

Permanent Open Call

Invitation to Apply to ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia

Reference: ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia Open Call – Issue A, 17/05/2021

Thank you for your interest in ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia.

The European Space Agency (ESA) together with its Member States supports entrepreneurs with the ambition to exploit space technology or utilise space systems in non-space markets, or become suppliers to the space sector, e.g. by exploiting non-space technology in the space market.

Together with its local partners, ESA manages a network of Business Incubation Centres (ESA BICs) across Europe. In North Rhine-Westphalia, AZO Anwendungszentrum GmbH Oberpfaffenhofen and EurA AG (ESA BIC NRW) are responsible for managing ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia. The locations where start-ups can be incubated are

- Aachen
- Herten

ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia offers a comprehensive package of support to start-ups selected for incubation, including office accommodation, incentive funding, technical support, business coaching, and legal/IPR advice to the start-ups selected for incubation.

ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia hereby invites you to submit your application for business incubation. This document provides an introduction to the application and evaluation process and contains references to the templates that should be used when applying.

Please contact ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia for any further questions.

Yours sincerely,

Florian Mrosek
Manger ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia
EurA AG Aachen

Introduction

The purpose of this Open Call for ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia is to inform about the opportunity for space-related start-ups to become incubated in ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia and to provide the material and guidance needed to apply for incubation.

Selection and evaluation of applications are scheduled periodically, see <http://www.esa-bic.de/> for details.

The Call is permanently open, has no closing date for the submission of applications unless the ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia has indicated otherwise.

Who can apply?

In general, any space-related start-ups in North Rhine-Westphalia not older than five years are welcome to apply for incubation.

However, some further criteria apply. These can be found in the Cover Letter Template of the application documents. In particular, note the following:

- The application needs to have a valid space connection. In general terms this means that it must be evident that “space” (space technology or a space-based service such as satellite communication, navigation, or earth observation) is needed. Alternatively, it must be evident that the proposed technology or service can be used in a space context. In case of doubt, please contact the ESA BIC for further guidance.
- Applicants need to run their start-up at their own risk. In practice this means that more than half of the shares must be owned by the entrepreneur(s) that apply to the ESA BIC.
- In case the application is done by natural persons, these need a working permit in North-Rhine-Westphalia. The application shall include details about the status, the intended legal structure, and the shares distribution. An incubation contract can only be signed with a legal entity.

How to apply?

Please make sure you have received the following documents, which are part of the Open Call documentation:

- Cover Letter including Requirement Checklists
- Business Plan
- Incubation Proposal
- Draft Incubation Contract

Make sure to fill in all required sections in the application templates and pay particular attention to the following:

- Instructions inside the documents (**highlighted in blue in each template**) shall be followed in order to fulfil all pre-conditions of the Open Call and for the application to be accepted.
- Please read the Draft Incubation Contract carefully. The Cover Letter must include a clear, explicit, and unambiguous statement declaring that the applicant has read, understood and accepted the terms and conditions contained in the contractual documentation (this is part of the Cover Letter template). Modifications or amendments to the Incubation Contract may only be done in exceptional cases. Please contact the local ESA BIC Manager for guidance.
- Make sure the Cover Letter and the Requirement Checklists are signed by either the majority shareholder or by shareholders with a combined ownership in excess of 50%.

- The incubation proposal should include details on how the incentive funding is meant to be spent. Note that, as a general rule, the incentive funding has a ceiling of 50,000 EUR.
 - The ESA incentive (25,000 EUR) can only be spent in Germany, may not be used for direct labour costs, and can only be used for product development and IPR.
 - The incentive (25,000 EUR) from the Land NRW can be used e.g., for material, subcontracting, marketing, travel costs, technical advice within the EU. Direct labour costs are not eligible. For expenses exceeding 1000 euros, three comparative offers must be obtained.

Please see the Draft Incubation Contract for details.

Incubation in ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia may be requested for a maximum of 24 months. An incubation period of 12 or 18 months is also possible.

Please submit the application documents in electronic form (pdf, maximum three files, one for each required document) to the following e-mail address: esa-bic@aura-ag.de with subject “ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia Open Call”.

ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia will verify the identity of applicants. You are requested to send digital copies of a passport etc. in a separate file together with your application.

Any questions related to submission of proposals should be sent to the same e-mail address: esa-bic@aura-ag.de

The evaluation procedure

The evaluation of all received applications is managed locally by ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia and follows common ESA BIC procedures.

Once a published submission deadline has passed, ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia first assesses the formal aspects of applications received before the submission deadline. If a non-compliance of a minor nature is found, the applicant may be asked to address this in an updated proposal within 48 hours. If the proposal is found non-admissible, the applicant will be informed, and the reason will be explained. In such a case an applicant is eligible to submit a revised proposal at a later date.

If the application is compliant with the formal requirements, applicants will be invited to hold a presentation to the ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia evaluation board. The evaluation will typically take place a few weeks after the submission deadline. The evaluation board consists of representatives of ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia, ESA, German Space Agency at DLR, AZO, and other experts. There will also be an opportunity for the evaluation board to ask questions to the applicant.

The application and the presentation will be marked against the criteria in *Table 1*, taking weighting factors into account.

Criteria	Weighting factor
Background and Experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience and team composition • Support entities • Vision 	25%
Technology/Service <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Space Connection • Technical feasibility of the product/service to be developed • Production development strategy • Intellectual Property strategy 	20%
Value proposition & Market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value proposition • Market • Competition 	20%
Business Modelling and Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revenue model • Finance • Risk 	15%
Activity proposal <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality of the application • Milestones/Cost-planning • Work break-down • Management • ESA BIC investment opportunity 	20%

Table 1: ESA BIC evaluation criteria and weighting factors.

All applicants will be notified in writing about the outcome of the evaluation. The applicant may require, within 10 calendar days from the receipt of the notification, an oral debriefing explaining the reason why the application was successful or not.

ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia will enter into contract negotiations with successful applicants, taking the comments of the evaluation board into account. ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia has the right *not* to place a contract if, after three months after the notification to a successful applicant, no contract still has been signed, and this is because of a reason for which the applicant can be held accountable.

Additionally, ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia has the right not to place a contract in case the (intended) legal entity presented in the application is different from the actual established and registered legal entity.

Furthermore, we kindly ask you to pay attention to the following:

- Please note that applications will be treated as confidential. However, the applicant's idea may through this application fall into the public domain (e.g. if local laws require so). Therefore, we strongly recommend that the applicant discusses the protection of his/her idea with a dedicated expert in this field prior to application, and – if relevant – takes appropriate steps to protect the idea (e.g. by applying for a patent).
- As far as allowed by law, any title held by the applicant to his/her idea shall remain vested in him/her. An application to ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia will not result in the acquisition

of any title whatsoever to the idea. *However, ESA retains a right to use the Intellectual Property in specific cases. Please read the detailed conditions described under the section “Use of Intellectual Property Rights” in the Draft Incubation Contract.*

- No expenses incurred in either stage of the application procedure will be reimbursed to the applicant by ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia, ESA and/or any third party.
- This Open Call does not impose any obligation upon ESA BIC North Rhine-Westphalia to enter into negotiations with any applicant.