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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME AFFAIRS

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COMMITTEE FOR THE HOME AFFAIRS FUNDS

Subject: Launch of the call for expression of interest for the Specific Action “Support for innovation and new technologies for the protection of public spaces - Innovation PPS” under the Internal Security Fund (ISF) - Reference ISF/2021/SA/3.4.1

1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) 2021/1149 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Internal Security Fund for the duration of the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027¹ foresees that Member States may receive funding for specific actions in addition to their initial allocation for Member States’ programmes.

The specific actions shall fund transnational or national projects that bring high Union added value in accordance with the objectives of the Fund and in line with agreed Union priorities, in particular in order to contribute to preventing and combating terrorism, as well as preparing for, protecting against and effectively managing security-related incidents, risks and crises within the scope of the ISF Regulation.

On 26 November 2021, the Commission adopted the financing decision and the work programme for 2021-2022 Internal Security Fund (ISF) Thematic Facility².

By the present note, the Commission launches a call for expression of interest for the Specific Action ‘Support for innovation and new technologies for the protection of public spaces - Innovation PPS’, in line with the actions listed in the adopted work programme.

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/1149](#)

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2021) 8460 final of 26/11/2021

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The actions will be implemented by one or more Member States participating in the Fund via funding received in addition to the allocation under the Member States' programmes.

Funding for specific actions is added to the Member States' programme allocations at programme adoption 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 Member State's programme. This means that, as a rule, in case of under-spending or non-implementation of this specific action, Member States will not be able to use the corresponding amount to support any other action of their programme. In such cases, any unused amount would be reimbursed to the Union budget and/or decommitted, except under the circumstances referred to above.

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

The specific action must be implemented by the Member States in accordance with the ISF Regulation and the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR).

Your attention is in particular drawn to one provision of the CPR. As regards the valued added tax ("VAT") eligibility regime, Article 64(1)(c) of the CPR provides that VAT shall not be 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 2021-2022 ISF Thematic Facility work programme indicates that for all specific actions under this Fund EUR 22 million are available.

The indicative amount envisaged for this ISF/2021/SA/3.4.1 call is **EUR 3 million**.

Requested amount(s) (i.e. EU contribution to a Member State ISF programme for the "Specific Action Innovation PPS"):

The requested amount(s) must not be lower than EUR 300 000 per application.

The Commission encourages project proposals by groups of Member States in consideration of the potential transnational impact.

3.2. Background for the specific action

The **EU Security Union Strategy 2020-2025**³ highlighted protection of public spaces: "*recent terrorist attacks have focused on public spaces, including places of worship and*

³ [COM/2020/605 final](#)

transport hubs, exploiting their open and accessible nature. The rise of terrorism triggered by political or ideologically motivated extremism has made this threat even more acute. This calls for both stronger physical protection of such places and adequate detection systems, without undermining citizens' freedoms.

Malls, open crowded gathering areas and events, and non-restricted areas of transport infrastructures, constitute "soft targets", aims of "low cost" attacks strongly impacting the citizens. Places of worship hold a particularly high symbolic value and have frequently been targeted by terrorists in the past. Thus, protection of churches, mosques and synagogues, as well as other religious sites across the EU should be improved.

The Commission will enhance public-private cooperation for the protection of public spaces, with funding, the exchange of experience and good practices, specific guidance and recommendations. Awareness raising, performance requirements and testing of detection equipment and enhancing background checks to address insider threats will also be part of the approach.[...] Regional and local public authorities have an important role to improve security of public spaces. The Commission is also helping foster cities' innovation in security in public spaces. The launch of a new Urban Agenda partnership on "security in public spaces" in November 2018 reflects the strong commitment of Member States, Commission and cities to better address threats to security in the urban space."

Furthermore, the **EU Counter-Terrorism Agenda**⁴ highlighted the role of new technologies: *"Threat detection technologies can detect objects and substances of concern, for example bombs or bomb-making materials. [...] New technologies can contribute to the protection of public spaces if they are used in a well-defined, targeted and proportionate manner. [...] The Commission is ready to fund projects to develop new technologies under the Urban Agenda for the EU, and supports the exchange of best practices in this area in accordance with EU law. Developments in Artificial Intelligence (AI) are set to have a profound impact on the ability of law enforcement authorities to respond to terrorist threats. Law enforcement authorities are already developing innovative solutions based on AI technology, for example to identify terrorist content online and stop its dissemination, to prevent the creation of new terrorists' accounts on social media, and detect symbols. One key aspect to developing trustworthy AI applications is ensuring that the data used to train algorithms is relevant, verifiable, of good quality and available in high variety to minimise bias for instance towards gender or race. AI applications should be developed and used with proper safeguards for right and freedoms, in compliance with relevant legislation and adequately documented to ascertain the legality of their use. [...] Staying ahead of the curve also means addressing emerging threats that may be posed by new technologies. Drones (Unmanned aircraft systems) can be misused to target public spaces, individuals and critical infrastructure."*

EU funding is necessary for this specific action given the uptake challenges for innovation, new knowledge, technologies and methods in the field of protection of public spaces. Much of the Research & Innovation (R&I) on civil security supported by the EU led to excellent scientific findings, promising technology areas and technology development and deployment. However, barriers and challenges often hinder the uptake of innovation in the civil security sector. Examples of these challenges include the lack of

⁴ [COM\(2020\) 795 final](#)

funding, and development streams dedicated to innovative technologies and methods; a limited understanding of how public procurement can be used as a catalyst for innovation uptake; or the limited visibility and traceability of successful research outcomes.

Furthermore, there is a strong EU added value in **promoting European innovation** in this area. Innovation leads to the development of civil security capabilities only if solutions (which must obviously be legally, ethically and socially compliant) that come from (successful) previous R&I are made available to, and used by practitioners.

Synergies between Union funded research and innovation with the Internal Security Fund can hence 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. These instruments can support technology suppliers in the industrialisation and commercialisation of innovative products, as well as the business creation and scale-up, and security practitioners in further testing or validating and also acquiring innovative solutions

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 and/or deploy and use innovative technologies and/or methods (i.e. “uptake”) for the protection of public spaces and for security in mass gatherings.

This specific action falls specifically under points (e) and (i) of Annex III of the ISF Regulation, regarding support to:

(e) “actions developing innovative methods or deploying new technologies with a potential for transferability to other Member States, in particular projects aimed at testing and validating the outcome of Union-funded security research projects”

(i) “cooperation with the private sector..., including in the protection of public spaces and critical infrastructure”.

This call targets in particular a Member State or a group of Member States to address the following issue (s):

- the protection of public spaces from the risk of terrorist attacks,
- the support to the uptake of innovation such as new knowledge, technologies and methods in the field of protection of public spaces.

The specific action proposed **can include** activities such as testing, validation, and/or further piloting (including in groups of MS) in real environment; procurement; installation and integration in legacy systems; deployment, hands-on training on the use of the new technologies.

This action aims especially at supporting, testing, validating, deploying, and/or transfer to other Member States new technologies and methods resulting from Union-funded research projects on protection of public spaces, security of mass gatherings, etc. However, similar activities building on new technologies and methods deriving from past research in other domains can also be proposed.

Funded projects can support innovative technologies, such as:

- infrastructures,
- tools, systems and technologies,
- guidance,
- and communication

for law enforcement agencies to improve protection of public spaces and security of mass gatherings.

If expenditure are planned for purchase of equipment or means of transport or construction of security-related buildings or facilities and the project is selected, the Managing Authority should ensure that the expenditure will be included in the calculation under the ISF Programme for the 35% threshold stipulated in Article 13(7) of the ISF Regulation⁵.

Projects may build on results of research including, but not limited to projects: eVACUATE (FP7), S4ALLCITIES (H2020), IMPETUS (H2020), SYSTEM (H2020), APPRAISE (H2020), and LETS-CROWD (H2020). Further information on Union-funded research and innovation on security technologies and methods can be found on:

- the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (for past, open and forthcoming topics and calls),⁶
- the Common Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) (for ongoing and past projects),⁷
- the Horizon Dashboard (for aggregated search by country, partner, topic),⁸
- through the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS),⁹
- from the National Contact points (NCPs) for EU security research in each Member State, and
- from DG HOME's Innovation and Security Research Unit.¹⁰

For project proposals building on previous Pre-Operational Validation and Pre-Commercial Procurement, proposed actions should also engage Member States beyond the initial buyers group.

Proposals should explain the plans for future deployment and/or scale-up of the new technologies, and/or methods should the activities funded by this specific action be successful. Further operational deployment, use and/or scale-up can be planned with support with national funding, ISF programmes, and/or other public or private funding. Project proposals that have a credible and committed plan for further uptake will be particularly welcome, as they will ensure impact on the capabilities of national security practitioners.

⁵ This ceiling may be exceeded only in duly justified cases.

⁶ [EU Funding & Tenders](#)

⁷ [CORDIS](#)

⁸ [Horizon Dashboard](#)

⁹ [Community for European Research and Innovation for Security \(CERIS\)](#)

¹⁰ [EU Innovation and Industry for Security](#)

Activities and innovative technologies must be compliant with EU and national legislation on law enforcement and protection of public spaces, as well as promote respect of fundamental rights and EU values.

Innovative technologies should incorporate assessment of social acceptance and respect of fundamental rights, including privacy.

The call for expression of interest should be open to all for both proposed national or transnational projects.

In case of a transnational project proposal, the lead Member State will have to make sure that all participating Member States duly sign the “Partnership Declaration Form” and are listed in the Application Form indicating the share each will receive from the top up amount allocated if the project proposal is successful. Based on this common agreement, each partner will have a role and resulting responsibilities in the implementation of the project and delivering on its objectives.

The specific action proposed **should not include activities related to research**, but must rather support the uptake and use of innovative solutions coming 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 8.¹¹

3.4. Expected results following the call

Member States can propose both projects implemented entirely at national level, and projects implemented transnationally in a group of Member States. In the latter case, the proposing Member States should explain the case specific value of their transnational approach to uptake of new technologies resulting from research and innovation.

Expected results

- Improved security of citizens in open spaces and mass gatherings;
- Enhanced capabilities of law enforcement and relevant services for open space and mass gatherings security operations;
- Perseverance of the openness of European cities;
- Addressing major threats in cooperation with local and regional authorities;
- Uptake of relevant new technologies and solutions from past, especially Union-funded, security research and innovation initiatives.
- Empowerment of society to co-responsibility for security, and deeper involvement of citizens;
- Increased European open strategic autonomy in security technologies.

4. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

4.1. Admissibility and assessment aspects

All Member States participating in the ISF are eligible.

¹¹ [h2020-wp1415-annex-g-tr1_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

The specific action proposed should:

- **not start before 1 January 2022 and**
- **be completed by the 31 December 2025.**

The proposals submitted by the Member States will be assessed by DG HOME.

To be considered admissible, a proposal:

1. has to be submitted within the deadline (see below) to the ISF specific actions functional mailbox HOME-ISF-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu in the official ISF/2021/SA/3.4.1 Application Form, attached to this Note, together with its annexes, and readable and complete (all fields necessary for assessment are filled in)
2. has to 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
3. has to identify a project beneficiary (an entity) that will be responsible for the implementation of the action in the Member State (in the lead for the action)
4. has to include partnership declaration forms of all participating Member States, involved in the project proposal.

Other entities can be involved in the implementation of the action as co-beneficiaries.

DG HOME will assess admissible proposals on the basis of the following award criteria:

A. Relevance

1. **Clarity, correspondence and consistency** of the objectives and scope of the proposed specific action seen against the objectives and expected impact/outcomes (if applicable) as identified in this call for expression of interest. The Member States having expressed interest should demonstrate that extra support and participation in the specific action may effectively contribute to the overall objective of innovation for the protection of public spaces.
2. **Cost effectiveness, sustainability and complementarity of the project with the Member States' programme and other EU funding instruments:** the Member State(s) should present the amount of financial support requested and its appropriateness in relation to the scale and type of the activities (personnel, equipment, travel, etc.), and to the (long-term) expected results. It should also demonstrate the overall costs effectiveness and value for money, as well as the complementarity with actions implemented under the Member States' programme and/or other EU funding instruments.
3. **Innovation:** the potential for innovation, i.e. to develop and/or improve protection of public spaces that Member States lacked, and were identified as needed; to deploy and to exploit new technologies, methods and knowledge generated by previous relevant Union funded research and innovation, including by exploiting the relevant Intellectual Property Rights (IPR); potential for sustainability, including a credible

plan for future deployment and/or scale-up of the new technologies and/or methods, after the lifetime activities funded by this specific action.

B. Quality and content

1. Maturity of the proposal and **appropriateness of the design** and planned implementation, taking into account the envisaged activities methodology (including operational and financial management), the **organisation of work** and strategy for project management and monitoring,
2. Expected results, evaluation, as well as the measures undertaken to mitigate the identified risks,
3. The proposal should indicate how the proposed activities will be implemented in full respect of fundamental rights and, take into account other relevant horizontal principles, as described in Article 9 of the Regulation (EU) 2021/1060¹².

C. Impact

1. **Impact or effect** of the proposed specific action in relation to the objective of the call for expression of interest for the EU (Union added value)
2. The Member State(s) should demonstrate that extra funding available under the programme financed from the ISF may effectively **contribute to achieving the priorities and expected outcomes of this Call, notably regarding the output and results indicators** listed in Annex VIII of the ISF regulation (see Annex 3),
3. **Impact on capability development** for law enforcement and security practitioners in the protection of public spaces
4. **Impact on European strategic autonomy** on technologies for protection of public spaces
5. **Level of cooperation with other Member States**, and impact of collaboration on innovative security for public places, and standardisation in that area.
6. The Member State(s) should also describe efforts to **disseminate and communicate the results** of the project.

4.2. Application procedure

Deadline for the application: Member States are invited to submit their proposals by **15 May 2022** at the latest, using the official ISF/2021/SA/3.4.1 Application Form attached to this Note, together with its annexes.

The proposals should be submitted to the ISF specific actions functional mailbox HOME-ISF-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu. Member States may submit additional documentation if necessary.

¹² [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.

Deadline for any clarification requests: Member States can send requests by **23 April 2022** at the latest to HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu.

The Commission may also contact the lead Member State to request further specific information. A reply should be provided by the Member State within 3 working days.

In order 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.

Member States will receive information on the successful proposals towards July 2022, while the respective revisions of the ISF programme(s) will be carried out immediately after.

Amendment of the ISF programmes and eligibility of expenditure

After information on the outcome of the call for expression of interest is provided by the Commission to the Member States, DG HOME will invite successful Member States to submit the request to amend their ISF programme accordingly. They should amend the output and result indicators as well as include the costs linked to this “Specific Action Innovation PPS” breaking down the costs by type of intervention (respectively under tables 2.1 and 2.1.3 of each relevant specific objective of their national programme in SFC).

When amending an ISF programme of a Member States, two situations may arise regarding the eligibility of expenditure:

1. For Member States that have included types of interventions (listed in table 2 Annex VI of the ISF regulation) relevant to the “Specific Action Innovation PPS” in the tables 2.1.3 of each relevant specific objective in their initially adopted ISF programme, expenditure for the “Specific Action Innovation PPS” would be eligible as of 1/1/2022.
2. For Member States that have not included types of interventions (listed in table 2 Annex VI of the ISF regulation) relevant to the “Specific Action Innovation PPS” in the tables 2.1.3 of each relevant specific objective in their initially adopted ISF programme, expenditure for the “Specific Action Innovation PPS” will be eligible from the date of the submission by the Member State of its request for the amendment of the ISF programme to which new types of interventions will be added accordingly.

Electronically signed

Chiara GARIAZZO
Chair of the Committee for the
Home Affairs Funds