

EPOS ERIC CALL FOR COLLABORATION
(Ref. No 1/2025)

for

Coordination of the ICS-TCS INTERACTION

EPOS ERIC hereby launches a Call for Collaboration (Call) to select a public-interest entity, which, under the supervision and in collaboration with EPOS ERIC, will be responsible for coordinating the interaction between the EPOS Integrated Core Services (ICS) and the Thematic Core Services (TCS).

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1. Collaboration Framework

The entity selected under the Call shall act as the **ICS–TCS Interaction Coordinator**.

The selected entity will be invited to enter into a four-year **Multi-Year Collaboration Agreement (MYCA)** with EPOS ERIC (together, the “Parties”) and will be responsible for coordinating the activities defined in the MYCA in accordance with the EPOS ERIC Implementing Rules (Section 2) and the annual planning and governance procedures of EPOS ERIC.

The MYCA will establish the overall legal, financial, and operational framework governing the collaboration between the Parties and will not, in and of itself, constitute a commitment by EPOS ERIC to fund or carry out any activities beyond those expressly approved in accordance with its applicable annual planning and governance procedures.

Under the MYCA, the Coordinator will: i) ensure ongoing and structured interaction between the Integrated Core Services (ICS) and the Thematic Core Services (TCS); ii) support coordinated planning of service and IT developments by identifying key implementation activities and priorities; iii) organise and coordinate ICS–TCS workshops and meetings as the main forum for planning development activities; iv) supervise the preparation of annual work plans and draft annual activity reports for submission to EPOS ERIC Management; v) participate, where relevant, in meetings of EPOS ERIC Committees and Boards as the interface for ICS–TCS-related matters; iv) ensure that coordination activities align with EPOS's annual IT planning and governance processes.

For each fiscal year covered by the MYCA, the Parties will agree on a specific annual Work Plan, subject to approval by EPOS ERIC. Each annual Work Plan will define the activities to be carried out during the relevant period, the corresponding implementation schedule, the expected outputs, and the related budget allocation. Any such budget allocation will be subject to the availability of funds and to formal approval by EPOS ERIC. No financial or operational obligations will arise unless and until the relevant annual Work Plan has been duly approved. Approval of an annual Work Plan for a given fiscal year will not imply any automatic renewal, financial commitment, or obligation with respect to subsequent fiscal years.

EPOS ERIC reserves the right, in accordance with the MYCA and its applicable governance rules, to amend, suspend, or terminate the collaboration, in whole or in part, including with respect to future Work Plans, subject to the terms and conditions set forth therein.

2. Collaboration Commitments

General Commitments

The selected entity (the “Party”) shall collaborate with EPOS ERIC to ensure the effective and mutually beneficial implementation of the activities set out in the MYCA. The activities to be carried out in each year shall be detailed in an annual Work Plan, which shall specify the necessary efforts and resources required for their proper implementation. The Party shall participate in regular meetings addressing operational, financial, and management matters, as well as at events, conferences, and other related activities, whether held online or in person.

The Work Plan shall be agreed upon no later than 15 November of the preceding year.

The Party shall ensure that all personnel involved in the collaboration, including employees, consultants, and students, comply with EPOS ERIC's applicable policies and procedures, including, without limitation, the EPOS



Data Policy, Digital Assets Management Policy, Code of Conduct, and Gender Equality Plan, when performing activities under the MYCA, accessing EPOS ERIC premises or information systems.

The Party shall be responsible for obtaining and maintaining all regulatory and ethical authorisations required to carry out the tasks set out in the Work Plan and shall conduct all activities in compliance with applicable laws and regulations governing its obligations under the MYCA.

Financial Commitments

EPOS ERIC shall support the collaboration through either grants or in-kind contributions. The specific tasks and type of funding shall be defined in the annual Work Plan, in alignment with the EPOS ERIC Annual Activity Plan and Provisional Budget for the ICS-TCS Interaction Multi-Year Collaboration Agreement.

For each agreed annual Work Plan, EPOS ERIC will allocate to the Party a maximum grant amount of EUR 75,000.00 to cover eligible direct costs (personnel and other direct expenses) and, where applicable, eligible indirect costs (general expenses), up to a maximum of 25% of the eligible direct costs, excluding subcontracting costs. The Party shall provide a financial contribution in the form of an in-kind contribution, classified as indirect costs, up to a maximum of 25% of the eligible direct costs. By way of advance payment, the Party may request pre-financing of up to 35% of the maximum contribution allocated to the tasks under the relevant annual Work Plan. Any financial transactions under the MYCA shall be considered outside the scope of VAT implementation.

Reporting Commitments

For the purpose of assessing and recognising the activities, resources, and costs allocated to the annual Work Plan, and in support of the request for the grant contribution, the Party shall submit to EPOS ERIC an annual activity and financial report, accompanied by an internal certification of the incurred expenses, duly signed by the competent office or authorised authority.

3. Call for Collaboration

Scope

EPOS ERIC hereby launches a Call for Collaboration (the “Call”) to select a public-interest entity, which, under the supervision and in collaboration with EPOS ERIC, will be responsible for coordinating the interaction between the EPOS Integrated Core Services (ICS) and the Thematic Core Services (TCS).

The Call shall identify an organisation with the necessary scientific, organisational, and operational capacity to ensure structured, continuous, and effective coordination of the ICS–TCS interaction, thereby supporting the development, integration, and operation of services within the EPOS Delivery Framework and contributing to the advancement of the EPOS Strategic Objectives and the EPOS Science Program.

The selected organisation shall comply with the highest standards of scientific integrity, operational reliability, and strategic alignment with EPOS ERIC's objectives.

The collaboration between EPOS ERIC and the selected entity is intended to deliver mutual benefits for the Parties and will be formalised through a four-year Multi-Year Collaboration Agreement (MYCA). The MYCA shall set out the terms and conditions, as well as the modalities of cooperation governing the Parties' interactions and ensuring effective coordination of the ICS–TCS relationship.



Notwithstanding the coordination role assigned to the selected entity, overall governance, strategic oversight, and alignment of the ICS–TCS interaction with EPOS ERIC policies, work plans, and decision-making bodies shall remain the sole responsibility of EPOS ERIC.

The selection procedure shall be carried out in accordance with the principles of transparency, fairness, and objectivity.

Eligibility

The Call is open to entities legally established within the European Union which operate in the public interest and are actively engaged in research and innovation activities.

Eligible entities will include, without limitation:

- universities and higher education institutions;
- public research organisations;
- private non-profit research institutions;
- any other legally recognised entity whose statutory mission involves conducting research for the public benefit.

Entities interested in participating in this Call (the “Applicants”) shall demonstrate an outstanding scientific record, employ personnel with appropriate scientific, technical, and managerial expertise, and possess the organisational and technical capacity necessary to perform the tasks described in the annual Work Plan.

Evaluation Criteria

To ensure the selection of a qualified and dependable Party capable of effectively contributing to the objectives of the Collaboration, EPOS ERIC establishes a set of five evaluation criteria (Table 1). All applicants shall submit complete and verifiable documentation demonstrating compliance with the criteria in relation to their scientific, technical, administrative, and managerial capacity to meet the obligations of the Collaboration.

The evaluation criteria, the objectives linked to each criterion, and the mandatory documentation needed for eligibility and application assessment are detailed in Table 1. Only applications that include all mandatory documentation and clearly demonstrate alignment with the objectives shall be eligible for full evaluation and shall proceed to the comprehensive evaluation stage. The completeness, clarity, and relevance of the submitted materials shall directly influence the assessment of each criterion.

All documents listed below shall be prepared on the applicant's letterheaded paper, in free format, at the applicant's discretion.

All applications will be assessed through a transparent, fair, and objective process based on the criteria outlined in Table 1.



Table 1 - Evaluation criteria and concerned documentation

Criterion	Objectives	Documentation
Administrative Capacity	Declaration of Honour	1) Declaration of Honour (see Annexe 1) duly signed by the Legal Representative of the Entity. 2) A document, duly signed by the Legal Representative of the Entity, providing a description of the organisation, its mission, and its primary activities.
Management Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate proven experience in managing and implementing scientific or research-driven projects at national or international level. • Ensure compliance with applicable legal, ethical, and data-management standards. • Ensure adequate organisational structures, internal procedures, and administrative systems for project implementation, financial management, and reporting. • Provide qualified personnel with interdisciplinary skills relevant to the scope of the Collaboration. 	3) A list of projects coordinated or participated by the Applicant demonstrating participation in previous collaborative research programmes. 4) An indicative annual Work Plan aligned with the objectives and activities described in this Call and related budget.
Human Resources and Competence Profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the involvement of at least three personnel with documented scientific and/or managerial competencies. • Demonstrate scientific expertise (research background, domain knowledge, publications, achievements). • Demonstrate managerial competencies (team coordination, project management, administrative oversight, multi-stakeholder experience). 	5) Minimum three CVs meeting the required criteria. 6) A short description of each individual's role and expected contribution to the Collaboration.
Technical and Operational Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate the ability to perform Work Plan activities efficiently and within deadlines. • Provide the necessary technical resources, tools, and infrastructure. 	7) Description of relevant tools and technologies to be used to perform the annual Work Plan tasks.
Strategic Relevance and Added Value	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide innovative and specialised contributions to the Collaboration. 	8) Statement describing strategic added value contributions.

Evaluation Process



Applications fulfilling all admissibility and eligibility criteria shall be assessed by an Evaluation Committee appointed by EPOS ERIC, in accordance with the scoring matrix defined in Table 2.

The final score represents the aggregate of all allocated scores. Applicants who fail to attain the minimum overall threshold of 18 points out of 30 will be excluded from further consideration.

This scoring matrix reflects all administrative, technical, scientific, and managerial requirements outlined in the Party Selection Criteria. Each criterion must be scored according to the specified range.

Table 2 – Scoring Matrix

Criterion	Score Range	Evaluation Description
Administrative Capacity	0–3 0-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal status, organisational structure, administrative systems, prior experience in large-scale projects. Completeness, clarity, internal coherence, correctness of all required documentation. • Compliance with applicable laws, ethical frameworks, data protection, and EPOS ERIC data policies.
Management Capacity	0–3 0-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment with project goals, complementarity, innovation potential, collaboration capacity. • Realism of proposed effort, staffing adequacy, appropriateness of allocated resources.
Human Resources and Competence Profiles	0–6	Personnel relevance and depth of expertise; balance of scientific and managerial competencies.
Technical and Operational Capacity	0–6	Infrastructure, tools, methodologies, operational readiness, processes.
Strategic Relevance and Added Value	0–6	Proved innovative and specialised contributions to the Collaboration.

Scoring Guidance

- 0 = Not compliant / no evidence
- 1 = Very weak
- 2 = Weak
- 3 = Acceptable
- 4 = Good
- 5 = Strong
- 6 = Excellent

Applications and Submission Deadlines

Proposals related to the initiatives outlined in this Call for Collaborations should be submitted by email to the EPOS ERIC Administration at administration@epos-erci.eu, starting from 19 December 2025 until 31 January 2026 at 15:00 (CET). Submissions must strictly follow the requirements, formats, deadlines, and instructions specified in this Call for Collaborations and its supporting documentation. Failure to comply will result in exclusion from the selection process.



Data Protection and GDPR Compliance

All processing of personal data related to this Call for Collaborations, the evaluation and selection process, and any subsequent collaboration must fully comply with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation – GDPR) and all relevant national data protection laws.

Unless explicitly agreed in writing, each Party will act as an independent data controller with respect to personal data processed under this Call and any resulting MYCA. Personal data will be processed solely for essential purposes, including:

- managing and evaluating applications;
- concluding, implementing, monitoring, and reporting on the collaboration;
- ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory, and audit requirements.

Each Party will implement appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure a security level suitable for the risk involved and will limit access to personal data to authorised personnel only.

Privacy Statement

Personal data provided by applicants in this Call will be processed solely for managing the selection process and, where applicable, overseeing any subsequent collaboration. Data subjects may exercise their rights under the GDPR, including access, rectification, restriction of processing, and erasure, subject to applicable legal retention requirements. Personal data will be retained only for as long as necessary to achieve the purposes for which it was collected and to comply with legal obligations. Additional information on EPOS ERIC's data protection practices will be available through its official privacy notices.

Confidentiality

All documents, information, and data exchanged during the Call, the evaluation process, and any subsequent collaboration will be considered confidential unless: they are already lawfully in the public domain; or disclosure is mandated by applicable law, regulation, or a binding decision of a competent authority. Confidential information must not be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent from the originating entity. This confidentiality obligation will remain in effect even after the collaboration ends or expires, for a period specified in the MYCA.

Intellectual Property Rights

Intellectual Property Rights, including ownership, access rights, and conditions for use or exploitation of results and background, will be governed solely by the provisions of the MYCA.

Conflict of Interest

Applicants must disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest that could affect the impartiality or independence of the selection process or collaboration. EPOS ERIC reserves the right to require mitigation measures, exclude a participant or applicant from the process, or terminate the collaboration if a conflict of interest is identified and cannot be satisfactorily resolved.

Liability

Each applicant will be solely responsible for any damage caused by its own acts or omissions in fulfilling its obligations. Neither Party will be liable for indirect, incidental, or consequential damages, including loss of



profit or revenue, except in cases of willful misconduct or gross negligence, to the extent permitted by applicable law.

Force Majeure

Neither applicant will be considered in breach of its obligations if performance is prevented or delayed by force majeure events, including, but not limited to, natural disasters, acts of government, strikes, or other events beyond reasonable control. The affected applicant will promptly notify EPOS ERIC of the occurrence and expected duration of such event and will use reasonable efforts to mitigate its effects.

Amendments to the Call

EPOS ERIC reserves the right to amend, clarify, or update this Call for Collaborations at any time before the submission deadline. Any amendment will be published transparently and will be binding on all applicants. No applicant may claim compensation or damages resulting from such amendments.

Dispute Resolution

Any dispute arising out of or in connection with this Call for Collaborations or any ensuing agreement will, initially, be resolved through good-faith negotiations between the Parties. If no mutual agreement is reached within a reasonable timeframe, the dispute will be referred to the competent jurisdiction as specified in the MYCA.

Applicable Law

This Call for Collaborations and any related agreements will be governed by and interpreted in accordance with European Union law, supplemented, where applicable, by the national law governing EPOS ERIC.

Language

The working and legally binding language of this Call for Collaborations and any related documents will be English. In the event of discrepancies between language versions, the English version will prevail.

Information

Please direct all questions and information regarding the Call to Diana Piras (diana.piras@epos-eric.eu), the Chief of the EPOS ERIC Administrative Unit.

