



Resilient and secure Europe:

Advancing security through green and digital transitions

Rahoitusinfo yrityksille ja turvallisuuustoimijoille – digitaaliset ratkaisut ja 60.000€ rahoitusmahdollisuus

10.3.2026 klo 15.00-16.00 | Teams

Petri Nykänen, Petri Koskinen, Business Tampere

Event is held in Finnish.
Materials are in English.

Next Info and Matchmaking
session in English:
7 April 2026

More info will be available at
<https://citadel.grantplatform.com/>



Co-funded by
the European Union

**BUSINESS
TAMPERE**



**SAFETY &
SECURITY CLUSTER**
TAMPERE REGION FINLAND

Agenda

Introduction to the CITADEL project

I° CITADEL Open Call 1 presentation

II° Evaluation and selection processes

III° How to find partners

Conclusion and Q&A



Petri
Nykänen



Petri
Koskinen

**BUSINESS
TAMPERE**



SAFETY &
SECURITY CLUSTER
TAMPERE REGION FINLAND

What is CITADEL?

CITADEL is a European cluster-driven initiative designed to support and accelerate SME-led innovation in the civil security sector by connecting innovation supply with real market demand.

Ecosystem networking
and matchmaking

**Structured open calls
with cascade funding**

Monitoring and
acceleration of selected
innovation projects

The project aims to accelerate the adoption of innovative security solutions across Europe.

Starting date: 1 October 2025

Duration: 36 months

Funding program: Single Market Programme, Euroclusters

CITADEL: Vision, Mission and Strategy



Mission

- ✓ To support innovation, networking and adoption of new processes and advanced technologies on the security value chain



Vision

- ✓ To reinforce the resilience of European critical infrastructures facing emerging threats, by leveraging the synergies between digital and green transitions






Strategic objectives (implemented through cascade funding)

- ✓ Stimulate collaborations between digital companies and the security sector
- ✓ Accelerate the adoption of innovative digital technologies in the security sector
- ✓ Improve the resilience of European critical infrastructures
- ✓ Facilitate access to security markets for innovative SMEs

CITADEL consortium



CITADEL is implemented by a consortium of six specialised European clusters from France, Lithuania, Romania and Finland, covering digital technologies, security and innovation ecosystems across Europe.

-  Strong regional anchoring
-  Complementary expertise across the security value chain
-  Wide European outreach



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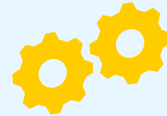




I° CITADEL Open Call 1 presentation

Cascade funding in CITADEL

Mechanism of cascade funding (Financial support to third parties – FSTP)

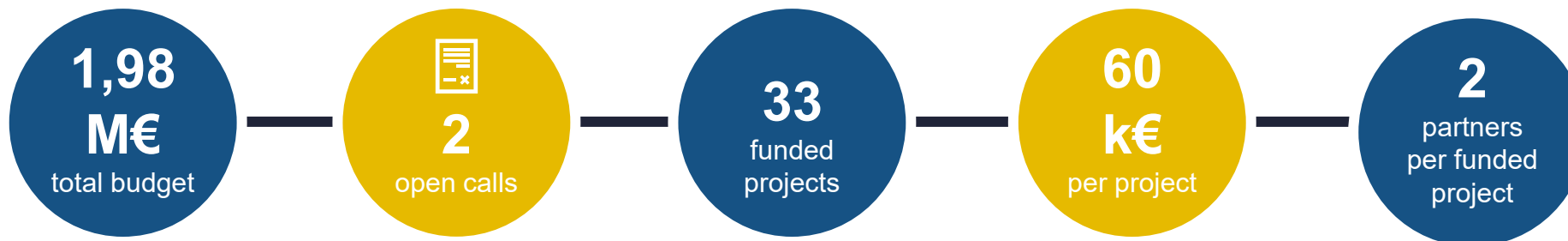


EC mechanism that distributes smaller amount of public funds in a more agile way

- Open calls managed by larger EU projects
- Lighter and simplified administrative process
- Faster
- Innovation funding (grant = lump sum)
- Simplified reporting process



Cascade funding in CITADEL: funding mechanism to accelerate security innovation across Europe



Funding mechanism

- ▶ Funding of 9-month demonstration / pilot projects
- ▶ Each funded project will receive **60 000 €** as a **lump sum**
- ▶ Funding to be **shared among the SME** partners of the same project
- ▶ Co-financing from private sources of **at least 20%**
- ▶ **Eligible countries** : EU-27 + associated countries to SMP
- ▶ **2 successive Open Calls**
- ▶ Transparent and fair **selection**



Collaboration rules

- ▶ **Collaborative projects** among tech-savvy companies (SMEs from digital sector) and more traditional companies (security sector)
- ▶ **Demonstration** of a digital solution in real or near-real conditions fitting with a security use case/challenge
- ▶ **2 partners per project** :
 - ▶ One SME company from digital sector
 - ▶ One entity representing the demand side (security sector)

Who are we looking for ?

- **Consortium of 2 partners: 1 digital/tech SME + 1 security end-user (SME or non-SME)**
- Established in EU Member States and Single Market Programme associated countries
 - ✓ *EU-27 member states + Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Moldova, Ukraine*
- **Cross-border partnerships encouraged (1 point of bonus)**
- **Only SMEs are eligible to receive funding**
- Co-financing needed from private sources of **at least 20% and covered either by the SME's own financial resources (equity capital) or by guaranteed external financing**. It cannot consist of contributions in kind, personnel costs, or non-monetary contributions.

What are we looking for ?

Selection of 17 SME-led innovation projects contributing to:

- **Technological innovation:** demonstrate and validate advanced security solutions (AI, IoT, photonics, cybersecurity, communication), accelerating uptake and deployment



- **Operational and security benefits:** Improve threat detection, resilience of critical infrastructures, emergency response, and safety in urban environments, including crowd and large-event management.
- **Economic and market impact:** Support faster commercialisation, create new business opportunities, and strengthen competitiveness of European security companies
- **Societal and policy impact:** Enhance public trust, support the green and digital transition, and inform security policy and standardisation.
- **Knowledge and learning:** Generate lessons learned, best practices, and insights to guide replication, R&D, and innovation strategies.

Technologies



IoT

- ✓ Smart sensors
- ✓ Edge AI
- ✓ Environmental monitoring
- ✓ Risk detection



Photonics & optics

- ✓ Computer vision
- ✓ Advanced robotics
- ✓ Smart optical sensors
- ✓ Image recognition



AI and data analytics

- ✓ Predictive analytics
- ✓ Decision support
- ✓ Digital twins
- ✓ Risk prediction (big data)



Cybersecurity

- ✓ Threat detection
- ✓ Attack prevention
- ✓ Blockchain for secure data
- ✓ Infrastructure protection



Connectivity

- ✓ Cloud platforms
- ✓ Secure communication
- ✓ Emergency response
- ✓ Protected data exchange

Security value chain challenges



Critical infrastructures

- ✓ Energy
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Healthcare
- ✓ Digital infra



Resilience

- ✓ Natural disaster
- ✓ Green transition
- ✓ Technological risks
- ✓ Service continuity in case of crisis



Urban environment

- ✓ Smart cities
- ✓ Sustainability
- ✓ Green transition linkage
- ✓ Large events



Risk assessment

Identification and evaluation of potential threats and vulnerabilities



Prevention

Measures to mitigate risks and protect against identified threats



Detection

Systems for monitoring and identifying security incidents in real-time



Response

Immediate actions to address and contain security incidents



Recovery

Restoration of systems and business continuity after incidents

CITADEL financial support

- ▶ **Up to 60 000 €** per selected project
- ▶ **Only SME** can be funded
- ▶ Grant, lump sum
- ▶ Funding rate: **maximum 80%**

- ▶ Budget form requested at application stage for both partners

- ▶ Maximum project duration = **9 months**
- ▶ Expected start: 01/10/2026 at latest
- ▶ Latest ending: 30/06/2027

- ▶ Payment calendar:
 - ▶ Up to **20%** at project start (after subgrant agreement signature)
 - ▶ Up to **80%** at project closure, after validation of the project by CITADEL consortium

CITADEL open call: eligibility conditions

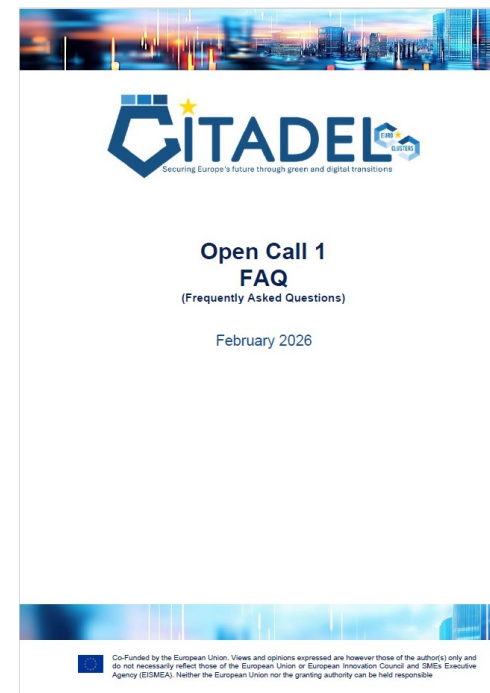
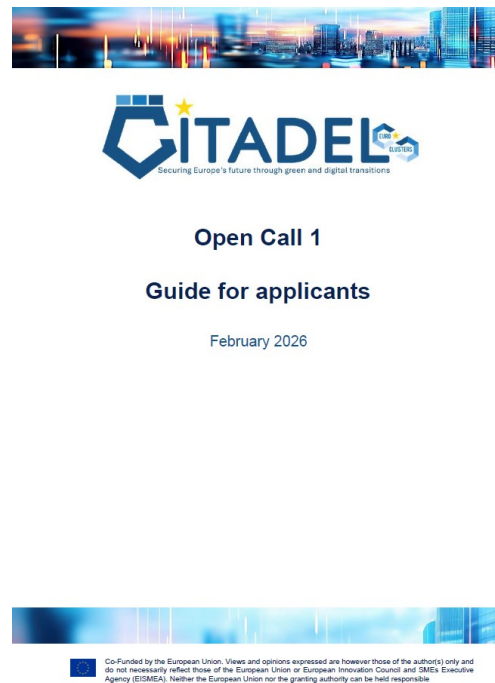
- ✓ Applicants are legal entities from eligible countries.
- ✓ Consortium of 2 legal entities, independant from each other.
- ✓ Partner 1 if a for-profit digital / tech SME. Partner 2 is a security end-user.
- ✓ Applications are submitted before the deadline.
- ✓ Applications are complete and in English.
- ✓ Only 1 application per applicant. If more than one proposal is identified, only the last proposal which has been submitted will be evaluated.
- ✓ SME must be in good financial health (not under liquidation nor in difficulty).

CITADEL Open Call 1: how to apply

Deadline
5 May 2026 – 17:00 CEST

Documents

- ▶ [Guide for applicants](#)
- ▶ [FAQ](#)
- ▶ [Template](#)



Sample form, not for offline completion.

Visit <https://citadel.grantplatform.com> to apply.



CITADEL Open Call 1

**** SAMPLE FORM for information only, not for offline completion****

Please refer to the **CITADEL Guide for Applicants**.

Project acronym

1. BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION

1.1. Project full title 200 characters
Max. 200 characters

1.2. Project tagline 300 characters
Description of the project in one sentence
Max. 300 characters

1.3. Project abstract 1000 characters
Concise abstract of the project
Max. 1000 characters

Consortium must be composed of 2 partners:

- Partner 1 = **SME from digital / technological sector**, representing offer side
- Partner 2 = **End-user from security sector** (SME or non-SME), representing demand side

1 of 14

CITADEL Open Call 1: how to apply

Deadline
5 May 2026 – 17:00 CEST

► Application form on <https://citadel.grantplatform.com/>



How to join the CITADEL Open Call 1

The application platform is now open.

🕒 **Deadline: 5 May 2026, 17:00 CEST**

Get ready now:

Register for our upcoming webinars and matchmaking sessions to learn more and connect with potential partners:

📢 Informative webinar with Q&A on CITADEL Open Call 1

🕒 5 March 2026 | 11:00 – 12:00 CET | Online
📄 Register here

🤝 Matchmaking session (B2B)

🕒 5 March 2026 | 13:00 – 18:00 CET | Online
📄 Register here

How to apply?

1. Register an account

- Create your profile to access the CITADEL application platform.

2. Start your application

- Starting 24 February, begin your submission and **save your progress** anytime to continue later.

3. Submit your application

- Complete and submit **before the CITADEL Open Call 1 deadline** to be evaluated.

Home
About CITADEL

Log in or register

Email

Continue

CITADEL

About CITADEL Open Call 1

The CITADEL Open Call 1 supports security-focused demonstration and pilot projects aimed at strengthening the protection and resilience of critical infrastructures, urban environments, and territories against physical, cyber, and hybrid threats.

Projects must validate advanced digital security technologies in real or near-real operational environments, moving from TRL 5-6 to TRL 6-7-.

Supported technologies include in particular:

- **Artificial Intelligence and data analytics** (predictive analytics, anomaly detection, decision support, digital twins)
- **IoT and smart sensing systems** (multi-sensor monitoring, edge AI, secure IoT architectures)
- **Photonics and optical systems** (computer vision, advanced sensing, robotics perception)
- **Cybersecurity solutions** (threat detection, secure data management, cyber resilience)
- **Secure communication** and interoperable platforms for crisis coordination and emergency response

Funding does not cover technology acquisition, but rather field validation, operational testing, performance measurement (KPIs), and integration within the security value chain to accelerate market uptake.

The CITADEL Open Call 1 supports innovative and transformative digital and cybersecurity solutions.

Manage applications → CITADEL Open Call 1 → Start application

All questions must be answered, unless marked optional.

Configuration mode: OFF

START 1. Basic project information 2. Consortium composition 3. Excellence 4. Impact 5. Implementation 6. Description of the consortium 7. Declaration

1. BASIC PROJECT INFORMATION

1.1. Project full title 0 / 200 characters Max. 200 characters

1.2. Project tagline 0 / 298 characters Description of the project in one sentence. Max. 300 characters

Manage applications → CITADEL Open Call 1 → Start application

All questions must be answered, unless marked optional.

Configuration mode: OFF

START 1. Basic project information 2. Consortium composition 3. Excellence 4. Impact 5. Implementation 6. Description of the consortium 7. Declaration

5. IMPLEMENTATION

5.1. WORKPLAN

5.1.1. Duration of your project in months Maximum duration is 9 months.

5.1.2. Description of the project workplan 0 / 2500 characters Max. 2500 characters

Describe your project workplan in a lean structure, broken down into several tasks.

For each task, specify:

- Task title
- Task objective
- Description of the task
- Role of participants
- Timing
- Deliverables

5.2. CONSORTIUM AS A WHOLE and EUROPEAN DIMENSION

The individual members of the consortium are described in a separate section 6. There is no need to repeat that information here.



CITADEL Open Call 1: how to apply

Deadline
5 May 2026 – 17:00 CEST

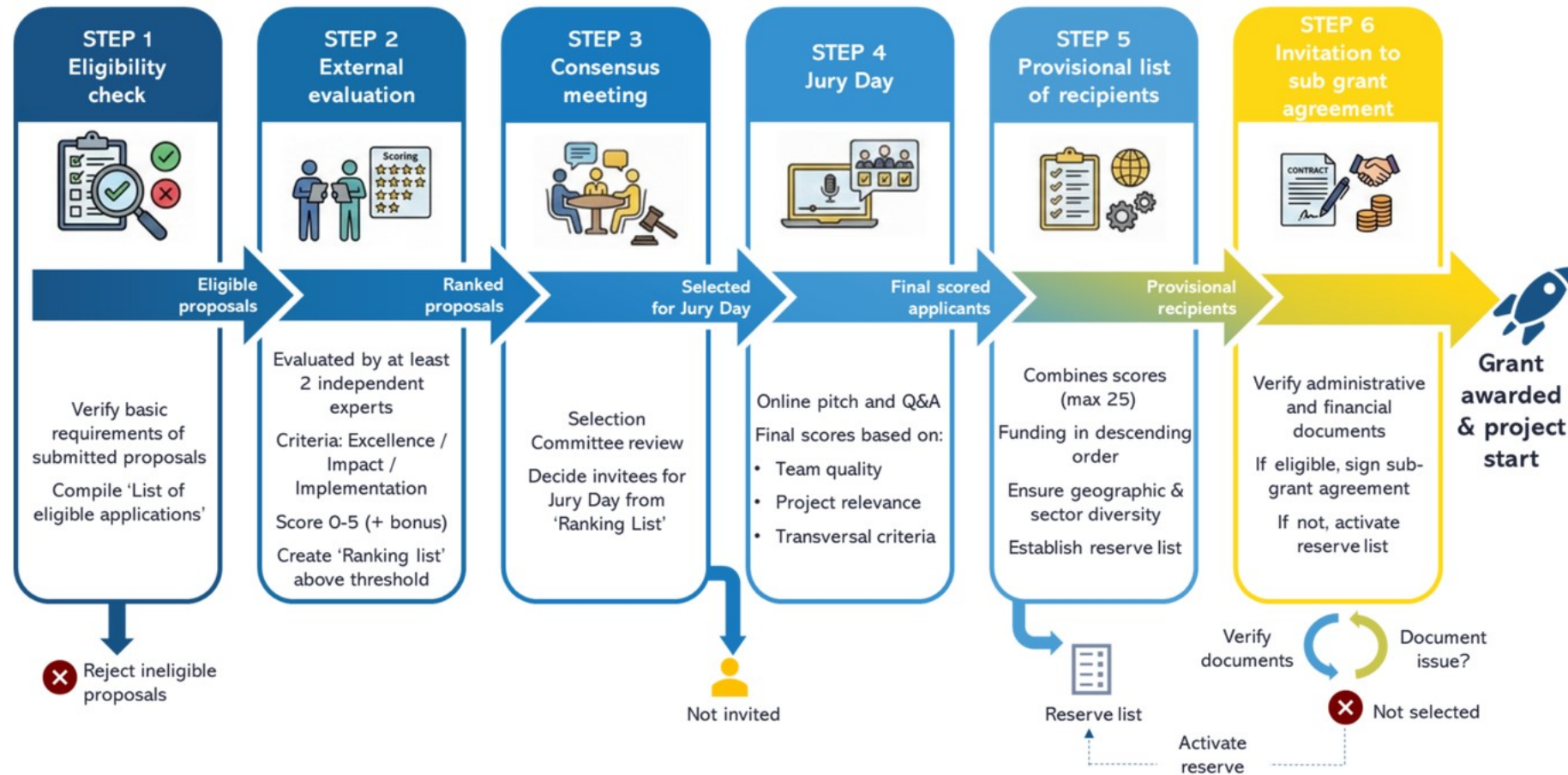
<https://citadel.grantplatform.com/>

- **All applications for CITADEL Open Call 1 must be submitted exclusively via this platform.**
- Applicants are able to:
 - create an account
 - enter all required information using text fields, drop-down menus, or similar input formats
 - upload additional documents in PDF format (results of the self-financial viability check (mandatory for SME); results of the SME self-assessment (mandatory for SME); additional letter of support (optional)).
- **Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the application form with the utmost care and accuracy, as the information provided therein will be binding and, in the event of selection, will form an integral part of the sub-grant agreement.**



II° Evaluation and selection processes

Evaluation and selection processes



First eligibility check



Basic requirements of the proposals which must be:

- complete, readable and in English in all mandatory sections.
- submitted via the online form <https://citadel.grantplatform.com/> within the deadline.
- having a consortium composition complying with the requirements.
- including the properly filled declaration of honour, and attached documents (SME declaration, SME financial viability check).

Proposals that do not meet these criteria will be rejected.

Evaluation criteria and scoring

Each application will be evaluated by at least 2 external and independent experts.
Scores from 0 to 5
Threshold 3/5 on each criteria + 10/15 on the total

EXCELLENCE (. / 5)

IMPACT (. / 5)

IMPLEMENTATION (. / 5)

+ 1 extra bonus point in case the 2 partners are from 2 different countries

External evaluation: Excellence

- ▶ **Soundness and pertinence of objectives** with the scope of the call
- ▶ **Credibility of the technological KPIs** to measure the results
- ▶ **Concreteness of the technical approach**
- ▶ **Coherence of the TRLs**
- ▶ **Innovativeness** of the proposed solution

5 points

External evaluation: Impact

- ▶ **Industrial and market relevance:** alignment of the project with key security challenges, relevance for the security sector including potential for adoption by end-users
- ▶ **Contribution to strengthening competitiveness and innovation capacity** of European companies in the security market
- ▶ **Environmental and societal dimension:**
 - Contribution to the green and digital transition (energy-efficient, sustainable, low-carbon solutions)
 - Positive societal impact, such as enhancing public safety, protecting citizens, or improving urban resilience
 - Attention to ethical, privacy, and social responsibility aspects, particularly for AI, IoT, or surveillance technologies
- ▶ **Quality of the exploitation,** market opportunity, IPR and knowledge protection strategy

5 points

External evaluation: Implementation

- ▶ **Soundness of the workplan**, including relevance of the tasks described, and the timing of the activities
- ▶ **Risk assessment and mitigation strategy**: Identification of technical/operational risks and adequacy of proposed mitigation measures
- ▶ **Appropriateness of the consortium**: evaluate completeness and complementarity, expertise of the team
- ▶ **European dimension** (in terms of transnational dimension of the consortium and exploitation intentions towards European countries)
- ▶ **Cost-effectiveness of the workplan and budget**: quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned to the project in order to get the proposed objectives/deliverables
- ▶ **Operational capacity**

5 points

Evaluation criteria

In **case of ties**, the following criteria will be used to rank the projects, by order:

- 1 Impact score
- 2 Implementation score
- 3 Excellence score
- 4 Priority to projects with partners coming from EU-13 countries
(Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia)

 **Ranking list of projects**  **Up to 24 projects invited to CITADEL Jury Day**

Final step: Jury Day

- ▶ Pre-selected applicants will be invited to an **online** Jury Day that is foreseen on **15 – 16 – 17 June 2026**.
 - ▶ Participation of at least one consortium member from the shortlisted applicants will be mandatory.
 - ▶ **Pitch of the pre-selected projects in front of the CITADEL Jury** composed of the CITADEL Selection Committee Members.
- + Q/A session with the Jury.
- ▶ Final selection based on:

Quality of the team

/ 4 points

Matching with
CITADEL objectives

/ 4 points

Transversal criteria
(environmental impact, low
carbon, equip opp.)

/ 1 point



Final ranking list

(score from external evaluation + score from jury day)



17 projects invited for sub grant agreement preparation

(+ reserve list)

Timeline

17 projects

Open call 1 timeline



Call opening

Publicatio

24 February 2026



Deadline of the CITADEL Call 1

5 May 2026 at 17:00 CEST



Evaluation and Online Jury Day (15-17 June 2026)

Review and scoring of applications by expert evaluators + jury day

5 May – 17 June 2026



Selection

Final decision on projects to be funded

18 June 2026



Granting

Contract signing and prefunding

July - September 2026



Implementation and monitoring

Project tracking, reporting and support

1st October 2026 – 30 June 2027



Closing

Final reporting, impact and final payment

July 2027



III° How to find partners

Tips for applicants: find partners



INFO & MATCHMAKING Session

REGISTER NOW!

Get more information and find European partners to apply for **CITADEL's 1st open call!**

5th March 2026



11.00 - 12.00 CET: Information webinar by CITADEL partners

13.00 - 18.00 CET: B2B meetings



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Info days and matchmaking events organised on 5 March and 7 April 2026

- Create a profile
- Promote your expertise or project idea
- Gain visibility towards other European players
- Schedule meetings
- Meet the right partners to apply for the Open Call 1

Tips for applicants: what you need to know

01

Invest your time to prepare a good application!

02

Make sure your project fits into CITADEL scope of objectives and impact.

03

Check the eligibility requirements first, are you the consortium of 2 partners? Do you have any COI?

04

Read the Guide for Applicants and the included list of identified challenges!

05

Be convincing for evaluators, check the selection criteria.

06

Check the payments procedure and timeline, agree the grant distribution with your partner, and the cofunding rule.

07

Build your consortium and your team and plan your demonstration from the application stage!

08

Address one of the challenges (innovation is key)!

09

Remember about the European and green transition dimensions.



Conclusion and Q&A



Next steps

1. Familiarize with the online application platform at:
<https://citadel.grantplatform.com/>
2. Next Info and Matchmaking session:
7 April 2026
3. Questions, contact: citadel@aktantis.com

How to join the CITADEL Open Call 1

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Deadline: 5 May 2026, 17:00 CEST

Get ready now:

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Informative webinar with Q&A on CITADEL Open Call 1 | in French - en français uniquement

16 mars | 14:00 – 15:00 CET | Online

[Inscription FR](#)

2nd Informative webinar with Q&A on CITADEL Open Call 1 | in English

7 April 2026 | 11:00 – 12:00 CET | Online

[Registration](#)

2nd matchmaking session (B2B)

7 april 2026 | 13:00 – 18:00 CET | Online

[Registration](#)

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- Begin your submission and **save your progress** anytime to continue later.

3 Submit your application

- Complete and submit **before the CITADEL Open Call 1 deadline** to be evaluated.



Contact:
citadel@aktantis.com

Thank you for your attention!



CITADEL Euroclusters project



@EC_CITADEL

Website :

<https://profile.clustercollaboration.eu/profile/cluster-partnership-initiative/78b45df8-516c-4375-bf45-3a571ac2210a>



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