



Brussels  
HOME.E.3/PS

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

**Ref.:** **HOME-Funds/2025/46**

**Subject:** **Launch of the call for expression of interest under the Specific Action “Promoting new European technologies, including artificial intelligence, for border checks and/or border surveillance taking up research results (INNO)” under the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI), reference: BMVI/2025/SA/1.8**

**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 provides that *Member States*<sup>(1)</sup> 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 Regulation and in accordance with the relevant financing decisions and work programmes for the Instrument<sup>(2)</sup>.

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<sup>(1)</sup> Reference to Member States in this note should be understood as including the Schengen Associated Countries (i.e. Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland), for which the arrangements for their participation in the BMVI are in place.

<sup>(2)</sup> Integrated Border Management Fund – Border Management and Visa Instrument (2021-27) - Migration and Home Affairs

By the present note, the Commission launches a call for expression of interest for Specific Action “**Promoting new European technologies, including artificial intelligence, for border checks and/or border surveillance taking up research results (INNO)**”, in line with the actions listed in the above-mentioned Commission’s financing decision and work programme.

## 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 programme.

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 the total eligible expenditure, projects implemented under specific actions may benefit from an increased co-financing rate of up to 90% of the total eligible expenditure.

The specific action must be implemented by the Member States in accordance with the BMVI Regulation <sup>(3)</sup> and the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR) <sup>(4)</sup>. This includes compliance with fundamental rights. Moreover, Member States must ensure that the specific action is 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 the BMVI Regulation).

Your attention is drawn to one provision of the CPR in particular. As regards 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”.

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<sup>(3)</sup> 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.

<sup>(4)</sup> 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. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

#### 3.1. Indicative Budget available

The indicative amount envisaged for the present call (BMVI/2025/SA/1.1.8) under the Thematic Facility work programme 2023-2027 <sup>(5)</sup> is **EUR 25 million**.

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

For projects funded under this call, approaches of **joint procurement** by groups of Member States and/or of innovation procurement may be useful. **The Commission encourages consideration by Member States of such approaches for the potential transnational impact**. However, neither innovation procurement nor joint procurement are mandatory for this call.

**Joint procurement** is the central and collective (by groups of Member States) procurement of goods and services that could have been otherwise procured and then used by the individual parties involved (national governments and administrations). Joint procurement may help Member States to increase attractivity to manufacturers/suppliers and be more strategic in front of the market and suppliers of innovative systems and solutions to test and validate. It may also allow to exploit economy of scale by aggregating the demand of more contracting authorities. Moreover, joint procurement may help to increase interoperability and/or integration of possible future systems. If Member States plan to do joint procurement for this call (in connection or not with innovation procurement), each Member State should indicate it in its own application. The Commission invites Member States to review the Toolbox for joint cross-border public procurement (JCBPP) by the EU-funded iProcureNet <sup>(6)</sup>.

**Innovation procurement** is a type of public procurement that aims to stimulate or acquire new or significantly improved products, services, or processes that are not yet widely available, and in which contracting authorities, instead of buying off-the-shelf, act as a “launch customer” <sup>(7)</sup>. Innovation procurement provides a large enough demand to incentivise industry to invest in commercialisation with the quality and price needed by users, and may contribute to achieving best value-for-public-money. Innovation procurement also allows to perform conformance testing and validation of solutions before actually procuring them, ensuring that the selected solutions meet their specific needs and requirements. Innovation procurement is not research and development and does not include the procurement of research (which is instead known as ‘pre-commercial procurement’ (PCP)). With innovation procurement, the actual public procurement of the solutions happens anyway through one of the existing public procurement procedures (e.g. negotiated procedure, competitive dialogue etc.). The Commission invites Member States to review the EU-funded Toolbox for Innovation Procurement in Civil Security (border

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<sup>(5)</sup> Commission Implementing Decision C(2025)2696 of 8.5.2025 extended the work programme 2023-2025 to the years 2026 and 2027 for actions implemented under shared management.

<sup>(6)</sup> <https://www.iprourennet.eu/home/toolbox-section-1/>

<sup>(7)</sup> Launch customer or early adopter refers to the first 20% of customers that buy an innovative solution. Launch customer reference help attracting investors.

management, internal security, civil security) by the EU-funded iProcureNet<sup>(8)</sup>; and the Commission's 2021 Guidance on Innovation Procurement<sup>(9)</sup>.

In case of a transnational project, the Commission recommends, for the sake of efficiency, the choice of Option 1 (allocation of funding to a lead Member State only) as presented in guidance note HOME-Funds/2022/07(Ares(2022)1060102) of 14 February 2022 *on 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*.

Any proposal submitted by a single Member State must also demonstrate its transnational impact by its potential for transferability, as well as dissemination activities, trainings, or others.

### **3.2. Background for the specific action**

This Specific Action focuses on **promoting new European technologies, including artificial intelligence, for border checks and/or border surveillance, taking up research results**. It aims to support the uptake (e.g. validation, piloting in real environment, testing, transfer, 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.

The **importance of state-of-the-art, innovative and knowledge-based methods and technologies for the security of the EU external borders** has been 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<sup>(10)</sup>, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum<sup>(11)</sup>, and the Strategy towards a fully functioning and resilient Schengen area<sup>(12)</sup>. More recent EU policy documents and legislation, such as the proposal on an EU Digital Travel application<sup>(13)</sup>, the Artificial Intelligence Act<sup>(14)</sup>, the Joint Communication on an Action Plan on Cable Security<sup>(15)</sup>, the ProtectEU Internal Security Strategy<sup>(16)</sup>, as well as increasing hybrid threats to the Schengen area, including the instrumentalisation of migration<sup>(17)</sup>, recurring and disruptive external drone incursions into the EU's air space and close to critical infrastructure, and migrant smuggling<sup>(18)</sup>, further highlighted that innovation is more needed than ever to ensure effective, secure and fair border management.

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<sup>(8)</sup> Available here: <https://www.iprocurenet.eu/home/toolbox-section-2/>

<sup>(9)</sup> Available here: <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/45975>

<sup>(10)</sup> [COM\(2020\) 605 final](#)

<sup>(11)</sup> [COM\(2020\) 609 final](#)

<sup>(12)</sup> [COM\(2021\) 277 final](#)

<sup>(13)</sup> [Interinstitutional File 2024/0670 \(COD\); COM\(2024\) 670](#)

<sup>(14)</sup> [COM\(2024\) 1689](#)

<sup>(15)</sup> [JOIN\(2025\) 9 final](#)

<sup>(16)</sup> [COM\(2025\) 148 final](#)

<sup>(17)</sup> [COM\(2024\) 1359](#)

<sup>(18)</sup> [COM. Call to Action on a Global Alliance to Counter Migrant Smuggling. 28 November 2023.](#)

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<sup>(19)</sup>. The crucial role of innovation in this area is further highlighted in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (“MFF”) proposed by the Commission,<sup>(20)</sup> which foresees a significant increase in the budget for European research, innovation and competitiveness on civil security, including border management. The European Competitiveness Fund (ECF)<sup>(21)</sup> planned under the new MFF would complement existing efforts to take research and innovation into industrialisation, commercialisation and subsequent operational deployment where needed.

Research and innovation is also 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 the EBCG Agency’s Multiannual Plans, culminating in the EBCG Capability Roadmap<sup>(22)</sup>. The Roadmap is one of the pillars enabling a smarter and innovative EBCG standing corps model, supporting a further integrated European capability architecture. Promoting European innovation has a strong EU added value, as it leads to the reinforcement of existing and development of new border management authorities’ capabilities<sup>(23)</sup>, thus strengthening the European Border and Coast Guard as a whole.

This capability-based approach, integrated between, on the one hand, research and innovation funding and, on the other hand, BMVI funding, facilitates bringing European solutions to European users, while reinforcing European open strategic autonomy.

Under this policy background, the **EU research and innovation (R&I) investments for European solutions in border management** have been consistent since the inception of the EU civil security R&I programme in 2007. Union-funded research and innovation projects on border management are supported by specific parts of the EU Framework Programmes for Research and Innovation (i.e. FP7, Horizon 2020 (H2020), Horizon Europe (HE)). For more information, see webpages on EU security research<sup>(24)</sup> and on Horizon Europe’s Cluster 3 “Civil security for society”<sup>(25)</sup>. Over time, this led to new knowledge, data, technologies, and prototypes at different levels of Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs).

Both the EU civil security research and innovation legal basis and Work Programmes<sup>(26)</sup>, and the BMVI Regulation, state that the BMVI should be used to support Member States

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<sup>(19)</sup> [COM\(2023\) 146 final](#)

<sup>(20)</sup> [COM\(2025\) 570 final](#)

<sup>(21)</sup> [COM\(2025\) 555 final/2](#)

<sup>(22)</sup> [Frontex Management Board Decision 16/2024 of 26 March 2024 on the approval of the Capability Roadmap of the European Border and Coast Guard](#)

<sup>(23)</sup> COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Enhancing security through research and innovation, Brussels, 15.12.2021 SWD (2021) 422 final.

<sup>(24)</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/innovation-and-security-research\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/policies/internal-security/innovation-and-security-research_en)

<sup>(25)</sup> [https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-3-civil-security-society\\_en](https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-3-civil-security-society_en)

<sup>(26)</sup> See, for example, Regulation (EU) 2021/695 on Horizon Europe, Work Programme [C\(2025\) 2779](#), and Work Programme 2026-2027 [C\(2025\) 8493](#)

to take up innovative European technologies and methods, in particular those coming from Union-funded research and innovation.

Innovation leads to the development of civil security capabilities if solutions (which must be legally, ethically and socially compliant) become available to practitioners. Much of the research and innovation on border management supported by the EU led to excellent scientific findings, and to development and deployment of promising technology.<sup>(27)</sup> However, barriers and challenges may also hinder the uptake of innovation in the civil security sector. The EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security<sup>(28)</sup> and the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS)<sup>(29)</sup>, for example, have documented barriers to innovation uptake by border management authorities, such as: fragmentation of demand, lack of funding for piloting and validation, complex procurement and certification procedures, and limited visibility or traceability of research results.

The BMVI can contribute to overcome these barriers, facilitating the testing, validation and deployment of new methods and technologies while supporting interoperability, compatibility, data protection and ethical standards. In the longer term, these efforts may contribute to shared operational standards and trust across Member States, increasing the efficiency of EU investment and ensuring lasting impact.

In this context, this **Specific Action “Promoting new European technologies, including artificial intelligence, for border checks and/or border surveillance taking up research results (INNO)”** aims to help border management authorities in Member States to test, validate, further pilot and deploy innovative technologies, tools and methods, including those based on artificial intelligence, and especially those developed through Union-funded research and innovation.

This Specific Action will contribute to strengthen the Union’s collective capability to improve border management, to facilitate authorised border crossings, to address migratory challenges as well as potential future threats, contributing to combating crime with a cross-border dimension, as well as hybrid threats<sup>(30)</sup>, thereby ensuring a high level of internal security within the Union<sup>(31)</sup> - thus operationalising the vision of a more resilient, innovative and prepared Europe. This Specific Action may also contribute to EU’s strategic objectives by encouraging solutions that strengthen the EU’s security and

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<sup>(27)</sup> 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.

<sup>(28)</sup> <https://www.europol.europa.eu/how-we-work/innovation-lab/eu-innovation-hub-for-internal-security>

<sup>(29)</sup> [https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/ceris-community-european-research-and-innovation-security\\_en](https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/ceris-community-european-research-and-innovation-security_en)

<sup>(30)</sup> Hybrid threats refer to threats from state or non-state actors who seek to exploit the vulnerabilities of the EU to their own advantage by using in a coordinated way a mixture of measures (i.e. diplomatic, military, economic, technological) while remaining below the threshold of formal warfare. Source: [https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/hybrid-threats\\_en](https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/hybrid-threats_en)

<sup>(31)</sup> Frontex Management Board Decision of 20 September 2023 adopting the Technical and Operational Strategy for European Integrated Border Management 2023-2027

strategic autonomy, for instance by capitalising on European technological developments in the border management domain.

### 3.3. Scope and purpose of the specific action

This Specific Action falls under point 1(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”.

The objective of this Specific Action is to provide financial support to Member States to **test, validate, further pilot and/or deploy European innovative digital technologies, tools and/or methods (i.e. “uptake” of innovative technologies)** of a starting **Technological Readiness Level not lower than 7** <sup>(32)</sup> for border management, whether border checks or border surveillance, aimed at improving the management of the EU’s external borders, and especially building on the results of Union-funded research and innovation projects on border management.

The support will focus on co-funding solutions with elements that must be innovative (at least at European level). Hence, **the purchase of available commercial off-the-shelf (COTS)**, unless being a minor, complementary or necessary part of the integration effort of an innovative solution, **is not eligible under this Specific Action**.

Project proposals presented under this Specific Action must build on the outcomes of research and innovation on border management, especially of Union-funded research and innovation activities on civil security <sup>(33)</sup>, to ensure some, or all, of the following:

- Improved capabilities for more secure and efficient border crossings;
- Improved capabilities for integrated, interoperable and multi-purpose surveillance of the EU’s external borders;
- Improved capabilities for acquiring, fusing, analysing and interpreting information and data from different sources for border checks or border surveillance;
- Enhanced situational awareness, intelligence picture and operational capabilities of border management authorities;
- Improved capabilities for border management including with emerging technologies;
- Improved use of well trained and AI Act-compliant artificial intelligence models, and of high-quality datasets;
- Training and guidance for border management authorities.

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<sup>(32)</sup> TRL 7 - System prototype demonstration in an operational environment; for a description of Technology Readiness Levels, see C(2025) 8493, General Annexes.

<sup>(33)</sup> 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.

The specific action **may include but is not limited to** activities such as:

- Testing, validation, and/or further piloting (including in groups of Member States) in operational and real environment;
- Procurement of goods and services;
- Evaluation of operational maturity of innovative solutions;
- Installation and integration of innovative solutions with legacy systems;
- Deployment, training and guidance on the use of the new solutions, including new technologies, knowledge and/or methods.

**Examples of innovative solutions (technologies, methods, knowledge)** may include but are not limited to:

- Biometrics, digital travel credentials (DTCs) and other smart border crossing solutions;
- Mobile platforms for operational staff;
- Technologies for document security;
- Sensors (e.g. optical, electromagnetic);
- Satellite technology; high-altitude platform stations (HAPS);
- Manned and unmanned platforms;
- Uncrewed aerial, ground, surface or under water vehicles and systems;
- Digital twin solutions (e.g. of the EU's external borders);
- Positioning and tracking systems;
- Computer vision, video analytics, data fusion and information analysis;
- Augmented, extended and virtual reality;
- Detection, identification and tracking systems;
- Artificial intelligence-based technologies;
- Technologies used for testing platforms, infrastructures, methodologies, and governance models;
- Methodologies, standard operating procedures, training, etc.

**Use cases** may include, but are not limited to:

- Detection, classification, identification and neutralisation of manned and unmanned vehicles, vessels or systems (including uncrewed aerial, ground, surface and/or underwater), which may be employed for smuggling, trafficking or other illegal activities across external borders;
- Tracking, identification and analysis of vehicles or vessels for border surveillance, including search and rescue;
- Increased cross-border situational awareness;
- Increased traveller facilitation and security at border crossing points, with new technologies enabling more seamless flows;

- In general, improving efficiency, effectiveness, availability and reliability of capabilities of border and coast guards.

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

Examples of such previous initiatives on border management **include, but are not limited to**, the following EU-funded projects: BorderForce (HE), BorderLink (HE), EURMARS (HE), FLEXI-cross (HE), ODYSSEUS (HE), EINSTEIN (HE), SAFETRAVELLERS (HE), CARMEN (HE), POPEYE (HE), I-SEAMORE (HE), MELCHIOR (HE), UnderSec (HE), SEAGUARD (HE), SMAUG (HE), ALFA (H2020), ANDROMEDA (H2020), D4FLY (H2020), EFFECTOR (H2020), FOLDOOUT (H2020), iMARS (H2020), MARISA (H2020), NESTOR (H2020), PROMENADE (H2020), RANGER (H2020), ROBORDER (H2020), SAFESHORE (H2020), SMILE (H2020), TRESSPASS (H2020).

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

- the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (for past, open and forthcoming topics and calls) <sup>(34)</sup>,
- the Common Research and Development Information Service (CORDIS) (for ongoing and past projects) <sup>(35)</sup>,
- the Horizon Dashboard (for aggregated search by country, partner, topic) <sup>(36)</sup>,
- through the Community for European Research and Innovation for Security (CERIS) <sup>(37)</sup>,
- the National Contact points (NCPs) for EU security research in each Member State <sup>(38)</sup>, and
- the DG HOME's Innovation and Security Research Unit <sup>(39)</sup>.

For proposals building on **previous Pre-Operational Validation (POV) and Pre-Commercial Procurement (PCP) projects**, in order to make sure it is an actual “uptake” action, proposed actions should also engage Member States beyond the original buyers’ group (i.e. the buyers which were already in the initial POV or PCP group).

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

The 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 operational deployment and/or scale-up can be planned with the support from national funding, BMVI

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<sup>(34)</sup> [EU Funding & Tenders](#)

<sup>(35)</sup> [CORDIS](#)

<sup>(36)</sup> [Horizon Dashboard](#)

<sup>(37)</sup> [Community for European Research and Innovation for Security \(CERIS\)](#)

<sup>(38)</sup> [Funding & tenders \(europa.eu\)](#)

<sup>(39)</sup> [Innovation and security research \(europa.eu\)](#)

National Programmes, and/or other public or private funding. Project proposals that have a credible and committed plan for further uptake are particularly welcome, as they will impact on the capabilities of national and EU border security practitioners (e.g. EBCG Agency Frontex).

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. During the project, if applicable, innovative technologies should incorporate an assessment of social acceptance and on the respect of fundamental rights, including privacy (e.g. data protection impact assessment (DPIA)).

The proposals should also demonstrate, in line with the objective to promote the Union's strategic autonomy, how the projects will ensure and preserve the **security and cybersecurity, integrity, reliability and resilience** of components and systems that would be tested, validated, piloted, transferred, and their capacity, once in operation, to securely connect with relevant existing IT networks, including regarding the handling of classified data and information, if applicable.

If using space services – like for earth observation, positioning, timing or navigation – proposals should plan to use **European space programmes (Copernicus, Galileo)**.

The call for expression of interest is open for both national and transnational project proposals. However, in both instances, proposals should set out the impact also in terms of the potential for transferability to other Member States and in relation to European strategic autonomy.

**In case of a transnational project proposal**, the lead Member State will have to make sure that the BMVI Managing Authority of each participating Member State duly signs the “Partnership Declaration Form”. In the Application form, each project beneficiary in each participating Member State should be listed and the share that each Member State will receive from the additional amount allocated, if the project proposal is successful, should be indicated. 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.

### **3.4. Expected results following the call**

Member States can propose both projects implemented entirely at national level and projects implemented transnationally by a group of Member States. In the latter case, the proposing Member States should explain the specific added value of their transnational approach.

As outcome of the present call for expression of interest, **the Commission expects to select 4 to 15 projects** targeting the issues listed under Section 3.3.

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

- 1) Improved security of the EU's 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 strategic autonomy in border management technologies.

## 4. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

### 4.1. Admissibility and assessment

The Specific Action proposed **should not start before 1 January 2026 and should be completed by 31 December 2029** at the latest.

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/2025/SA/1.1.8 Application Form attached to this note together with its annexes, which must be readable and complete (all fields necessary for assessment are to be filled in);
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;
5. In case of a transnational project: include partnership declaration forms signed by the Managing Authorities of all participating Member States <sup>(40)</sup>.

Failure to comply with the above admissibility criteria will lead to the rejection of the application.

DG HOME will assess admissible proposals based on the following criteria <sup>(41)</sup>:

#### A. Relevance (40 points/100 – minimum score: 20 points):

1. **Clarity** of the proposed solution, its **correspondence** with the objectives and scope of this call for expression of interest, and **its contribution towards the output and result indicators** listed in Annex VIII of the BMVI Regulation (see Annex 4).
2. **Innovation** of the proposed solution compared to state-of-the-art solutions.
3. **Complementarity and synergies** with other EU funding sources, particularly with ongoing or planned actions financed from the EU Home Affairs Funds; exploitation of previous Union-funded research and innovation in the area of border management; potential for integration and/or interoperability of the proposed solutions into existing systems and tools supporting border management.

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<sup>(40)</sup> Please refer to the note HOME-Funds/2022/07 on the arrangements between partners to be sought when submitting proposals for transnational specific actions.

<sup>(41)</sup> Applications not meeting the minimum score of 20 points under criterion A, relevance, will not be further assessed. Applications must meet the minimum score under each of the criteria A, B and C to be proposed for funding – depending on their overall ranking and budget availability.

**B. Quality and content (40 points/100 – minimum score: 20 points):**

1. **Maturity** of the proposal: appropriateness of the design and planned implementation, considering the envisaged activities; reasonability and justification of estimated costs in relation to the scale of the challenge and proposed solutions; methodology (including operational and financial management); organisation of work for project management, monitoring, and evaluation and for coordination between project partners; appropriateness of considerations on security, cybersecurity, integrity, reliability and resilience of components and systems; identification of potential risks and adequacy of the proposed mitigating measures.
2. **Cost-effectiveness and sustainability:** the proposal should present the allocation of the financial support to the planned activities, in line with the budget form (annex 2) and its appropriateness in relation to the scale and type of those activities (e.g. personnel, equipment, travel, training). It should also demonstrate the overall cost effectiveness and value for money. Finally, the sustainability model should be explained, including a credible plan for future deployment(s) and/or scale-up after this specific action's lifetime.
3. **Indicative timetable** setting out the sequencing and duration of the activities/workstreams required and aligned with the budget form (annex 2), and assessing the extent to which the duration of the project proposal/activities is realistic, adapted to the need to address the challenges.

**C. Impact (20 points/100 – minimum score: 10 points):**

1. **Potential Impact** of the proposed solution on capability development for innovative solutions for the border management authorities concerned by the project, including in consideration of the National Capability Development Plan and EBCG Capability Roadmap.
2. **Degree of involvement of, and cooperation** with, competent entities from other Member States (border management authorities, private and public entities, research organisations, industry) and relevant EU agencies or other entities whenever appropriate.
3. **Potential for transferability** to other Member States, and its relation and/or contribution to European strategic autonomy.

Member States must ensure respect for the horizontal principles described in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060<sup>(42)</sup>, including respect for fundamental rights and compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, as well as Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and Directive (EU) 2016/680<sup>(43)</sup>.

Moreover, Member States must also 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) 2021/1149).

#### **4.2. Application procedure**

**Deadline for the application:** Member States are invited to **submit their proposals by 4 May 2026** at the latest, using the official BMVI/2025/SA/1.1.8 Application Form attached to this Note, together with its annexes. The applicant can submit an application 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.

In line with Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001<sup>(44)</sup>, **any document held by the Commission, including documents containing sensitive information, may be subject to a request for public access**. Therefore, if more than one project proposal is submitted, the Managing Authorities should submit each project application in a separate email. Likewise, where needed or required clarifications should be sent in separate emails for each 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](mailto:HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu). Member States may submit additional documentation if necessary.

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<sup>(42)</sup> 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.

<sup>(43)</sup> Directive (EU) 2016/680 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by competent authorities for the purposes of the prevention, investigation, detection or prosecution of criminal offences or the execution of criminal penalties, and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Council Framework Decision 2008/977/JHA. Regulation (EU) 2016/679 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and the free movement of such data.

<sup>(44)</sup> Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents

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 3 April 2026 at the latest**, to the same BMVI specific actions functional mailbox [HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu).

Requests for clarifications should only be sent **by the Managing authority**. The Managing Authority has an important role to explain to the 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 their sole contact point and has the responsibility to review and reply to any questions or requests for clarifications received from applicants. 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 the functional mailbox [HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu](mailto:HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu).

DG HOME will aim at informing Member States of the outcome of the assessment of the proposals by October 2026.

## **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 the SFC system. 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 objective, and table 6 of the programme).

When amending a BMVI programme of a Member States, two situations may arise regarding the eligibility of expenditure <sup>(45)</sup>:

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 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 January 2026**.
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 in the tables in the 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**

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<sup>(45)</sup> Art. 63(7) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

**of the BMVI programme** that will add the respective types of interventions in the programme.

Yours faithfully,

Silvia MICHELINI

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