



Brussels
HOME.E.1/MGM

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE HOME AFFAIRS FUNDS**

Ref.: HOME-Funds/2024/04

Subject: Launch of the call for expression of interest under the Specific Action: “Promoting innovation in border checks and/or border surveillance by taking up research results - INNO”, under the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) – Reference: BMVI/2024/SA/1.1.5.

1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (the BMVI Regulation), provides that Member States may receive funding for specific actions in addition to their initial allocations in their respective programmes.

Specific actions aim to fund transnational or national projects that bring Union added value in accordance with the objectives of the Instrument for which one, several or all Member States may receive an additional allocation to their programmes.

They will be implemented as one of the components of the Thematic Facility in line with Art. 8 of the above-mentioned BMVI Regulation and in accordance with the relevant financing decisions and work programmes for the Instrument ⁽¹⁾.

By the present note, the Commission launches a call for expression of interest under the Specific Action “**Promoting innovation in border checks and/or border surveillance by taking up research results - INNO**”, in line with the actions listed in the above-mentioned financing decision and work programme.

⁽¹⁾ [Integrated Border Management Fund – Border Management and Visa Instrument \(2021-27\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/1148/oj) (europa.eu)

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Specific actions will be implemented by one or more Member States participating in the Instrument via funding received in addition to the allocation under their BMVI programmes.

Funding for specific actions is added to the Member States' programme allocations at the time of the approval of the initial programme or by means of a programme amendment. That additional funding is earmarked for the specific action concerned and shall not be used for other actions in the Member State's programme, except in duly justified circumstances and as approved by the Commission through the amendment of the programme.

Whereas the regular EU co-financing rate under the Member States' programmes will not exceed 75% of total eligible expenditure, projects implemented under specific actions may benefit from an increased co-financing rate of up to 90% of total eligible expenditure.

The specific action must be implemented by the Member States in accordance with the BMVI Regulation and the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR) ⁽²⁾. This includes compliance with fundamental rights.

Your attention is drawn to one provision of the CPR. As regard the value added tax ("VAT") eligibility regime, Article 64 (1)(c) of the CPR provides that VAT is not eligible, except:

- (i) "for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
- (ii) for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation".

3. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

3.1. Indicative budget available

The indicative amount envisaged for this call (BMVI/2024/SA/1.1.5), under the 2023-2025 Thematic Facility work programme, is **EUR 15 million**.

The **requested amount** (i.e. the Union contribution to the Member State's BMVI programme under this specific action) **should not be lower than EUR 1 500 000 per application**.

⁽²⁾ Regulation (EU) [2021/1060](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

3.2. Background for the specific action

This specific action focuses on **promoting the uptake (validation, piloting in real environment, procurement and/or deployment) of new technologies and methods for border management, especially those coming from Union-funded research and innovation projects on border management.**

Union-funded research and innovation projects on border management are funded by specific parts of the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (FP7, Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe). For more information, see pages on EU security research ⁽³⁾ and on Horizon Europe's Cluster 3 "Civil security for society" ⁽⁴⁾.

The importance of state-of-the-art, innovative and knowledge-based methods and technologies for the security of the EU external borders is highlighted in key EU policy documents and legislation such as Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 on the European Border and Coast Guard, and in Communications such as the EU Security Union Strategy ⁽⁵⁾, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum ⁽⁶⁾, and the Strategy towards a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area ⁽⁷⁾.

Research and innovation is a key overarching component of European integrated border management (EIBM), as described in the March 2023 Commission Communication establishing the multiannual strategic policy for EIBM ⁽⁸⁾.

Research and innovation is integrated in the Capability Development planning of the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG), which consists of the Member States' national Capability Development Plans and Frontex's Multiannual Plans, culminating in the EBCG Capability Roadmap.

The identified capability needs can be addressed first with research and innovation investment, and then with support - including from the BMVI - to take up the innovative results.

The EU research and innovation (R&I) investments for European solutions in border management technologies and methods have been consistent since the inception of the EU civil security R&I programme in 2007. Over time, this led to new knowledge, data, technologies, and prototypes at different levels of Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs).

Both the EU civil security R&I legal basis and programmes ⁽⁹⁾ and the BMVI regulation state that BMVI should be used to support Member States to take up innovative European technologies and methods, in particular those coming from Union-funded research and innovation.

EU co-financing is necessary given the uptake challenges for innovation, new knowledge, technologies, and methods in the field of border management. Furthermore,

⁽³⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/innovation-and-security-research_en

⁽⁴⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-3-civil-security-society_en

⁽⁵⁾ [COM\(2020\) 605 final](#)

⁽⁶⁾ [COM\(2020\) 609 final](#)

⁽⁷⁾ [COM\(2021\) 277 final](#)

⁽⁸⁾ [COM\(2023\) 146 final](#)

⁽⁹⁾ See, for example, Regulation (EU) [2021/695](#) on Horizon Europe and Work Programmes C(2023) 2178 and C(2022) 2975.

there is a strong EU added value in promoting European innovation on border management.

Innovation leads to the development of civil security capabilities only if solutions (which must be legally, ethically and socially compliant) that come from (successful) previous R&I are made available to, and used by, practitioners.

Much of the R&I on civil security supported by the EU led to excellent scientific findings, promising technology areas and technology development and deployment. Examples of innovation delivered in support of European police authorities, border and coastguards, civil protection and first responders include solutions for the protection of critical infrastructures, next generation cross border communication systems for security practitioners, virtual reality-based training support tools, new technologies for border surveillance in land and sea border contexts, and the current state-of-the-art technologies on facilitated travel and border crossings.

However, barriers and challenges may also often hinder the uptake of innovation in the civil security sector.

Synergies between Union-funded border security R&I with the BMVI can facilitate funding to security practitioners and authorities to build on successful research results, supporting testing, validating or deploying new methods and technologies coming from R&I.

This is particularly relevant when it fulfils needs identified in the national Capability Development Plans that contribute to the Capability Roadmap of the European Border and Coast Guard.

3.3. Scope and purpose of the specific action

The objective of this specific action is to provide support to Member States to **test, validate, further pilot, transfer and/or deploy innovative technologies and/or methods (i.e. “uptake” of innovative technologies) for border checks or border surveillance.**

The specific action falls specifically under points 1(f), 2(f) and 3(f) of Annex III to the BMVI Regulation, regarding support to “actions developing innovative methods for deploying new technologies with a potential for transferability to other Member States, especially projects that aim to test and validate the outcome of Union-funded research projects”.

Support will focus on technical, organisational and/or societal solutions with innovative elements coming from previous research and innovation. **Purchase of “off-the-shelf” technology** (normally commercially available technology or normal methods that can be purchased or funded with other actions under the BMVI or other EU funding instruments) **is not eligible** under this specific action.

Project proposals should build on the outcomes of research and innovation on border management, especially taking up results of Union-funded research and innovation on civil security ⁽¹⁰⁾, in order to:

- Improve capabilities for automated, facilitated, modern border checks at external borders.
- Improve capabilities for integrated, interoperable surveillance of external borders;
- Improve capabilities of acquiring, fusing, analysing and interpreting information and data from different sources, for border checks or border surveillance.

The projects to be funded by this specific action may include, but are not limited to **activities** such as:

- testing, validation, and/or further piloting (including in groups of Member States) in real environment;
- procurement;
- installation and integration in legacy systems;
- deployment, hands-on training on the use of the new technologies, knowledge and/or methods.

Technologies may include, but are not limited to: biometrics; mobile platforms for operational staff; technologies for document security; sensors (optical, electromagnetic, etc); satellite technology; high-altitude platforms; remotely-piloted aerial, ground or water vehicles; computer vision; video analytics; data fusion and information analysis; augmented and virtual reality; interception systems; detection and identification systems.

Use cases may include, but are not limited to:

- detection, classification and identification of manned and unmanned flying vehicles or vessels which may be employed for smuggling, trafficking or other illegal activities; vehicles and vessels tracking, identification and analysis for border surveillance, including search and rescue;
- increased cross-border situational awareness;
- in general, improving efficiency, effectiveness, availability and reliability of capabilities of border and coast guards.

Examples of Union-funded research and innovation on border management include, but are not limited to: ALFA, ANDROMEDA, COMPASS2020, D4FLY, EFFECTOR, FOLDOUT, iMARS, MARISA, NESTOR, PROMENADE, RANGER, ROBORDER, SAFESHORE, SMILE, TRESSPASS.

⁽¹⁰⁾ This specific action aims to especially support testing, validating, deploying and/or transferring to other Member States new technologies and methods resulting from Union-funded research projects. However, similar activities building on new technologies and methods deriving from past R&I not funded by the Union may also be proposed.

Further information on Union-funded research and innovation on border management can be found from:

- the National Contact points (NCPs) for EU security research ⁽¹¹⁾
- the DG HOME's Innovation and Security Research Unit ⁽¹²⁾
- the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (for past, open and forthcoming topics and calls) ⁽¹³⁾
- on the Common Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) (for ongoing and past projects) ⁽¹⁴⁾
- on the Horizon Dashboard (for aggregated search by country, partner, topic) ⁽¹⁵⁾
- through the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS) ⁽¹⁶⁾.

Project proposals based on results of previous Union-funded research and innovation on border management are invited to **indicate the research and innovation project(s) on which they are based.**

For proposals building on **previous Pre-Operational Validation (POV) and Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) projects**, proposed actions should also engage Member States beyond the initial buyers group.

The project proposals should indicate how the project links with, and contributes to the implementation of, the **national Capability Development Plan(s)** in line with EIBM.

The project proposals should explain **the plans for future deployment and/or scale-up of the new technologies and/or methods, after the activities funded by this Specific Action**, should the activities funded by this Specific Action be successful. Further deployment and/or scale-up for after the activities funded by this Specific Action can be planned with support with national funding, BMVI National Programmes, and/or other public or private funding. Projects that have a credible and committed plan for further uptake are particularly welcome as they will impact on the capabilities of national security practitioners.

Innovative solutions in proposed projects should **promote and respect fundamental rights, including but not limited to privacy**, as well as be in full respect of EU and national applicable legislation and guidelines. Innovative technologies should incorporate an **assessment of social acceptance and on the respect of fundamental rights, including privacy.**

The project proposals **should not include research activities** but rather support the use of innovative solutions stemming from past research. As such, **new technologies** addressed in the projects (which are not necessarily the only technologies involved but should be the main ones) **should be of Technological Readiness Level not lower than 8** ⁽¹⁷⁾.

⁽¹¹⁾ [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁽¹²⁾ [Innovation and security research \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁽¹³⁾ [EU Funding & Tenders](#)

⁽¹⁴⁾ [CORDIS](#)

⁽¹⁵⁾ [Horizon Dashboard](#)

⁽¹⁶⁾ [Community for European Research and Innovation for Security \(CERIS\)](#)

⁽¹⁷⁾ [h2020-wp1415-annex-g-trl_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

Member States may either submit a proposal to be implemented entirely **at national level** or a **proposal to be implemented transnationally** by a group of Member States – in which case, the proposing Member State should explain the value added of the transnational approach to support uptake of new technologies from results of research and innovation ⁽¹⁸⁾.

The Commission encourages project proposals by groups of Member States in consideration of the potential transnational impact. In case of a transnational project proposal, as regards the financial management, the Commission recommends for the sake of efficiency the choice of **Option 1** (= allocation of funding to the programme of the lead Member State only) as set out in Note HOME/Funds/2022/07 ⁽¹⁹⁾.

3.4. Expected results following the call

Project proposals are expected to achieve one or more of the following results:

- 1) Improved security of EU external borders;
- 2) Enhanced capabilities of border management authorities and relevant services in the Member State for border surveillance and/or border checks operations;
- 3) Uptake of the relevant new technologies and solutions from past, especially Union-funded, security research and innovation initiatives;
- 4) Increased European open strategic autonomy in security technologies.

4. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

4.1. Admissibility and assessment aspects

All EU Member States participating in the BMVI are eligible. The Schengen Associated Countries may participate in the call and, if successful, will receive additional funding once the legal arrangements for their participation in the BMVI are in place ⁽²⁰⁾.

DG HOME will assess the proposals submitted by the Member States.

To be considered admissible a proposal must:

1. be submitted within the deadline (see below) to the BMVI specific actions functional mailbox HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu
2. consist of the official BMVI/2024/SA/1.1.5 Application Form attached to this note, together with its annexes, and be readable and complete (all fields necessary for assessment are filled in),

⁽¹⁸⁾ Examples of transnational projects could be innovative systems for collaborative border surveillance by Member States with contiguous EU external sea/shore or land borders.

⁽¹⁹⁾ Note to the Committee for the Home Affairs Funds, Ares(2022)1060102 of 14 February 2022: Transnational specific actions under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI), and the Internal Security Fund (ISF) – Arrangements between partners.

⁽²⁰⁾ Reference to Member States in this note should therefore be understood as including the Schengen Associated Countries, once the legal arrangements for their participation in the BMVI are in place.

3. be submitted by the Managing Authority on behalf of the entity in the Member State that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action,
4. identify a project beneficiary (an entity) that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action in the Member State (in the lead for the action),
5. in case of a transnational project: include partnership declaration forms signed by the Managing Authorities of all participating Member States ⁽²¹⁾.

DG HOME will assess admissible proposals based on the following criteria ⁽²²⁾:

A. Relevance (30 points – minimum score : 15 points)

1. **Innovation** of the proposed solution (of minimum TRL 8) in comparison with state-of-the-art tools: the potential for innovation, i.e. to develop and/or improve border management capabilities that the Member State(s) needed; to deploy, build and/or train new or additional capacities for border management practitioners using new technologies and methods; to exploit new technologies, methods and knowledge generated by previous Union-funded R&I on border security, including by exploiting the relevant Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).
2. **Clarity and consistency** of the objectives and scope of the proposal against the objectives and expected results identified in this call; **contribution to the outputs and result indicators** listed in Annex VIII of the BMVI Regulation (see annex 4).

B. Quality and content (30 points – minimum score: 15 points)

1. **Maturity** of the proposal: appropriateness of the design and planned implementation, taking into account the envisaged activities; methodology (including operational and financial management), organisation of work and strategy for project management and monitoring; measures undertaken or envisaged to mitigate the identified risks.
2. **Cost-effectiveness, complementarity and sustainability**: breakdown of requested financial support and appropriateness in relation to the scale and type of planned activities (e.g. personnel, equipment, travel, training etc.); demonstration of the overall cost effectiveness and value for money; complementarity with actions implemented under the Member States' programme and/or other EU funding instruments. Sustainability model, including a credible plan for future deployment(s) and/or scale-up after this specific action lifetime.

⁽²¹⁾ Please refer to the note HOME-Funds/2022/07 on the arrangements between partners to be sought when submitting proposals for transnational specific actions.

⁽²²⁾ Proposals not meeting the “pass score” of criterion A (15 points) will not be further assessed. Only proposals scoring at least the “pass score” defined for each criterion (A, B and C) may be proposed for funding, depending on their overall ranking and budget availability.

C. Impact (40 points – minimum score: 20 points)

1. Impact of the proposal on **capability development for border management**.
2. Impact of the proposal on **European strategic autonomy on technologies for the management of external borders**.
3. Involvement of, and cooperation with **other Member States**, whenever appropriate, and impact of such cooperation on innovative border management solutions, and standardisation in that area.
4. **Dissemination and communication strategy** for the results of the project to ensure their long-term impact.

Member States must ensure respect for the horizontal principles described in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, including respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Moreover, Member States must ensure that the envisaged actions are not affected by a reasoned opinion delivered by the Commission in respect of infringement proceedings under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that put in doubt the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of the actions (Article 8(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1148).

4.2. Application procedure

Deadline for the application: Member States are invited to submit their proposals **by 20 September 2024** at the latest, using the official BMVI/2024/SA/1.1.5 Application Form attached to this Note, together with its annexes. Proposals can be submitted in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, it is strongly advised to use English for the entire application.

To ensure equal and fair treatment of the proposals and allow the Commission to allocate at the same date all the available funding, DG HOME will assess all proposals simultaneously. Therefore, proposals submitted after the deadline will not be admissible.

The Members of the Committee for the Home Affairs Funds will be informed at the latest 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of the proposals in case the deadline for the submission of proposals is extended.

E-mail address for the application: The proposals should be submitted to the BMVI specific actions functional mailbox HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu. Member States may submit additional documentation if necessary.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant/ lead Member State during the evaluation process. A reply should be provided by the Member State within 3 working days from the request date.

Any requests for clarification of the Member States on this call for the expression of interest may be sent by 30 August 2024 at the latest, to the BMVI specific actions functional mailbox HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu.

Requests for clarification should only be sent **by the Managing authority**. The Managing Authority has an important role to explain to potential beneficiaries the

applicable rules and specificities of the BMVI programme in general and of a specific action in particular and to help prepare applications for a specific action. The Managing Authority should be the contact point and take the responsibility to review questions from potential beneficiaries and raise questions to or request clarifications from the Commission services where necessary. As projects under specific actions are managed at national level, according to national rules, specific questions on eligibility of costs should be addressed first to the Managing Authority.

To respect the equal treatment and transparency, the replies to the written requests for clarification received will be sent to all Member States, via HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu

DG HOME will inform Member States of the outcome of the assessment of the proposals towards December 2024.

5. AMENDMENT OF THE BMVI PROGRAMMES AND ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE

After having been informed of the outcome of the call for expression of interest, each successful Member State shall submit to the Commission a request to amend its BMVI programme via SFC . The amended programme should include a short description of the specific action, adjust the output and result indicators, and include the costs and codes linked to this specific action (respectively in the description and under tables 1, 2 and 3 of the relevant specific objectives and table 6 of the programme).

When amending a BMVI programme of a Member State, two situations may arise regarding the eligibility of expenditure ⁽²³⁾:

1. For Member States that have included all the types of interventions listed in Annex VI table 1 of the BMVI Regulation that are relevant for the Specific Action “Promoting innovation in border checks and/or border surveillance by taking up research results – INNO” in table(s) 2.1.3 of the relevant specific objective(s) in their *initially approved* BMVI programme: expenditure for the Specific Action will be eligible as of 1 September 2024.
2. For Member States that have *not* included all the types of interventions listed in Annex VI table 1 of the BMVI Regulation that are relevant for the Specific Action “Promoting innovation in border checks and/or border surveillance by taking up research results – INNO” in table(s) 2.1.3 of the relevant specific objective(s) in their initially approved BMVI programme: expenditure for the Specific Action will be eligible from the date of submission by the Member State of its request for amendment of the BMVI programme that will add the respective types of interventions in the programme.

Yours faithfully,

Silvia MICHELINI

⁽²³⁾ Art. 63(7) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Enclosures: Annex 1: Application form;
Annex 2: Budget form;
Annex 3: Partnership declaration form;
Annex 4: Indicators

c.c. Permanent Representations; JHA Counsellors

