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Open call for proposals New Ventures in Creative Tech (Spark) Frequently Asked Questions

EIT Culture & Creativity

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https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/

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Document History

Version 1.0 (2026)

Changelog

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	28/20/2026	Initial version

1. General questions

Question 1.1 What is the main difference between the New Ventures in Creative Tech (Spark) call and Financial Support to Startups and Scaleups (Shape & Scale) call?

This call is designed **for early-stage createch founders and teams** who have NO registered company, while the Financial Support to Startups and Scaleups (Shape & Scale Programs) is for established companies in the process of investment readiness and international expansion.

Question 1.2 Do you only accept digital solutions, or can other types of innovation be submitted?

Yes, other types of solutions are welcome. We focus on innovations that can include digital, technological, business model innovation, and more. We especially encourage tech-centric solutions, whether in material innovation, hardware, or digital.

Question 1.3 What does the programme offer?

The Spark Incubation Programme is designed in two phases to support you from early validation to company creation. In addition to the funding, it's a 9-month online incubation journey supporting early-stage cultural and creative tech entrepreneurs in transforming validated business concepts into formally established, market-ready ventures. The programme combines structured training, mentorship, business model development, company formation support, and access to the EIT Culture & Creativity ecosystem. It starts with Startup Sprint, which is a short, high-intensity, 2–3-day bootcamp designed to help early-stage cultural and creative tech entrepreneurs validate the problem they aim to solve. Through hands-on workshops, expert feedback, rapid prototyping, field research, and pitch sessions, participants test the relevance and potential of their business ideas.

What you will get if you are selected:

- Up to EUR 30,000 funding,
- In-person createch Startup Sprints,
- Goal-oriented topic workshops,
- Designated Coach,
- Curated Mentor access,
- Exclusive tech perks and partnerships,
- Network: Connect Europe's ecosystem,
- Createch founder community,
- Visibility and positioning.

Question 1.4 How many applications will be selected?

Up to 35 applications will be selected to participate in the Spark Incubation Programme.

Question 1.5 How long is the programme and when does it start?

The programme's duration is 9 Months, and it will start March 2027 and end December 2027

Question 1.6 What is the Startup Sprint and when is it taking place?

The Sprint is a short, high-intensity, 2–3-day in-person bootcamp where we kick off the programme which is designed to help early-stage cultural and creative tech venture founders validate the problem they aim to solve. Once the applicant is selected for the Spark Incubation Programme, they will be invited to participate in the in-person Startup Sprint, with a minimum of one founder to represent and work on the business concept they applied with. he first Sprint will take place in March 2027, and the exact location will be announced ahead of time.

Question 1.7 What will I get out of the Spark Incubation Programme?

The Spark Incubation Programme aims to help early founders to translate their business concepts into viable ventures, validate its market potential, and build an MVP.

What is waiting for you if you are selected:

- Validate your idea and problem–solution fit: Test your assumptions, engage with users, and refine your solution based on real feedback,
- Build and iterate your product: Develop your MVP or prototype through rapid testing, feedback loops, and continuous improvement,
- Design and validate your business model: Clarify your value proposition, revenue logic, and go-to-market approach based on evidence,
- Understand your customers and market: Generate insights through direct user engagement to support early traction and informed decisions,
- Strengthen your entrepreneurial skills: Build capabilities in decision-making, prioritisation, and financial thinking,
- Grow with peers and expand your network: Learn alongside other founders and connect with mentors, experts, and ecosystem partners across Europe,
- Build the right team: Connect with potential co-founders and strengthen your team with complementary skills,
- Launch your company: Establish a legally registered venture by the end of month 3 and prepare for market entry.

You'll get there through hands-on workshops, close support from coaches and mentors, and access to the EIT Culture & Creativity network, giving you a whole village around you as you build your venture.

Question 1.8 Does the project need to be scalable across countries, or can it be focused on just one?

We take a broad view of scalability. Your project can be rooted in one country and still be considered scalable. Our programme and experts will help you explore whether there are opportunities to expand, but international scalability is not mandatory.

Question 1.9 Can I apply as a solopreneur without a co-founder?

Yes. Solopreneurs are welcome to apply. At the same time, we strongly value the power of complementary teams. In the application form, you will be asked whether you are currently looking for a co-founder or not. Throughout the programme, we also aim to create opportunities for solopreneurs to connect with potential co-founders and build their teams.

Question 1.10 I am working full-time or studying, can I still apply?

Yes, you are welcome to apply. However, we expect selected participants to commit a minimum of 10–15 hours per week to programme-related activities, such as participating in trainings, completing assignments, and developing their venture. Please keep in mind that this programme is designed for early founders who are serious about building and growing their business.

2. Priority area

Question 2.1 Which sectors and types of innovation are covered by the Spark call?

The Spark cohort focuses on solutions in the architecture and fashion industries, including advanced and circular materials for fashion ecosystem and the built environment. Applicants must present a technology-driven business concept that creates clear value in one of these areas. A product's use of technology or its high-end design does not, by itself, establish eligibility. Applicants should explain how their solution addresses a relevant sector challenge or opportunity.

Question 2.2 Which types of projects are eligible under the Fashion and Architecture priority areas?

Projects should demonstrate a clear connection to the Fashion or Architecture sectors, a strong technology component, and the potential to develop a scalable, for-profit business model. Examples (not limited) of potentially relevant innovations include digital platforms for supply-chain traceability, algorithms that help reduce manufacturing waste, AI-driven content creation tools, and digital solutions that improve visibility for fashion brands.

Question 2.3 Can projects involving sustainability, social impact, or circularity be eligible?

Potentially, yes. Projects addressing sustainability, circularity, or social challenges may be relevant if they demonstrate a strong technology component, a scalable business model, and a clear connection to the programme's priority areas.

Question 2.4 Are solutions required to target consumers directly?

No. Both B2B and B2B2C solutions may be considered, provided they have a clear connection to the fashion sector and technology is a core component of their value proposition.

Question 2.5 Does interior architecture fall within the Architecture priority area?

Interior architecture and design may be relevant to the Architecture priority area. Applicants should clearly demonstrate how their proposed solution relates to the sector and meets the programme's technology and business-model requirements.

Question 2.6 Can a fashion education platform or an innovative clothing brand qualify?

Potentially, depending on the proposed solution. Applicants should demonstrate how their venture addresses a relevant challenge or opportunity in Fashion and how technology contributes to its value proposition. A business based solely on offering well-designed, high-quality, affordable clothing may not, by itself, demonstrate the technology component and innovation required by the programme.

Question 2.7 Can hardware or physical-product ventures apply?

Yes. Hardware ventures are within scope, but the proposed solution must demonstrate a clear connection to the Fashion or Architecture priority areas. For example, a high-end design product may be relevant to Fashion if its innovation is centered on advanced or circular materials, design for longevity or repair, sustainable production or supply chains, or circular business models. A design product alone may not be sufficient.

Question 2.8 Can digital platforms and AI-driven solutions qualify under Architecture?

Yes. Digital platforms, AI tools and other technology-driven solutions for architecture, interior design and the built environment may be considered under the Architecture priority area. Examples include tools for material selection, renovation decision-making, project management, architectural visualisation and design workflows. Applicants should clearly explain how their solution creates value for the sector.

3. Admissibility and Eligibility

Question 3.1 Can I apply if I already have a registered company?

The programme is intended for ventures that have not yet established a registered legal entity linked to the proposed solution at the time of application. Applicants who already have a company connected to their proposed solution are not eligible for this call.

Question 3.2 Can a project be eligible if it already has a prototype or is being piloted?

Having a prototype or running pilot projects is one of the expected and preferred criteria as evidence of the solution's existence and level of maturity. It does not exclude an applicant.

Question 3.3 Can I apply if I own a company operating in a different sector or developing a different product?

An existing company does not eliminate the applicant if it is unrelated to the proposed solution. However, the programme requires the creation of a legal entity for the selected venture by the end of Month 3. The applicant will be expected to s commit to establishing a new venture within the defined timeline to continue receiving the support and the fund.

Question 3.4 Can I apply if my existing company is dormant or has no revenue?

The absence of revenue or the fact that a company is dormant does not, by itself, establish eligibility. The key consideration is whether a registered company is linked to the proposed solution and whether the applicant meets the programme's incorporation requirements.

Question 3.5 Can self-employed individuals apply?

Applicants registered as self-employed may be eligible, provided they meet the programme requirements, have no registered company linked to the proposed solution at the time of application, and intend to establish a legal entity for the venture if selected.

Question 3.6 When should the selected applicants establish their companies?

Applicants should not have a registered company linked to the proposed solution at the time of application. If selected, establishing a legal entity is a mandatory programme deliverable. Company creation is expected between the signature of the subgrant agreement and end of Month 3. Applicants should follow the official programme timeline and confirm the applicable deadlines before taking incorporation steps.

Question 3.7 Can I incorporate my company after submitting the application but before the selection results are announced?

Applicants should not have a registered company linked to the proposed solution at the time of application and that company creation is expected after selection. Applicants should not assume that incorporating before the selection results are announced is permitted. If selected, company creation is expected between the signature of the subgrant agreement and the end of Month 3.

Question 3.8 Can I apply as an individual while maintaining an existing sole proprietorship or self-employed registration?

Yes, provided the proposed venture is separate from your existing activities and is not operated or commercialised through the existing business. Tax registration as a natural person does not, by itself, affect eligibility. Applicants must provide accurate information about their legal status and may be asked to supply supporting documentation.

Question 3.9 Can I apply if my proposed venture already has pilot customers or sales invoiced through another company?

Yes, provided the company invoicing those activities is not registered for the proposed business concept and the venture otherwise meets the eligibility requirements. Applicants may report existing pilots and sales as evidence of early traction. They should clearly explain the invoicing arrangement and may provide supporting invoices, with confidential information anonymised where appropriate. Final eligibility is determined during the formal eligibility check.

Question 3.10 Can I apply as a team, and what ownership requirements apply if we are selected?

Applications may be submitted by individuals or teams. If selected, the applicants must establish a new company for the proposed venture by Month 3 of the programme. The original applicant or applicants must retain at least 50% ownership and effective control of the new company, in accordance with the applicable call requirements.

Question 3.11 Can I submit applications for two different business concepts?

Yes. An applicant or founding team may submit more than one application for several distinct business concepts. However, only one of the applications can be supported under the programme. Each application should describe a distinct venture, with clearly separated activities, outputs and costs. Double funding of the same activities or costs is not permitted.

Question 3.12 What legal form must the new company take, and where must it be registered?

Selected applicants must establish a new legal entity by Month 3. The entity must be registered in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, obtain a Participant Identification Code (PIC), and pass legal entity validation. The eligibility of specific national legal forms, including sole-trader arrangements without separate legal personality, should be checked against these requirements. Applicants should confirm whether it can meet the registration and validation requirements before relying on it.

Question 3.13 How long must the newly established company remain active?

Company must remain registered and active until the end of the funding period to receive the full funding. For the 2026 call, the programme runs until December 2027, followed by a final financial review between January and March 2028, with the final settlement payment expected in April 2028.

Question 3.14 Can I apply if I have a concept and technical mock-ups but no functional prototype?

Yes. A functional prototype is not mandatory in every case. Technical mock-ups, interface designs and user-experience flows can constitute acceptable evidence. However, applicants must provide at least one form of tangible evidence beyond the concept stage. Early validation through user interviews, feedback from prospective customers or other relevant evidence is also recommended. The strength of the evidence is assessed by evaluators under the applicable prototype/concept evidence and market validation criteria.

Question 3.15 Must a founder have direct professional experience in Fashion or Architecture?

Direct experience in the selected industry is not a formal requirement. However, evaluators assess the founding team's capabilities and understanding of the relevant domain. Applicants should explain how their existing skills and experience relate to the needs of their target sector and how they plan to address any knowledge gaps. Possible approaches include working with co-founders, advisors, partners or future team members. Not having one year of relevant experience does not automatically exclude an applicant, but it may negatively affect the score for founder/team capability and commitment. At least one founder with a minimum of one year of relevant domain experience is one of the mandatory requirements and this can be demonstrated through; formal education (e.g. master's degree, PhD), Professional practice (e.g. as an employee, team member, intern), Participation in incubation, entrepreneurship, or domain-specific programmes.

Question 3.16 Does the programme require a company to be registered in a specific country or through a particular platform?

There is no specific country required. If selected, you must incorporate a new company by Month 3 in any EU Member State or Horizon Europe-associated country (Pillar III) (Section 4.2). The company is registered through the usual national procedures of that country.

After incorporation, the company must also: register in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal and obtain a PIC (Participant Identification Code) and complete legal entity validation through the EIT Community Onboarding Service

4. Application process

Question 4.1 How do I apply?

Step 1: Carefully read the Call Guidelines and check your eligibility.
Step 2: Prepare the requested mandatory documents.
Step 3: Fill out application form and upload mandatory documents here.

Question 4.2 Can I get help preparing my application? Can I check whether my idea fits the programme before submitting a full application?

In order to prepare your application, you can:

- Review the call guideline,
- Join one of the info sessions by registering to ask your question directly to the Business Creation team,
- Watch recording from info session (available on call website)
- Use the Contact us form on the EIT Culture & Creativity website,
- Check the call website.

Question 4.3 Can I update my application after submission?

You can save a draft of your application, but please make sure to save the link. As admins, we don't have access and unfortunately can't recover it. After submission, you are still able to edit your application, again, just keep that link safe too.

Question 4.4 Should I present my solution as it exists today or describe what it could achieve with programme support?

Applicants should explain their current solution, its stage of development, the problem it addresses, and its potential for growth. They should also describe how participation in the programme would help advance the venture.

Question 4.5 What level of development or validation is expected at the application stage?

Applicants must provide at least one form of tangible evidence demonstrating progress beyond the idea stage. A fully functional prototype is not required.
Acceptable forms of evidence may include:

- A product demonstration or link to a working demo.
- Screenshots of a prototype or minimum viable product (MVP).
- Technical mock-ups, interface designs or user-experience flows.
- Pilot or testing documentation.
- Evidence of early validation, such as user interviews, customer feedback or expressions of interest.

Applicants should explain what has already been developed, what remains to be done, and how the available evidence supports the proposed business concept.

Question 4.6 When will applicants be informed of the selection results?

After Admissibility and Eligibility check, each applicant will receive a formal notification by email, informing if:

- The proposal has been selected for funding,
- The proposal has been placed on the reserve list,
- The proposal has been rejected.

Email will include the relevant assessment and, where applicable, the Evaluation Summary Report.

Question 4.7 How much technical information should the application include, and how can confidential information be protected?

Proposal should provide enough detail for evaluators to understand your solution, its innovation and its current stage of development. The relevant criteria are A2 (Innovation & Differentiation) and C4 (Prototype / Concept Evidence). Answers should be clear, concise and evidence-based, within the character limits of each question in Part B. Sensitive technical details, such as formulas or source code, are not required.

Confidential information: Any confidential information must be clearly labelled as such in your application. It is used only for evaluation and shared only with EIT Culture & Creativity staff, independent external experts and the Selection Committee, all bound by confidentiality obligations (Section 6.4).

5. Application form

Question 5.1 Where can I find the application form?

Applications must be submitted online through the submission platform. The application form and related documents are available via the official EIT Culture & Creativity Spark call website. Before starting, applicants should read the Call Guidelines and all related documents. The application must be completed in English. Incomplete applications cannot be considered.

Question 5.2 What do I need to upload in the application form?

Applicants must submit the online application form and the following supporting documents:

- Budget file: completed using the EIT Culture & Creativity funding template and saved in .xlsx format, showing the planned allocation of the requested funding of up to EUR 30,000.
- Venture Execution Plan: a single PDF of no more than 7 pages, including the budget plan. It should describe the planned activities, milestones, deliverables, development goals and intended use of funds.
- Lean Startup Canvas: completed and uploaded as a PDF. Applicants may use the template in Annex VI or prepare it using a digital tool such as Canva or Miro.
- Pitch video: a one-minute video introducing the applicant (and the team, where applicable) and the business idea. It must include English subtitles and be publicly accessible via YouTube or Vimeo.
- Evidence of the business idea and/or prototype: one publicly accessible link to tangible evidence, such as a demo video, prototype or MVP screenshots, technical mock-ups, pilot documentation, or a working solution.
- Part B of the application form: completed using the template in Annex III, saved as a PDF and uploaded separately.

All required sections and supporting documents must be completed and submitted. The maximum file size for each uploaded item is 500 MB; if a file exceeds this limit, the guidelines instruct applicants to create and upload a ZIP file instead.

Question 5.3 What is Part B of the application form?

Part B is the technical proposal. It is a separate document that applicants must complete using the template provided in Annex III of the Call Guidelines. It allows applicants to explain their business idea in more detail and is assessed together with the budget file and required annexes against the award criteria.

Part B includes:

- Proposal abstract: a short summary of the business idea, objectives, target users or markets, expected outcomes, and contribution to EIT Culture & Creativity's objectives.
- Excellence: the problem being addressed, the proposed solution, its innovation and differentiation, and the evidence supporting the concept.
- Impact: the expected results, market potential and broader value of the proposed venture.

- Implementation: how the venture will be developed and implemented, including the relevant work plan and resources.

Once completed, Part B must be saved as a PDF named *Part B_proposal acronym.pdf* and uploaded separately through the online submission platform.

Important note: Applicants must ensure that the information is accurate, complete and consistent with Part A and the required supporting documents. Applicants must fill in the text boxes without changing the question structure, respect the character limits, and ensure that any questions marked "Individuals only" or "Teams only" correspond to the applicant type selected in Part A.

Question 5.4 What is the Sanctions and Jurisdiction checkbox in the application form?

The Sanctions and Jurisdiction checkbox is a declaration confirming that you comply with the applicable EU restrictive measures, eligibility requirements, and jurisdictional restrictions set out in the Call Guidelines.

If you are applying as an individual, you must confirm that you are not subject to EU restrictive measures that would prevent your participation in or receipt of funding under the call. If you are applying as a team, the declaration applies to both the applicant and all designated team members.

Before ticking the box, please make sure that the declaration applies to you and, where relevant, to all designated team members. Further details on eligible countries and jurisdictional restrictions are provided in Call Guidelines.

Question 5.5 What does the Financial Capacity checkbox mean in the application form?

By ticking this box, you confirm that you (if applying as an individual) or you and the designated team founders (if applying as a team) have the financial capacity needed to implement the proposed project. You also acknowledge that EIT Culture & Creativity may request supporting documents to assess your financial capacity, such as financial statements, business plans, audit reports, information about your dependence on EU funding, or records of previous financial performance. If you fail to provide the requested information or submit false, incomplete or misleading information, your application may be rejected, an award decision may be withdrawn, the contracting process or agreement may be terminated, and/or funds may be recovered, where applicable.

6. Evaluation process

Question 6.1 How are applications evaluated?

After Admissibility and Eligibility check, proposals passing to the Quality Evaluation stage, conducted by independent External Expert Evaluators (EEEs) against 3 criteria followed each with sub-criteria:

Excellence (maximum score: 15 points)

- Problem & Solution
- Clarity Innovation & Differentiation
- Gender mainstreaming and the integration of the gender dimension

Impact (maximum score: 10 points)

- Relevance to CCSI & Use of Technology
- Execution Plan and Use of Funds

Quality and efficiency of the implementation (maximum score: 25 points)

- Commercial logic and venture viability
- Founder / Team Capability & Commitment
- Lean Business Canvas Quality & Hypothesis Strength
- Prototype / Concept Evidence
- Entrepreneurial Spirit & Experience

Each criterion is scored from 1 to 5 points. Up to 35 top-ranked proposals that pass the quality evaluation will undergo a portfolio selection assessment conducted by the EIT Culture & Creativity Selection Committee. The Selection Committee members will assess each proposal on the basis of the submitted application and the interview against the criterion and sub-criteria:

KIC portfolio strategic fit and contribution to financial sustainability objectives (maximum score: 30 points):

- Market Validation
- Growth Potential
- Financial Sustainability & Portfolio Alignment

Applicants invited to the Interview will be requested to prepare a short presentation to support the interview. Structure of the interview will follow:

- A short presentation by the applicant, up to 10 minutes; and
- A question-and-answer session with the Selection Committee, up to 10 minutes.

Question 6.2 Can the programme team confirm whether my specific business idea will be eligible before I apply?

We cannot pre-assess or guarantee the eligibility of individual proposals before submission. Applicants should review the call requirements and clearly explain how their solution fits the selected priority area, creates value for the sector, and meets the programme's eligibility criteria. Final eligibility is determined

during the formal eligibility check, while the proposal's quality and strategic alignment are assessed through the evaluation process.

Question 6.3 How is the founding team's capability assessed?

The evaluation considers the founding team's skills, relevant experience, understanding of the target domain and commitment to developing the venture. Applicants should describe their relevant experience and demonstrate how the team can deliver the proposed solution. Where specific expertise is missing, they should explain how they plan to address the gap through additional team members, advisors or partners.

Question 6.4 How are prototypes and market validation assessed?

Evaluators assess the strength of the evidence provided to demonstrate progress beyond the concept stage, together with evidence of market validation. Applicants should provide the most relevant available materials, such as technical mock-ups, product demonstrations, pilot results, user feedback or customer expressions of interest. The evidence should be clearly linked to the proposed venture and its development stage.

7. Budget & Financial support

Question 7.1 Is there a financial support?

Yes. Selected applicants may receive financial support of up to EUR 30,000 per project to help validate their business idea, test their product in the market, establish a new legal entity and develop their venture through the Spark programme. The funding covers up to 100% of actual eligible costs, subject to the maximum contribution and the programme's cost eligibility rules. No co-funding is required. Financial support is linked to participation in both the Startup Sprint and the Spark Incubation Programme, and is not guaranteed automatically upon selection.

Question 7.2 When will I receive the funding if selected?

The payment of the up to €30,000 funding will be in three instalments connected to the deliverables

1- Up to €12,000 is released upon delivery of the DEL 1 and Startup Sprint participation.
2- Up to €12,000 is released upon delivery of the DEL 2 and company formation.
3- Following the programme's conclusion and review of the annual reporting delivered by the participant, up to the remaining €6,000 is paid.

The final amount retained depends on the eligible costs incurred, reported and accepted under the programme's financial rules. Any remaining balance is settled following the final financial assessment.

Question 7.3 Is equity required in exchange for the EUR 30,000 programme funding?

No. The financial support provided through the Spark Incubation Programme is not an equity investment.

Question 7.4 Can the programme funding be combined with other funding sources?

Yes, provided that the same activities, costs, outputs or results are not funded, or planned to be funded, through another EIT-funded instrument or another EU funding source. Costs already funded by another EU programme or source cannot be reimbursed again by EIT Culture & Creativity.

Question 7.5 What costs should be included in the budget?

The budget should include costs that are directly related to your approved project activities, necessary and proportionate to implementing your Venture Execution Plan, and linked to the programme's milestones and deliverables. The budget must be submitted using the provided budget template.

Eligible expenditure falls into the following categories:

- Personnel costs: up to EUR 15,000.
- Travel and subsistence: up to EUR 7,500.
- Subcontracting: up to EUR 5,000 and no more than 15% of the total eligible project costs.
- Other goods and services: up to EUR 7,500.

These are maximum eligibility ceilings for the nine-month programme, not guaranteed allocations. The total EIT Culture & Creativity contribution, including indirect costs, cannot exceed EUR 30,000 per project.

Indirect costs are calculated at a flat rate of 25% of the eligible direct costs included in the calculation base and are included within the EUR 30,000 maximum.
All costs must be incurred during the eligible period, properly documented and verifiable, and comply with the applicable financial and legal requirements. For detailed eligibility rules, please see Call Guidelines.

Question 7.6 How should an early-stage venture demonstrate financial sustainability when it is still at the idea stage?

Applicants are not expected to have a fully established business or proven revenue at this stage. However, they should demonstrate a credible understanding of how their venture could become a viable, scalable, for-profit business. This can be demonstrated by explaining the customer problem being addressed, the target market, potential customers and competitors, and how the venture plans to generate income. Applicants should also present a realistic execution plan, with clear milestones and a budget that shows how the requested funding will support the development and validation of the business idea. The proposal should demonstrate commercial potential and a plausible path towards a sustainable business, rather than relying on unsupported assumptions. Existing revenue or paying customers are not required, but applicants should provide evidence of progress beyond the concept stage, such as a prototype, demonstrator, working demo, screenshots, or pilot and testing documentation.

Question 7.7 Is FSM required?

The programme does not require applicants to sign a Financial Sustainability Mechanism to receive the programme's financial and incubation support.

Question 7.8 Can an individual applicant meet the financial capacity requirement if they rely on the initial prefinancing payment?

Potentially, yes. Relying on the initial prefinancing payment does not automatically prevent an individual applicant from meeting the financial capacity requirement. However, the prefinancing alone does not guarantee compliance. Applicants must be able to demonstrate their capacity to implement the proposed project, and supporting documentation may be requested.

Question 7.9 Must I cover any costs before receiving the first funding payment?

Yes. The initial prefinancing payment is linked to the completion of the first programme deliverable, which includes participation in the Startup Sprint. As the deliverable can only be completed after the Sprint, the first payment cannot be made beforehand. Applicants should therefore be prepared to cover upfront expenses, such as travel and accommodation expenses related to the Startup Sprint. Such expenses may be declared as eligible travel costs if they fall within the eligibility period and meet the conditions of the subgrant agreement.

Question 7.10 Can the initial prefinancing be used for company registration and early project costs?

Yes, funding may contribute to company formation and registration costs, early operational expenses and other eligible project costs, subject to the applicable rules. Costs must fall within the eligibility period and be properly documented. Costs incurred before the subgrant agreement is signed are at the applicant's own risk. Prefinancing is not a final payment. The final contribution is based on the actual eligible costs reported, and any excess prefinancing may be recovered.

8. Other

Question 8.1 Where can I find examples of innovative projects in the creative industries?

The programme team recommended the 100 to Watch list as a source of inspiration and examples of relevant ventures: https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/what-we-do/business-creation/100-to-watch.

Question 8.2 Where can companies that are already incorporated find support?

Companies that are already established may wish to explore the Shape and Scale programmes offered by EIT Culture & Creativity: https://eit-culture-creativity.eu/grow-your-company.

Question 8.3 Is English proficiency required to participate in the programme?

Yes. All programme activities are delivered in English, and translation support is not provided. Applicants must be able to truthfully confirm their English proficiency in the application form declaration.