

Clarification Note #1

EUSPA internal reference – WFID: 320937

CASSINI Challenges Prize Contest

Questions submitted during the CASSINI Challenges Information Webinar held on 29 January at 16:00 via Teams.

Question #1: Are the info webinars recorded?

Answer #1: No, the webinars are not recorded, but the presentation slides and the questions and answers from the webinar are all published on the CASSINI Challenges website in the form of Clarification Notes.

Question #2: What is the reason of having changed the format this year, i.e. one single track vs. three different tracks in the previous year's CASSINI Challenges edition?

Answer #2: Based on participant feedback and past applications, it was decided to focus this year's CASSINI Challenges edition on the MVP solution stage.

Question #3: Is the award ceremony's date in Prague known with a bit more detail?

Answer #3: The date of the award ceremony in 2026 is still being determined. Please note that the June period provided in the Rules of Contest is indicative. Participants are recommended to monitor the EUSPA and CASSINI websites for updates.

Question #4: Can I apply with two solutions?

Answer #4: Yes. The Rules of Contest do not limit the number of MVPs participants can submit.

Question #5: Will the slides from the webinars be published?

Answer #5: Yes, the slides will be published on the EUSPA website after the webinar.

Question #6: Can an applicant established in or from Zimbabwe, apply?

Answer #6: Please refer to [Section 2.4 of the Rules of Contest](#) for information on eligibility. Case-by-case assessments of eligibility cannot be provided.

Question #7: In cases where earlier public funding supported preparatory work or individual components that enabled the submitted MVP, would this be considered double funding, or only if the same final deliverable, the complete MVP, was previously funded?

Answer #7: Please note that Section 2.5 (“Exclusion and Rejection Criteria”) of the Rules of Contest provides that the contest is not open to beneficiaries of other European Union funding for the same action and not all public funding. In light of this, and according to Section 2.7 (“Content of the Applications and Evaluation Process”) applicants shall Indicate whether they have received any previous EU funding related to the proposed MVP and, in case, clearly and soundly justify how the submitted MVP differs from the previously funded solution to avoid double funding.

Question #8: How relevant is the video in the evaluation process?

Answer #8: The video complements the application form. Scores are awarded as per the Award criteria for the content of the video and the application form.

Question #9: Are some examples of previous funded projects available online?

Answer #9: Information regarding winners of previous contests is provided on the [CASSINI Challenges website](#).

Question #10: Are the Challenges focused only on using data generated by missions like Galileo, Copernicus, etc. or could solutions also build on their design processes to support the design of new missions?

Answer #10: Please refer to Section 2.2 of the Rules of Contest stating the objectives of the competition as well as Section 2.9 specifying the Award Criteria.

Question #11: Is the contest suitable only for downstream solutions or can applicants apply with upstream solutions as well?

Answer #11: Applicants with upstream as well as downstream solutions are welcome to participate in the contest subject to the terms and conditions defined in the Rules of Contest.

Question #12: Can you participate if you already won CASSINI Challenges in the past?

Answer #12: Yes, provided that the solution and applicant meet the eligibility criteria and do not fall under the exclusion and rejection criteria defined in the Rules of Contest.

Question #13: What counts exactly for EU funding? Funding directly from EU institutions or also other public sector or similar inside the EU?

Answer #13: EU funding refers to funds coming from the EU budget.

Question #14: Could you please clarify whether the concept of “leveraging EU space assets, data, or services” refers exclusively to the use of data and downstream services, or whether MVPs that primarily address satellite infrastructure (upstream)—for example, simulation tools assessing radiation exposure and its impact on satellite components—could also be considered eligible?

Answer #14: It is up to the applicant to demonstrate how their proposed solution solves the identified challenge and meets the objectives of the contest. Please also refer to Answer #11.

Question #15: Are dual-use technologies eligible to be selected as winners? If an MVP is dual-use, does it affect in any way the evaluation process / impact the award criteria (positively or negatively)? Should an applicant highlight the dual use nature of their MVP in detailing the use cases, LOIs, financial runway and in general all aspects of the "Market" section of the application?

Answer #15: The eligibility and quality of each application is assessed based on the criteria specified in the Rule of Contest. Each application shall identify a commercial, social or environmental challenge the MVP is solving.

Question #16: Regarding the prevention of double funding, if we have other EU-funded applications pending, and if we get selected for those, would our application be immediately disqualified by CASSINI Challenges, or it would be treated case by case to see there's no double funding in terms of project scale, region, etc.?

Answer #16: Please refer to Section 2.5 and 2.7 of the Rules of Contest and provide detailed information to allow a thorough assessment of the case by the Agency.

Question #17: I am 17 years old and I am the leader of my team and the main engineering, is my age a problem?

Answer #17: As stated in Section 2.4 of the Rules of Contest, natural persons applying for the contest must be at least of 18 years of age by the date of submission of the application. Participants may submit their application as individual persons (both natural or legal) or as a team of persons (both natural or legal).

Question #18: Is there any limitation in the size of the company to apply? Can Freelancers apply? Is there a limitation in the date of the company creation? Can two new SMEs or freelancers apply jointly?

Answer #18: The Rules of Contest do not specify limitations as to the company size. Participants may submit their application as individual persons (both natural or legal) or as a team of persons (both natural or legal). Please see Section 2.4 of the Rules of Contest for the Eligibility criteria.

Question #19: Regarding the €100,000 prize, what types of expenses are eligible, and is any financial justification required, or is it awarded as a lump sum?

Answer #19: The Cassini Challenges 2026 is a Prize Contest. According to the Financial Regulation a prize is a contribution given as a reward following a contest, there are no eligible costs, and no financial justification is required.

Question #20: If the TRL of technology is 6, would you advise to apply for CASSINI Business Accelerator?

Answer #20: Please visit the [CASSINI Business Accelerator](#) website for details on this.

Question #21: How is the contest open to upstream solutions when it requires relatively high TRL and CRL levels?

Answer #21: The prize is targeting functional MVPs with proven commercial potential. Based on entries in the previous editions of the competition and existing in the market, this encompasses upstream solutions.

Question #22: If the large part of technology development was funded by ESA, are we eligible to apply?

Answer #22: Please refer to the requirement under Section 2.5 of the Rules of Contest: beneficiaries of other European Union funding for the same action are to be excluded.

Question #23: Are the CASSINI Challenges 2026 focused only on using data generated by missions like Galileo, Copernicus, etc. or can we have our own missions?

Answer #23: Please refer to Section 2.2 of the Rules of Contest and Answer #21.

Question #24: I am Indian student studying for a Master's degree in Europe. Am I eligible?

Answer #24: Please see Answer #6.

Question #25: Is ESA Bass considered EU funded or not?

Answer #25: Please refer to the requirement under Section 2.5 of the Rules of Contest: beneficiaries of other European Union funding for the same action are to be excluded.

Question #26: Why is SSA mentioned separately from SST? Isn't EU SST the only component of the EU Space Programme tied to SSA?

Answer #26: Within the legal framework of the EU Space Programme (Regulation 2021/696), SSA and SST are mentioned separately because they represent two different levels of the program's structure: SSA is the umbrella component of the EU Space Programme, while SST is one of its three sub-components. EU SST is singled out in the Rules of Contest because of EUSPA's unique role in the operation of the EU SST Front Desk.

Question #27: To what extent are AI Tools allowed for the preparation of the content?

Answer #27: Please refer to the Rules of Contest for the terms and conditions for the submission of applications under the Contest.

Question #28: Is there an overview of funding programmes which are not allowed due to the double-funding exclusion rule, i.e. subsidized national projects?

Answer #28: Please refer to the requirement under Section 2.5 of the Rules of Contest: beneficiaries of other European Union funding for the same action are to be excluded.

Question #29: Do you provide technical or IP support during the preparation of the application?

Answer #29: No such support is provided to applicants.

Question #30: How are IP inputs and outputs regulated?

Answer #30: Please see Section 2.10 of the Rules of Contest.

Questions submitted to the prizes@euspa.europa.eu mailbox

Question #31: Is the contest open to mid-sized companies?

Answer #31: Please see Answer #25.

Question #32: Can an entity which is not yet incorporated in the EU be eligible for the CASSINI Challenges 2026 with the intent that if granted funding, a new company will be incorporated in the EU?

Answer #32: Eligibility conditions are set under Section 2.4 of the Rules of Contest. The assessment of the eligibility is based on the information provided in the application at the time of submission of the application.

Question #33: Is the UK among the eligible countries to participate in the competition?

Answer #33: Please refer to the Eligibility conditions set under Section 2.4 of the Rules of Contest.

Question #34: While preparing my application for the Cassini Challenges, I have noticed in the "Market" section that we can only upload a single file for the signed LOIs, while multiple files are expected.

Answer #34: Please merge the files into a single file.

Question #35: Is participation in an ongoing EUSPA PCP project, where the applicant acts as a supplier under a procurement contract, compatible with submitting a CASSINI Challenges application? Is the assessment of double funding risk based on EU funding received directly by the applicant at submission time, or also considers conditional future phases of PCP contracts?

Answer #35: The requirement under Section 2.5 of the Rules of Contest is clear, beneficiaries of other European Union funding for the same action are to be excluded (any EU funding received for the same action). Furthermore, according to Section 2.7 of the Rules of Contest, applicants shall Indicate whether they have received any previous EU funding related to the proposed MVP and, in case, clearly and soundly justify how the submitted MVP differs from the previously funded solution to avoid double funding.

Question #36: Our company is incubated within the ESA Business Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) program. As point 2.5(c) of the Rules of Contest states that employees of ESA and ESA contractors are not eligible to participate in the competition, are ESA BIC–incubated startups are considered independent private entities and therefore eligible to apply, provided they do not hold ESA contracts?

Answer #36: Please refer to Section 2.5 (“Exclusion and Rejection Criteria”) point c) of the Rules of Contest.