

**SUBJECT: Invitation to apply to the European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre
in the United Kingdom (ESA BIC UK)**

The ESA BIC UK programme offers support to UK-registered start-ups and early-stage SMEs that are less than five years old, independently owned (with founding entrepreneurs holding at least 51% of the company) and have a clear connection to space. These companies might be developing technologies for space use or creating downstream applications in non-space fields utilizing space technologies such as Earth Observation, Satellite Communications, Satellite Navigation, or ESA-patented technologies. There is a network of ESA BICs around Europe – more details can be found at <https://commercialisation.esa.int/esa-business-incubation-centres/>

The ESA BIC UK is managed by STFC Innovations Ltd, a subsidiary fully owned by the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC), which is a part of United Kingdom Research and Innovation, a public body funded by the UK Government. Since 2020, STFC has collaborated with the University of Leicester to deliver the ESA BIC UK programme across four locations. ESA BIC incubatee companies can be based at three STFC locations: the Science and Innovation Campuses at Harwell (near Oxford) and Daresbury (in Cheshire), and the Higgs Innovation Centre at the Royal Observatory Edinburgh. Additionally, companies can also be based at Space Park Leicester.

The programme offers a package of incentive funding aimed at accelerating product development, which can be used for R&D, prototyping, IP protection, market research, and third-party consultancy. Additionally, it provides business support, access to networking events, and technical assistance from STFC or the University of Leicester.

Selected companies are required to rent either a hot desk, an office, an assembly area, or a lab space within the ESA BIC and become an active member of the chosen campus.

In your proposal, it is crucial to highlight the distinctive features of the ESA BIC programme by addressing the following points:

- The central role of space technologies in your company.
- Your plan to leverage the available technical and business support.
- Your strategy for situating your operations on campus and becoming an active member of the community.

The application template documents and supporting information may be found at www.esa-bic.org.uk and comprise the following:

○ **ESA BIC UK Open Call:**

- Details of the ESA BIC UK Open Call [*ESA BIC UK Open Call – Issue C.pdf*]
- Instructions for completing the application, evaluation process and evaluation criteria [*ESA BIC UK Open Call Sections I-II – Issue C.pdf*]

○ **Draft Incubation Contract and Lease for reference:**

- ESA BIC UK Draft Business Incubation Contract (Section III) [*ESA BIC UK Draft Open Call Section III Business Incubation Contract_STFC - Issue C.pdf*]

Please note that a standard hot desking contract is included in Appendix 2 of this document.

○ **Business Application Proposal (BAP) documents for completion:**

- Template Cover Letter [*ESA BIC UK Application Template – Cover Letter and Requirements Checklist – Issue C.docx*]
- Template Incubation Proposal [*ESA BIC UK Application Template – Incubation Proposal – Issue C.docx*]
- Template Business Plan [*ESA BIC UK Application Template – Business Plan – Issue C.docx*]

○ **Space Connection Assessment** [*ESA BIC UK Space Connection Assessment – Issue C.docx*]

○ **Support templates for BAP** [*ESA BIC UK Application Template – Tables & Figures – Issue C.xlsx*]

○ **Reference Document:**

- Innovation Readiness Level [*ESA BIC UK Application Template – Innovation Readiness Level – Issue C*]

○ **Q&A:**

- ESA BIC UK Frequently Asked Questions [*ESA BIC UK Q&A – Issue C.pdf*]

You may also find the following ESA pages useful for searching and locating IPR and Technology:

- ESA IP for Commercialisation:
http://www.esa.int/Enabling_Support/Space_Engineering_Technology/IP_for_commercialisation
- ESA Innovation Exchange:
https://www.esa.int/About_Us/Business_with_ESA/Global_Space_Economic_Forum/Innovation_Exchange_Fuel_the_future

HOW TO APPLY:

To apply, please complete and send the following **three** Business Application Proposal (BAP) documents:

1. Cover Letter and Requirements Checklist
2. Incubation Proposal
3. Business Plan

(note that templates are provided separately for the tables in the Incubation Proposal and Business Plan)

Instructions for submitting these documents are provided in the *ESA BIC UK Open Call document* and are also repeated here for your convenience:

Please submit your complete proposal and all supporting documents electronically in .pdf and .doc/.docx formats to the following email address: enquiries@esa-bic.org.uk.

Feedback will be provided for unsuccessful applications. If an application is unsuccessful at the initial stage, a maximum of two submissions is allowed per company, unless an exception is granted by the ESA BIC. If the company passes the first stage but is unsuccessful at the second stage, only one resubmission is permitted. This resubmission must fully address the previous feedback and include a summary of the changes made since the original application. The Tender Opening Board will evaluate this summary to determine if the resubmission is admissible.

BEFORE DRAFTING YOUR APPLICATION, PLEASE CONTACT enquiries@esa-bic.org.uk FOR GUIDANCE. To qualify for the first stage of the application review process, you must schedule a review meeting with the relevant site manager.