BattleVerse

Financial support to third parties
Open Call 1

Guide for Applicants

Project acronym: BattleVerse

Project full name: A Human-Centred MSaaS Ecosystem for Enhanced Mission Planning and Execution via Battlefield Modelling, Adversarial AI, and Multi-domain Simulation Environments

Project grant agreement number: 101224034

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1. Introduction to BattleVerse

BATTLEVERSE conceives an innovative approach to successful mission planning and execution. By **leveraging AI-driven scenario generation and reinforcement learning**, BattleVerse bridges the gap between real and virtual battle environments, enabling the effective **simulation of complex multi-domain mission scenarios**.

In this context, BattleVerse provides an **interactive virtual battlespace**, designed to support decision making and dynamic strategies. Enriched by digital twins of battle assets, landscapes and meteorological conditions, BattleVerse's cutting-edge military metaverse offers **strategic insights into battlefield dynamics**, effectively improving response times and tactical mission approaches. This interactive ecosystem fosters collaborative and cross-functional mission planning, consistently reducing fragmentation and inefficiency across a wide range of military simulations.

As a flexible tool, easily adaptable to emerging demands, BattleVerse aims to **strengthen Europe's defence autonomy** and technological leadership in complex, multi-domain operations. As such, BattleVerse becomes a critical mission-readiness tool based on core European standards and human-centred AI.

BATTLEVERSE Main Objectives:

- Provide a **comprehensive MSaaS ecosystem** for military multi-domain mission planning and execution to support strategic defence analysts and commanders with interactive virtual battlespaces.
- Design and develop an **AI-driven simulation framework** to effectively support informed decision-making and cross-functional collaboration.
- Design and **integrate Digital Twins** (DT) of different battlefield features and environments to support interactive, accurate and fast-executing military simulations.
- Support the **development of innovative solutions** that enhance mission planning and simulation frameworks to broaden the repository of European military technologies and facilitate the access of new SMEs into the defence sector.
- Enhance the European **Simulator Model Generator ecosystem** to strengthen the region's defence autonomy and technological leadership.

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2. BattleVerse 1st Open Call for Experiments

2.1. Open Call Overview

The BattleVerse Open Calls are designed to identify innovative technologies eligible for inclusion in the project's ecosystem, targeting simulation software solutions that enhance mission planning and simulation frameworks. The BattleVerse Open Calls provide an opportunity for organisations with high-value solutions, to participate in a dynamic environment, providing strategic technological and industrial innovations for a crucial field within the European Union.

The Open Calls are designed to address concrete operational needs, gaps, and limitations in current Member States' defence solutions. This approach ensures the BattleVerse Open Calls directly contribute to develop innovative add-ons that enhance mission effectiveness and realism in simulated scenarios.

Overall, the objective of the BattleVerse 1st Open Call is to support the growth of SMEs and start-ups in military simulation. The Call is designed to provide access to funding and select a set of experiments capable of fostering innovation and collaboration in the defence sector.

Call Identifier	BattleVerse Open Call 1
Funding Scheme	Lump Sum
Maximum funding per beneficiary	Up to 60,000 €
Consortium composition	Between 1 and 3 beneficiaries, including at least one SME or start-up and up to two complementary partners
Maximum funding per experiment	The total funding allocated to an experiment depends on the number of participating beneficiaries and may not exceed 180,000€ per experiment (60,000€ per beneficiary)
Duration of experiments	6 months
Eligible countries	EU Member States, Norway and Ukraine
Eligible applicants	SMEs and start-ups

Table 1: Summary of the Open Call 1 Main Features

The timeline of the BattleVerse 1st Open Call is as follows:

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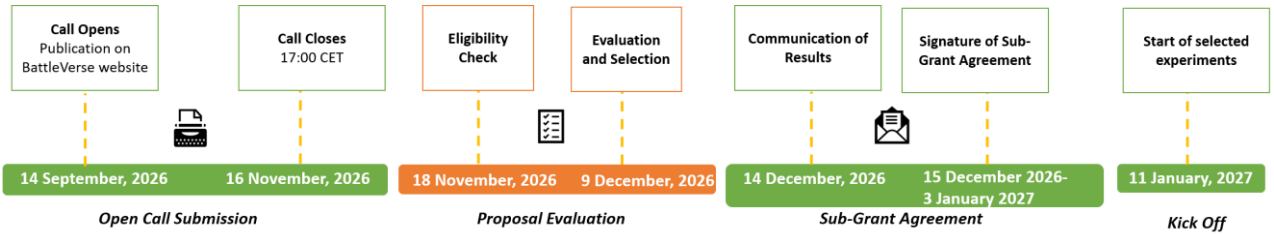

Figure 1: ***BattleVerse Open Call 1 Timeline***

2.2. Open Call Technical Topics

Open Call 1 includes 3 topics to be covered by experiments:

TOPIC 1: LLMs for strategic decision-making, symbolic reasoning, game theory, and mission planning under uncertainty

Context

As it has become evident, Large Language Models (LLMs) are directly transforming and enhancing decision-making strategies. By levering its capabilities, organisations can easily gather critical insights, analyse the right course of action, and make informed decisions, faster than ever before. Unlike traditional methods, LLMs can effortlessly translate raw data, into refine strategies, identifying key patterns and trends, crucial for understanding organisations' environments.

Objectives of the Topic 1

The objective is to demonstrate the potential of Large Language Models (LLMs) in supporting military strategic decision-making and mission preparation. In defence contexts, LLMs can contribute to the development and analysis of tactical scenarios, supporting the adaptation of operational concepts to fast-evolving mission environments. The BattleVerse project aims to demonstrate how AI-based scenario generation tools can assist military personnel in planning and training activities while ensuring that human operators retain full authority and responsibility over operational decision-making.

Technical Scope

Experiments selected under this topic should explore and demonstrate the potential of Large Language Models (LLMs) to support planning and decision-support processes in defence-related contexts. Experiments should investigate how LLM-based approaches can assist in the development, analysis, and evaluation of strategic and tactical scenarios.

Particular attention should be given to human-in-the-loop approaches, ensuring that AI-generated outputs remain interpretable, decisions explainable and that human operators retain full control over decision-making processes. In addition to their operational efficiency, solutions should address trustworthy aspects such as

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explainability, robustness, transparency, accountability, safety and security while demonstrating alignment with European principles for human-centred AI.

Experiments should address one or more of the following areas, as relevant to the proposed solution. Results can be achieved through experimental setups, involving agentic architectures and specialised language models. Proposed approaches can develop hybrid neuro-symbolic techniques, for instance combining ontologies with language models. Additional aspects may also be considered where they clearly contribute to the topic objectives.

- Use of LLMs and agentic AI for strategic decision-support in multi-domain operational scenarios, including complex effects, multi-step planning and decision-support tasks;
- Experimentation with on-premises LLMs to ensure operational security and data sovereignty in air-gapped or communication-denied environments;
- Integration with MSaaS-compliant simulation environments, including the use of standardised APIs and data exchange formats;
- Integration of symbolic reasoning, knowledge bases, and retrieval-augmented approaches with LLMs to support data-driven operational decision-making;
- Game-theoretic modelling, simulation, automated planning and AI-assisted generation of operational scenarios for mission preparation and training within a wargaming setting;
- Planning under uncertainty and dynamic operational conditions;
- Order generation and explanation in natural language, including mentions to commanding intention and rationale with respect to the expected effects, the opposing forces, potential collateral damages and neutral elements.
- Explainability, traceability, visualisation of AI-supported decisions, including human approval workflows for AI-generated actions;
- Safeguards against hallucinated, unsupported or operationally unsafe recommendations.

Experiments should demonstrate how the proposed solution contributes to improving situational understanding, scenario development, or decision-support capabilities in complex operational environments.

Expected Outcomes

Experiments funded under this topic are expected to deliver demonstrable results highlighting the potential of LLMs to support planning and decision-support processes in defence-related contexts. Expected outcomes may include:

- **Prototype tools and demonstrators** using LLMs and multi-agent AI for planning and decision support, including BattleVerse integration and on-premises deployment. Prototypes address one or several levels: strategic, operative and

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tactical levels and must demonstrate tangible results measured by performance indicators.

- **Human-in-the-loop approaches** ensuring oversight, intervention, auditability, and traceability in AI-assisted decision-making;
- **Methods improving** the explainability, transparency, robustness, and safety of AI-generated outputs in uncertain conditions;
- **Integration of LLM capabilities** with symbolic reasoning, simulations, game-theoretic models, and RAG-based data pipelines;
- **Performance evaluation** of AI-enabled decision-support systems, including KPIs for accuracy, latency, and hardware requirements;
- **Operational insights** on the role, performance, and limitations of LLM-based decision-support tools in defence contexts.
- **Synthesis of experimental results** on benchmarks that can be disseminated within the community.

Proposals are expected to define and demonstrate the capacity of the experiments to achieve at least **TRL5** by the end of the experimental journey.

Available Coaching Activities

To facilitate the implementation and follow-up of experiments under Topic 1, the BattleVerse consortium will provide coaching activities aligned with the scope of the selected experiments. These activities are intended to support technical orientation, interoperability alignment and validation planning throughout the experimentation period. However, beneficiaries remain fully responsible for the development, implementation and validation of their proposed solutions.

In this regard, the coaching activities may include assistance in the following areas:

Technical Challenge	Coaching Activity	Delivery Method
Trustworthiness of AI-generated recommendations	Recommendations on traceability, confidence indicators, hallucination mitigation and operator approval workflows.	1 on 1 coaching sessions[1]
Integration with BattleVerse architecture	Guidance on interoperability requirements, API usage and data exchange formats.	
Explainability and visualisation of AI outputs	Recommendations on explainable AI approaches and visualisation of decision processes.	

[1] Please refer to **section 2.3** for further details on the coaching delivery arrangement

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Evaluation and validation of solutions	Guidance on KPI definition and evaluation methodologies.	

For further information regarding the contractual obligations of selected applicants over the course of the experimental journey, please refer to chapter 6.

TOPIC 2: Multi-physics simulation capabilities for surface/submarine warfare, electronic warfare, and continuous combat across land, air, or naval platforms

Context

Advanced simulation systems are essential tools for modern defence planning, training and operational preparation. They enable military organisations to analyse complex operational environments, mission rehearsals, evaluate system performance, and support capability development. In particular, multi-physics simulation approaches allow the modelling of interactions between physical environments, operational platforms, and multiple warfare domains, such as cyberspace, space, land, air, maritime. They involve different types of physical laws, including optical, mechanical, and electromagnetic ones.

Within this context, the BattleVerse project aims to develop a Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) simulation environment, designed using an AI-centric framework to support mission planning, training, and operational analysis. This environment integrates multiple simulation layers and enables the modelling of dynamic behaviours, interactions between platforms, agents and their environment. Realistic operational conditions across domains are needed to provide appropriate user experience and to reduce the gap between physical reality and simulation.

Objectives of the Topic 2

The objective of this topic is to explore and demonstrate advanced multi-physics simulation capabilities supporting military planning, training, simulation and operational analysis across multiple domains, including surface and submarine warfare, electronic warfare, and joint operations across land, air, and naval platforms. Experiments funded under this topic should contribute to the development of simulation approaches capable of modelling complex operational scenarios and interactions between platforms, systems, and operational environments.

Technical Scope

Experiments selected under this topic should explore and demonstrate simulation approaches capable of modelling complex operational environments and interactions across multiple warfare domains. Proposals should address the integration and synchronisation of physical, operational, environmental, cyber, and communication-related factors to support realistic and comprehensive military simulations.

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The focus should be on multi-physics and multi-domain simulation capabilities supporting mission planning, operational analysis, training environments, or simulation-based experimentation.

Experiments should address one or more of the following areas, as relevant to the proposed solution. Additional aspects may also be considered where they clearly contribute to the objectives of the topic.

- Simulation of surface and submarine warfare scenarios, including interactions between naval platforms and underwater systems;
- Simulation of physical laws related to platform mobility evolving in air, ground and naval domains, including multi-physic and multi-scale models. Use of AI models such as Phyisical Informed Neural Networks (PINNS) or other surrogate models is possible;
- Modelling of physical and operational effects, including environmental conditions, sensing, communication, electronic warfare, or cyber-related interactions;
- Integration of physical environment models (e.g., terrain, atmosphere, electromagnetic spectrum, underwater environments);
- Development of interactive agents and behavioural models representing platforms, systems, or operational entities;
- Synchronisation and interoperability between simulation components, Digital Twins (DTs), sensors, communication systems, or federated simulation services;
- Simulation frameworks supporting dynamic, adaptive, and scalable operational scenarios.

Proposals should demonstrate how the proposed solutions enhance the realism, scalability, interoperability, or operational relevance of simulation environments supporting operational simulation of platform behaviours and capabilities. Simulation and model performances are evaluated within the context of mission preparation, training, or capability development.

Expected Outcomes

Experiments funded under this topic are expected to demonstrate innovative multi-physics simulation capabilities supporting multi-domain operational scenarios. Results should demonstrate contributions to one or more of the following outcomes:

- **Prototype simulation components or tools** supporting modelling of complex multi-domain operational environments
- **Demonstrations of simulation capabilities** addressing surface, underwater, electronic warfare, or cross-domain operational scenarios
- **Improved modelling of physical or environmental factors** affecting operational dynamics in simulation environments

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- **Simulation agents or behavioural models** representing platforms, systems, or operational actors
- **Executable simulation components or model packages** with documented interfaces, inputs, and outputs
- **Experimentation, evaluation and validation of simulation approaches** demonstrating operational relevance and interoperability within defence-oriented environments
- **Operational insights** on the applicability of multi-physics simulation tools for mission planning, training, or scenario analysis.

Proposals are expected to define and demonstrate the capacity of the experiments to achieve at least **TRL5** by the end of the experimental journey.

Available Coaching Activities

To facilitate the implementation and follow-up of experiments under Topic 2, the BattleVerse consortium will provide coaching activities aligned with the scope of the selected experiments. These activities are intended to support technical orientation, interoperability alignment, and validation planning throughout the experimentation period. However, beneficiaries remain fully responsible for the development, implementation and validation of their proposed solutions.

In this regard, the coaching activities may include assistance in the following areas:

Technical Challenge	Coaching Activity	Delivery Method
Synchronisation with BattleVerse DTs and services	Guidance on interoperability, state exchange and integration approaches.	1 on 1 coaching sessions[2]
Federated simulation integration	Recommendations on integration workflows and communication approaches between simulation components.	
Simulation interoperability	Guidance on APIs, interfaces and data exchange mechanisms.	
Validation and testing	Recommendations on testing, verification and validation approaches.	

[2] Please refer to **section 2.3** for further details on the coaching delivery arrangement

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For further information regarding the contractual obligations of selected applicants over the course of the experimental journey, please refer to chapter 6.

TOPIC 3: Distributed AI for autonomous systems (UxVs) with for coordinated swarm operations

Context

Autonomous systems are increasingly used in defence operations to support situational awareness, mission execution, and coordinated operations across multiple domains. Unmanned platforms such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), Unmanned Ground Vehicles (UGVs), Unmanned Surface Vessels (USVs), and Unmanned Underwater Vehicles (UUVs), collectively referred to as UxVs and offering significant potential for improving operational efficiency and flexibility.

Recent advances in machine learning (ML) and distributed artificial intelligence (AI) enable autonomous systems to coordinate actions, adapt to changing operational conditions, and continue operating in degraded or communication-constrained environments.

Within this context, the BattleVerse project aims to support the development and simulation of coordinated UxV swarm operations capable of collaborative task execution while maintaining appropriate levels of human supervision.

Objectives of the Topic 3

The objective of this topic is to explore and demonstrate how autonomous systems powered by machine learning and distributed AI can support coordinated multi-UxV operations in complex operational environments. Experiments funded under this topic should investigate approaches enabling distributed coordination, adaptive task execution, resilient communication, and collaborative swarm behaviours while ensuring human supervision and operational control.

Technical Scope

Experiments selected under this topic should assess how autonomous systems relying on agentic, machine learning and distributed AI techniques can support the coordination and execution of collaborative operations. The focus should be on capabilities related to swarm coordination, distributed autonomy, resilient communication, adaptive behaviours and interoperability in degraded or contested operational environments.

Proposals shall provide simulation assumptions on the sharing of distributed situation awareness between agents, for example, ranging from asynchronous local views to global uniform view.

Experiments should address one or more of the following areas, as relevant to the proposed solution. Additional aspects may also be considered where they clearly contribute to the objectives of the topic.

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- Off-line deliberative automatic planning for mission preparation and development. Just in time automatic planning for mission control, contingencies including temporal constraints, temporal uncertainties and on-board resource usage (energy, decoys, sensor, etc). Online planning related to both UxV behaviour and its execution control.
- AI-driven swarm coordination and collaborative task execution across heterogeneous UxV systems such as Multi-Agent Reinforcement Learning, Markov Decision Process or Bayesian methods to manage and control swarm behaviours.
- Distributed AI approaches supporting communication, shared situation awareness, decision-making, and coordination between autonomous platforms;
- Human supervision and control mechanisms, including human-in-the-loop or human-on-the-loop approaches, task delegation and mixed initiative decision making;
- Development of machine learning pipelines for training, testing, and evaluating situation awareness, as well as autonomous system behaviours;
- Use of Machine Learning as a Service (MLaaS/MSaaS) platforms for model development, training and validation;
- Operation of UxVs in degraded communication, contested, GPS-denied, or cyber-compromised environments;
- Operations in opposing, uncertain and strongly constrained environment including simulation of hostile agents.
- Synchronisation and interoperability of activities between UxVs, sensors, communication nodes, and BattleVerse simulation services.

Proposals should demonstrate how the proposed solutions contribute to improved mission planning capabilities, coordination efficiency, or operational adaptability of autonomous systems.

Expected Outcomes

Experiments funded under this topic are expected to demonstrate innovative approaches supporting coordinated operations of autonomous systems. Expected outcomes may include:

- **Prototype solutions or demonstrators** supporting mission planning and coordination of multiple UxV platforms
- **Demonstrations of swarm coordination strategies** based on machine learning or distributed AI approaches, given operational performance indicators.
- **Experimentation, evaluation, and validation of approaches for human supervision and interaction** in autonomous swarm operations in order to evaluate human appropriation and involvement.

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- **AI pipelines or models** supporting training and evaluation of coordinated autonomous behaviours
- **Demonstrations of resilient autonomous operation** under degraded or contested communication conditions
- **Operational insights** on the applicability and limitations of swarm-based autonomous systems in defence scenarios.

Proposals are expected to define and demonstrate the capacity of the experiments to achieve at least **TRL5** by the end of the experimental journey.

Available Coaching Activities

To facilitate the implementation and follow-up of experiments under Topic 3, the BattleVerse consortium will provide coaching activities aligned with the scope of the selected experiments. These activities are intended to support technical orientation, interoperability alignment, and validation planning throughout the experimentation period. However, beneficiaries remain fully responsible for the development, implementation, and validation of their proposed solutions.

In this regard, the coaching activities may include assistance in the following areas:

Technical Challenge	Type of Support	Delivery Method
Integration with BattleVerse simulation services	Guidance on APIs, telemetry logs, scenario state exchange and interoperability requirements.	1 on 1 coaching sessions[3]
Human-in-the-loop integration	Recommendations on supervision, operator oversight and control mechanisms for autonomous systems.	
MLaaS/MSaaS integration	Recommendations on training and validation workflows for AI models.	
Validation and testing	Guidance on evaluation methodologies, KPI assessment and operational validation approaches.	

For further information regarding the contractual obligations of selected applicants over the course of the experimental journey, please refer to chapter 6.

[3] Please refer to **section 2.3** for further details on the coaching delivery arrangement

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2.3. Definition of Coaching and Delivery Methods

During the implementation of each BattleVerse Open Call experiment, the consortium partners will make available tailored support on the previously defined technical topics.

This support will be delivered through individual **1 on 1 coaching sessions,** aimed at facilitating technical orientation and alignment with BattleVerse requirements. In this regard, each participant may receive up to **2 individual coaching sessions, each lasting a maximum of one hour.**

The coaching activities are intended to support follow-up and technical orientation throughout the experimentation period. However, as previously mentioned, **beneficiaries remain fully responsible** for the implementation and validation of their proposed solutions. Applicants should therefore plan to develop and implement their projects independently, using the coaching activities as targeted support.

3. Conditions for Applicants

3.1. Eligible applicants

The BattleVerse Open Call is addressed to **small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups** established in countries eligible under the European Defence Fund (EDF).

Proposals may be submitted:

- by a single SME or start-up; or
- by a consortium composed of:
  - at least one SME or start-up and
  - up to two complementary partners. Participation of entities other than SMEs, such as RTOs or academic institutions, may **only** be accepted where no suitable SME is available to provide the specific capacity or expertise required for the successful implementation of the project.[4]

⚠ Where an organisation other than an SME participates, the proposal must clearly justify its involvement by demonstrating the complementary expertise or capabilities provided and explaining why these cannot be adequately provided by an available SME. Moreover, natural persons are not eligible to participate in the Open Call.

[4] The Open Call primarily targets SMEs, including start-ups. Applicants must self-assess their SME status in accordance with Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. The BattleVerse consortium may perform checks of SME status on the basis of random sampling.

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Applicants should operate in, or demonstrate the potential to contribute to the defence sector through the development of innovative technologies, solutions or applications relevant to the scope of the call.

The Call particularly encourages the participation of innovative SMEs and startups, including entities that are currently active in civilian markets but seek to explore or expand into defence-related applications.

For the purpose of this Open Call and in accordance with the definition provided by the European Commission, an SME is defined as follows:

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are companies whose staff numbers and economic weight fall below certain limits as defined by the EC[5]:

- A medium-sized company has up to 250 employees, a turnover of up to €50 million or a balance sheet total of up to €43 million;
- A small company has up to 50 employees and a turnover or balance sheet total of up to €10 million;
- A micro-company has up to 10 employees and a turnover or balance sheet total of up to €2 million.

The applicants might be requested to prove their SME status.

Applicants must comply with all eligibility criteria defined in this Guide for Applicants, including requirements related to geographical scope, ownership control, security requirements, conflict of interest and data protection. These conditions are aligned with the applicable rules of the European Defence Fund, tailored to reality of financial support to third parties.

3.2. Eligible Participation Formats

The BattleVerse 1st Open Call is open to SMEs and start-ups established in and controlled from EU 27, Norway or Ukraine. To participate in the Open Call, each experiment must include at least one SME or start-up.

To support the development of technically advanced solutions, experiments may also involve up to two complementary partners, providing specialised expertise and technical capabilities.

Accordingly, the following participation formats are eligible under the BattleVerse Open Call:

[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/glossary/small-and-medium-sized-enterprises.html

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- **CASE 1: Individual SME or Start-up** – In this configuration the experiment is implemented by a single SME or start-up with sufficient in-house capabilities to independently carry out the proposed technical activities.
- **CASE 2: Small-scale Consortium** – In this configuration, experiments may involve up to 3 individual entities. In this case, an SME or start-up may apply together with one or more complementary entities. Where an organisation other than an SME is included, its participation must be duly justified by the specific expertise or capabilities required for the experiment and by the absence of a suitable SME able to provide such expertise or capabilities.

Given the technical complexity of the proposed solutions, applicants must demonstrate the technical capabilities and expertise required to develop, implement and exploit the proposed experiments.

3.3. Geographical scope

All applicants to this Call must be legally established in an EU 27 Member State[6], Norway or Ukraine. This follows country eligibility criteria under the EDF as well as the Commission Implementing Decision of 29 January 2025 (C(2025) 568 final).

3.4. Ownership Control

In general, EDF-funded activities are subject to specific ownership and control requirements in accordance with Article 9 EDF Regulation. To be eligible for this Call, entities must be established in an EU Member State, Norway or Ukraine. In addition, they are not eligible if they are controlled by a legal entity or authority from any other country than EU 27, Norway or Ukraine.

To verify compliance with these requirements, applicants to this Call must submit the **Ownership Control Declaration**[7]. Compliance will be assessed during the eligibility check where the applicants might be asked to provide additional documents substantiating their declaration (e.g. proof of tax residence).

Applicants are required to notify the BattleVerse coordinator without undue delay of any change in their ownership or control occurring after the submission of the proposal and throughout the implementation of the experiment, where such change may affect their eligibility or compliance with the Call's participation requirements.

This includes, but is not limited to, acquisitions, mergers, changes in controlling interests or significant modifications to the shareholding structure. Where relevant, the

[6] The eligible EU Member States are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden.
[7] Annex 1 Declaration of Honour and Ownership Control is mandatory for the successful submission of the proposal.

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BattleVerse consortium may request updated ownership and control information and reassess the beneficiary's continued eligibility.

3.5. Security Requirements

Activities conducted under experiments funded by this call, are subject to the security instructions applicable for the BATTLEVERSE project. The Project, in accordance with art. 27.4 of the EDF Regulation falls under the European Commission responsibility. Therefore, no national classified information is involved in the implementation of the project including actions conducted under funded experiments.

Should the experiments involve the generation and/or access to classified information pertaining BATTLEVERSE classified information, the security applicable provisions are listed in the project PSI.

3.6. Conflict of Interest

Applicants must not have any actual or potential conflict of interest in relation to the Open Call or the implementation of the funded activities. A conflict of interest refers to any situation where the impartial and objective execution of the project may be compromised due to economic interests, political or national affiliations, family or emotional ties, or any other direct or indirect personal interest.

Funded experiments must declare without delay any situation that may give rise to a conflict of interest and take appropriate measures to address it. The consortium reserves the right to assess such situations and request corrective actions where necessary.

3.7. Data Protection

Funded experiments must ensure that any personal data processed during the implementation is handled in full compliance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR) and applicable national data protection legislation.

Where experiments involve the collection, processing or analysis of personal data, beneficiaries must implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure data protection, confidentiality and security. This includes ensuring that personal data is processed only for legitimate purposes, that data minimisation principles are respected and that appropriate safeguards are in place.

Funded experiments remain fully responsible for ensuring compliance with data protection requirements throughout the duration of the experiment and must ensure

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that any data processing activities are carried out in accordance with applicable legal and ethical standards.

4. Financial Support

The overall budget available for BattleVerse First Open Call is 1,200,000€. Financial support will be provided in the form of a lump sum for experiments with a maximum duration of 6 months. Experiments may involve between 1 and 3 beneficiaries. In all cases, the maximum financial support is up to 60,000€ per beneficiary. In the case of one experiment with 3 beneficiaries, the total funding ceiling is 180,000€ per experiment, following the rule of up to 60,000€ per beneficiary.

Funding rate: The financial support provided under the Open Call covers up 100% of the eligible costs for all selected beneficiaries, in accordance with the applicable European Defence Fund (EDF) rules.

BattleVerse first Open Call will adopt the lump sum cost reporting system. Unlike traditional models, the lump sum method allocates a fixed amount that directly aligns payments with the successful completion of experiment activities. This approach significantly simplifies obligations on actual cost reporting, reducing the administrative burden for beneficiaries and granting access to a wider range of organisations.

Payment structure

The first payment will be disbursed after the Sub-Grant Agreement signature of the winning experiment. The second payment will be disbursed after approval by the BattleVerse partners of the corresponding deliverables.

When submitting the proposal, applicants must present the total requested amount in a simplified budget table, indicating the costs exclusively dedicated to the execution of the experiments.

Payment	Trigger for payment	%
Initial payment	Signature of the Sub-Grant Agreement by all parties and completion of any required administrative formalities.	30%
Final payment	Successful completion of the experiment, submission and approval of all required deliverables and reports.	70%

Table 3: Payment Procedure Overview

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Eligible costs include **direct personnel costs** required for the implementation of the experiment. Note that subcontracting costs (i.e. outsourcing project activities) are not eligible.

⚠ When drafting the budget, the proposer needs to take into consideration the **mandatory activities listed in sub-section 6.1.1**, especially the in-person sessions.

5. Proposal Design, Submission and Evaluation

5.1. Overall Submission Process

The submission and evaluation process shall be anchored in European principles and standards such as transparency, fairness and equality. As such, all proposal applicants must undergo the following stages and procedures:

Figure 1. Open Call Procedure

5.2. Step 1: Experiment Design

Applicants interested in applying for the first BattleVerse Open Call must draft a description of the project proposal, together with a technical description with further details on the implementation of the project and the exploitation of results.

The proposal template has 3 sections that applicants must fill in:

1. Technical Excellence
2. Impact
3. Implementation

These sections together must not exceed 15 pages in length (with text no smaller than 11-point Century Gothic font). Proposals will be truncated to this page count, and the independent expert evaluators will only be provided with the truncated version.

The proposal must be submitted in a single stage, through the Evaluation Management System (EMS) online platform: **here.** Through this platform, candidates will be able to download the application **form templates,** required to submit the proposal. Applicants interest in applying should:

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- Carefully read the Open Call description and requirements.
- Thoroughly consider and follow the instructions provided in the proposal template.
- Complete the required form in **English**, and upload the proposal onto the EMS platform as a PDF document, ensuring it complies with the structure provided.
- Include a summary of the experiment in around 300 words and make sure the PDF does not exceed 20MB.

To be precise, the application form template, available for download in the **EMS platform** will include the following sections:

Table 4: Structure of the Proposal

Section	Sub-Sections
1. Technical Excellence	a. Experiment Overview b. Objectives of the Experiment c. Technological Excellence d. Methodological Approach e. Technological Maturity
2. Impact	a. Expected Impact b. Relevance for the European Defence Sector c. Contribution to the BattleVerse Ecosystem d. Exploitation and Sustainability Strategy
3. Implementation	a. Work Plan b. Timeline and Gantt Chart c. Personnel and Resource Management d. Risk Management Strategy e. Ethics, Security and Data Protection f. Budget of the Experiment

Further details on what is required for each section are available in the proposal template. Additionally, it is important to note that, together with the proposal template, applicants are required to provide the following **annex** on the platform:

- **Declaration of Honour and Ownership Control** (mandatory)

Security and Classified Information

Proposals submitted under this Open Call must not contain any classified information or other sensitive information whose disclosure is restricted by national or EU regulations. Therefore, applicants shall ensure that all information included in the proposal can be assessed without requiring access to classified material.

Where the implementation of the proposed experiment is expected to require access to classified information or other security-restricted assets, applicants shall indicate this

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requirement and provide a brief justification. The proposal must not contain or disclose any classified information or other information whose disclosure is restricted under applicable national or EU regulations.

5.3. Step 2: Submission of the Proposal

Proposals are submitted digitally, by the leading organisation, in a single-stage through the Evaluation Management System (EMS) platform.

To begin the submission process, applicants should visit the BattleVerse EMS website and click on "Register". Then, to complete the submission process, applicants must navigate the following sections:

- **General Details:** in this section, applicants must provide an overview of their proposal, including title, acronym, topics and keywords.
- **Technical Proposal:** within this part, participants are required to present a summary of the experiment in around 300 words, comprising, objectives, sector of activity and technologies to be used.
- **Annexes:** then applicants must upload the mandatory application form template and the required supporting documentation in this section.
- **Submission:** in the final stage, applicants must select and press the "Submit" button to complete the submission process.

Only proposals submitted through the EMS online platform before the deadline **16 November, 2026, 17:00 CET**, will be considered for funding. Applicants will have the chance to submit new versions of their proposal as many times as they wish, before the call closure. Only the last version submitted before the deadline will be considered in the evaluation.

Applicants are advised to avoid submitting the proposal on the very last minute in order to avoid any technical difficulties that might hinder the ability to submit the proposal on time. It is important to note that, the responsibility for a successful and timely reception remains with the applicants. Late submissions, including those affected by force majeure, will not be evaluated. Additionally, proposals submitted through any means other than the online submission tool (EMS) will be rejected.

After the call closure, applicants will receive an acknowledgment of receipt, via email, to confirm the successful submission of their proposals. However, this receipt will not be proof that the proposal is eligible for evaluation.

5.4. Step 3: Evaluation and Selection

All proposals received will undergo the evaluation process described below.

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5.4.1. Eligibility Check

All applicants will be initially assessed according to the established eligibility criteria. The eligibility check ensures that the conditions presented in section 3 are met. The applicant must use provided template when submitting the proposal.

The outlined eligibility criteria entail:

- Applicants must be legal entities established in any of the countries eligible for this open call:
  - A EU27 Member State or,
  - Norway or,
  - Ukraine.
- Applicants controlled by an entity from a non-eligible country will be excluded.
- Applications must be submitted in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will be excluded.
- Proposals must be submitted using and following the template provided.

5.4.2. Evaluation

Eligible proposals will be subjected to a fair, transparent and equal evaluation process. Accordingly, applications **complying with the criteria** outlined below will be awarded for financial support:

Table 5: Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Description	Threshold
Technical Excellence	• Quality and soundness of the proposed solution. • Clear, ambitious and well-defined objectives (e.g. SMART objectives). • Relevant to the sectors and technologies of the BattleVerse Open Call. • Aligned with BattleVerse's objectives and standards. • Level of innovation compared to the current processes, products or services. • Robust and consistent methodology. • Consistent overview of the Technology Readiness Levels.	**3**

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Impact	• Clear technological and operational impacts. • Clear and realistic Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). • Capacity to enhance overall European strategic autonomy and competitiveness. • Capacity to contribute to the BattleVerse Innovation Hub. • Potential replicability of the experiment. • Exploitation model and exploitation potential.	**4**
Implementation	• Overall work plan (e.g. deliverables, milestones, GANTT chart). • Capacity to carry out the experiment in terms of infrastructure, technological expertise and previous experience. • Capacity and appropriateness of the consortium team members. • Coherent risk management strategy • Aligned with European ethical and security standards (e.g. GDPR). • Budget, eligible costs and resource allocation.	**3**

Only approved proposals, with scores above thresholds for each criterion and a total score of 11 or higher, will be retained for funding.

The following table details the evaluation scores for each criterion ranging from 0 to 5:

Table 6: Evaluation Scores

Evaluation Criteria	Description
0 - Fail	The Proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.
1 - Poor	The criterion is addressed inadequately, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2 - Fair	While the Proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would hinder the project implementation.
3 - Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary and various details are missing on implementation.
4 – Very Good	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible and some particular details are missing on implementation.

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5 – Excellent	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.

5.4.3. Ranking of Proposals and Final Selection

Once the evaluation is completed, all proposals will be ranked and only shortlisted applicants will be recommended for funding. The rest of the approved proposals will be included in a reserve list.

In the event that two proposals receive the same score, the order of priority will be determined as follows:

- **Impact**: Proposals will be prioritised based on the scores awarded for the "Impact" criterion (#1).
- **Technical Excellence**: If the scores for "Impact" are also equal, priority will then be determined by the scores for the "Technical Excellence" criterion (#2).
- **Implementation**: If the scores for both "Impact" and "Technical Excellence" are equal, priority will be determined based on the "Implementation" criterion (#3), with particular attention to the efficient use of resources.

Table 7: Criteria Thresholds and Priority

CRITERION	THRESHOLD	PRIORITY in case of ex-aequo
Technical Excellence	3	2
Impact	4	1
Implementation	3	3

In order to maximise the impact of the open call, the final selection may take into consideration the topic distribution, geographical coverage, and diversity of sectors of the proposals, as well as the capacity of BattleVerse partners to provide the requested support.

All applicants, whether successful or unsuccessful, will receive an email with the outcome of the evaluation.

6. Contractual Obligations

Applicants selected for financial support will be required to sign a Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA) with the Project Coordinator, CERTH. By signing the SGA, the beneficiary formally accepts the financial support provided in the form of a lump-sum grant, as well as the applicable obligations, legal provisions and payment conditions.

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The beneficiary also commits to implementing the proposed project activities under its responsibility.

The Sub-Grant Agreement defines the terms and conditions of the funding, including reporting obligations, intellectual property provisions, record-keeping requirements and payment arrangements. The terms and conditions of the Sub-Grant Agreement are predefined and cannot be negotiated.

6.1. Experiment implementation and deliverables

Experiments selected and funded under this Open Call must take into consideration the mandatory activities expected to be carried out throughout the duration of each experiment. These compulsory tasks include various events, meetings, deliverables and dissemination activities.

6.1.1. Planned Events and Meetings

Selected experiments will be required to participate in a number of mandatory events and monitoring meetings throughout the project. As part of the experiment journey, beneficiaries are expected to engage not only with the technical partners but also with the BattleVerse Innovation Hub ecosystem. In this context, experiments will be required to participate in the following sessions:

- **Kick-off Meeting (M1):** An initial online meeting organised at the start of the experiment to align objectives, technical approaches, expected outcomes and administrative requirements. This session provides an opportunity for beneficiaries to clarify expectations and present their innovative approaches to all selected experiments.
- **Learning Expedition (M2):** An in-person event organised at the start of the experiment journey in Paris (France) as part of the BattleVerse Innovation Hub, during which experiments can be presented (objectives, expectations, technical scope, expected outputs, integration assumption, etc.) to a larger number of ecosystem stakeholders. It will also allow experiments to meet the technical partners of the consortium in charge of providing them coaching and guidance.
- **Individual Monitoring Meetings (M3 and M5):** Individual online meetings aimed at assessing the progress of the experiment. As part of the experiment journey, beneficiaries will participate in monitoring meetings, together with the BattleVerse technical partners, dedicated to present the status of their work, potential preliminary results and any challenges encountered. During these sessions, feedback and guidance will be provided by the consortium to support successful completion of the experiment. Specifically, these meetings are designed to:

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- Review progress made in line with the proposed plan;
- Identify any challenges encountered from a technical and operational point of view;
- Discuss and align upcoming steps.

- **Final Evaluation and Hackathon (M6):** An in-person wrap-up event in Athens (Greece) organised as part of the BattleVerse Innovation Hub dedicated to present the final results of each experiment. This event supports the evaluation of the experiment and its potential contribution to the project objectives. Specifically, this closing event serves as an opportunity to:
  - Present final results and key achievements;
  - Share and exchange insights and lessons learned;
  - Gather final feedback from technical partners and relevant ecosystem stakeholders;
  - Provide recommendations and suggest next steps.

Selected experiments must demonstrate the capacity and resources of the team to participate in, and engage with, BattleVerse collaborative and engagement initiatives, as described above.

6.1.2. Mandatory Deliverables

Selected experiments will be required to develop and submit the following experiment deliverables:

Deliverable	Due date	Description
D1. Experiment design and technical approach	M1	Definition of the experiment scope, methodology and expected timeline.
D2. Technical implementation and Demonstration	M4	Presentation of the overall experiment architecture, technical specifications and workflows.
D3. Final experiment report and recommendations	M6	Overview of the experiment activities, outcomes, impact, lessons learnt and recommendations.

Table 8: Expected Deliverables

- **D1. Experiment design and technical approach (M1)**

Description of the deliverable: This comprehensive deliverable outlines the experiment's full scope, methodology, system requirements, KPIs and data management strategy established for the experiment's life-cycle. Furthermore, this document considers the identified timeline of the experiment, expected activities and possible barriers foreseen during the implementation of the experiment.

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Overall, this deliverable provides the necessary information to assess the capability of the experiment, potential bottlenecks and identified best practices.

- **D2. Technical implementation (M4)**

Description of the deliverable: this deliverable comprises details on the implementation, integration and testing of the experiment, providing an overview of the overall architecture and technical specifications of the solution. This comprehensive document provides details such as interface/API specs, source code repository, deployment packages, integration guides or user guides. It also includes validation results and a demonstration (live or recorded) showcasing the functionality of the solution within the target environment.

- **D3. Final experiment report and recommendations (M6)**

Description of the deliverable: this deliverable provides an overview of the results achieved throughout the experimentation, detailing test scenarios and performance metrics. As well as an assessment of the impact on both, the organisation, and the BattleVerse ecosystem, effectively describing the interaction with BattleVerse components. The exploitation strategy identified for the solution will also be considered within this deliverable, including expected activities for the upcoming months. Furthermore, this deliverable provides the opportunity to reflect on lessons learnt and possible recommendations.

6.1.3. Participation in Dissemination Activities

Selected experiments are expected to carry out dissemination and exploitation activities both, throughout the experimentation journey, and after the execution of the experiments. This approach offers an opportunity for experiments to provide information on progress achieved, key milestones, and exciting announcements. Dissemination activities can include; social media posts, newsletters, and/or technical publications.

Additionally, as part of the experiment journey, beneficiaries are expected to:

Participate in sector-specific events: experiments are expected to leverage industry events to present available results and demonstrable developed prototypes.

Beneficiaries will have access to a range of support and **ecosystem activities organised by the BattleVerse consortium** to facilitate knowledge exchange, networking, and technical collaboration.

- **Digital Webinar Series:** Three on-line webinar sessions organised as part of BattleVerse Innovation Hub for SMEs and startups on the defence sector and its

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specific market, including funding, regulatory and operational dynamics. Beneficiaries will have the opportunity to participate in engaging and dynamic sessions on the defence sector, designed to:

- Understand defence go-to-market dynamics, pathways and models;
- Provide an overview of relevant initiatives and funding opportunities;
- Better understand investor expectations in defence and dual-use markets.

Participation in these activities is encouraged to maximise the benefits of the experimentation process and engagement with the BattleVerse ecosystem.

6.2. Timeline

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
MEETINGS						
Kick-Off Meeting	■					
Learning Expedition		■				
Individual Monitoring Meetings			■		■	
Final Hackathon						■
DELIVERABLES						
D1. Experiment design and technical approach	■					
D2. Technical implementation and demonstration				■		
D3. Final experiment report and recommendations						■

7. Support Available for Applicants

7.1. Tool 1: Helpdesk

Applicants may contact the **BattleVerse Open Call helpdesk** should they wish to receive further information on the Call for Proposal content and conditions. The helpdesk aims to support the preparation of applications by providing clarifications and addressing potential concerns. Inquiries will be answered by email directly to the pertinent party, however, to ensure equal treatment across the experiment design process, all answers will be published in the FAQ section as explained below.

For further information please refer to: **BattleVerse EMS platform**

7.2. Tool 2: Frequently Asked Questions

A **Frequently Asked Questions** document is available on the website. Based on the information provided in the call guidelines, the document will provide clarifications on eligibility questions, application procedures and funding concerns.

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In order to ensure a fair, equal and transparent selection and evaluation process, each question addressed through the BattleVerse helpdesk will be included and published in the FAQ document. This approach will ensure all interested applicants are provided with the same information, thereby preventing discrimination.

The document will be periodically updated to reflect the questions received.

7.3. Tool 3: Official BattleVerse Website

A dedicated webpage is available on the **official BattleVerse website.** Applicants are invited to visit the page and check all related information and download all the documents useful for the application. Specifically, the project website includes details on:

- The Open Call objectives, scopes and timeline;
- The Guide for Applicants;
- The Open Call proposal template;
- The Frequently Asked Questions document;
- The access to the EMS platform (submission system).

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