

SESAR Engage 2 KTN – first Call for Catalyst funding in the domain of air traffic management (ATM)

Opening date: 11 March 2024

Deadline model: single-stage

Call deadline: 13 May 2024 17:00:00 (Brussels time)

Expected duration of participation: 12 months

Total funding available: €480000.00 (the total catalyst funding budget is €960000.00 which is split between two Calls; the second Call is planned to open in 2025 with the remainder of the catalyst funding budget)

Project acronym: Engage 2

Full name of the EU funded project: The SESAR 3 Knowledge Transfer Network

Grant agreement number: 101114648

Topic: HORIZON-SESAR-2022-DES-ER-01-WA3-1 - Knowledge Transfer Network

1. Overview

Catalyst funding is intended to support focused projects. The focus is on maturing exploratory research further towards applications and operational contexts with a clear European dimension. These projects may address the corresponding thematic challenges mentioned below in Section 2. Other ‘open’ proposals, for projects moving solutions closer towards industry goals and objectives, and towards higher TRLs, will also be considered for catalyst funding, although some priority will be given to those aligned with thematic challenges, as set out below. Proposals supporting a thematic challenge should clearly state with which challenge the proposal is aligned. Cost constraints and submission principles are also described below. The Awards Board is comprised of Engage 2 consortium members¹, the SESAR 3 Joint Undertaking, ASDA (Association for the Scientific Development of ATM in Europe, <https://www.asda.aero/>), CANSO (Global voice of the ATM Industry, <https://canso.org/>) and industry partners (without conflicting interests). It is chaired by EUROCONTROL (with a casting vote). Engage 2 consortium members are ineligible to bid for the funding, although they will monitor, support and advise on the corresponding projects. This is the first of two waves of this type of funding.

2. Research themes

Proposals should demonstrate an original contribution to the state of the art, either supporting a thematic challenge, or be ‘open’. The thematic challenges were introduced at the 13th SESAR Innovation Days

¹ Deep Blue, Technische Universitaet Braunschweig, University of Belgrade – Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering, Fundacion Instituto de Investigacion Innaxis, Frequentis, EASN Technology Innovation Services, EUROCONTROL, University of Trieste and University of Westminster.

conference and are described on the Engage 2 website (see <https://engagektn.eu/thematic-challenge/>), namely:

- thematic challenge 1: Climate impact analysis and mitigation for ATM-related non-CO₂ emissions
- thematic challenge 2: Passenger-centric digital airport
- thematic challenge 3: Disruptive ATM system modernization
- thematic challenge 4: Integration of new entrants

Further details on each challenge are available on the Engage 2 website. Associated workshops, open to anyone to attend, will be advertised on the Engage 2 website and disseminated through various other channels, including as *SESAR e-news* items.

3. Submission and selection procedures

3.1 General conditions

Proposals may be submitted by a single entity or by a consortium of between two and four entities. Each entity should be located in a country eligible to receive funding through Horizon Europe grants (see Annex), however there is no requirement for consortia to include entities from a minimum number of countries.

For proposals submitted by a single entity, this entity is the project coordinator. For consortia, one entity in each consortium acts as project coordinator, with the responsibility for submitting the proposal and acting as point of contact with Engage 2. The empowered project coordinator shall be clearly identified in the proposal and this role shall not be shared between entities.

For consortia, funding is allocated to the project coordinator who is responsible for paying the other entities in the consortium. Please note that the same eligibility conditions apply to this Call as for the original Call for Proposals leading to the award of Engage 2 (refer to [1] for the current edition of Horizon Europe's General Annexes).

Funding through this Call is made available as 'financial support to third parties' and complies with Engage 2's Grant Agreement (refer to [2] for the current edition of the Annotated Grant Agreement).

The duration of projects is limited to 12 months.

This Call closes on **13 May 2024** at 17:00 (Brussels time).

3.2 Eligible costs

The maximum award from Engage 2 per funded catalyst project is EUR 60 000; additional co-funding from another source is permitted. The following costs are eligible:

1. Effort of all parties according to Horizon Europe rules.
2. Travel costs directly attributable to the project, including, for example, meetings with industry/stakeholders, participation at a corresponding Engage 2 thematic challenge workshop and/or a dedicated session at a SESAR Innovation Days conference.
3. Data and other supporting material costs, including computing infrastructure (e.g. cloud resources). All taxes eligible under Horizon Europe rules are covered.

In accordance with Horizon Europe rules, the maximum amount that any third party can receive from Engage 2 is EUR 60 000 over the duration of the network. Refer to the Call Annex for further guidance. For the

avoidance of doubt, this means that no entity can receive more than EUR 60 000 *in total* from Engage 2, from the first or second waves of this Call and including any other Engage 2 funding (this includes PhD funding through the earlier Engage 2 PhD Call). Entities submitting more than one proposal should be mindful of this constraint.

3.3 Material

Proposals are to be submitted in English as a PDF file.

Each proposal should be composed of a:

- Project description (see details below).
- Project administrative form (an MS Word template is available to download from the Engage website).

3.3.1 Submission material for proposals

Proposals should include the following parts:

(1) Summary (1 page): a concise overview of the project and its background, with project inputs and any planned outputs that are in addition to those specified in Section 4. The entity(ies) agree(s) that in case of award of funding, the summary page will be anonymised (by removing names and references) and published on the Engage 2 website and the S3JU website, subject to applicants' permission.

(2) Project goals and objectives, either explicitly supporting a specific thematic challenge (as identified in Section 2) or stated as 'open'.

(3) Research plan, including a:

- Description of the research approach, with *specific reference* to criteria (i)-(iv) in Table 1, below.
- Brief description of each entity with relevance to the topic addressed and the ability to execute it. The empowered project coordinator shall be clearly identified.
- Description of the data sources and their use, if applicable.
- Project schedule and milestones over the 12 months (please align these with Section 4's project reporting requirements); note that detailed work package descriptions and formal meetings (e.g. kick-off) with Engage 2 are *not* expected. Additional deliverables are *not* required, other than intermediate and final reporting (described in Section 4) – if additional deliverables are planned, these should not be linked with measures of project progress (e.g. milestones) as they will not be formally assessed.

(4) Financial plan (concise summary):

- Provide evidence of eligible costs per entity, including an estimate of effort, as specified in Section 3.2.
- Provide evidence of co-funding, if applicable; this may be used as evidence to support criterion C(iv) in Table 1 but will not be given explicit weighting in its own right. Note that co-funding is separate and does not contribute towards the EUR 60 000 maximum award per proposal.

(5) Project administrative form (complete the supplied template).

An optional annex of references (only) may be additionally included.

Proposals should be written in a font no smaller than 11-point. Parts (2) – (4) above, inclusive, shall comprise 5-8 pages (and no more than this – proposal evaluators will be instructed to disregard excess pages). An optional annex of references will not count towards this page limit.

Proposals supporting a thematic challenge should clearly state with which challenge (see Section 2 above) the proposal is aligned.

Projects will be encouraged to start promptly, however the starting date is expected to be no later than **16 September 2024** and funding is not available beyond 12 months.

Submissions with the attached PDF proposal and project administrative form (in MS Word format) should be e-mailed to:

Engage2-coordinator@dblue.it

using the subject line “**Catalyst Call**”. All proposals received before the Call closes will be acknowledged by e-mail. In the event of a failure with the Engage 2 e-mail account, a message will be posted on the catalyst Call page on Engage 2 website (Engage 2 Calls web page, <https://engagektn.eu/calls/>) with alternative submission instructions. Interested parties are advised to monitor the Call FAQ section on the Engage 2 website for clarifications. The last date for questions to be submitted by e-mail will be 29 April 2024, two weeks before the Call closes.

3.4 Selection criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by the Engage 2 Awards Board based on four criteria (Table 1, column C). For a proposal to be eligible, each criterion must receive a score higher than, or equal to, the threshold (Table 1, column T). For eligible proposals, the score of each criterion is then weighted (Table 1, column W) to obtain the final score. Eligible proposals are then ranked in decreasing order of the final score. For proposals in the top 75th percentile, which are aligned with a thematic challenge, one project will be awarded per thematic challenge, based on rank order (i.e. with the intention of thus awarding at least one project per thematic challenge). After selecting one project per thematic challenge, the remaining projects will be awarded funding by rank order alone (regardless of the aligned thematic challenge). In the event of a tie, the Awards Board will vote on the order of tied proposals, with the chair having a casting vote. It is expected that eight projects will be awarded through this Call, although Engage 2 may award fewer, or more, depending on the quality and complementarity of the proposals, and of the total funding requested (e.g. a significant number of successful co-funded projects would permit a higher number to be awarded). Indicatively, applicants will be notified about the evaluation outcome within one month after the end of the submission period.

Table 1: Selection criteria, threshold and weights for catalyst funding projects

Criterion (C)	Threshold (T)	Weight (W)
(i) Impact on, and relevance for ATM	7/10	30%
(ii) Clarity of how the research will contribute to advancing the state of the art/mature the TRL/improve the potential application of the concept, citing previous research, where applicable	7/10	25%
(iii) Quality of the research plan, including the identification of measures of success and overcoming future barriers towards maturing the concept through future research; the consortium’s experience in relation to the proposed work	7/10	25%

(iv)	Integration and consultation with industry members (i.e. excluding universities and research institutes) (see also body text)	7/10	20%
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Formal inclusion of industry members in a consortium may be used as evidence supporting criterion (iv), *but will not be given explicit weighting in its own right*. In all cases, an explicit consultation activity with industry, and industry engagement, is expected to attain the threshold score, for example, organising a stakeholder consultation exercise.

4. Project reporting

Each project can start as soon as the agreement is in place between Deep Blue, in its capacity specified in Section 5 below, and the project coordinator indicated in the proposal. Project progress will be assessed by the Engage 2 consortium in relation to the project schedule and milestones in the proposed research plan (Section 3.3.1).

The project coordinator of each project shall submit three reports during the implementation of the project: an Intermediate Progress Report, a Final Progress Report and a Final Technical Report (further guidance and reporting templates will be provided by Engage 2). Project coordinators will submit these reports by e-mail to then be assessed by Engage 2 and shared with the SESAR 3 Joint Undertaking.

The Intermediate Progress Report (max ten pages) will be submitted after six months. This will summarise the technical progress made in relation to the project schedule and implementation of criteria (i)-(iv) in Table 1, during the first half the project and expected progress over the second half. The financial situation will also be reported, detailing all eligible costs per entity (if more than one partner is participating) during the first six months, to satisfy the release of the first payment. Note that the Intermediate Progress Report should be submitted as soon as possible after the end of month six, but no later than 30 days thereafter.

The Final Progress Report will have a similar structure and content as the Intermediate Progress Report. This will summarise technical progress in relation to the project schedule and the financial situation during the final six months to satisfy the release of the second payment (*jointly with the Final Technical Report, see next paragraph*) and should be submitted as soon as possible after the end of the project, but no later than 30 days thereafter.

The Final Technical Report will summarise the achieved scientific results, the extent to which the objectives were achieved and how the results helped to increase the maturity towards applied (or industrial) research (with reference to the criteria in Table 1) and will be made public after approval by Engage 2 (refer to [3] for the final reporting of catalyst fund projects supported by the previous Engage KTN). Further content guidance will be provided to projects. The Final Technical Report should be submitted at the end of the project (*jointly with the Final Progress Report, see previous paragraph*), but no later than 30 days thereafter.

Projects are encouraged to disseminate their findings, ensuring open access publication standards are followed, which will also be supported by Engage 2. Projects supporting a thematic challenge should participate at a corresponding Engage thematic challenge workshop and must present their work in at least one. A poster and/or paper are expected to be submitted to the SESAR Innovation Days conference taking place within the lifetime of the project. Note that content from the various projects' Final Technical Reports will be re-published in Engage 2 deliverables.

5. Contractual procedure

To ensure compliance with Horizon Europe rules/provisions, for each project an agreement will be signed between Deep Blue (as Engage 2 Coordinator) and the project coordinator. Two payments will be made by Deep Blue to the project coordinator. Payment will be released only after Engage 2 approval has been given to: (i) the Intermediate Progress Report (after six months), and (ii) the Final Progress Report/Final Technical Report (after 12 months). Note that catalyst-funded projects will not be managed using the EC's Participant Portal.

6. References

[1] European Commission, 2022. Horizon Europe Work Programme 2023-2024 - 13. General Annexes (refer to 'Entities eligible for funding' section for a list of countries eligible to receive funding through Horizon Europe).

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf

[2] European Commission, 2023. EU Grants – Annotated Grant Agreement V1.0 Draft, 01 April 2023 (refer to Article 6.2.D.1 Financial support to third parties and Article 9.4 Recipients of financial support to third parties).

https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf

[3] Engage KTN, 2022. Engage catalyst fund project final reports (18 catalyst projects received financial support through the previous Engage KTN).

<https://engagektn.com/cf-final-reports/>

Annex: further information on eligibility and funding conditions

Eligibility

Engage 2 catalyst funding will be paid to the project coordinator, however to receive funding, the catalyst project coordinator and all consortium entities should be located in eligible countries. For clarification on funding eligibility, please refer to 'Entities eligible for funding' on page 8 of Horizon Europe's General Annexes [1]. Interested parties should also be aware of the following restrictions.

Since 16 December 2022, the conditions imposed by Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506 (http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec_impl/2022/2506/oj) preclude Hungarian entities operated by public interest trusts from receiving EU funding. However, all other Hungarian entities not affected by these measures are eligible to receive Engage 2 funding.

Whilst the United Kingdom associated to Horizon Europe on 01 January 2024, UK entities are ineligible to receive funding through 'financial support to third parties' from Engage 2. This is due to the funding allocated to the Engage 2 KTN pre-dating UK association, coming from the Horizon Europe Work Programme for 2021-2022.

Engage 2 consortium members are ineligible to apply for catalyst funding.

Funding conditions

Engage 2 will provide funding for catalyst projects (and PhDs) through ‘financial support to third parties’. Horizon Europe rules permit third party entities, such as catalyst project partners, to receive a maximum of EUR 60 000, however this maximum applies for the duration of the network. Third party entities can submit more than one proposal in response to the first and second Calls for catalyst funding, however the aggregate total funding per entity cannot exceed EUR 60 000. All funding received from the Engage 2 KTN (including PhD funding) counts towards this total.

For example, a third party awarded EUR 45 000 funding to support a PhD candidate in the earlier Engage 2 Call for PhDs, would only be able to receive a maximum of EUR 15 000 from either Call for catalyst funding. Note that the second Call for catalyst funding is planned to open in 2025.

Further funding guidance may be posted in the Call FAQ section on the Engage 2 website, as required.