

EDIP in Motion, AGILE Ahead

The EU's evolving defence-industry funding landscape

02 April 2026

With the European Commission launching its first calls for proposals under the European Defence Industry Programme (*EDIP*) almost in parallel with the introduction of *AGILE*, its new programme for Agile and Rapid Defence Innovation, the EU is taking the next steps in expanding its defence-industrial toolkit. Time to give a quick overview of what these instruments are and how they fit into existing EU programs.

EDIP and *AGILE* sit alongside and build upon an ecosystem of earlier EU measures. Long-standing frameworks such as the European Defence Fund (*EDF*) and major financing instruments like 'Security Action for Europe' (*SAFE*) have already begun shifting the EU from a primarily research-oriented approach towards more coordinated defence procurement and industrial reinforcement.

Within this ecosystem, *EDIP* is set to serve as the industrial backbone of the EU defence policy for the period 2025-2027. *AGILE*, once adopted by the European Parliament and the European Council and entered into force, will become the EU's primary mechanism for accelerating disruptive technologies into operational use.

How *EDIP* and *AGILE* fit into existing EU programs

EDIP: A successor to *ASAP*/*EDIRPA* and industrial counterpart to *EDF*

EDIP extends and consolidates the logic of earlier short-term crisis instruments, such as the Act in Support of Ammunition Production (*ASAP*) and the Instrument for the European defence industry reinforcement through common procurement (*EDIRPA*). Whereas *ASAP* and *EDIRPA* address immediate shortages, notably by supporting the industrial ramp-up of ammunition production and enabling urgent joint procurement, *EDIP* provides a structured, multi-year framework to strengthen production capacity, build resilient supply chains, and facilitate coordinated procurement beyond emergency contexts. *EDIP* complements the *EDF*, which remains the EU's flagship instrument for research and early-stage capability development, with €7.3 billion available for 2021-2027, and represents the 'next step' by focusing on industrial reinforcement, production, and procurement - once *EDF*-funded technology reaches maturity.

A key feature of *EDIP* is the introduction of Structures for European Armament Programmes (*SEAPs*). These provide a dedicated legal framework for cross-border arma-

ment cooperation, building on existing multinational formats, including under the Permanent Structured Cooperation (*PESCO*), while embedding such cooperation more firmly within the EU framework and linking it to enhanced funding incentives.

AGILE: A new fast-track instrument to complement EDIP

AGILE introduces a new element into the EU's defence funding landscape: speed. As a €115 million pilot instrument, it is designed to bridge the gap between research under the EDF and deployment under EDIP and it aims to significantly shorten innovation cycles for disruptive technologies. Grant decisions are expected within approximately four months, with supported technologies intended to reach operational use within one to three years. Focusing on areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and autonomous systems, AGILE places particular emphasis on SMEs, start-ups and scale-ups. AGILE is expected to become operational in early 2027.

EDIP Work Programme 2026-2027: what it provides

The 2026-2027 EDIP Work Programme organises its €1.5 billion budget around two major pillars: the core programme for EU industrial strengthening ('the Programme') and a dedicated envelope for cooperation with Ukraine ('the Ukraine Support Instrument'). The first round of calls for proposals has been available on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal since 31 March 2026.

How companies can engage with EDIP and AGILE

For industry stakeholders, early positioning within the evolving EU framework will be critical. In particular, companies should:

- clarify strategic positioning in the EU architecture;
- engage early with national authorities and European partners;
- consider participation in SEAP-based multinational procurement; and
- prepare for AGILE's fast-track, innovation-driven funding model.

Conclusion

EDIP and AGILE further strengthen the EU's defence-industrial policy architecture. EDIP extends and consolidates earlier procurement and industrial-readiness efforts, while AGILE redefines how fast defence innovation can be brought to the market.

BLOMSTEIN will closely monitor further developments and keep you informed. If you have questions on the EU's Defence Programs, Christopher Wolters, Elisa Steinhöfel and the entire team is ready to assist.

BLOMSTEIN | We provide legal support to our international client base on competition, international trade, public procurement, state aid and ESG in Germany, Europe, and – through our global network – worldwide.