial viability**



**Multiplier effect  
for EU industry**

Overall objective of the call: support increased EU private sector investment in strategic infrastructure projects

# Eligibility: Applicants

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## **LEAD APPLICANT (Mandatory)**

- Legal person established in EU Member State
- Private or public entity: startups, SMEs, large companies, consortia, JVs
- Government-linked companies, SOEs, PPPs
- Research institutions & universities (Lot 2 only)

## **Cannot be Lead Applicant**

- State authorities, ministries, public agencies
- Regional and local authorities
- International organizations

# Eligibility: Applicants

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## CO-APPLICANT & AFFILIATED ENTITIES (Optional)

**Co-applicants:** local entities (including state authorities, regional/local authorities, international organizations), research institutions

**Affiliated entities:** entities with structural link (subsidiaries, parent companies, sister companies, network members)

# Eligibility: Applicants

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## Submission limits per Lead Applicant

### Submissions

Max 2 applications **per lot**

### Awards

Max 1 grant **per lot**, max 3 total

## Co-applicant & Affiliated entity rules

- **Co-applicant participation:** max 2 applications per lot, max 3 grants total
- **Lead applicant flexibility:** can be co-applicant or affiliated entity in other applications simultaneously
- **Consortium agreement:** all co-applicants must sign mandate (Annex A.2, Section 5)
- **Affiliated entities:** must sign affiliated entity statement (not beneficiaries, but costs eligible)

**Consortium structure:** Each actor should have a single role (lead, co-applicant, affiliated entity, contractor, associate) to avoid conflicts of interest and ensure clarity.

# Eligibility: Actions & Activities

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## Action requirements

- **Duration:** 12–36 months
- **Pre-investment focus** to improve project quality, bankability, and sustainability
- **EU know-how:** innovative solutions adapted to local context, based on EU standards and best practices
- **Scalability & replicability:** multiplier effects, potential to unlock Team Europe investment
- **Complementarity:** avoid duplication, align with existing initiatives
- **Clear, tangible deliverables:** studies, tools, pilots...



## Eligible activities

### Pre-investment

Studies, feasibility analyses, technical assistance, regulatory recommendations, training, master plans

### Pilot Projects

Demonstration projects to test EU business models, technologies, and concepts

# Eligibility: Actions & Activities

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## Location

### **Lots 1 - 3: Transport, AI, Energy**

**Global\* with focus in DG INTPA partner countries (SSA, LAC, Asia-Pacific)**

Min. % of funds allocated to DG INTPA partner countries per lot

### **Lot 4: Urban development**

**Actions must take place in DG INTPA partner countries (SSA, LAC, Asia-Pacific)**

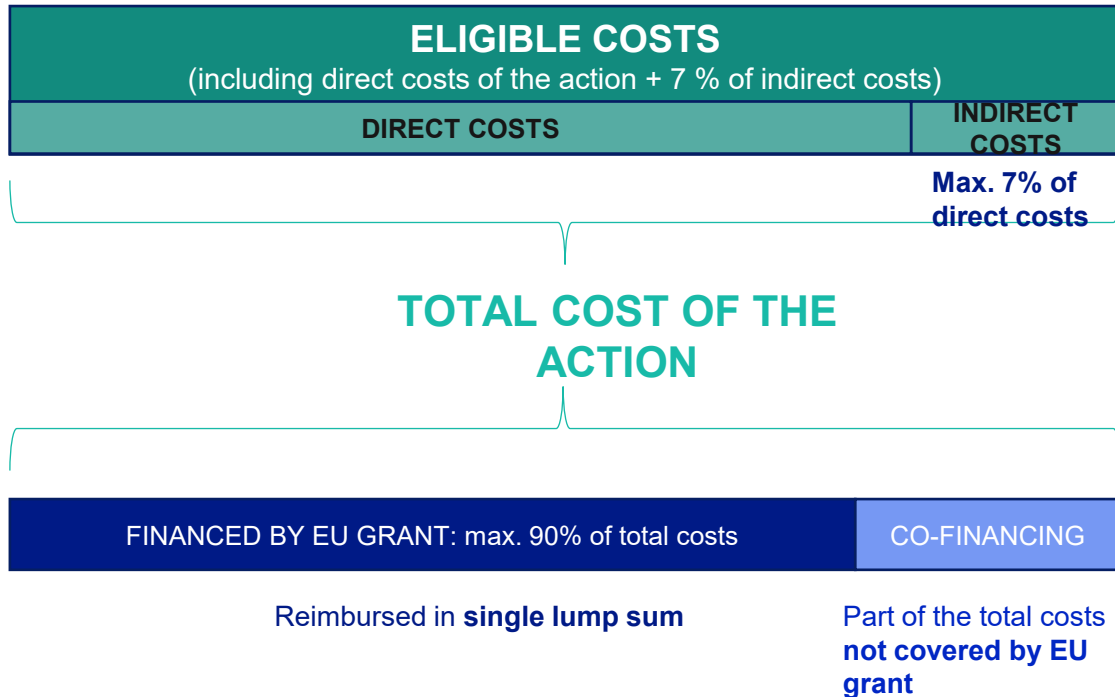
### **Lot 5: Railways in LAC**

**Colombia, Mexico, Costa Rica, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Brazil, Guatemala, Chile, Uruguay**

\* NDICI-eligible countries, including a wide range of third countries across SSA, LAC, Asia and the Pacific, and the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood, as defined in the applicable eligibility rules.

# Eligibility: Costs & Budget structure

## Cost composition



## NON-ELIGIBLE COSTS

- Debts and interest
- Currency exchange losses
- In-kind contributions (except volunteers)
- Staff bonuses
- Land/building purchases (except for direct action implementation)

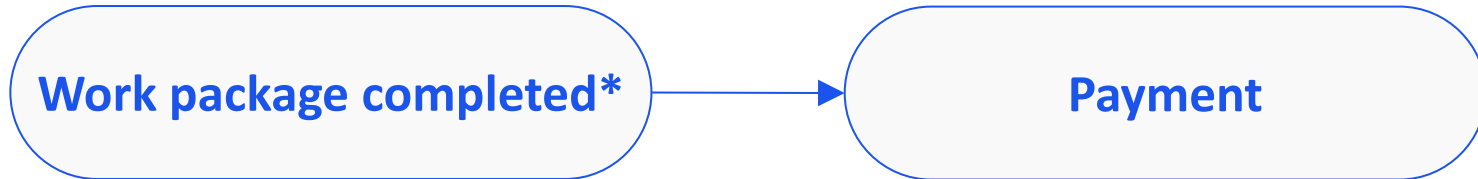
### 3. Expected sources of funding & summary of estimated amount of the action<sup>1</sup>

|   |                   | Amount<br>EUR        | Percentage<br>%      |
|---|-------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| <b>Expected sources</b>   |                   |                      |                      |
| EU/EDF contribution sought in this application <b>(A)</b>   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| <b>CO-FINANCING (1+2+3+4) (B)</b>   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| 1. Other contributions (applicant, other donors etc)  |                   |                      |                      |
| <i>Name</i>   | <i>Conditions</i> | <input type="text"/> |                      |
|   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| 2. Revenue from the action <sup>6</sup>   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| To be inserted if applicable and allowed by the guidelines:   |                   |                      |                      |
| 3. In-kind contributions <sup>7</sup>   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| 4. Volunteers' work <sup>8</sup>  |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| Expected TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS <b>(A)+(B)</b>   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| <b>Estimated amount</b>   |                   |                      |                      |
| Estimated TOTAL ELIGIBLE COSTS <sup>2</sup> <b>(C)</b>  |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| EU/EDF contribution expressed as a percentage of total eligible costs <sup>4</sup> <b>(A/C x 100)</b> |                   |                      | <input type="text"/> |
| To be inserted if applicable and allowed by the guidelines:   |                   |                      |                      |
| Taxes/In-kind contributions <sup>5</sup>  |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| Estimated TOTAL ACCEPTED COSTS <sup>3</sup> <b>(D)</b>  |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |
| EU/EDF contribution expressed as a percentage of total accepted costs <sup>4</sup> <b>(A/D x 100)</b> |                   |                      | <input type="text"/> |
|   |                   |                      |                      |
| EU/EDF contribution sought in this application <b>(E)</b>   |                   | <input type="text"/> |                      |

# Eligibility: Costs & Budget structure

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- Proposals must specify **work packages** (min. 2 max. 6) that will trigger the payments. A work package is a major sub-division of the work plan of the action.
- One **lump sum** share is fixed in the grant agreement for each work package.
- **Detailed budget table** with cost estimations shall define and justify the lump sum per work package.



\* A work package is considered completed if more than 70% of its activities are completed. Therefore, activities in a work package should be well defined in the proposal to allow verification of its % of completion.

| Budget of Work Package [insert number and name] <sup>1</sup>  | All Years   |      |            |                                  |
|---|-------------|------|------------|----------------------------------|
|   | Costs       | Unit | # of units | Total Cost (in EUR) <sup>3</sup> |
| <b>1. Human Resources</b>   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 1.1 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local staff) <sup>4</sup>         |             |      |            |                                  |
| 1.1.1 Technical   | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| 1.1.2 Administrative/ support staff   | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| 1.2 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, expat/int. staff)                 | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| 1.3 Per diems for missions/travel <sup>5</sup>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 1.3.1 Abroad (staff assigned to the action related to the work package)   | Per diem    |      |            |                                  |
| 1.3.2 Local (staff assigned to the action related to the work package)  | Per diem    |      |            |                                  |
| 1.3.3 Seminar/conference participants   | Per diem    |      |            |                                  |
| <b>Subtotal Human Resources</b>   |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>2. Travel<sup>6</sup></b>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 2.1 International travel  | Per flight  |      |            |                                  |
| 2.2 Local transportation  | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| <b>Subtotal Travel</b>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>3. Equipment and supplies<sup>7</sup></b>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles  | Per vehicle |      |            |                                  |
| 3.2 Furniture, computer equipment   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 3.3 Machines, tools...  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 3.5 Other (please specify)  |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>Subtotal Equipment and supplies</b>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>4. Project office<sup>14</sup></b>   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 4.1 Vehicle costs   | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| 4.2 Office rent   | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| 4.3 Consumables - office supplies   | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| 4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)  | Per month   |      |            |                                  |
| <b>Subtotal Project office</b>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>5. Other costs, services<sup>8</sup></b>   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.1 Publications <sup>9</sup>   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.2 Studies, research <sup>9</sup>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.3 Expenditure verification/Audit  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.4 Evaluation costs  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.5 Translation, interpreters   |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars <sup>9</sup>  |             |      |            |                                  |
| 5.8. Communication activities (only if specifically requested by and agreed with the contracting authority) <sup>10</sup> |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>Subtotal Other costs, services</b>   |             |      |            |                                  |
| <b>6. Other (e.g. activities with their related visibility costs)<sup>16</sup></b>  |             |      |            |                                  |

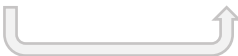
| Justification of the estimated costs for the Work Package [insert number and name]                        | All Years |   |
|---|-----------|---|
|   | Costs     | Clarification of the budget items<br><i>Provide a narrative clarification of each budget item demonstrating the necessity of the costs and how they relate to the action (e.g. through references to the activities and/or results in the Description of the Action).</i> |
|   |           | Justification of the estimated costs<br><i>Provide a justification of the calculation of the estimated costs. Note that the estimation should be based on approximation of actual costs, as described in section 2.1.4 of the Guidelines for grants applicants</i>        |
| <b>1. Human Resources (1)</b>   |           |   |
| 1.1 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, local staff)      |           |   |
| 1.1.1 Technical   |           |   |
| 1.1.2 Administrative/ support staff   |           |   |
| 1.2 Salaries (gross salaries including social security charges and other related costs, expat/int. staff) |           |   |
| 1.3 Per diems for missions/travel   |           |   |
| 1.3.1 Abroad (staff assigned to the action related to the work package)                                   |           |   |
| 1.3.2 Local (staff assigned to the action related to the work package)                                    |           |   |
| 1.3.3 Seminar/conference participants   |           |   |
| <b>Subtotal Human Resources</b>   |           |   |
| <b>2. Travel</b>  |           |   |
| 2.1. International travel   |           |   |
| 2.2 Local transportation  |           |   |
| <b>Subtotal Travel</b>  |           |   |
| <b>3. Equipment and supplies</b>  |           |   |
| 3.1 Purchase or rent of vehicles  |           |   |
| 3.2 Furniture, computer equipment   |           |   |
| 3.3 Machines, tools...  |           |   |
| 3.4 Spare parts/equipment for machines, tools   |           |   |
| 3.5 Other (please specify)  |           |   |
| <b>Subtotal Equipment and supplies</b>  |           |   |
| <b>4. Project office</b>  |           |   |
| 4.1 Vehicle costs   |           |   |
| 4.2 Office rent   |           |   |
| 4.3 Consumables - office supplies   |           |   |
| 4.4 Other services (tel/fax, electricity/heating, maintenance)  |           |   |
| <b>Subtotal Project office</b>  |           |   |
| <b>5. Other costs, services</b>   |           |   |
| 5.1 Publications  |           |   |
| 5.2 Studies, research   |           |   |
| 5.3 Expenditure verification/ Audit/ Third party assessment   |           |   |
| 5.4 Evaluation costs  |           |   |
| 5.5 Translation, interpreters   |           |   |
| 5.6 Financial services (bank guarantee costs etc.)  |           |   |
| 5.7 Costs of conferences/seminars   |           |   |
| 5.8. Communication activities, if applicable  |           |   |
| <b>Subtotal Other costs, services</b>   |           |   |
| <b>6. Other (e.g. activities with their related visibility costs)</b>                                     |           |   |

# Evaluation process

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**Submission**  
of  
concept note  
(max. 6  
pages) and full  
proposal (max.  
40 pages)  
+ all annexes



Admin. check



**1<sup>st</sup> Evaluation**  
Concept notes  
are evaluated  
based on their  
**relevance** and  
**maturity/  
expected  
impact**



Pre-selection



**2<sup>nd</sup> Evaluation**  
Full proposals are  
evaluated based on  
**selection criteria**  
(financial/ operational)  
and **evaluation  
criteria** (quality,  
sustainability,  
efficiency, etc.)



Eligibility verification



**Final  
award  
decision  
and  
signature  
of grant  
contract**

# Concept note evaluation (step 1)

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**Total Score: 50 Points**

## 1. Relevance of Action (25 pts)

- Consistency with call objectives & priorities
- Alignment with beneficiary country needs
- EU know-how integration
- Added value & innovation

## 2. Maturity & Impact (25 pts)

- Level of maturity & local engagement
- Expected impact & financial viability
- Catalytic effect on future investment
- Cross-cutting issues (climate, gender)

- Only the concept notes with a **score of at least 30** will be considered for pre-selection. If the score for at least one of the subsections is less than 20% of the maximum score, the application will also be rejected.
- Based on the ranking, concept notes will be **shortlisted up to a total requested contribution equivalent to 200%** of the available budget.

# Full application evaluation (step 2)

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**Total Score: 100 Points**

## 1. Capacity (10 pts)

Technical expertise & financial stability

## 3. Quality (20 pts)

Design, risk analysis, org. structure

## 5. Budget & Efficiency (20 pts)

Cost justification & value for money

## 2. Relevance (25 pts)

Alignment with objectives & added value

## 4. Impact & Sustainability (25 pts)

Multiplier effects, SDG alignment

**Selection criteria (pass/fail):** Financial capacity, operational capacity.

**Award criteria (scored):** Quality, relevance, impact, sustainability, efficiency.

# Timeline & key deadlines

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Deadline for clarification questions

24 February 2026

Final clarifications published

5 March 2026

**Deadline for submission (PROSPECT)**

**16 March 2026, 12:00 (Brussels time)**

Concept note evaluation results

May 2026 (indicative)

Notification of award decision

July 2026 (indicative)

Grant contract signature

Before end of 2026

# Important information

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## Required registration & submission

**Step 1:** Register in **PADOR** (all lead applicants, co-applicants, affiliated entities)

**Step 2:** Submit application via **PROSPECT** (online portal)

- All questions must be channeled through the functional mailbox respecting the dates provided for clarifications (not through EUDs or other EU staff).

**Functional mailbox:**

INTPA-184659@ec.europa.eu

**Deadline for questions:**

24 February 2026, 12:00 Brussels time

- All Q&A as well as other important notices to applicants during the evaluation procedure will be published on the website where the call was published.
- In the event of any discrepancy or inconsistency, written information contained in the Guidelines for Applicants and in the published Q&A shall prevail over any oral information or statements.

# Q&A

## More info:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/prospect-details/184659PROSPECTSEN>

