



Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)

Call for proposals

AI Continent
(DIGITAL-2025-AI-08)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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O. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU action grants in the field of AI under the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL).

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2024/2509 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))¹
- the basic act (Digital Europe Regulation [2021/694](#))².

The call is launched in accordance with the 2025 - 2027 Work Programme³ and will be managed by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT).

The call covers the following topics:

- DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR - Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies
- DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT - Data Spaces Support Centre
- DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data
- DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD - Multi-Country project in Agri-Food
- DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations

Each project application under the call must address only one of these topics. Applicants wishing to apply for more than one topic, must submit a separate proposal under each topic.

Topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI is an EU Synergies call. Grants may be linked with another grant funded from any other EU funding programme⁴ (with the exception of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) which is not eligible). The grants under both calls will be managed as linked actions.

We invite you to read the call documentation carefully, and in particular this Call document, the Model Grant Agreement, the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, outcomes and deliverables, KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables, targeted stakeholders, type of action and funding rate and specific topic conditions (sections 1 and 2)

¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) ('EU Financial Regulation') (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024).

² Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme (OJ L 166, 11.5.2021, p. 1).

³ Commission Implementing Decision C/2025/1839 final of 28 March concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2025 - 2027 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Digital Europe Programme.

- timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
- admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
- criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
- evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
- award criteria (section 9)
- legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
- how to submit an application (section 11).
- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (**'Portal'**)
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application.
- the [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the [EU Funding & Tender Portal](#) to consult the list of projects funded previously.

1. Background

The Specific Objective 2 of the Digital Europe Programme aims to reinforce the EU's core Artificial Intelligence (AI) capacities as a crucial driver for the digital transformation of the public and private sectors.

The vision is to make Europe an AI continent, thriving on the development, integration and adoption of AI. As one of the financial instruments of the upcoming Apply AI Strategy, SO2 will support the development of world class AI models in the EU and **foster the integration of AI technologies into EU's most strategic sectors, including healthcare, energy and research.** It will stimulate new industrial uses of AI and improve the delivery of various public services.

A particular focus is placed also in the uptake of generative AI in the public administration through large scale pilots.

This call for proposals supports the deployment of Common European Data Spaces and related data-sharing initiatives, as well as the further development of a network of stakeholders to enhance data access and availability for innovative AI-based applications, services and other data-driven innovations.

In addition, it will support the deployment of new digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data, and the support of the Secretariat for the Alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies. The Alliance aims to identify gaps in the production and development of microchips and the technology developments needed for companies and organisations to thrive in a more and more competitive world where AI technologies are gaining importance.

It will also support the concept of Multi Country Projects (MCPs), which has been introduced under Decision (EU) 2022/2481 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030. **MCPs are necessary for the Union's digital transformation in critical areas**; such as the *European common data infrastructure and services* area of activity.

2. Objectives — Scope — Outcomes and deliverables — KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables — Targeted stakeholders — Type of action and funding rate — Specific topic conditions

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR — Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies

Objectives

This action is to support the activities of the Industrial Alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies⁴. The purpose of the Alliance is to gather relevant stakeholders, including industry, Member States representatives and other experts, **from across Europe in view of strengthening Europe's capacities in** the design and manufacturing of advanced processors and other electronic components. The Alliance aims to identify gaps in the production and development of microchips and the technology developments needed for companies and organisations to thrive, no matter **their size. This will help the competitiveness of companies, increase Europe's digital** sovereignty and address the demand for the next generation of secure, energy-efficient, powerful chips and processors.

Scope

The Secretariat shall support the day-to-day work of the members of the Alliance in carrying out the main tasks of the Alliance. These include the identification of critical gaps in the semiconductor value chain and the development of targets and roadmaps for a number of working groups. In addition to representatives from industry, RTOs, and academia, Member States' delegates are invited to participate in the work of the Alliance in relevant working groups. This action consists in providing the following support services to the Alliance:

- Organisation and administrative support of relevant thematic working groups, and their follow up, in view of ensuring progress towards and delivering on the **Alliance's milestones, in close collaboration with the Chair/Vice-Chairs**;
- Supporting communication and exchanges between the European Commission, Alliance members and all other stakeholders with an interest in the fields of work of the Alliance;
- **Disseminating the Alliance's work**;
- **Creating and maintaining the Alliance's website**, a digital collaboration platform, and creating day-to-day content to inform the broader audience about the **Alliance's activities**
- Supporting providing advice and guidance to the European Semiconductor Board, when requested;
- Expand and ensure a representative Alliance community by promoting the Alliance towards relevant stakeholders that meet the eligibility criteria;
- Support the **on-boarding of new members in the Alliance's work**.

⁴ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/alliance-processors-and-semiconductor-technologies>

- Organise physical meetings for the General Assembly at least once per year.
- Organise Stakeholder Forums in close coordination with the European Commission and the Steering committee of the Alliance.

Outcomes and deliverables

The Secretariat of the European Alliance will support the European Commission in making the Alliance a sustainable stakeholder platform that will deliver on the following outcomes:

- The development and promotion of strategic roadmaps and action plans for the objectives and deliverables as established within the thematic Working Groups of the Alliance, in coordination with the members of the Alliance and the European Commission;
- The identification of the needs of end-users for the next decade;
- **Creation and maintenance of the Alliance’s website, a digital collaboration platform and day-to-day content creation to inform the broader audience about the Alliance’s activities;**
- Preparation and organisation of the annual General Assembly and Forum, and follow-up with all members of the Alliance, in close coordination with the European Commission and the Steering committee of the Alliance;
- The support of upskilling and reskilling opportunities for workers and students.

The Secretariat should offer a platform of support services to Alliance members and working groups.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Number of Alliance members engaged and active in the network and contributing in the thematic working groups as well as attending the General Assembly, and their satisfaction level as measured by surveys;
- Number of Member states covered by the Alliance;
- Number of alliance members engaging in strategic activities in relation to the objectives of the Alliance;

Targeted stakeholders

The consortium should be representative of the European processor and semiconductor technology value chain and of the technology priorities of the Alliance, including end-user companies, associations and research and technology organisations. It should be representative of the types of stakeholders that are eligible to the Alliance (as set out in paragraph 5 of the Terms of Reference) and comply with the security assurance, EU data protection, trade secrets and IP protection legislation as set out in the Membership Eligibility Criteria of the Alliance⁴.

Type of action and funding rate

Coordination and Support Actions — 100% funding rate



For more information on Digital Europe types of action, see *Annex 1*.

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, restrictions for the protection of European digital infrastructures, communication and information systems, and related supply chains apply (*see section 6 and section 10*)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS— SUPPORT – Data Spaces Support Centre

Objectives

The objective is to maintain the Data Spaces Support Centre (DSSC), ensuring it continues to coordinate all relevant actions on Common European Data Spaces, while placing a stronger focus on deployment. This involves transitioning from the initial design phase to full implementation and ensure that data spaces deploy in a coherent way, are interoperable and benefit from economies of scale through the adoption of common practices, standardised components (**referred to as 'building blocks'**), protocols and tools (e.g., software implementations or services that effectively support these building blocks). The aim is to build upon the existing efforts and actively engage and fully support the deployment, proper functioning, and interconnection of Common European Data Spaces, as well as of other data-sharing initiatives organised outside the Digital Europe Programme. This will boost secure and trusted data sharing and reuse within and across sectors, benefiting both the public sector and European businesses, particularly SMEs.

Additionally, the DSSC will continue supporting the work of the European Data Innovation Board (EDIB) e.g., by identifying cross-sector standards for data use and sharing, by conducting comparative analyses across sectors, and by highlighting best practices related to security and access to data, all while considering sector-specific standardization efforts. In order to ensure alignment with sectoral initiatives, the DSSC will work in close cooperation with the key stakeholders in the data spaces.

Scope

The Support Centre will include three main work strands:

1. Community Building

The first work strand aims to maintain and enlarge the network of stakeholders.

- Fostering a community of practice focused on data sharing, including activities aimed at European businesses and organisations to understand and seize the opportunities arising from data sharing.
- Engaging participants from projects supported by the EU, especially those funded by the EU, including AI factories, as well as participants involved in initiatives organised outside the Digital Europe programme.
- Collaborating with providers of data space services and technology, with a particular emphasis on open-source solutions, such as the European Commission's Simpl programme.

- Maintaining an overview of commercial market developments, mainstream and emerging apps, services, and AI platforms.
- Maintaining a live observatory on data-sharing initiatives and data spaces in Europe, enabling qualitative and quantitative analysis to inform policymaking and research. It will combine crowdsourced data with curated quality control and support ad hoc or topical research.
- Connecting with data sharing activist organisations and individuals and the open data community.

A particular attention should be given to startups and SMEs in order to facilitate access and participation in data spaces.

2. **Governance and Infrastructure Requirements**

In collaboration with the stakeholder network, the second work strand focuses on:

- Promoting the use of common solutions for data infrastructure across sectoral data spaces, covering technical design, functionality, operation, governance and **legal aspects**.
- Identifying standards, including semantic standards and interoperability protocols (both **domain-specific and crosscutting**).
- Engaging in standards development initiatives, where needed, to ensure **data space requirements are supported**.
- Identifying and documenting methods and tools to assess the utility of data spaces, the business value for its participants, and to model the economic dynamics of data and AI ecosystems.
- Document best practices for effectively engaging SMEs in data-sharing initiatives and data spaces.
- Exploring potential synergies between data spaces and coordinate **cross-cutting exchanges among them**.
- Promoting data governance models, business strategies, and operational **approaches for running data spaces. Reach out to industry associations and industry standards organisations**.
- Addressing legal issues and other **market-relevant barriers**.
- **Identifying opportunities for value added services**.
- Actively monitor and advance the maturity of Common European Data Spaces, based on standardised metrics, KPIs, and a well-defined growth path.
- Continue advancing the DSSC maturity model, ensuring its alignment with preferred solutions, standards, and European legislative requirements, and support its transition into a formal European technical specification (European standardisation organisations).

3. **Platform for knowledge sharing and support**

The third work strand will focus on the maintenance and development of the DSSC.EU platform which will act as a central hub for knowledge sharing, stakeholder support and the development of data spaces. It will provide resources, promote best practices, and allow to connect stakeholders across various initiatives. The platform will also include

a customer support centre function, allowing stakeholders to easily get into contact **with the DSSC for specific support requests.**

The Data Spaces Support Centre addresses a wide range of stakeholders involved in the creation, maintenance and governance of Common European Data Spaces. It aims to create a collaborative environment where these diverse stakeholders can work together to establish Common European Data Spaces that are secure, interoperable, and trustworthy. These stakeholders include European organisations from different **sectors:**

- **Private:** Businesses and industries that can benefit from data sharing and **interoperability.**
- **Public:** Government agencies and public administrations that manage and use **data for public services.**
- **Academia:** Research institutions and universities that contribute to the **development of data space technologies and standards.**
- **Civil Society:** Non-governmental organisations and community groups that **advocate the use of data in a secure and trusted manner.**

Outcomes and deliverables

The outcome of this action will be the transformation of the Data Spaces Support Centre into an organisation that actively promotes, monitors and supports the full-scale deployment of data sharing initiatives, to the benefit of the European data economy. Building on existing deliverables, the Centre will shift focus from foundational technology discussions to practical applications and real-world use cases, accelerating implementation and bringing data spaces to life. Additionally, it will consolidate previous achievements through a standardisation process, ensuring the interconnection, seamless integration, and interoperability of data spaces across various sectors. The Centre will also ensure active involvement from key stakeholders to foster broad participation and alignment.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Number of stakeholders engaged in the network
- Number of supported data sharing initiatives
- Number of data sharing initiatives that participate in the DSSC maturity model

Targeted stakeholders

Public and private organisations, including SMEs, interested in the participation in Common European Data Spaces and related data sharing initiatives; research institutions and universities that contribute to the development of data space technologies and standards; standardisation bodies; the open data community; the civil society - non-governmental organisations and community groups that advocate the use of data in a secure and trusted manner.

Type of action and funding rate

Coordination and Support Actions — 100% funding rate



For more information on Digital Europe types of action, see *Annex 1*.

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, restrictions for the protection of European digital infrastructures, communication and information systems, and related supply chains apply (see section 6 and section 10)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the project would reinforce and secure the digital technology supply chain in the Union
 - extent to which the proposal can overcome financial obstacles such as the lack of market finance
 - extent to which the proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data

Objectives

This objective will support projects testing digital solutions for transmitting information relevant for compliance with EU legislation (e.g. regulations on environmental issues) and automate the compliance process for several use cases. These projects will target regulatory reporting requirements, from aggregate data (e.g., company balance sheets) to detailed data (e.g., transactions, events, and product registrations). The aim is to leverage advanced technologies, including data capturing technologies, automatic transmission, analysis, cloud storage, and encryption, to ensure data security, confidentiality, and regulatory compliance. The strong focus should be given to privacy-preserving technologies to ensure trust between the reporting entity and regulatory authorities, safeguarding data confidentiality while enabling secure and efficient compliance processes.

Additionally, the projects will identify burdensome administrative challenges in the selected sectors that could be addressed by automated data-driven solutions, while close collaboration with reporting entities will be essential to enable direct communication with regulatory agencies for automated updates and ensure compliance with evolving regulations. The approach will prioritize access controls and audit trails to enhance transparency and reduce the risk of non-compliance and penalties. Furthermore, the projects could incorporate the European Digital Identity Wallet, when available, to securely identify individuals and legal entities in data spaces, alongside trust services like electronic seals and ledgers.

Scope:

The activities funded under this initiative will focus on the following aspects:

Technical aspects:

- Utilize advanced technologies such as privacy-preserving technologies, data capturing technologies, automatic transmission and analysis, cloud storage and encryption for data security and compliance with regulations.
- Implement comprehensive APIs to enable real-time compliance and self-compliance checks.
- Employ machine learning algorithms for automated monitoring and reporting.
- Where possible use precisely defined concepts available in the data catalogue entries of Common European Data Spaces enabling deterministic data collection.
- Establish direct communication channels with regulatory authorities for automated updates and reporting, keeping the system updated with changing regulations (e.g. by expressing the reporting requirements in machine readable and executable way).
- Ensure robust access control and maintain audit trails for transparency and accountability.
- Minimize the risk of non-compliance and potential penalties through these technological and procedural safeguards.
- Integrate the European Digital Identity Wallet for secure identification of individuals and legal entities, when available.
- Collaborate with providers of data space services and technology, with a particular emphasis on open-source solutions, such as the European Commission's Simpl programme.
- All systems must incorporate robust data privacy and security measures.
- Proposers must ensure that the systems developed are open source, interoperable with existing government data systems and adhere to European data standards and specifications.
- The system must be scalable to handle large volumes of data and high transaction rates.
- The system must be designed with end-users in mind, ensuring ease of use and accessibility.
- A comprehensive data governance framework must be established. This should include policies for data quality management, data stewardship, and data lifecycle management.
- Proposals should target legislations that have clear, quantifiable compliance metrics that can be automatically assessed using data analytics and they should ensure no overlaps with ongoing initiatives (e.g. Digital Product Passport, Customs reform).
- The list of selected sectors with significant administrative burden:
 - agriculture,
 - environment,
 - manufacturing,
 - healthcare,
 - and energy

- construction

Outcomes and deliverables

The objective is to deliver three to four projects that demonstrate the streamlining of regulatory reporting through automated and trusted sharing of compliance data. Each project will address the governance, technical, legal, and processing aspects of the solution.

The deliverables for each project include:

- A (legal) identification of administrative burden in the selected sectors
- A use case implemented under realistic operational conditions.
- A live demonstration of the use case presented by the participants.
- A final report outlining the results, methodologies, and key findings.

The outcomes, including the developed solutions, must be disseminated to relevant stakeholders, such as public administrations and private entities (particularly SMEs), to showcase the benefits of streamlining compliance processes and reducing administrative burdens.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Number of projects Delivered (3–4 use cases completed under realistic operational conditions)
- Successful live presentations (demos) of use cases delivered to stakeholders for all projects.
- Number of regulating agencies/authorities involved (minimum 1 regulating agency per each project)
- Number of relevant stakeholders reached (e.g. public administrations, SMEs).
- Number of dissemination events, workshops, or reports shared.

Targeted stakeholders:

National and EU authorities (as data users)/ regulatory agencies public and private entities, businesses, farmers, etc/providers of compliance data (data holders), data sharing organisations, universities.

Type of action and funding rate

Simple Grants — 50% funding rate



For more information on Digital Europe types of action, see *Annex 1*.

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)

- For this topic, restrictions for the protection of European digital infrastructures, communication and information systems, and related supply chains apply (see section 6 and section 10)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the project would reinforce and secure the digital technology supply chain in the Union*
 - extent to which the proposal can overcome financial obstacles such as the lack of market finance*
 - extent to which the proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects*

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD - Multi-Country project in Agri-Food

Objectives

The objective of this action is to support a Multi-Country Project (MCP) in the agri-food sector. The MCP in Agri-Food aims to leverage digital infrastructure, particularly data infrastructure, to enhance the efficiency, sustainability, and competitiveness of the agri-food sector across Europe. This action will foster the access, sharing, and reuse of data to support decision-making, reduce administrative burdens, and enable innovative solutions within the sector.

In line with the European Data Strategy, the action should contribute to creating a fair, competitive, and innovative data economy. In line with Political Guidelines⁵, it should support the digital transformation of the agri-food sector, making it smarter, more sustainable, and better adapted to the needs of its users, in line with the objectives to build a competitive and resilient agriculture and food system, aiming to support the **sector's sustainability and productivity. The action is also expected to support the reduction of administrative burden in both, business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-government (B2G) data sharing, in particular in cross-border settings; and explore the potential for simplification.** The awarded proposal will take into account existing data-sharing initiatives at European, national, and local levels. Especially, it will complement and accelerate the development and implementation of the Common European Agricultural Data Space (CEADS).

Scope

The awarded proposal should address the following activities:

- Develop and set-up digital infrastructure in view of enabling agri-food data exchange, access, and analysis at the European level; this activity should form a main part of project.
- Support the implementation and deployment of a large-scale data-infrastructure with a multi-country or EU-level dimension to roll out data services in agri-food relevant for the public and private domains.

⁵ Political Guidelines for the European Commission 2024-2029: [Political Guidelines 2024-2029 EN \(1\).pdf](#)

- Provide assistance, including financial support to third parties, for the development of cross-border use cases focusing on real-life applications based on agri-food data sharing and promote the sharing and reuse of best practices. These use cases should be implemented across several Member States and foster advanced technologies, including AI, and should follow a coherent approach, that ensures interoperability; indicative areas for use cases include the preparation of scaling of the multi-country project and/ or subsequent actions that support the objectives of the MCP.
- Analyse gaps in existing agri-food data infrastructures and services, and propose measures to support the deployment, operation, and maintenance of data and service infrastructures.
- Provide operational support to create a sustainable collaboration framework among Member States and other stakeholders aimed at facilitating large-scale investments in digital and data infrastructure for agri-food projects with a multi-country focus.
- Support the exchange of information and take stock of available infrastructures, solutions, tools, agreements, and standards related to the scope of the action among participants, and coordinate across initiatives and projects in different countries and domains.

All activities under this project will require close collaboration and alignment with existing and evolving EU initiatives related to agri-food data, in particular:

- Common European Agricultural Data Space (CEADS)
- Testing and Experimentation Facilities (TEF) for AI in agri-food
- Horizon Europe Partnership Agriculture of Data
- European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) and EDICs
- eWallet/eID

Duplication of existing initiatives should be avoided. Compliance with applicable EU legislation, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Directive on open data and the re-use of public sector information, is required.

The awarded proposal is expected to achieve financial sustainability beyond the project's duration. The outcomes and deliverables of the project should be owned or usable by a lasting structure supporting the implementation of the MCP in the agri-food sector.

The active involvement of data providers and users in the public and private domains **is highly recommended to ensure that the project's outcomes are designed to meet** their needs and to create a stronger sense of ownership.

To achieve the objectives stated above and encourage the participation of diverse public and private actors across the EU, the minimum share of the grant allocated to financial support to third parties (FSTP) is 55 %, the maximum share of the grant allocated to FSTP is 65%. The maximum amount per recipient of financial support to third parties is EUR 500 000. FSTP is especially to be used as part of the development, customisation, and integration of digital infrastructure for the agri-food ecosystem, the implementation of cross-border use cases, and use cases fostering the application of advanced technologies, including AI. At least 50% of the budget allocated to FSTP should be used for activities with a cross-border dimension. Overall, activities, should involve actors from at least 20 countries. More information on funding rates and rules for this type of action is available in section 6, section 10 and Annex 1 to this document and Annex 5 of the model grant agreement.

Activities under the proposed project, including those carried out under Financial Support to third parties (FSTP) – if applicable – should be in line with the vision and objectives set out in the Digital Decade Policy Programme⁶ and the Digital Compass Communication⁷, including principles towards the digital transformation of the economy, such as digital sovereignty in an open manner, respect for fundamental rights, the rule of law and democracy, inclusion, accessibility, equality, sustainability, resilience, and security.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Capacity building: Proactive collaboration with stakeholders.
- Information exchange platform: A platform for sharing, primarily among participants, insights and data about infrastructure, tools, standards, and agreements related to the scope of this action, complementing related initiatives.
- Coordination roadmap: A comprehensive plan for preparing the implementation of the actions under this project and their contribution to the multi-country project, detailing the alignment of various initiatives, of actors participating in the action across different sectors and member states.
- Recommendations for the development, operation, and maintenance: Key foundational elements to roll-out the project towards countries not yet involved in the MCP and towards further segments of the agri-food sector.
- Assessment of ongoing initiatives: Stocktaking of ongoing initiatives at national and EU level relevant to the project and documentation of lessons learnt to tailor the approach towards the deployment action.
- Concept, technical specification, and set-up of digital infrastructure for the agri-food ecosystem.
- Use cases portfolio: A collection of cross-border use cases implemented by third parties that demonstrate cooperation and interoperability, including guidelines and standards for implementing such use cases more generally, in alignment with existing European initiatives and in compliance with applicable legislation. This deliverable should be prepared by the consortium with support from third-party beneficiaries. Those use cases might be implemented as preparation for deployment actions, the envisaged digital infrastructure project, or as subsequent actions to capitalise the deployment action.
- Use case evaluation reports: Detailed assessments for each use case, including performance results, lessons learned, and recommendations for future projects. This deliverable should be prepared by third parties under the consortium's guidance.
- Deployment action: Implementation of the envisaged project in agri-food at multi-country/ EU level with sustainable structures for its maintenance and further development.
- Policy recommendations on the creation of favourable framing conditions for achieving MCP objectives and furthering the digital transformation of the sector, reducing administrative burden, and simplification.

⁶ DECISION (EU) 2022/2481 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030.

⁷ COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS 2030 Digital Compass: the European way for the Digital Decade.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Number of countries in which developed digital infrastructure was successfully implemented
- Number of cross-border data-infrastructure actions achieved
- Number of stakeholder types involved in data-infrastructure transactions
- Number of countries involved in data-infrastructure transactions
- Extent of reduced administrative burdens in B2B and B2G settings
- Number of use cases demonstrating the added value of the digital infrastructure in the public and private domains
- Number of implemented applications and/ or use cases demonstrating the added value of activity/project for AI applications (in a multi-country context)
- Business plan underpinning the viability of the investments undertaken

Targeted stakeholders

EDIC, Public and private entities such as (but not limited to) public administrations (national, regional, and local level), economic actors (SMEs, large organizations) in the agri-food sector.

Type of action and funding rate

Grants for Financial Support — 100% funding rate



For more information on Digital Europe types of action, see *Annex 1*.

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation and full cost for listed equipment (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, financial support to third parties is allowed (*see section 10*)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the proposal can overcome financial obstacles such as the lack of market finance

DIGITAL-2025-AI-SUPPLY-08 -Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations

Objectives

By automating routine tasks, enhancing personalized service delivery, and improving accessibility for citizens, Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) can play a

transformative role in public administrations. GenAI solutions can also support decision-making by analysing large datasets and simulating policy outcomes, while helping in the drafting of legal texts.

This call aims to accelerate the adoption of scalable and replicable GenAI solutions in public administrations by supporting up to four pilot projects. Each pilot project will comprise one or more use cases where European GenAI solutions are developed and applied in the public administrations of the involved countries.

Funded projects should drive innovation in public services, ensuring that AI adoption leads to measurable improvements in one or more of the following areas: efficiency, service quality, service accessibility, and citizen experiences. While the specific GenAI use cases will be defined by the public administrations' applications, successful projects are expected to advance one or more of the following key functional areas:

- supporting data-driven decision making in key sectors, including sustainable urban planning, infrastructure development, and transportation-systems design.
- optimising internal processes and operations to enhance budget planning, optimise human resource allocation, and improve overall organisational efficiency.
- enhancing interactions with citizens via GenAI-powered platforms, such as chatbots and virtual assistants that deliver personalised assistance, improve the accessibility of public services, and offer integrated support across multiple domains, including social security, healthcare, public employment, migration management, and other services, to create a seamless user-centric experience.
- simplifying legal and administrative procedures, making regulations machine-readable ("law as code"), improving access to complex bureaucratic processes, and providing citizen- and business-friendly interfaces for tasks such as environmental authorisations, procedures for starting a new business, or funding opportunities.

Each funded pilot must:

- promote EU values, ensuring robustness, sustainability, explainability, fairness and transparency, while mitigating cybersecurity risks and ensuring human oversight in critical decisions complying with the AI Act.
- address key challenges such as staff shortages, administrative complexity, and language barriers.
- ensure scalability and replicability, enabling seamless adaptation and deployment across public administrations and Member States.
- Include measurable impact assessment methods to track improvements in efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and service quality.

Scope

This call will fund pilot projects led by consortia mainly composed of public administrations at the national, regional, or local level. To ensure effective implementation, consortia may also include higher education institutions, research and technology organizations, system integrators, and civil society actors, provided their role supports the implementation of GenAI solutions in public services.

Each pilot project will receive indicative funding of between EUR 5-7 million, subject to a matching funding requirement of at least of an equal amount from the project

beneficiaries or other national, regional, or local public sources. Each public administration can be part of one pilot project only.

As outlined in the objectives, proposed projects must focus on one or more functional areas. To apply, consortia must submit a project proposal that includes:

- An overview of the planned GenAI solutions and the specific use cases where these solutions will be deployed across participating public administrations;
- An overview of the expected outcomes and benefits of the proposed GenAI models and solutions;
- An outline of the consortium's capacity to successfully integrate and scale up the proposed GenAI models and solutions; and
- A letter of commitment from the Member States or local/regional authorities, undertaking to provide co-funding of the respective project costs, should the project be selected for funding.

Successful consortia will be awarded a grant to implement the proposed pilot projects. Specifically, public administrations within these consortia will be responsible for procuring:

- the fine-tuning of European foundation models;
- the development of tailored solutions based on these models,
- and their integration into existing platforms, systems, and operational workflows.

The procurement could moreover cover supporting infrastructure and implementation activities such as:

- The technical infrastructure required to deploy and run GenAI solutions at scale and across single or multiple public administrations;
- The support needed by public administrations to ensure they have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement and manage the deployed GenAI solutions;
- The maintenance and optimisation costs for the deployed GenAI solutions.

As stated in the regulation establishing the Digital Europe Programme⁸, the financial contribution from the Union aims to achieve, under Specific Objective 2 – Artificial Intelligence, the operational objective of: **“build[ing] up and strengthen[ing] core AI capacities and knowledge in the Union”**. Therefore, solutions based on European AI models (i.e., models developed by European AI companies/laboratories) will be prioritised, thereby reinforcing EU technological sovereignty.

Regarding synergies, the action should foster synergies with related initiatives, such as the Alliance for Language Technologies⁹, the action on open-source European foundational model fine-tuning¹⁰, the sectoral AI & Robotics Testing and

⁸ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2021/694/oj>

⁹ Alliance for Language Technologies EDIC, https://language-data-space.ec.europa.eu/related-initiatives/alt-edic_en

¹⁰ Making available a high performing open-source European foundation model for fine-tuning, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/digital-2024-ai-06-finetune>

Experimentation Facilities¹¹, data spaces¹² and relevant EuroHPC initiatives¹³. Furthermore, it should work with actions implementing the AI Act¹⁴, such as the EU AI Innovation Accelerator and regulatory sandboxes, as well as with the AI Factories¹⁵.

Strong synergies should also be built with the future Multi-Country Project on Innovative and Connected Public Administrations.

Outcomes and deliverables

The projects funded under this call will deliver piloted European GenAI solutions, fully integrated into the operational workflows and IT systems of participating public administrations. These solutions should be scalable and interoperable, enabling replication across different national and local contexts.

Beyond technological improvements, these projects will generate significant societal benefits by making public services more accessible and responsive. Adopted GenAI solutions will help improve public services, reduce administrative burdens and enhance multilingual and personalized support for citizens. Legal and administrative simplification will make regulations and procedures more understandable, enabling businesses and individuals to navigate complex requirements more easily. To ensure long-term impact, projects should include training and capacity-building initiatives, equipping public sector employees with the necessary skills to oversee and manage GenAI-driven processes effectively.

At the policy level, the pilots will provide valuable insights for evidence-based policymaking, demonstrating best practices for responsible GenAI adoption in public administration. They will contribute to the standardization of GenAI practices across the EU, helping to establish common frameworks that facilitate broader adoption while reinforcing European technological sovereignty.

Deliverables

- Pilots of European GenAI Solutions fully integrated into participating public administrations.
- Blueprints, technical documentation, and best practices to support replication in different national and regional contexts.
- GenAI4EU Community, fostering collaboration and knowledge-sharing across European public administrations.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

Pilot Project KPIs

- Number of participating public administrations deploying GenAI solutions.
- Number of services offered to citizens and businesses integrating GenAI solutions.

¹¹ Sectorial AI Testing and Experimentation Facilities under the Digital Europe Programme, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/testing-and-experimentation-facilities>

¹² Common European Data Spaces, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/data-spaces>

¹³ The European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/high-performance-computing-joint-undertaking>

¹⁴ AI Act, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/regulatory-framework-ai>

¹⁵ AI Factories, <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-factories>

- Reduction in time and costs for administrative processes – efficiency optimisation.
- Number of public administrations successfully replicating solutions.
- Employees satisfaction index and productivity gain
- Number of insights generated from pilot projects that inform future genAI policies and best practices.

Targeted stakeholders

The grant for procurement is primarily intended for public administrations at the national, regional, and local levels. Consortia may also include other entities, such as research and technology organizations (RTOs), universities, and system integrators, which will support the procurement process and assist with the technical deployment and adoption of GenAI solutions. While these entities contribute to the overall effort, they are not the primary providers of the solutions. To foster citizen engagement and ensure inclusivity, the participation of civil society organizations and NGOs is also encouraged.

Type of action and funding rate

Grants for Procurement — 50% funding rate



For more information on Digital Europe types of action, see *Annex 1*.

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see *sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2*)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (see *section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: full costs only (see *section 10*)
- For this topic, restrictions for the protection of European digital infrastructures, communication and information systems, and related supply chains apply (see *section 6 and section 10*)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the project would reinforce and secure the digital technology supply chain in the Union
 - extent to which the proposal can overcome financial obstacles such as the lack of market finance
 - extent to which the proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is EUR 55 000 000.

Specific budget information per topic can be found in the table below:

Topic	Topic budget
DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR - Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies	EUR 1 000 000
DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS— SUPPORT – Data Spaces Support Centre	EUR 10 000 000
DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data	EUR 8 000 000
DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRIFOOD - Multi-Country project in Agri-Food	EUR 15 000 000
DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations	EUR 21 000 000

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	15 April 2025
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>02 September 2025 – 17:00:00 CEST (Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	September-October 2025
Information on evaluation results:	November-December 2025
GA signature:	February/March 2025

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the call deadline (*see timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted electronically via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section. Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*template to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*)
- mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*templates to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator: not applicable
 - CVs of core project team: not applicable
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects: not applicable
 - ownership control declarations (including for associated partners and subcontractors) (for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI -SUPPLY-08 -Apply AI)
 - For topic DIGITAL-2025-AI -08-SUPPLY-AI, a letter of commitment from the Member States or local/regional authorities, undertaking to provide co-funding of the respective project costs, should the project be selected for funding.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that all participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (*especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc*). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be readable, accessible and printable (please check carefully the layout of the documents uploaded).

Proposals are limited to maximum 70 pages except for Coordination and Support Actions where the maximum is 50 pages (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).



For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries (except for topics with restrictions; *see below*):

- listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Digital Europe Programme ([list of participating countries](#))

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Please note however that following topic is subject to restrictions due to security reasons:

- DIGITAL-2025-AI -SUPPLY-08-Apply AI : GenAI for the public administrations
Only the following countries are eligible: EU Member States, EEA countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and Switzerland¹⁶. Entities must not be directly or indirectly controlled from a country that is not an eligible country unless the granting authority agrees to allow for exceptional participation on the basis of a guarantee.

For more information, *see Annex 2*.

Please note however that following topics are subject to restrictions for the protection of European digital infrastructures, communication and information systems, and related supply chains:

- DIGITAL-2025-AI -08-PROCESSOR - Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies
- DIGITAL-2025-AI -08-DS-SUPPORT - Data Spaces Support Centre
- DIGITAL-2025-AI -08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data
- DIGITAL-2025-AI -08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations

Entities that are assessed as high-risk suppliers of mobile network communication equipment (and any entities they own or control) are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Please see Appendix 4 of the Digital Europe Work Programme 2025-2027¹⁷ for details and the assessment criteria.

Specific cases and definitions

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e. sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

¹⁶ Transitional arrangements apply: grant agreements with beneficiaries established in Switzerland on the basis of the association agreement can only be signed if the association has started producing legal effects, i.e. the association agreement started to apply

¹⁷ Commission Implementing Decision C/2025/1839

International organisations — International organisations are NOT eligible, unless they are International organisations of European Interest within the meaning of Article 2 of the Digital Europe Regulation (i.e. international organisations the majority of whose members are Member States or whose headquarters are in a Member State).

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons¹⁸.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as **'sole beneficiaries'** or **'beneficiaries without legal personality'**¹⁹. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

Countries currently negotiating association agreements — Beneficiaries from countries with ongoing negotiations for participating in the programme (*see list of participating countries above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature and if the association covers the call (i.e. is retroactive and covers both the part of the programme and the year when the call was launched).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)²⁰. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

EU conditionality measures — Special rules apply for entities subject to measures adopted on the basis of EU Regulation 2020/2092²¹. Such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). Currently such measures are in place for Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain (see [Council Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2022/2506](#), as of 16 December 2022).

For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

[Consortium composition](#)

Proposals must be submitted by:

for topic:

¹⁸ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

¹⁹ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

²⁰ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

²¹ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2092 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2020 on a general regime of conditionality for the protection of the Union budget (OJ L 325, 20.12.2022, p. 94).

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR - Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies

- Not applicable

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT - Data Spaces Support Centre

- minimum 3 independent applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data

- minimum 3 independent applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD - Multi-Country project in Agri-Food

- A European Digital Infrastructure Consortium²² or another MCP implementation mechanism listed in the DDPP Decision²³ (see especially Article 11(5)) including a consortium which includes at least three independent entities from three different Member States. These entities should be appointed by the government as representing entity of the Member State, with the purpose of implementing the given Multi-Country Project. Besides these, the consortium can include other relevant private and public organisations contributing to the implementation of Multi-Country Projects.

DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations

- minimum 3 independent applicants which are public administrations (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 2 different eligible countries

Eligible activities

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which they are submitted.

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects should take into account the results of projects supported by other EU funding programmes. The complementarities must be described in the project proposals (Part B of the Application Form).

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*). Projects must also respect EU values and European Commission policy regarding reputational matters (*e.g. activities involving capacity building, policy support, awareness raising, communication, dissemination, etc*).

²² A European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) in the process of being established may submit a proposal. If the proposal is retained for funding, such EDIC will have to be officially established before the signature of the grant agreement (see the indicative timing for preparation and signature of grant agreements on the call page on the Funding & Tenders Portal).

²³ DECISION (EU) 2022/2481 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 14 December 2022 establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030.

Financial support to third parties is allowed in DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD - Multi-Country project in Agri-Food for grants or similar forms of support under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and confidentiality
- the calls must be published on the Funding & Tenders Portal, and on the **participants' websites**
- the calls must remain open for at least two months
- if call deadlines are changed this must immediately be published on the Portal and all registered applicants must be informed of the change
- **the outcome of the call must be published on the participants' websites**, including a description of the selected projects, award dates, project durations, and final recipient legal names and countries
- the calls must have a clear European dimension.

Financial support to third parties will be implemented to encourage participation of diverse actors as part of the development, customisation, and integration of digital infrastructure for the agri-food ecosystem; for the implementation of cross-border use cases, and for use cases fostering the application of advanced technologies, including AI. At least 55 % and up to 65% of the project budget is to be used for Financial Support to third parties. The maximum amount of financial support for each third party may not exceed 500 000 Euro.

Your project application must clearly specify why financial support to third parties is needed, how it will be managed and provide a list of the different types of activities for which a third party may receive financial support. The proposal must also clearly describe the results to be obtained.

Geographic location (target countries)

Due to restrictions due to security:

for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations the proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

- highest ethical standards and
- applicable EU, international and national law (including the [General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679](#)).

Proposals under this call will have to undergo an ethics review to authorise funding and may be made subject to specific ethics rules (which become part of the Grant Agreement in the form of ethics deliverables, *e.g. ethics committee opinions/notifications/authorisations required under national or EU law*).

For proposals involving development, testing, deployment, use or distribution of AI systems, the ethics review will in particular check compliance with the principles of human agency and oversight, diversity/fairness, transparency and responsible social

impact, while the experts performing the technical evaluation will assess the robustness of the AI systems (i.e. their reliability not to cause unintentional harm).

Security

Projects involving EU classified information must undergo security scrutiny to authorise funding and may be made subject to specific security rules (detailed in a security aspects letter (SAL) which is annexed to the Grant Agreement).

These rules (governed by Decision [2015/444](#)²⁴ and its implementing rules **and/or** national rules) provide for instance that:

- projects involving information classified TRES SECRET UE/EU TOP SECRET (or equivalent) can NOT be funded
- classified information must be marked in accordance with the applicable security instructions in the SAL
- information with classification levels CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above (and RESTREINT UE/ EU RESTRICTED, if required by national rules) may be:
 - created or accessed only on premises with facility security clearance (FSC) from the competent national security authority (NSA), in accordance with the national rules
 - handled only in a secured area accredited by the competent NSA
 - accessed and handled only by persons with valid personnel security clearance (PSC) and a need-to-know
- at the end of the grant, the classified information must either be returned or continue to be protected in accordance with the applicable rules
- action tasks involving EU classified information (EUCI) may be subcontracted only with prior written approval from the granting authority and only to entities established in an EU Member State or in a non-EU country with a security of information agreement with the EU (or an administrative arrangement with the Commission)
- disclosure of EUCI to third parties is subject to prior written approval from the granting authority.

Please note that, depending on the type of activity, facility security clearance may have to be provided before grant signature. The granting authority will assess the need for clearance in each case and will establish their delivery date during grant preparation. Please note that in no circumstances can we sign any grant agreement until at least one of the beneficiaries in a consortium has facility security clearance.

Further security recommendations may be added to the Grant Agreement in the form of security deliverables (*e.g. create security advisory group, limit level of detail, use fake scenario, exclude use of classified information, etc*).

Beneficiaries must ensure that their projects are not subject to national/third-country security requirements that could affect implementation or put into question the award of the grant (*e.g. technology restrictions, national security classification, etc*). The granting authority must be notified immediately of any potential security issues.

²⁴ See Commission Decision 2015/444/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
- an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

- propose no prefinancing
- request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with **the 'Implementation' award criterion**, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate²⁵:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including **procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts**)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with **unlimited liability for the applicant's debts**)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct²⁶ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- intentionally and without proper justification resisted²⁷ an investigation, check or audit carried out by an EU authorising officer (or their representative or auditor), OLAF, the EPPO, or the European Court of Auditors.

²⁵ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

²⁶ 'Professional misconduct' includes, in particular, the following: violation of ethical standards of the profession; wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility; breach of generally accepted professional ethical standards; false declarations/misrepresentation of information; participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition; violation of IPR; attempting to influence decision-making processes by taking advantage, through misrepresentation, of a conflict of interests, or to obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain an advantage; incitement to discrimination, hatred or violence or similar activities contrary to the EU values where negatively affecting or risking to affect the performance of a legal commitment.

²⁷ 'Resisting an investigation, check or audit' means carrying out actions with the goal or effect of preventing, hindering or delaying the conduct of any of the activities needed to perform the investigation,

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that²⁸:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

The proposals will have to follow the standard submission and evaluation procedure (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).


An evaluation committee (composed or assisted by independent outside experts) will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated (for each topic) against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic or budget envelope) a priority order will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) Proposals focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the **scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'**. **When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'**. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the **criterion 'Implementation'**.
- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall proposal portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between proposals, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.
- 4) After that, the remainder of the available call budget will be used to fund projects across the different topics in order to ensure a balanced spread of the geographical and thematic coverage and while respecting to the maximum possible extent the order of merit based on the evaluation of the award criteria.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (evaluation result letter). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

 No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation

check or audit, such as refusing to grant the necessary access to its premises or any other areas used for business purposes, concealing or refusing to disclose information or providing false information.

²⁸ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

committee or other concerns. Full compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a complaint (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The award criteria for this call are as follows:

1. Relevance

- Alignment with the objectives and activities as described in section 2
- Contribution to long-term policy objectives, relevant policies and strategies, and synergies with activities at European and national level
- Extent to which the project would reinforce and secure the digital technology supply chain in the EU*
- Extent to which the project can overcome financial obstacles such as the lack of market finance*

2. Implementation

- Maturity of the project
- Soundness of the implementation plan and efficient use of resources
- Capacity of the applicants, and when applicable the consortium as a whole, to carry out the proposed work

3. Impact

- Extent to which the project will achieve the expected outcomes and deliverables referred to in the call for proposals and, where relevant, the plans to disseminate and communicate project achievements
- Extent to which the project will strengthen competitiveness and bring important benefits for society
- Extent to which the project addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects*.

*May not be applicable to all topics (see specific topic conditions in section 2).

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	3	5
Implementation	3	5
Impact	3	5

Overall (pass) scores	10	15
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Maximum points: 15 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 3/5, 3/5 and 3/5 points.

Overall threshold: 10 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding — within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration:

- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR - Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies – 36 months
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT - Data Spaces Support Centre- 36 months
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data – 24 months
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD - Multi-Country project in Agri-Food – 48 months
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations – between 36 and 48 months

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

The following deliverables will be mandatory for all projects:

- additional deliverable on dissemination and exploitation, to be submitted in the first six months of the project

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (requested grant amount):

- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR - Support to the secretariat for the Alliance on Processors and Semiconductor Technologies: – EUR 1 000 000 per project
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT - Data Spaces Support Centre: EUR 10 000 000 per project
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE - Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data: between EUR 2 000 000 and EUR 4 000 000 per project
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD - Multi-Country Project in Agri-Food: up to EUR 15 000 000 per project
- for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI - Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations: between EUR 5 000 000 and EUR 7 000 000 per project

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement. This rate depends on the type of action which applies to the topic (*see section 2*).

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*).

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 6*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence

- C.2 Equipment
- C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties (for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD)
 - D.2 Internally invoiced goods and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - average personnel costs (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices)²⁹: Yes
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost³⁰: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit costs³¹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs:
 - depreciation (for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR, DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT, DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE)
 - full cost (for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI)
 - depreciation + full cost for listed equipment (for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD)
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants or similar for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD — Multi-Country Project in Agri-Food
 - maximum amount per third party EUR 500 000; amounts of more than 60 000 EUR per third party are necessary because the nature of the actions under this call is such that their objectives would otherwise be impossible or overly difficult to achieve.
 - Between 55% and 65 % of the requested amount should be reserved for financial support to third parties.
 - The recipients of financial support to third parties are required to co-finance the activity by minimum 50% of the total costs of the activity.
 - internally invoiced goods and services (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices)³²: Yes

²⁹ [Decision](#) of 29 June 2021 authorising the use of unit costs based on usual cost accounting practices for actions under the Digital Europe Programme.

³⁰ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7115).

³¹ Commission [Decision](#) of 12 January 2021 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework (C(2021)35).

³² [Decision](#) of 29 June 2021 authorising the use of unit costs based on usual cost accounting practices for actions under the Digital Europe Programme.

- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any).
- VAT: non-deductible/non-refundable VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' **websites or social media accounts** are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
 - EU Synergies call: Yes, costs can be charged to several EU Synergies grants, provided that the funding under the grants does not go above 100% of the costs and contributions declared to them (for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI)
 - restrictions due to security:
 - country restrictions for subcontracting costs: Yes, subcontracted work must be performed in the eligible countries (for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI)
 - eligible cost country restrictions: Yes, only costs for activities carried out in eligible countries are eligible (for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI)
 - restrictions for the protection of European digital infrastructures, communication and information systems, and related supply chains (see Appendix 4 of the Digital Europe Work Programme 2025-2027³³)
 - Equipment and other goods, works and/or services related to 5G/6G mobile network communication equipment, and other technologies linked to the evolution of European communication networks must fulfil the conditions set out in the work programme to be eligible. (for topics: DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR; DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT; DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE; DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI)
 - other ineligible costs: No.

Reporting and payment arrangements

The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a prefinancing to start working on the


³³ Commission Implementing Decision C/2025/1839

project. For topics DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-PROCESSOR, DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-DS-SUPPORT, and DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-COMPLIANCE prefinancing is normally set at 80% of the maximum grant amount; for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD prefinancing is normally set at 30% of the maximum grant amount and for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI prefinancing is normally set at 50% of the maximum grant amount. The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/10 days before starting date/financial guarantee (if required) – whichever is the latest.

There will be one or more interim payments (with cost reporting through the use of resources report). There will be one or more additional prefinancing payments linked to a prefinancing report for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD and DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-SUPPLY-AI.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if you or one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are normally requested from the coordinator, for the consortium. They must be provided during grant preparation, in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement (*art 23*).

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
- unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*

or

- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

Security rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 13 and Annex 5)*

Ethics rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 14 and Annex 5)*

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5):*

- background and list of background: Yes
- protection of results: Yes
- exploitation of results: Yes
- rights of use on results: Yes
- access to results for policy purposes: Yes
- access to results in case of a public emergency: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: No
- special IPR obligations linked to restrictions due to security:
 - exploitation in eligible countries: Yes (for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI - SUPPLY-08 -Apply AI)
 - limitations to transfers and licensing: Yes (for topics DIGITAL-2025-AI - SUPPLY-08 -Apply AI)

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5):*

- communication and dissemination plan: Yes
- dissemination of results: Yes
- additional dissemination obligations: No:
- additional communication activities: Yes
- special logo: No

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and*

Annex 5):

- specific rules for PAC Grants for Procurement: No
- specific rules for Grants for Financial Support: Yes for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-08-AGRI FOOD
- specific rules for blending operations: No
- special obligations linked to restrictions due to security for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-SUPPLY-08 -Apply AI :
 - implementation in case of restrictions due to security or EU strategic autonomy: Yes

Other specificities

Consortium agreement: Yes

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Calls for proposals](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

The proposal must keep to the page limits (*see section 5*); excess pages will be disregarded.

Documents must be uploaded to the right category in the Submission System, otherwise the proposal may be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted before the call deadline (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a confirmation e-mail (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, *please try to find the answers you need yourself*, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- Topic Q&A on the Topic page (for call-specific questions in open calls; not applicable for actions by invitation)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent [here](#)

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (see cover page).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait** until the end — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute technical problems. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- Consult the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System — By submitting the application, all participants accept to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- Registration — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- Consortium roles— When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as beneficiaries or affiliated entities; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. Associated partners and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). Subcontracting should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application (except for topic DIGITAL-2025-AI-SUPPLY-08 -Apply AI).

- Coordinator — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- Affiliated entities — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any). If affiliated entities participate in your project, please do not forget to provide documents demonstrating their affiliation link to your organisation as part of your application.
- Associated partners — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- Consortium agreement — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget**— Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule**— Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding**— It is strictly prohibited to cumulate **funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions')**. Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants; projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants**— Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this this Call document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be rejected. This applies also to applicants: **All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.**
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

Annex 1

Digital Europe types of action

The Digital Europe Programme uses the following actions to implement grants:

Simple Grants

Description: Simple Grants (SIMPLE) are a flexible type of action used by a large variety of topics and can cover most activities. The consortium will mostly use personnel costs to implement action tasks, activities with third parties (subcontracting, financial support, purchase) are possible but should be limited.

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: Prefinancing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

SME Support Actions

Description: SME Support Actions (SME) are a type of action primarily consisting of activities directly aiming to support SMEs involved in building up and the deployment of the digital capacities. This type of action can also be used if SMEs need to be in the consortium and make investments to access the digital capacities.

Funding rate: 50% except for SMEs where a rate of 75% applies

Payment model: Prefinancing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs)

Description: Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) are a small type of action (a typical amount of 1-2 Mio) with the primary goal to support EU policies. Activities can include coordination between different actors for accompanying measures such as standardisation, dissemination, awareness-raising and communication, networking, coordination or support services, policy dialogues and mutual learning exercises and studies, including design studies for new infrastructure and may also include complementary activities of strategic planning, networking and coordination between programmes in different countries.

Funding rate: 100%

Payment model: Prefinancing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

Grants for Procurement

Description: Grants for Procurement (GP) are a special type of action where the main goal of the action (and thus the majority of the costs) consist of buying goods or services and/or subcontracting tasks. Contrary to the PAC Grants for Procurement (see *below*) there are no specific procurement rules (i.e. usual rules for purchase apply), nor is there a limit to 'contracting authorities/entities'. Personnel costs should be limited in this type of action; they are in general used to manage the grant, coordination between the beneficiaries, preparation of the procurements.

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: Prefinancing - second prefinancing (to provide the necessary cash-flow to finance the procurements) – payment of the balance

PAC Grants for Procurement

Description: PAC Grants for Procurement (PACGP) are a specific type of action for procurement in grant agreements by 'contracting authorities/entities' as defined in the EU Public Procurement Directives (Directives 2014/24/EU , 2014/25/EU and 2009/81/EC) aiming at innovative digital goods and services (i.e. novel technologies on the way to commercialisation but not yet broadly available).

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: Prefinancing - second prefinancing (to provide the necessary cash-flow to finance the procurements) – payment of the balance

Grants for Financial Support

Description: Grants for Financial Support (GfS) have a particular focus on cascading grants. The majority of the grant will be distributed via financial support to third parties with special provisions in the grant agreement, maximum amounts to third parties, multiple pre-financing and reporting obligations.

Annex 5 of the model grant agreements foresees specific rules for this type of action regarding conflict of interest, the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and sound financial management as well as the selection procedure and criteria.

In order to assure the co-financing obligation in the programme, the support to third parties should only cover 50% of third party costs.

Funding rate: 100% for the consortium, co-financing of 50% by the supported third party

Payment model: Prefinancing - second prefinancing (to provide the necessary cash-flow to finance sub-grants) – payment of the balance

Lump Sum Grants

Description: Lump Sum Grants (LS) reimburse a general lump sum for the entire project and the consortium as a whole. The lump sum is fixed ex-ante (at the latest at grant signature). on the basis of a methodology defined by the granting authority (either on the basis of a detailed project budget or other pre-defined parameters). **The lump sum will cover all the beneficiaries' direct and indirect costs for the project. The beneficiaries do not need to report actual costs, they just need to claim the lump sum once the work is done. If the action is not properly implemented only part of the lump sum will be paid.**

Funding rate: 100%/50%/50% and 75% (for SMEs)

Payment model: Prefinancing – (x) interim payment(s)– final payment

Framework Partnerships (FPAs) and Specific Grants (SGAs)

FPAs

Description: FPAs establish a long-term cooperation mechanism between the granting authority and the beneficiaries of grants. The FPA specifies the common objectives (action plan) and the procedure for awarding specific grants. The specific grants are awarded via identified beneficiary actions (with or without competition).

Funding rate: no funding for FPA

SGAs

Description: The SGAs are linked to an FPA and implement the action plan (or part of it). They are awarded via an invitation to submit a proposal (identified beneficiary action). The consortium composition should in principle match (meaning that only entities that are part of the FPA can participate in an SGA), but otherwise the implementation is rather flexible. FPAs and SGAs can have different coordinators ; other partners of the FPA are free to participate in an SGA or not. There is no limit to the amount of SGAs signed under one FPA.

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: Prefinancing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

Annex 2

Eligibility restrictions under Articles 12(5) and (6) and 18(4) of the Digital Europe Regulation

Security restrictions Article 12(5) and (6)

If indicated in the Digital Europe Work Programme, and if justified for security reasons, topics can exclude the participation of legal entities *established* in a third country or DEP associated country, or established in the EU territory but *controlled* by a third country or third country legal entities (including DEP associated countries)³⁴.

This restriction is applicable for SO1 (High Performance Computing), SO2 (Artificial Intelligence) and SO3 (Cybersecurity), but at different levels.

- In the case of SO3, the provision is implemented in the strictest way. When activated, only entities established in the EU AND controlled from the EU will be able to participate; entities from associated countries (which are normally eligible) can NOT participate — unless otherwise provided in the Work Programme.
- In SO1 and SO2, entities established in associated countries and entities controlled from non-EU countries may participate, if they comply with the conditions set out in the Work Programme (usually:
 - for the associated countries: be formally associated to Digital Europe Programme and receive a positive assessment by the Commission on the replies to their associated country security questionnaire. Currently Switzerland has received a positive assessment.
 - for the participants: submission of a guarantee demonstrating that they have taken measures to ensure that their participation does not contravene security or EU strategic autonomy interests).



EEA countries (and participants from EEA countries) are exempted from these restrictions (and additional requirements) because EEA countries benefit from a status equivalent to the Member States.

In order to determine the ownership and control status, participants³⁵ will be required to fill in and submit an [ownership control declaration](#)* as part of the proposal (and later on be requested to submit supporting documents) (see [Guidance on participation in DEP, HE, EDF and CEF-DIG restricted calls](#)).

In addition, where a guarantee is required, the participants will also have to fill in the [guarantee template](#)*, approved by the competent authorities of their country of establishment, and submit it to the granting authority which will assess its validity.

The activation of these restrictions will also make a number of specific provisions in the Grant Agreement applicable, such as country restrictions for eligible costs, country restrictions for subcontracting, and special rules for implementation, exploitation of results and transfers and exclusive licensing of results.

Thus:

³⁴ See Article 12(5) and (6) of the Digital Europe Regulation [2021/694](#).

³⁵ Beneficiaries and affiliated entities, associated partners and subcontractors — except for entities that are validated as public bodies by the Central Validation Service.

- participation in any capacity (as beneficiary, affiliated entity, associated partner, subcontractor or recipient of financial support to third parties) is also limited to entities established in and controlled from eligible countries
- project activities (included subcontracted work) must take place in eligible countries
- the Grant Agreement provides for specific IPR restrictions.

Strategic autonomy restrictions Article 18(4)

If indicated in the Digital Europe Work Programme, calls can limit the participation to entities *established* in the EU, and/or entities established in third countries associated to the programme for EU strategic autonomy reasons³⁶.

The activation of these restrictions will make a number of specific provisions in the Grant Agreement applicable, such as country restrictions for eligible costs, country restrictions for subcontracting, and special rules for implementation, exploitation of results and transfers and exclusive licensing of results.

 For more information, see [Guidance on participation in DEP, HE, EDF and CEF-DIG restricted calls](#).

³⁶ See Article 18(4) of the Digital Europe Regulation [2021/694](#).