

Date: 25 March, 2026

Topic: AGILE

[Commission presents €115 million Programme for agile and rapid defence innovation \(AGILE\)](#)

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- Scope: **accelerate disruptive defence technologies** from lab to real-world deployment
- Target beneficiaries: **SMEs, start-ups, and scale-ups** (“New Defence players”); designed for **fast-moving tech innovators**.
- **Time-to-grant: ~4 months** (very fast for EU funding).
- **Deployment timeline: 1–3 years** to reach defence forces.
- Supports **20–30 projects**. Provides **up to 100% funding of eligible costs**.
- Includes a **retroactive funding clause** (covers costs up to 3 months before application deadline).
- Activities supported: **mission-driven development of disruptive defence technologies**; market delivery, helping solutions reach real defence users.

[EU to pilot €120M fast-paced disruptive defence innovation scheme](#)

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The Agile scheme will aim to boost start-up access to finance as the EU revamps defence R&D support in lead up to the next EU budget.

- Grants could be awarded **within ~4 months**. Technologies could reach the market in **around 1 year**
- Agile will **fund single start-ups directly**
- Target disruptive technologies (shift toward **dual-use and fast-evolving battlefield tech**)
- The scheme is designed to make the EU more responsive to **rapid tech development cycles**. It acknowledges that **small, agile players are increasingly central** to defence innovation.
- Agile complements existing instruments like the **EU Defence Innovation Scheme (EUDIS)**, which already aims to support SMEs and start-ups and help them scale and enter defence markets

The EU is shifting from slow, consortium-heavy R&D funding → fast, start-up-driven innovation support. Agile is a test case for a more flexible, venture-style approach to defence innovation in Europe.