



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR MIGRATION AND HOME
AFFAIRS

Directorate E – HOME Affairs Funds
The Director

Brussels
HOME.E.3/RM

**NOTE FOR THE ATTENTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE HOME AFFAIRS FUNDS**

Ref.: HOME-Funds/2025/47

Subject: Launch of the call for expression of interest under the Specific Action “Support for border management capabilities including drones (UAS) and counter-drone measures (C-UAS)” under the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) – Reference BMVI/2025/SA/1.1.9

1. INTRODUCTION

Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 ⁽¹⁾ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI) provides that Member States (MS) ⁽²⁾ may receive funding for specific actions in addition to their initial allocations in their respective programmes.

Specific actions aim to fund transnational or national projects that bring Union added value in accordance with the objectives of the Instrument for which one, several or all Member States may receive an additional allocation to their programmes.

⁽¹⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy (BMVI)

⁽²⁾ For the purposes of this call, references to “Member States” include both the EU Member States participating in the BMVI and the Schengen Associated Countries

They will be implemented as one of the components of the Thematic Facility in line with Art. 8 of the above-mentioned Regulation and in accordance with the relevant financing decisions and work programmes for the Instrument ⁽³⁾.

By the present note, the Commission launches a call for expression of interest for Specific Action “Support for border management capabilities including drones (UAS) and counter-drone measures (C-UAS)”, in line with the actions listed in the above-mentioned Commission’s financing decision and work programme.

2. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Specific actions will be implemented by one or more countries participating in the Instrument via funding received in addition to the allocation under their programmes.

Funding for specific actions is added to the Member States’ programme allocations at the time of the approval of the initial programme or by means of a programme amendment. That additional funding is earmarked for the specific action concerned and shall not be used for other actions in the Member State’s programme, except in duly justified circumstances and as approved by the Commission through the amendment of the programme.

Whereas the regular EU co-financing rate under the Member States’ programmes will not exceed 75% of total eligible expenditure, projects implemented under specific actions may benefit from an increased co-financing rate of up to 90% of total eligible expenditure.

The specific action must be implemented by the Member States in accordance with the BMVI ⁽⁴⁾ Regulation and the Common Provisions Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 (CPR) ⁽⁵⁾. This includes compliance with fundamental rights. Moreover, Member States must ensure that the specific action is not affected by a reasoned opinion delivered by the Commission in respect of infringement proceedings under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that put in doubt the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of the actions (Article 8(5) of the BMVI Regulation).

⁽³⁾ [Integrated Border Management Fund – Border Management and Visa Instrument \(2021-27\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/eap/press/2021/11/1148_en.pdf) ([europa.eu](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/eap/press/2021/11/1148_en.pdf))

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing, as part of the Integrated Border Management Fund, the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

⁽⁵⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy.

Your attention is drawn to one provision of the Common Provisions Regulation (CPR) ⁽⁶⁾. As regard the value added tax (“VAT”) eligibility regime, Article 64 (1)(c) of the CPR provides that VAT is not eligible, except:

- (i) “for operations the total cost of which is below EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT);
- (ii) for operations the total cost of which is at least EUR 5 000 000 (including VAT) where it is non-recoverable under national VAT legislation”.

Moreover, for this call, your attention is also drawn to Article 9(4) of the CPR, where reference is made to sustainable development and the respect of the Union environmental acquis.

3. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

3.1. Indicative Budget available

The indicative amount envisaged for this call BMVI/2025/SA/1.1.8 is **EUR 250 million** (funds available under the 2023-2027 Thematic Facility work programme).

Each Member State may submit only one application.

Each application may be composed of multiple work packages, aligned with the different priority areas and/or external border sections concerned by these areas. You will find more information on the work packages in the application form.

The requested amount per Member State including all work packages (i.e., the Union contribution to the Member State’s BMVI programme under the Specific Action):

- should not be lower than **EUR 15 million** per application including technical assistance;
- should not be higher than **EUR 35 million** per application including technical assistance;

However, applications which support cooperation in the form of joint/cross-border innovation procurement and/or joint procurement acquisitions as defined under section 3.3.6, can increase the amount to EUR 50 million per application, including technical assistance.

Proposals that do not meet the minimum pass score of 45 out of 60 for the relevance criteria will be excluded from funding.

⁽⁶⁾ Regulation (EU) 2021/1060 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 June 2021 laying down common provisions on the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, the Cohesion Fund, the Just Transition Fund and the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund and financial rules for those and for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Internal Security Fund and the Instrument for Financial Support for Border Management and Visa Policy

Given the limited budget, DG HOME may decide to reduce the total budget of individual applications (for instance, select a limited number of work packages) or even that of individual work packages, and/or establish a reserve list for proposals.

3.2. Background for the specific action

The Communication establishing the multiannual strategic policy for European integrated border management ⁽⁷⁾, presented by the Commission on 14 March 2023, aims to provide a shared policy framework and guidance for the implementation of an effective European integrated border management for the period 2023 to 2027. The Communication highlights that *“Border surveillance requires effective operational measures of the Member States’ national authorities responsible with border management and enhanced presence of the European Border and Coast Guard Standing Corps in pre-frontier areas, as well as reinforced border protection capabilities and infrastructure, means of surveillance, including aerial surveillance, and equipment.”*

The ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy ⁽⁸⁾, presented by the Commission on 1 April 2025, acknowledges that *“strengthening the resilience and security of external borders is crucial to counter hybrid threats, such as the weaponisation of migration, to prevent threat actors and goods from entering the EU, and to combat cross-border crime and terrorism effectively.”*

The EU is supporting Member States countering threats posed by drones (unmanned aerial systems, hereafter UAS) throughout various policy areas, such as internal security, integrated border management, research, and civilian-military cooperation. Within the civilian scope, the aim of this call is to enhance border control capabilities with a special focus on the border management of the land and maritime external borders, as well international airports.

Border management needs continue to be very important, considering the rapidly evolving threat landscape and risks at the EU external borders, increased pressure on border management including incidents across the external border, with UAS engaging in disturbances, instrumentalization of migrants, hybrid threats, threats to infrastructure and criminal activities etc.

The development of capabilities to counter unauthorised and/or non-cooperative unmanned aerial systems (hereafter C-UAS) is a rapidly evolving challenge. Several factors underpin the nature of the threats: variety of possible drone characteristics, including size, range, speed, payload capacity, and difficulty to operate, which all impact the capacity to counter the threat; continuous performance gains and innovations in drone systems, including miniaturisation and resistance to countermeasures; proliferation of systems and components on the EU internal market and their widening accessibility to civilian consumers; current limits of counter-measures to detect, track, identify, mitigate or neutralise drones as appropriate from technical, operational, governance and regulatory perspectives.

There is hence a growing need to further develop the approach to countering threats posed by UAS.

⁽⁷⁾ [COM/2023/146/final](#)

⁽⁸⁾ [COM/2025/148/final](#)

Member States, in Council discussions, have underscored the urgent need to reinforce UAS and C-UAS capacities. They highlighted recent instances of unauthorised or malicious drones, for example, unexplained drone incursions at airports and sensitive sites, which have exposed gaps in current countermeasures. These discussions affirmed that national authorities require additional support to detect, track and neutralise rogue drones at the external borders.

At the meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council on 13 October 2025, Ministers addressed the issue of drone detection and protection; on 23 October 2025, the European Council addressed recent violations of EU airspace by calling for strengthened joint efforts among Member States to enhance counter-drone capabilities.

Civil security authorities, such as border and coast guards for the external border management (as well as law enforcement authorities for internal security, or operators of civil critical infrastructure), have counter-drone tasks and needs. Civil counter-drone capabilities are primarily under the jurisdiction of national civilian authorities. Counter-drone measures that those authorities need to perform include detection, identification, and neutralisation (non-kinetic and kinetic) of drones which are unauthorised and/or pose a threat.

The Commission is implementing measures to support Member States to enhance civil counter-drone capabilities.

Frontex and national border and coast guard authorities increasingly use UAS for border management and situational awareness purposes, and they are also developing C-UAS capabilities. The Capability Roadmap ⁽⁹⁾⁽¹⁰⁾ for the European Border and Coast Guard maps capability needs of Frontex and Member States' border management authorities, setting the priorities towards 2037 ⁽¹¹⁾, based on the National Capability Development Plans and on the Agency's overview that compiles them and investigates possible synergies.

In 2023, September through October, Frontex conducted live demonstration of C-UAS detection, identification and tracking capabilities in Estonia. In June 2024, Frontex organised Industry Days on C-UAS capabilities to inform the scoping of its future activities. ⁽¹²⁾ In October 2025 Frontex, hosted by the Portuguese Air Force, carried out the final live showcase of the C-UAS capabilities ⁽¹³⁾, with a particular focus on neutralisation. This experience allowed the Agency to draft metrics for the evaluation of C-UAS solutions' effectiveness in several capabilities – from neutralisation to range, precision, interoperability, mobility, efficiency, reliability and resilience.

⁽⁹⁾ Management Board Decision: <https://prd.frontex.europa.eu/document/management-board-decision-16-2024-on-the-approval-of-the-capability-roadmap-of-the-european-border-and-coast-guard/>

⁽¹⁰⁾ Published version: <https://op.europa.eu/publication-detail/-/publication/a4ca68c9-d0bd-11f0-8da>

⁽¹¹⁾ 1) Integrated information management across the European Border and Coast Guard; 2) Improved efficiency and security of border crossing points; 3) Comprehensive pan-European network-enabled multipurpose surveillance; 4) Strengthened strategic partnerships and reduced illegal pathways to Europe; 5) Sustainable operational excellence; 6) Seamlessly integrated and interoperable European Border and Coast Guard; 7) Gradually adopted emerging innovative technologies

⁽¹²⁾ <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/innovation/announcements/12-june-2024-frontex-industry-day-on-counter-unmanned-aerial-systems-c-uas-and-red-teaming-services-QwmMQE>

⁽¹³⁾ <https://www.frontex.europa.eu/innovation/research-and-innovation/prize-contests/c-uas-prize-contest-sFXJdl>

Supporting European C-UAS capabilities for the external border management is also relevant in the framework of European innovation policy for civil security and of European strategic autonomy.

Regarding European innovation, as UAS and C-UAS are a relatively new and rapidly evolving area (in terms of threats, capability needs and solutions), innovation is key. Within the dedicated EU programme on research and innovation on civil security (currently Horizon Europe Cluster 3 “Civil Society for Security”, and previously in the 2014-2021 Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge 7 “Secure Societies”),⁽¹⁴⁾ the EU funded European research and innovation on civil C-UAS capabilities to support border and coast guards, law enforcement agencies, and operators of civilian critical infrastructures. Several current European C-UAS solutions have been developed also through R&D funded by this programme.⁽¹⁵⁾

The Commission also organised joint demonstrations of prototypes of possible future innovative border management technologies from EU-funded civil security research, including on C-UAS⁽¹⁶⁾.

The Commission, supported by Frontex, also dedicated funding support to Member States border and coast guard users for testing, validating, piloting, transferring and/or integrating prototypes of innovative border management solutions. This led to several projects testing C-UAS innovative prototypes, such as those funded by the specific actions of the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) dedicated to uptake of innovation BMVI/2021-2022/SA/1.2.1 and BMVI/2024/SA/1.1.5;⁽¹⁷⁾ and those funded by the specific action of the Internal Security Fund (ISF) on uptake of innovation on protecting public spaces against drone threats (ISF/2022/SA/3.4.1).⁽¹⁸⁾

Regarding European strategic autonomy, European C-UAS solutions for European civil security practitioners including border and coast guards are also strategic for European resilience and reliability. As analysed in assessments of critical technology dependencies⁽¹⁹⁾ and of the EU security market,⁽²⁰⁾ European autonomous systems may be particularly prone to non-EU dependencies. C-UAS solutions for border management

⁽¹⁴⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe/cluster-3-civil-security-society_en

⁽¹⁵⁾ Such as projects ALADDIN (Advanced hoListic Adverse Drone Detection, Identification, Neutralization, <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/430028-a-complete-and-versatile-counter-drone-system>); ALFA (Advanced Low Flying Aircrafts Detection and Tracking, <https://cordis.europa.eu/article/id/418277-better-detection-of-small-aircraft-and-drones-helps-protect-europe-s-maritime-borders>); PRESERVE (Protecting euRopean public spaces against Emergent hoStile drone thrEats thRough an adVanced multidimensional shield and cross-border intelligEnce, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101168392>).

⁽¹⁶⁾ https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/news/european-innovation-strengthens-border-management-new-eu-technology-2025-09-04_en

⁽¹⁷⁾ Such as projects BMVI/2021-2022/SA/1.2.1/005, A mobile system for detecting and locating low flying objects that have illegally crossed the state border using radar technology, Poland; BMVI/2024/SA/1.1.5/001, Piloting of Multi-Layer Counter-UAS position, Estonia.

⁽¹⁸⁾ Such as projects ISF/2022/SA/3.4.1/001, Protection of public spaces & mass gatherings (POP-ART), Spain; ISF/2022/SA/3.4.1/002, Counter-UAS detection/tracking/alert and training for LEAs (PROTECDOME), Cyprus; ISF/2022/SA/3.4.1/003, LEA toolkit for public-space protection (SAFEGUARD), Greece.

⁽¹⁹⁾ A Commission-internal deep-dive assessment on autonomous systems was conducted in 2022.

⁽²⁰⁾ EU security market study – Final report, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2837/19472>

should as much as possible ensure compatibility and interoperability with other legacy, cross-agencies and cross-border components and systems, as well as security and cybersecurity of the equipment and its data integrity. According to national and EU systems and regulations, they may need also qualifications to connect to national administration's existing IT networks, including if applicable exchange of sensitive or classified information.

3.3. Scope and purpose of the specific action

This call targets Member States experiencing increased and complex pressures on border management. These pressures include, but are not limited to:

- hostile or disruptive activities at the external borders involving unmanned aircraft systems (UAS), including the instrumentalisation of migrants;
- hybrid threats affecting the EU external borders and border crossing points, including those in international airports;
- threats to critical border-related infrastructure;
- criminal activities linked to the management and security of the EU external borders.

Particular consideration will be given to Member States that have been most frequently exposed to such complex and multidimensional pressures at their external land and maritime borders (beyond mere presence of migratory pressure).

3.3.1. Priority areas to cover

The applications should cover one or more of the following three priority areas:

1. Expanding aerial surveillance capabilities with the purchase of UAS and C-UAS at external borders.
2. Integrating UAS and counter-unmanned aerial systems (C-UAS) into the national border surveillance systems and that feed into the national and European situational pictures, for the purpose of improving situational awareness on non-cooperative and/or unauthorised use of UAS.
3. Supporting deployment of innovative technologies, methods and communication systems for the purpose of border control at external borders that feed into the national and European situational pictures, bearing in mind new hybrid threats directly impacting the management of the EU external borders.

3.3.2. Operational needs to achieve

The applications should seek to enhance national border management capabilities at the EU external borders built so far, referring to the National Capability Development Plan, and, where appropriate, updates following evolving needs as resulting from changing threat landscape analysis in view of the management of the EU external borders.

The proposed work packages should contribute to the further development of interoperable systems that form a comprehensive and multi-layered surveillance capability, ensuring persistent large-area surveillance coverage, as well as adaptability and flexibility in the operational areas to be covered at the EU external border.

The application form offers the possibility to provide facts, data and other considerations on the national context and specific circumstances relating to the needs in the country according to the priority areas (see section 3.3.1) and border sections concerned that

should enable the Commission services to apply the assessment criteria presented under section 4.1, demonstrating relevance and impact of the application.

The application form also offers the possibility to explain the choices made for the nature of the equipment and systems, considering the conditions at the external border sections concerned and to indicate the expected results and impact (increase in reaction time, increase in aerial zone coverage etc), and indicate the priority of the different work packages.

To achieve the operational needs, applications can also include activities that relate to the following with the purpose of border management:

- Capacity building on the use of UAS and C-UAS (training and upskilling of staff, specialised teams in the border management authorities, etc.).
- Development of civilian border UAS platforms supporting border surveillance.
- Upgrading already existing civilian UAS/C-UAS packages (e.g. with longer range cameras, radar, etc.).
- Follow up and roll out of 2025 piloted prototypes and products for UAS and C-UAS developed under Horizon (e.g. collaboration with Frontex and Member States currently involved with such projects).
- Cooperation with stakeholders on UAS and C-UAS (private sector).
- In order to ensure a wider scale integration and interoperability as a non-cost item the following could also be included under the activities that could be covered to the extent relevant for this call: Cooperation with actors responsible for critical infrastructure and civil preparedness.

The applications should detail how the new UAS/C-UAS systems will be deployed in a secure and resilient manner. This should cover cybersecurity measures, data integrity protection, and the capacity to securely integrate with existing national IT networks.

The scope of this Specific Action also encompasses measures to ensure that any newly acquired systems are deployed in a secure and resilient manner. Applicants should consider cybersecurity requirements and data integrity when integrating UAS/C-UAS into their existing infrastructure, ensuring secure connections with national IT networks. Integration and interoperability will be key: multi-layered C-UAS systems not only should utilise integration between multiple technical solutions, but the whole C-UAS system should be interoperable to current C-UAS and other technical border management systems, which the Member State has deployed already. Standalone systems and hardware should be avoided.

Furthermore, this Specific Action contributes to the EU's strategic objectives by encouraging solutions that strengthen the EU's security and strategic autonomy, for instance by capitalising on European technological developments in the drone and counter-drone domain, and by using European space programme components' services.

Applications should consider and explain if and how national security services would or should be involved in the projects, including regarding handling of classified data and information, if applicable; if and how security and vulnerability assessments have or would be done on planned equipment or platforms; and or if security requirements would be planned for the handling and maintenance of the equipment once acquired (including handling of classified data and information, if applicable).

3.3.3. *Applicable technical standards and non-binding guidance*

Mandatory compliance

In accordance with Article 13(14) of the EU Regulation 2011/1148 on the Border Management and Visa Instrument, any purchase of equipment or ICT systems supported under this Instrument must comply with the standards established under Articles 16 and 64 of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 where such standards exist and are applicable to the equipment concerned ⁽²¹⁾.

The applicable requirements and standards for UAS purchased under this call need to fulfil the mandatory requirements as described in Annex I. For the types of UAS for which no such requirements have been established in Annex I, Member States may follow non-binding guidance.

Non-binding guidance

For any UAS that are not covered by Annex I and all C-UAS ⁽²²⁾ capabilities, the guidance in Annex II part 1 to this call should be considered and Annex II part 2 could be considered when preparing the application.

Adherence to Annex II is not mandatory under this call and non-adherence to this Annex in itself is not an exclusion ground; however, applicants should explain how the proposed solution meets the operational needs and requirements of the action (in particular C-UAS solution's core functional capabilities for detection/tracking/identification/mitigation, interoperability/integration, safety and security, cybersecurity and data integrity, and lifecycle support). Moreover, Member States should explain in the application how they considered the guidance and to what extent they can apply this in the operational needs in national context.

Evaluation of this current call is envisaged to take place after the results of the BMVI specific action "Equipment to increase the operational capacity of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency" (BMVI/2025/SA/1.2.3) are ready. The aim of that call is to purchase unmanned equipment to be used for border surveillance at the national level and to be put at the disposal of Frontex in accordance with Article 64(14) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896.

3.3.4. *Activities to co-finance*

The specific action proposed can include the following activities:

1. Purchase of equipment, be it stationary or mobile (equipment such as but not limited to different types and sizes of UAS, UAS with C-UAS capabilities; radio communication detectors, thermal cameras, sensors, radar to identify and detect, jammers, kinetic neutralisation measures, detection, tracking and identification

⁽²¹⁾ For your information please find here the current Technical Standards for the equipment to be deployed in Frontex activities, including Technical Standards for Aerial Equipment: [Frontex Management Board Decision 51/2021 of 21 September 2021 adopting Technical Standards for the equipment to be deployed in Frontex activities](#)

⁽²²⁾ Interceptor drones are considered only as a part of C-UAS capability and these do not need to meet mandatory requirements listed in the Annex I, only Annex II apply).

software, etc). In case of C-UAS it is crucial to be able to provide for a multilayered capability package to counter or neutralise unauthorised/non-cooperative UAS. UAS usually move based on signals from global navigation satellite system, but can also manage without, by using an offline inertial navigation system. In the latter case, neutralisation by jamming or spoofing will not work, and a kinetic solution will be needed.

2. Purchase of equipment to support the deployment and use of UAS and C-UAS capabilities.
3. IT developments and integration of C-UAS into existing mobile or fixed systems.
4. IT and ICT systems, infrastructure, operating equipment, including contributions to (functionalities in) common platforms and/ or integrated command and control systems at national level for the detection, tracking and neutralisation of UAS, insofar as they support border control.
5. Training and other capacity building measures for border management authorities on effective use of C-UAS.
6. Cost of partnership activities that are considered necessary for supporting the UAS and C-UAS capabilities of border management authorities.

When purchase of C-UAS is envisaged under this call, this should be procured as a service rather than as standalone hardware, so that performance, integration and maintenance are embedded in the contract and can evolve with the threat. Besides hardware also software and their maintenance should be in the focus of the acquisition to allow long-term functioning/use of the equipment purchased under this call.

In line with Article 13(14)(b) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1148 on the Border Management and Visa Instrument it is required that all large-scale operating equipment for border management, such as aerial and maritime means of transport and surveillance, purchased by the Member States shall be registered in the technical equipment pool of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency for the purpose of making that equipment available in accordance with Article 64(9) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1896 on the European Border and Coast Guard. To be noted that aircrafts are referred to in Article 63(4) of the Regulation (EU) 2019/1896, which can be manned or unmanned stipulated in the EUROSUR Implementing Regulation.

In line with these requirements, Member States are expected to register all large-scale equipment purchased under this call, so that it can be included in the annual bilateral negotiations between the Member State and Frontex.

If any special circumstances apply, such as cases where the warranty of fixed large-scale surveillance equipment or systems (e.g. certain UAS or C-UAS) would become void if the equipment were moved or redeployed, or in case of fixed equipment that cannot be moved, this should be flagged in the application form. It should be communicated to the Agency in view of the bilateral negotiations (where potential solutions, including financial compensation or an agreement not to redeploy, fall under the discretion of the negotiating parties).

3.3.5. Considerations on eligibility for the use of UAS and C-UAS

Nature and scope of the equipment UAS and C-UAS

Equipment that may entail the use of force, including weapon-like systems such as stand-alone hand-held counter-UAS devices, is not eligible for support. In accordance with the BMVI Regulation, equipment financed under the Instrument must have as its primary and ultimate purpose the performance of border management and border control tasks.

Any equipment procured with BMVI funding must be deployed strictly in line with the BMVI Regulation and with full respect for fundamental rights, including the principles of necessity and proportionality. The Member State will bear full responsibility for ensuring that such equipment is operated in a manner that does not endanger human life or physical integrity and avoids, to the greatest extent possible, harm to animals or the natural environment.

This responsibility is of particular relevance in the context of countermeasures or neutralisation actions. Such actions must be carried out so as to ensure that neither the measures themselves, nor any debris or secondary effects, pose risks to persons, animals, the environment, infrastructure, or facilities, including border-crossing points and associated installations. The prevention of such risks must be prioritised and remains within the exclusive operational responsibility and discretion of the Member State concerned.

For deployment at sea and land borders: Surveillance along the external maritime and land borders

Equipment necessary to carry out border management activities in line with Article 13 of the Schengen Borders Code, at the EU external border and its proximity.

For deployment at international airports: Surveillance of security perimeter

Equipment necessary to carry out border management actions along the fencing around the international airports and/or perimeter can be considered. The border management actions carried out at the fencing of international airports can focus on 1/ensuring the fluid and continued operation of the border crossing point, and 2/prevent that any person would circumvent border control, irregularly enter the territory of the Schengen area.

Purchase of equipment, be it stationary or mobile equipment such as but not limited to different types and sizes of UAS, UAS with C-UAS capabilities shall be used for the above mentioned two purposes as well among the objectives. The entity being able to operate the equipment shall be the national authority responsible for border management on its own or in cooperation with the airport operator and/or the company responsible for security. The national authority responsible for border management shall remain the owner of the equipment and responsible for the use of the equipment.

Funds dedicated to international airports will be limited, priority will be given to land and maritime borders. Only those international airports that have been notified to the Commission as border crossing points in the sense of Article 39 (published in Annex IV of the Practical Handbook for Border Guards) of the Schengen Borders Code will be considered for funding. Determining factor for allocating funds under this call will be the volume of passengers crossing the EU external borders as reflected in relevant EUROSTAT data. Particular consideration will be given to Member States that have faced such complex and multidimension pressures at their international airport and the frequency it has occurred.

Member States are requested to mention in the application which entity/ies will be involved in the use of the equipment.

3.3.6. Considerations on public procurement

To be considered eligible, an application must not result in financing of equipment that has already been procured and delivered. However, Member States may apply if they are already in the process of procuring equipment that is eligible under the specific action and fulfils the objectives, criteria and standards set out.

UAS and C-UAS, including for the border surveillance applications, is a relatively new, rapidly advancing, changing and diverse area in terms of technology, threats, market players, etc. Furthermore, novel or additional UAS and C-UAS systems will have to integrate with and into existing and legacy systems and components – sensors, command-and-control, etc.

In such situations, innovation procurement and/or joint procurement may be useful approaches.

Applicant countries are encouraged to proceed with innovation procurement and/or joint procurement acquisitions. However, neither innovation procurement nor joint procurement are mandatory for this call.

Applicant countries may consider using joint procurement in groups of countries, in combination (joint innovation procurement) or not with innovation procurement. Applicant countries may also consider using innovation procurement, either alone or jointly with other countries.

3.3.6.1. Joint procurement by groups of Member States

Joint procurement is the central and collective (by groups of Member States) procurement of goods and services that could have been otherwise procured and then used by the individual parties involved (national governments and administrations).

Joint procurement may help applicant countries to increase attractiveness to manufacturers/suppliers and be more strategic in front of the market and suppliers of UAS and C-UAS components and systems. It may also allow applicant countries to negotiate better contract conditions (e.g. terms of delivery) and exploit economy of scale by aggregating the demand of more contracting authorities.

Moreover, joint procurement may help applicant countries to increase interoperability and/or integration with existing and legacy systems, and to achieve better harmonisation and coordination between neighbouring countries.

If applicant countries plan to do joint procurement for this call (in connection or not with innovation procurement), each country should indicate it in its own application.

The Commission invites applicant countries to review the Toolbox for joint cross-border public procurement (JCBPP) by the EU-funded iProcureNet (available [here](#)).

3.3.6.2. Innovation procurement

Innovation procurement is public procurement where contracting authorities, instead of buying off-the-shelf, act as a launch customer ⁽²³⁾ for goods or services which are not yet available on the needed large-scale commercial basis. Buyer(s) act(s) as early adopters procuring products, services or processes that contains substantially novel characteristics.

Innovation procurement provides a large enough demand to incentivise industry to invest in commercialisation with the quality and price needed by users; and it may contribute to achieving best value for public money. A critical mass of purchasing power on the demand side can incentivise industry to scale up the production to bring solutions to the market.

Innovation procurement also allows procurers to perform conformance testing of solutions before actually procuring them, ensuring that the selected solutions meet their specific needs and requirements.

Innovation procurement is not research and development. Innovation procurement involves procuring goods and services that are innovative but already available, though not necessarily in the needed large-scale commercial basis. Innovation procurement does not include the procurement of research (which is known instead as ‘pre-commercial procurement’ (PCP)).

With innovation procurement, the actual public procurement of the solutions happens anyway through one of the existing public procurement procedures (e.g. negotiated procedure, competitive dialogue etc.).

The Commission invites applicant countries to review:

- EU-funded Toolbox for Innovation Procurement in Civil Security (border management, internal security, operators of civil critical infrastructure) by iProcureNet (available [here](#))
- Commission’s [Guidance on Innovation Procurement](#) (2021).

Applicant countries planning to use an innovation procurement approach for this call (in connection or not with joint procurement) should indicate it in their application.

3.4. Expected results following the call

The expected results of this specific action include a significant reinforcement of the overall operational capacity of the border management capabilities of national border management authorities.

The action is expected to contribute to the deployment of emerging and innovative technologies for comprehensive multipurpose surveillance at the EU external borders.

The supported actions are expected to result in enhanced, fully operational border control capabilities that prevent and detect illegal activities, supported by multisensory installations.

⁽²³⁾ Launch customer or early adopter refers to the first 20% of customers that buy an innovative solution. Launch customer reference help attracting investors.

The successful applications will require changes to the programmes' relevant indicators that are listed in Annex VIII of the BMVI Regulation. The presentation of the expected results should indicate reliable sources of data used to measure the achievements.

4. PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION

4.1. Admissibility, eligibility and assessment aspects

All EU Member States participating in the BMVI and the Schengen Associated Countries are eligible.

A two-step procedure will be applied: applications will be first checked against the admissibility and eligibility criteria and then against the assessment criteria.

4.1.1. Admissibility and eligibility

The Commission services will examine the admissibility and, following a first examination by Frontex of the technical requirements and standards, the eligibility of applications.

To be considered **admissible** an application must:

1. be submitted within the deadline (see below) to the BMVI specific actions functional mailbox HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu,
2. consist of the official BMVI /202/SA/1.1.9 application form attached to this note together with the budget form, which must be readable and complete (all fields necessary for assessment are filled in),
3. be submitted by the Managing Authority on behalf of the entity in the Member State that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action,
4. identify a project beneficiary (an entity) that will be responsible for the implementation of the specific action in the Member State (in the lead for the action),
5. in case of a transnational project involving joint procurement or other forms of alignment / cooperation: include partnership declaration forms signed by the Managing Authorities of all participating Member States ⁽²⁴⁾.
6. Respect the minimum and maximum ceilings as indicated in section 3.1.

Failure to comply with the above admissibility criteria will lead to the rejection of the application.

To be considered eligible, an application must

- (1) comply with the mandatory standards for equipment defined in Annex I
- (2) not result in financing of equipment that has already been procured and delivered. However, Member States may apply if they are already in the process of procuring equipment that is eligible under the specific action and

(24) Please refer to the note HOME-Funds/2022/07 on the arrangements between partners to be sought when submitting applications for transnational specific actions.

fulfils the objectives, criteria and standards set out. (The expenditure under the projects selected must be incurred and paid before 31 December 2029.)

Failure to comply with the above eligibility criteria will lead to the rejection of the application or parts thereof.

4.1.2. Assessment

DG HOME will assess admissible and eligible proposals based on the criteria indicated below. ⁽²⁵⁾.

A. **Relevance (max 60/100 – minimum pass score 45/60):**

1. **Clarity and consistency of the scope of the application** against the objectives and expected results identified in this call (choice of the priority areas and border sections concerned, internal coherence of the activities proposed under the work packages).
2. **Added value for the border management capabilities of the country concerned:**
 - technical and operational suitability of the activities proposed under the priority areas and border sections concerned;
 - the relevance in relation to the National Capability Development Plan or any updates;
 - any other relevant, existing medium- and/or long-term planning at national level.
3. **Synergies in the border management of the country concerned:**
 - degree of integration and/or interoperability of the proposed solutions into the existing surveillance means of the country concerned; including how the new UAS/C-UAS systems will be deployed in a secure and resilient manner, covering cybersecurity measures, data integrity protection, and the capacity to securely integrate with existing national IT networks, as applicable.
 - confirmation that any data related to border management, obtained via the monitoring activities of the UAS and C-UAS, will feed into EUROSUR and contribute to the National and European Situational Picture. As well use of European space programme components
4. **Compliance with the BMVI and coherence with European Integrated Border Management:** clarity and consistency of the proposal with the BMVI scope and objectives, relevant EU strategies.
5. **Contribution to the capabilities of the country concerned to handle threats hindering effective border management, and responding to the deficiencies identified** in the peer review of Schengen Evaluation and Monitoring Mechanism led by the Commission and/ or Vulnerability Assessment steered by Frontex. If Vulnerability Assessment would be referred to, please avoid reference to sensitive information and provide only the number of vulnerabilities identified and the year when it was reported, in case it was mentioned in any vulnerability assessment report without being or just refer to the year of the report and the type of report)

⁽²⁵⁾ A. Relevance (max 60/100), B. Quality and content (max 20/100) and C. Impact (max 20/100)

B. Quality and content (max 20/100):

1. **Maturity of the application:** intervention logic of the proposal as a whole (background information, needs assessment, proposed activities and expected results); project management, including operational and financial management; planned implementation (indicative timeline for the sake of ensuring that equipment will be delivered within the current Multiannual Financial Framework); monitoring/reporting strategy; experience and expertise of the project team/entities involved in the implementation; risk assessment and risk management procedures; mechanisms to ensure compliance with the EU acquis;
2. **Coherence between the work packages (where applicable):** clarity of the interconnection and interdependencies between the work packages for the achievement of the objectives of the proposal and the reasoning about the priority; feasibility of the start of the work package indicated as the first priority.
3. **Cost-effectiveness:** reasonability and feasibility of the estimated cost (if past examples of acquisition of same/similar equipment exist could be added as supporting information for the evaluation of costs); quality of the methodology for the calculation of costs; justification of costs not directly linked to the objectives of the proposal, if any. Appropriateness of the procurement approach (e.g. service-based vs. standalone acquisition) to ensure long-term maintainability and adaptability of the C-UAS solution.
4. **Degree of compliance with technical standards and requirements (Annexes I and II),** where appropriate, reasonableness of explanations on possible limitations or derogations requested.

C. Impact (max 20/100):

Proposals must demonstrate clear and measurable impact on the Member State's border-management capacity. Activities to be financed under the proposals should contribute to improved preparedness to address current and future challenges at the EU external borders, including threats involving UAS and C-UAS. Impact must be supported by concrete deliverables showing improvements that are specific, measurable, verifiable and directly usable by border management authorities relating to, inter alia:

1. the national baseline assessment of existing UAS and C-UAS capabilities (in case of complex approach to UAS, C-UAS the adequacy of the explanation to the capacity specifically available and/or used for border management);
2. operational readiness
3. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs);
4. training and exercise packages;
5. the implementation of the national capability development plan.

The Commission services may seek advice from Frontex to support the assessment of the applications.

Member States ⁽²⁶⁾ must ensure respect for the horizontal principles described in Article 9 of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060, including respect for fundamental rights and

⁽²⁶⁾ In the case of Schengen Associated Countries, the references to the Charter on Fundamental Rights of the European Union shall be understood as references to the Convention for the Protection of Human

compliance with the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Moreover, Member States must ensure that the envisaged actions are not affected by a reasoned opinion delivered by the Commission in respect of infringement proceedings under Article 258 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) that put in doubt the legality and regularity of expenditure or the performance of the actions (Article 8(5) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1148).

4.2. Application procedure

Deadline for the application: Member States are invited to apply by 8 May 2026 at the latest, using the official BMVI/2025/SA/1.1.8 Application Form attached to this Note, together with its annexes. The applicant can apply in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, it is strongly advised to use English for the entire application.

In line with the Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001⁽²⁷⁾, any document held by the Commission, including documents containing sensitive information, may be subject to a request for public access. Therefore, if relevant, the Managing Authorities should submit each application in a separate email. Likewise, clarifications where needed/required per application should be sent in separate emails. In the case sensitive information exists relating to incidents at the external borders or threats that impact on border management and/or the internal security of the Member State, applicants are invited to clearly indicate the nature of the available information in the documents to be sent to the Commission. Either the information provided is sensitive and this quality is highlighted (presented separately), or it is indicated that the information cannot be shared and its existence is only described in general terms. Sensitive information should not be sent without encryption.

To ensure equal and fair treatment of the applications and allow the Commission to allocate at the same date all the available funding, DG HOME will assess all applications simultaneously. Therefore, applications submitted after the deadline will not be admissible.

The Members of the Committee for the Home Affairs Funds will be informed at the latest 10 working days before the deadline for the submission of the applications in case the deadline for the submission of applications is extended.

E-mail address for the application: The proposals should be submitted to the BMVI specific actions functional mailbox HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu. Countries may submit additional documentation if necessary.

No modification to the application is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. However, if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Commission may contact the applicant/ lead Member State during the evaluation process. A reply should be provided by the Member State within 3 working days from the request date.

Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Protocols as ratified by the Schengen Associated Countries and Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

⁽²⁷⁾ Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents

Any requests for clarification of the Member States on this call for the expression of interest may be sent by **27 March 2026** at the latest, to the same BMVI specific actions functional mailbox HOME-BMVI-SPECIFIC-ACTIONS@ec.europa.eu.

Requests should only be sent **by the Managing authority**. The Managing Authority has an important role to explain to the potential beneficiaries the applicable rules and specificities of the programmes in general and of a specific action in particular and to help prepare applications for a specific action. The Managing Authority should be the contact point and take the responsibility to review questions from potential beneficiaries and raise questions to or request clarifications from the Commission services where necessary. As projects under specific actions are managed at national level, according to national rules, specific questions on eligibility of costs should be addressed first to the Managing Authority.

To respect the equal treatment and transparency, the replies to the written requests for clarification received will be sent to all Member States, via HOME-AFFAIRS-FUNDS-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu

DG HOME will inform Member States of the outcome of the assessment of the applications towards June 2026.

5. AMENDMENT OF THE BMVI PROGRAMMES AND ELIGIBILITY OF EXPENDITURE

After having been informed of the outcome of the call for expression of interest, each successful Member State shall submit to the Commission a request to amend its BMVI programme via SFC. The amended programme should:

- include a short description of the specific action;
- adjust the output and result indicators, and
- include the costs and corresponding intervention types' codes linked to this specific action (respectively in the description and under tables 1, 2 and 3 of the relevant specific objectives, and table 6 of the programme).

When amending the BMVI programme of a Member States, two situations may arise regarding the eligibility of expenditure ⁽²⁸⁾:

1. if all the types of interventions are listed in Annex VI table 1 of the BMVI Regulation that are relevant for this Specific Action in table(s) 2.1.3 of the relevant specific objective(s) in the initially approved BMVI programme, **then the expenditure for the Specific Action will be eligible as of 01/01/2021.**
2. if not all the types of interventions are listed in Annex VI table 1 of the BMVI Regulation that are relevant for this Specific Action in the table(s) 2.1.3 of the relevant specific objective(s) in the initially approved BMVI programme: expenditure for the Specific Action will be eligible from the date of submission of the request for amendment of the BMVI programme that will add the respective types of interventions in the programme.

Yours faithfully,

⁽²⁸⁾ Art. 63(7) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1060.

Silvia MICHELINI

Enclosures: Annex I - Requirements and standards for the technical assessment of UAS
Annex II- Non-binding guidance and reference documents for the technical
assessment of UAS/C-UAS solutions
Application form
Budget form

