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1. What has been the motivation behind the foundation of the ESA BICs?

The goal is to support start-ups and entrepreneurs to transfer space technology into non-space sectors or to better use existing space infrastructure and data. Alternatively start-ups and entrepreneur can use technologies from earth for an application related to space.

2. What is different about ESA BIC Switzerland in comparison to the other ESA BICs in Europe?

- You can receive up to 200k Euro grants from ESA
- We have a very broad industry and research network of partners that you can benefit from. <http://esabic.ch/partners/>
- Last, with ESA BIC Switzerland you are not bound to one location; it is a nationwide program and therefore a virtual incubator.

3. Who is the contact person in charge of ESA BIC Switzerland?

The ESA BIC team, from ETH Zurich, is responsible to set up and manage ESA BIC Switzerland. Please address any questions related to this program to startups@esabic.ch.

4. Who is involved in ESA BIC Switzerland?

Besides ETH Zurich, the key operational partners are: venturelab/Venture Kick for start-up support, Impact Hub Zurich for community building (and location, if you want) and AP-Swiss. In addition to that we managed to involve 50+ renowned industry and research partners on board, from Switzerland and abroad. ETH Zurich has the overall lead.

5. How can the network of partners/corporates/research etc. be used?

In various ways:

- venturelab/VentureKick: will be the main provider of start-up business support, be it through VentureKick itself or other programs/means.
- ImpactHub: will do pro-active community building amongst ESA BIC start-ups (and other industrial/research partners) such as to provide opportunities to meet partners and potentially use them for technical or business support, as customers, etc.
- AP Swiss: if satellite technology and data are important to you, AP-Swiss is a great source of expertise, ideas, and contacts.
- All other research & industrial partners: the ESA BIS Switzerland team and your mentor will facilitate access to these companies or universities. Companies can be a technical expert for you, could be your development partner, could be your future customer, could provide contact to a certain potential partner/customer. The opportunities are plentiful!

6. How many start-up companies are supported?

ESA BIC Switzerland has the capacity to support up to 10 (new) companies every year.

7. How long is the incubation period?

The incubation period can last up to two years.

8. What support can I expect from the ESA BIC Switzerland program?

Financial, technical and business support, and great contacts, from our extensive Swiss and international network.

9. What does the financial support consist of?

The financial support can go up to 500k Euro: 200k Euro come from ESA and 300k have to come as matching funds from third party sources.

- The first tranche consists of 50k Euro, and has two milestones attached to it. 25k come from ESA as grant. The grant has to be matched with 25k from third party sources such as equity or grants.
- The second tranche consists of 450k Euro, and has four milestones attached to it: 175k Euro come from ESA as grant. The grant has to be matched with 175k from third party sources such as equity, (convertible) loans or grants. We and our investor network will support in finding the matching funds if needed.

10. What does the technical support consist of?

You can receive up to 80 hours of technical support during the program. The support our technical partners provide includes manpower/expertise/consulting, test facilities, special equipment, etc. Most of it will be for free with the exception of usage/tests on very expensive facilities, e.g. of PSI.

11. What is my additional benefit if I already participate in VentureKick?

Additional financing, extensive and free-of-charge technical support, network of attractive industry partners, in Switzerland and abroad, access to ESA BIC network and partners in Europe (e.g. for market entry, alternative production location).

12. What if I already participated in VentureKick and did only get to Stage2?

If you fulfill all the criteria (e.g. not older than 5 years, space connection, etc.), you can apply. You will not enter the VentureKick program anymore, but will be supported by a customized program, to your specific situation/needs, e.g. and go to specific training, get specific business coaching, etc.

In terms of financing: if needed, we will help to raise the matching 25k Euro, and if you get further to the Incubation Boost phase, also with raising the additional 275k Euro (such that you are eligible for 25k and 175k Euro grants by ESA).

13. How long does it take to become an incubatee at ESA BIC Switzerland?

The evaluation process takes about two months from the application deadline to the start of your incubation.

14. What criteria do the applicants have to fulfil?

The key criteria are:

- Start-up not older than 5 years
- Some clear connection to some space technology/know how/patent
- Willingness to register your company in Switzerland, before entering the program / signing the contract
- Willingness to develop and scale your business, minimum in Europe (ESA is a European organization ;-)

15. Is there an application template for ESA BIC Switzerland?

Yes, you find all relevant information regarding the application on our website <http://esabic.ch/application/>. You have to register through the *apply here* button and we will send you all the templates.

16. Are there any deadlines on applying?

This is a permanent Open Call, but some deadlines apply: there are 2 jury sessions per year and your proposal, once submitted, will be included in the next Jury session due. See our website www.esabic.ch for Jury session dates.

17. How can I have my idea evaluated?

- Fill out the 2-pager form.
- You will receive a pre-evaluation within 2 weeks.
- If you get a positive feedback from us, please fill out the full application proposal template
- Submit your proposal before the next deadline.
- We will then check whether your idea meets the formal requirements (do not miss out on formal aspects with ESA! The cover letter and all the details required there are essential...).
- If it does, you can be asked to present your company at an evaluation meeting
- Your proposal will then be accepted or rejected.

During all of this, the ESA BIC Switzerland team is at your disposal should you have any questions, doubts or need help

18. Is there a jury to which I/we can present our start-up and proposal?

Yes. The jury consists of representatives of ESA, the Swiss Space Office, ETH Zurich, venturelab/VentureKick, and industry representatives and occasionally possibly investors.

Those applying start-ups which fulfill all of ESA's formal requirements and demonstrate their "space connection" well, move on to the jury session. There, every start-up presents approx. for 20min and has 20min Q&A with the jury. After this a decision is taken, and communicated within a few weeks.

19. If I am not sure if my business/start-up is in scope or out of scope, whom should I contact?

Please write your question to startups@esabic.ch and we will swiftly answer.

20. Do I need to have a registered company to apply to ESA BIC Switzerland?

No, you do not need to register your company before the evaluation meeting. You will, however, need to do so in Switzerland before signing the incubation contract

21. Can I only join the Incentive Phase or directly the Incubation Boost phase?

No. One has to pass through the Incentive Phase first, before being eligible for the Incubation Boost phase. In other words: the Incentive Scheme is the "entry ticket" for the Incubation Boost.

22. Can you state some reasons why applying start-ups do not get selected? In other words: what is important to ESA with regards to applying start-ups?

- First of all: you have to have the formalities complete and correct, that ESA requires, as an organization funded by several states (example: you need to sign your application). These are more demanding than for other application procedures, and we are happy to help you there!
- Lately, ESA becomes more demanding and clearer on the “space connection” that a start-up has to clearly portray in their application. Also on this, if you have doubts, contact us early and we are happy to discuss with you whether your space connection is strong enough.
- ESA wants to see ambitious entrepreneurs/start-ups. If your interest is to stay a 1-2 person, small start-up focused on the Swiss market only, this program might not be for you. ESA wants to see ambitions for international expansion, at least on some European scale.
- A business case building on ESA/ESA missions being the only customer would be considered very weak and might be a reason for not being selected.
- A spin-off of a larger company, where the larger company still holds 50% or more is not eligible.

23. Can I re-apply in case my first application has been rejected?

Yes. In fact we usually encourage you to re-apply actively if you have the potential to become an ESA BIC CH start-up in the future.

24. What are the evaluation criteria?

The evaluation criteria are the following: Formal Aspects, Background & Experience, Business Case, Technology, Activity Proposal. More detail will be available in the support documentation of the Open Call.

25. When does the funding under the co-funding scheme have to take place?

There is no real limitation in case of timing. However, the funding has to take place after you applied for ESA BIC CH.

26. Can the ESA BIC funding be combined with other ESA funding programs e.g. ARTES?

Yes. ESA BIC generally focuses on start-ups/start-up projects, ARTES much more on products. Restrictions might apply to additional ESA funding in relation to turnover.

27. Are there limitation on how I can use the granted funding?

Yes. The funding has to be used for projects or concrete strategic goals. Using the grants for personnel cost only is not accepted. More detail on this you will find in the Open Call documents.

28. Does a start-up have to stay the full two years in the program?

No. If you achieve to fund your start-up earlier we are happy to release you “back into the wild”.

29. Has a second proposal to be written to enter Phase 2 of ESA BIC?

To enter phase 2 you have to achieve certain milestones. Writing an amended proposal will most probably be one of these milestones. However, you won't have to enter a full second application.

30. Can technology from the US be used in ESA BIC start-ups?

There are no specific limitations from ESA regarding US technologies, however please consider that your business and business case could be negatively impacted in case export restrictions (ITAR) apply to this technology.

31. What is the role of AP-Swiss?

AP-Swiss supports ESA BIC CH with its strong network in the space industry. It will also help sourcing and selecting eligible start-ups. Beyond the scope of start-ups, AP-Swiss supports Swiss companies and organisations with identifying attractive, space-based business opportunities in the context of ESA programmes and initiatives.

32. How much time do I have to register the company?

If your company is not already registered in Switzerland you will have approx. 5 weeks in between being selected for ESA BIC CH and signing the incubation contract with ESA BIC CH.

33. Does ESA take any equity in my company?

No, ESA does not take any equity in your company.