

PORTUGUESE INCUBED NATIONAL CALLS

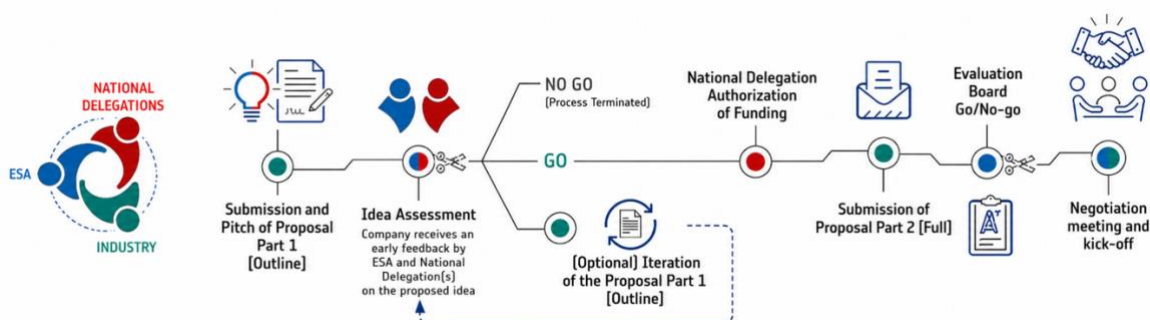
This document presents the InCubed standard procedure and the adjustments to be adopted for the Portuguese InCubed National calls.

1. INCUBED STANDARD PROCEDURE

Investing in Industrial Innovation (InCubed) is a Public Private Partnership co-funding programme focused on developing innovative and commercially viable products and services that generate or exploit the value of Earth Observation imagery and datasets. The programme has a very wide scope and can be used to co-fund anything from building satellites to ground applications and everything in between, or to develop new EO business models.

Entities can apply at any time for different levels of co-funding depending on the type of activity (de-risking or development cycle). Submitted industrial proposals must demonstrate that the product or service to be developed will be commercially viable by the end of the InCubed activity (or at the very least include a precise robust roadmap to commercialisation).

The process starts with the submission of the Outline Proposal (Part 1). After submission, and depending on the evaluation cycle described in Section 2.1, the company/consortium will be invited to present a Pitch (15 min followed by 45 min questions from ESA and national delegation(s)) where the company will receive early feedback on the proposal. After the internal debate, the company will receive the official Go/No-Go or Request for Iteration decision.



If the company is invited to iterate in the Outline Proposal (Part 1), 2 weeks will be given to address the pending points. After receiving a positive assessment, either directly (or after iteration), the company is to submit a Full Proposal – Part 2. For the submission of the Full Proposal, a letter of support from the national delegation is required. Companies have 4-6 weeks to submit the full proposal (Part 2 submission), and after official submission through the platform esa-star, an ESA Technical Evaluation

Board (TEB) will address and evaluate the final proposal for final approval decision. After the TEB, the company will be invited to a Negotiation Meeting to address the points raised by the TEB, and if negotiation is successfully closed, ESA will proceed with contract award.

2. PORTUGUESE INCUBED NATIONAL CALLS

Portugal will support innovative applications and ideas with commercial focus in the field of Earth Observation from national companies, following the selection scheme proposed hereafter.

2.1. SUBMISSION

Ideas can be submitted at any time of the year in the dedicated **ESA ORBIT portal**, but one evaluation cycle will be organised per year, subject to funding availability. For 2026, in **October**; in 2027, in **May**, and in 2028, in **January, pending funding availability**.

The following submission deadlines should be considered:

- 2nd October 2026 (pitches during the week 19-23 October 2026);
- 30th April 2027 (pitches during the week 17-21 May 2027);
- and 28th January 2028 (pending funding availability, pitches during the week 14-18 February 2028).

2.2. SCOPE AND FUNDING

Both de-risking and development activities with the standard co-funded scheme of InCubed (table below) in any area of the value-chain will be eligible. An indicative budget of **1.25 million EUR** is foreseen for the 2026-2028 implementation period. Contract Change Notices (CCNs) from ongoing projects will be assessed during the same evaluation cycles as new proposals and will be subject to funding availability.

Cycle	TRL	Funding Level up to % (of total allowable cost)		Funding level for Universities, Public Sector Entities or Research Institutes with no commercial Interest
		Non-SME	SME	
De-risking	Up to 4-6	Up to 75% ⁽¹⁾	Up to 80%	Up to 100% of maximum 30% of the cycle costs
Product development	Up to 7 (8 for IOV)	Up to 75% ⁽¹⁾	Up to 80%	Up to 100% of maximum 30% of the cycle costs

⁽¹⁾ Depending on the technological or market risks as assessed by the Agency.

2.3. PROCEDURE

The following procedure will be followed:

1. The ESA [ORBIT portal remains open](#) for proposal submissions throughout the year
2. Once a year (as described above), companies with submitted proposals until the submission deadlines will be invited to pitch and will be assessed both by ESA and the national delegation.
3. A Go/No-Go decision will be taken. The evaluation criteria to be used are listed in section 2.3.1.
4. Issuance of a Letter of support by the national delegation and invitation to submit the Full Proposal (Part 2)
5. ESA final evaluation and contract signature.
6. The target duration from Pitch to contract signature is six months, subject to ESA evaluation and negotiation timelines.

2.3.1. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR PITCH AND OUTLINE PROPOSAL (PART 1) ASSESSMENT

The InCubed ESA team and the Portuguese Space Agency members will assess both the pitch and the Outline Proposal (Part 1) and provide a Go/No-Go decision.

The following criteria will be considered by the Portuguese Space Agency:

1. **Earth Observation innovation and technical feasibility (20%)**
 - Substantial degree of innovation (new or improved competencies for Economic Operator(s));

- Key requirements and proposed architectures and concepts versus activity objectives;
- Evaluation of technical risks and credibility of the risk mitigation actions.

2. Business case credibility (20%)

- Credibility of the business opportunity in the market context including sustainability in the commercial market without further institutional support.

3. Team Capability and experience (15%)

- Company's or consortium partners' technical and commercial experience in all areas of the proposed activities,
- Completeness of the team with respect to the value chain,

4. Adequacy of the management approach, planning and co-funding (15%)

- Adequacy of the work packages,
- Project plan, deliverables and schedule,
- Completeness of the costing, value for money, assessment of financial risk versus company resources,
- Credibility of proposed co-funding scheme.

5. National impact (30%)

- Alignment with the National Space Strategy,
- Return on investment for the country (e.g. creation of highly skilled jobs, national intellectual property generation, exports and expected revenues),
- Previous funding and needs for further funding until MVP (minimum viable product),
- Level of co-funding requested (higher co-funding from companies will be evaluated positively),
- Tangible results within the timespan of InCubed.

The Portuguese Space Agency will score proposals against these criteria. Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 5. A minimum weighted score of 3.5/5 will be required for recommendation of support. Any proposal scoring below 2/5 in National impact, Business Case Credibility or Technical Feasibility will not be recommended for support.

ESA and the Portuguese Space Agency will jointly review proposals. The issuance of a Letter of Support remains the responsibility of the Portuguese Space Agency.

Proposals, with the letter of support, will go through an ESA TEB (Tender Evaluation Board) that will evaluate the proposals (as specified in the InCubed Call for Proposals Tender conditions).

Proposals that do not receive the letter of support from the national delegation can still apply for the following calls with that project idea (improved).

3. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES

This procedure will be announced on the Portuguese Space Agency website. To attract applications and generate awareness about the InCubed opportunities and process in the Portuguese space ecosystem, one PT InCubed Industry Day may be implemented, via an online webinar (e.g. 1 hour introduction, 2 hours for Q&A and dedicated bilateral with the interested companies). In this case, the webinar will be publicised on the LinkedIn pages of InCubed and the Portuguese Space Agency.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Beyond the Portuguese InCubed National Calls described in this document, funding may also be made available to support the participation of Portuguese entities in calls launched by other InCubed participating countries. Such participation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis when the respective calls are issued.