

Invitation to Apply to ESA Spark Funding Germany

Reference: ESA Spark Funding Germany - Open Call - Issue 2.0 - November 2024

The purpose and objective of ESA Spark Funding is to accelerate the product development process of a company as well as to hone the commercialisation roadmap which should result in an enhanced offer to its customers.

Together with Local Administrators across Europe, ESA has created the ESA Commercialisation Network to support innovation and investment. Currently, this network consists of ESA Business Incubation Centres (ESA BICs), ESA Technology Brokers (ESA TB), ESA PhilabNets (ESA Philab), ESA Business Applications Ambassadors (ESA AP), and the ESA Investor Network.

In Germany, the ESA Technology Broker Germany (cesah GmbH and EurA AG) is responsible for managing and implementing the ESA Spark Funding Call. For ESA Spark Funding Germany, the German Technology Broker, ESA, and German Space Agency at DLR welcome applications addressing:

- Spin-in activities:
Towards the transfer of a technology originally developed for a non-space application into a space application

and

- Spin-off activities:
Towards the transfer of space technology such as - but not limited to - space developed sensors, materials, or electronics in a non-space market such as - but not limited to - transport, energy, or health.

Applications of space services (satellite communication, navigation and earth observation) cannot be considered under this funding scheme. For further information on ESA funding for the application of space services, please contact the [ESA Business Applications Ambassadors](#).

The scope of activity of the ESA Spark Funding Open Call covers:

- Technical Breadboarding & Business Case – spin-in
- Technical Breadboarding & Business Case – spin-off

Definition

ESA Spark Funding projects concern the definition of a minimal viable product/service and technical breadboard to validate critical functions and value proposition, as well as the refinement of an applicable business case.

The specific objectives of the Call are:

- to determine the suitability of the solution to meet the needs and conditions of relevant users, customers, and relevant stakeholders in the target application (space or non-space), and to assess the business viability of the undertaking; and
- to secure the involvement of market representative customers, users and other stakeholders and validate the traction of the solution by the market; and
- to prepare the implementation of sustainable product(s)/service(s) by elaboration of the roadmap.

The ESA Technology Broker Germany hereby invites you to submit your application for ESA Spark Funding Germany. This document provides an introduction to the application and evaluation process and contains references to the templates that should be used when applying.

Please contact the ESA Technology Broker Germany for any further questions (SparkFunding@esa-technology-broker.de).

Yours sincerely,

ESA Spark Funding Germany Managers

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Who may apply?

ESA Spark funding is primarily targeted at SMEs or larger entities who generally already have existing product lines.

These companies are either:

- looking to innovate and gain a competitive advantage through **integrating space technology** into their products or to create new products, **targeting a non-space industry**

or

- looking to innovate and gain a competitive advantage **through integrating non-space technology** into their products or to create new products, **targeting the space industry**



The Product Developer:

- is defined as the entity where the value-added product will be created;
- has the connection to both the Technology Provider and the related customer;
 - as such this entity can collaborate to assign elements of work to the Technology Provider and/or the related Customer;
- will have access to all the socio-economic impact data arising from the activity.

It is possible that the Product Developer and the Technology Provider can be the same entity. In exceptional cases, it is possible that the Product Developer and the Customer are the same entity. In these instances, the project could be led by the Technology Provider.

However, some further formal criteria apply. To be eligible for contract award, applicants must fulfil all the requirements below:

- To be a legal entity registered under the laws of Germany;
- To be headquartered in Germany;
- To be fully compliant with Germany tax and social security obligations;
- To observe the remaining requirements stated in this document;
- When acting in collaboration with other national or foreign entities, the applicant will be the sole contractor and will be fully responsible for managing the funding.
- To declare that the activities proposed under the submitted ESA Spark Funding project are not being funded through other means (e.g. any ESA call, ESA Business Incubation, European Commission etc).

How to apply

Please ensure you use the applicable ESA Spark Funding Application Template, which is part of the Open Call documentation (see <https://www.esa-technology-broker.de/spark-funding>).

All sections of the application template must be completed i.e.:

1. Executive Summary
2. Business Case and Technical Proposal
3. Activity Proposal
4. Management Proposal

Pay particular attention to the following:

- Instructions inside the documents shall be followed in order to fulfil all pre-conditions of the Open Call and for the application to be accepted.
- Please read the application template as well as the Draft ESA Spark Funding Contract carefully. The Cover Letter shall include a clear, explicit, and unambiguous statement declaring that the applicant has read, understood, and accepted the terms and conditions contained in the contractual documentation. Modifications or amendments to the ESA Spark Funding Contract may be done in exceptional cases. Please contact the local ESA Technology Broker for guidance.
- Ensure the Cover Letter and the Requirement Checklist are signed by an authorised representative of the entity applying.
- As part of the application template, an 'Activity Proposal' section must be submitted. This should include details on how you intend to spend the ESA Spark Funding. Details on eligible costs can be found below.
- The funding should primarily be spent in Germany. However, in cases where the Product Developer is based in Germany and the Technology Provider in another country, up to 50% of the total ESA Spark Funding may be spent with the Technology Provider.

Please submit the completed ESA Spark Funding Application Template in electronic form as a single .pdf-document to the e-mail address SparkFunding@esa-technology-broker.de with subject "ESA Spark Funding Germany Open Call".

Any questions related to submission of proposals should be sent to the same e-mail address.

Selection and evaluation of applications are scheduled periodically, for details see: <https://www.esa-technology-broker.de/spark-funding>.ora

The Call is permanently open and has no closing date for the submission of applications unless the ESA Technology Broker Germany has indicated otherwise.

Co-funding Rules

The Spark Funding is considered as a ceiling price which shall not be exceeded and not constitute more than 75% of the total project costs and for which the applicant shall perform the activity in full. As the activities conducted under ESA Spark Funding are commercial in nature, it is expected that a co-funding of 25% is provided by the applicant.

Given a maximum project volume of 80,000 EURO, ESA co-funding would therefore amount to a maximum of 60,000 EURO (with a co-funding of 20,000 EURO by the applicant).

Eligible costs

In order to be eligible, all project costs must be:

- Necessary to the execution of the project;
- Incurred by the beneficiary and recorded in its accounts;
- Incurred during the contract term;
- Indicated in the cost planning in the proposal;
- Without VAT, interest owned, or duties.

Expenses incurred in the preparation and dispatch of the proposal will not be reimbursed. Expenses for business development and promotion (data sheets, flyers, attendance to trade shows etc.) should be agreed in advance with the Local Administrator responsible for implementing ESA Spark Funding Germany.

Payout of the ESA funding: 50% at the beginning of the project and 50% after accepted final report (final payment) for project duration equal or less than 12 months.

The evaluation procedure

The evaluation of all received applications is managed locally by ESA Technology Broker Germany and follows common ESA Spark Funding procedures.

Once a published submission deadline has passed, ESA Technology Broker Germany first assesses the formal aspects of applications received before the submission deadline. If a non-compliance of a minor nature is found, the applicant may be asked to address this in an updated proposal within 48 hours. If the proposal is found non-admissible, the applicant will be informed, and the reason will be explained. In such a case, an applicant is eligible to submit a revised proposal at a later date, if another evaluation round is scheduled.

If the application is compliant with the formal requirements, applicants will be invited to hold a presentation to the ESA Spark Funding Germany evaluation board. The evaluation will typically take place a few weeks after the submission deadline. The evaluation board consists of representatives of ESA Technology Broker Germany, ESA and German Space Agency at DLR. There will also be an opportunity for the evaluation board to ask questions to the applicant.

The application and the presentation will be marked against the criteria in Table 1, taking weighting factors into account.

Evaluation Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Weighting Factor
Background and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Composition • Partnerships • Vision 	20%
Business Case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeted Market Segment & Access to the targeted Market Segment • Targeted Product/Service • Target Customers/Users • Customer/User Needs or Pains • Value Proposition 	30%
Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology Definition • Suitability, and credibility of transfer • Access to technology • Maturity and feasibility 	30%
Activity Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Breakdown • Resources and Facilities • Milestones and Cost Planning • Management 	20%

Table 1: ESA Spark Funding evaluation criteria and weighting factors.

All applicants will be notified in writing about the outcome of the evaluation. The applicant may request, within 10 calendar days from the receipt of the notification, an oral debriefing explaining the reason why the application was not successful.

ESA Technology Broker Germany will enter contract negotiations with successful applicants, taking the comments of the evaluation board into account. ESA Technology Broker Germany has the right *not* to place a contract if, after three months following the notification to a successful applicant, no contract still has been signed, and this is because of a reason for which the applicant can be held accountable.

Furthermore, we kindly ask you to pay attention to the following:

- Please note that applications will be treated as confidential. However, despite the efforts undertaken by ESA Technology Broker Germany to ensure full confidentiality, the applicant's idea may through this application fall into the public domain. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the applicant discusses the protection of his/her idea with a dedicated expert in this field prior to application, and – if relevant – takes appropriate steps to protect the idea (e.g. by applying for a patent).
- No expenses incurred in either stage of the application procedure will be reimbursed to the applicant by ESA Technology Broker Germany, ESA, and/or any third party.

This Open Call does not impose any obligation upon ESA Technology Broker Germany to enter into negotiations with any applicant or to enter into any other specific arrangement.

ANNEX A – DETAILS ON DELIVERABLES

Under an ESA Spark Funding project, the Contractor will be undertaking both technical and commercially focused activities and, as such, the Deliverables reflect this.

D1 is a standalone Deliverable.

D2, D3, and D4 should be combined into a single document for final delivery to ESA Technology Broker Germany.

D1 Proof of Achievement for outreach and communication purposes to be delivered to the ESA Technology Broker Germany

For the use in public communication and promotion, outreach and dissemination, public display or presentation by the ESA Technology Broker Germany or ESA, the Contractor shall deliver a **slide deck** in ppt-Format and a suitable demonstration item, to present the activity in a nutshell.

The slide deck is composed of two slides covering the following elements:

- The heritage technology (with meaningful, high-definition, illustrative images/tables/diagrams);
- The new application (with meaningful, high-definition, illustrative images/tables/diagrams);
- Achievements, outcomes of the activity and next steps (with meaningful, high-definition, illustrative images/tables/diagrams);

The suitable **demonstration item**, including a short description of the product/service along with any instructions required for operation, shall be delivered to the ESA Technology Broker Germany. This can manifest in an item such as:

- A prototype or demonstrator;
- A suitable mock-up or breadboard showcasing the use/functionalities and application;
- A high-definition video showcasing the use/functionalities and application, including live demonstration;

Other demonstrations items may be proposed but are subject to approval prior to contract signature.

The deliverable D1 is intended for general audience and publication. Therefore, it shall not contain any sensitive or proprietary information and markings.

D2 Final Data Package

The Final Data Package is comprised of the final deliverable documents arising from the ESA Spark Funding Contract, in particular:

- **Mid Term Report** (if applicable, standalone document)
Content as defined in the ESA Spark Funding Contract

- **Final Report** (standalone document)

Content as defined in the ESA Spark Funding Contract, additionally including sections on:

Commercialisation Roadmap (suggested section length: 10 pages)

Phase 1 Projects:

- Presentation and validation of stakeholder/customer requirements and market needs;
- Presentation and validation of stakeholder/customer feedback with regards to the intended value proposition and unique selling points;
- Presentation of market assessment, including quantification of market size, segmentation, and competition;
- Presentation of market penetration strategy, including key financial projections for break-even (i.e. sales, CAPEX, OPEX) over the next 5 years;
- Conclusion on the viability of the intended product/service with indication of critical success factors
- Conclusion and specific outlook of the next steps and milestones to reach market entry.

D3 Technology Commercial Arrangement Document

If applicable - suggested length: 1 page.

The contents of this section shall include:

- Details regarding the type of commercial arrangement that has been agreed/envisoned with the Technology Provider
- Duration of the arrangement
- Conditions of the arrangement
- Value of the arrangement (i.e. financial impact)

D4 Participation to annual ESA Socio-Economic Survey for a maximum of 5 years

The Contractor shall participate to an annual Socio-Economic Survey by the European Space Agency (ESA) on the impact of the ESA Spark Funding Project, surveying the results and revenues generated from the potential product/service, job creation across the immediate value chain, access and penetration of new markets or product lines due to the work undertaken in this project, investment leverage, and social benefits. The survey will be sent out on an annual basis and the Contractor commits to participate in the survey for five consecutive years after the Final Review of the project.