

Defence - Your 2026 funding roadmap

Do not miss out on these grants and incentives!

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Defence – Relevant trends

- Defence spending surge and industry ramp-up

- European countries are significantly increasing defence budgets in response to rising security threats. The Netherlands, for example, supports NATO's call to spend 3.5% of GDP on defence and will raise its 2026 outlay to 2.2% of GDP

- Emerging tech and innovation in defence

- Launched in 2026, BraveTech EU links European and Ukrainian defence industries to fast-track the development of new technologies drawn from battlefield lessons. This joint initiative exemplifies the push for disruptive innovation to strengthen future military capabilities

- Military mobility and allied cooperation

- The EU unveiled measures to create a “military Schengen” area, removing red tape so troops and equipment can move swiftly across Europe. By streamlining permissions and upgrading key corridors, these steps greatly improve military mobility and reinforce collective defence readiness

Funding roadmap 2026 - Opportunity selection



Relevant grants and incentives in 2026

Programs - Defence*	Description	SME only?	Estimated grant range	Funding rate	Deadline
WBSO	Dutch fiscal scheme offering tax benefits for companies conducting R&D activities in innovative technologies and processes	No	Project specific	Max. 50% of eligible costs	Year-round
EIC Accelerator (incl. challenges)	European program providing funding and equity support for high-risk, high-impact innovations developed by start-ups and SMEs to scale breakthrough technologies	Yes	€2.5m + equity	Max. 70%	Multiple deadline dates in Q3/Q4
European Defence Fund	European program supporting collaborative defence research and capability development across Member States, strengthening innovation, industrial competitiveness and interoperability in European defence technologies and equipment	No	€5m - €125m	20%-90%	29 September 2026
Connecting Europe Facility	European funding program supporting the development and deployment of cross-border transport infrastructure and related innovation, including calls for military mobility, rail, inland waterways and alternative fuels infrastructure	No	TBA	TBA	October 2026
European Defence Industry Programme	European program supporting the ramp-up of defence production and common procurement in Europe, strengthening strategic autonomy and interoperability through funding for defence capabilities and industrial reinforcement	No	€10m - €30m	35%-100%	Call specific
Horizon Europe	Supports innovative projects, including the development of technologies for the defence domain (e.g., AI, cybersecurity, cryptography)	No	€1m - €20m	Max. 70%-100%	Call specific
AGILE	European funding program accelerating the development and deployment of agile defence technologies, supporting rapid innovation in areas such as AI, quantum and drones through fast approval and strong collaboration	No	€1m - €5m	TBA	Q2/Q3 2027

EY Grants & Incentives - approach and contact



Opportunity and risk assessment

Our international team of grants & incentives experts can aid you in mapping the right incentives for your operations. The ensuing long- and shortlists focus on timing, feasibility and value and help to devise an appropriate funding strategy. Additionally, compliance experts from our Subsidy Audit Services can identify potential compliance breaches early - contributing towards prevention of potential clawbacks.



End-to-end support

Our experienced team is well-versed all things grants and incentives. Deep technical and subject matter expertise helps to draft compelling, strong funding applications, whereas our knowledge of funding rules and regulations helps to optimize compliance processes.

Our Grants & Incentives services can consist of 1. aligning with your needs, 2. mapping opportunities, 3. deciding and prioritizing, 4. applying and submitting, and 5. ensuring compliance and follow-up.



Governance

As one of the world's largest business advisors we know how organizations work. Our in-house experience and track-record with servicing the largest firms in G&I applications helps us to define efficient, effective processes that ensure 1. timely identification of benefits, 2. efficient application for benefits and 3. effective retention of benefits. We help to define G&I governance processes - be it local, regional or global.



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