



Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)

Call for proposals

Advanced Digital Skills
(DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10)

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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 advanced digital skills 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 Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) ('Agency').

The call covers the following topics:

- **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health**
- **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs**
- **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech Accelerator**

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.

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)
 - 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)

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(2026) 1781 final of 19/03/2026 amending Implementing Decision C(2025)1839 on the financing of the Digital Europe Programme and the adoption of the multiannual work programme 2025-2027.

- 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 Digital Skills and Jobs Platform⁴ to consult the list of projects funded previously.

Recognising the importance of Strategic Technologies for the Union's economic security⁵, this call supports the strengthening of deployment of critical technologies, such as AI, across industry and value chains, further fostering deep tech innovations with significant economic potential. Consequently, a STEP Seal⁶ will be awarded to applicants for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health** that passed all evaluation thresholds, including the proposals that remain unfunded due to budget limitations in the Digital Europe Program.

1. Background

Europe needs a workforce with advanced digital skills to develop, deploy and use cutting edge digital technologies and infrastructures that support its competitiveness, digital sovereignty, as well as the digital and green transitions. The European Commission has set ambitious targets in the Digital Decade Policy Programme⁷ of increasing to 80% the number of European adults possessing at least a basic level of digital skills and reaching 20 million ICT professionals in Europe, while promoting access to women in this field to bridge the gender gap in the technology sector, by 2030.

This call covers three topics: a) **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health**; b) **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs**; and c) **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech Accelerator**.

The three topics of this call will contribute to the Competitiveness Compass⁸ by increasing the necessary pool of skilled digital users, by enhancing digital skills initiatives in the Member States, as well as by supporting the European start-ups and SMEs.

⁴ <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en>

⁵ [Regulation \(EU\) 2024/795 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 February 2024 establishing the Strategic Technologies for Europe Platform \(STEP\), and amending Directive 2003/87/EC and Regulations \(EU\) 2021/1058, \(EU\) 2021/1056, \(EU\) 2021/1057, \(EU\) No 1303/2013, \(EU\) No 223/2014, \(EU\) 2021/1060, \(EU\) 2021/523, \(EU\) 2021/695, \(EU\) 2021/697 and \(EU\) 2021/241](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/795/oj/1)

⁶ https://strategic-technologies.europa.eu/step-seal/step-seal-explained_en

⁷ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/digital-decade-policy-programme-2030>

⁸ https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/competitiveness-compass_en

a) By delivering training offerings specifically designed for healthcare professions, the topic Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health will directly contribute to **the AI Continent Action Plan and Apply AI Strategy flagship initiative “European network of AI-powered advanced screening centres”**. It will create an AI-ready healthcare workforce able to deploy AI solutions in healthcare settings, delivering tangible benefits for patients and health systems efficiency.

b) The Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition ecosystem is built around the National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs who constitute a key delivery mechanism for **achieving the EU’s digital skills objectives. They connect European initiatives with national, regional and local stakeholders, ensuring that EU priorities on digital skills are translated into concrete actions, services and opportunities on the ground.** By strengthening coordination, increasing transparency of training and funding opportunities, fostering the exchange of good practices and supporting skills intelligence, National Coalitions contribute to building resilient digital skills ecosystems across Member States. In doing so, they reinforce the governance framework of the **Digital Decade, support Europe’s technological sovereignty and competitiveness, and help ensure that no Member State is left behind in the digital transition.**

c) During recent years, the education and training landscape has been significantly impacted by rapid technological advancements. Innovations like generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), robotics, or extended Reality, to name a few examples, have significant power to reshape the way we teach and learn. There is a crucial need to support the Education Technology (EdTech) sector in Europe, and in particular European start-ups and SMEs, to develop innovative solutions and technologies meeting European values in terms of ethics, inclusion, accessibility, privacy, security and strong pedagogical foundations. This is particularly crucial given the fast-developing technological landscape. Therefore, the funded project under the EdTech topic is expected to contribute to the nurturing of an EdTech ecosystem in Europe that drives innovation, creates jobs, and fuels economic growth, while also ensuring pedagogically driven solutions that reach clear educational outcomes.

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

DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health

Objectives

This topic aims to expand the offer of education and training in Artificial Intelligence in health jointly designed between higher education and training institutions, research organisations and industry.

It will contribute to achieving EU policy objectives in the area of AI in healthcare outlined in the AI Continent Action Plan⁹ and Apply AI Strategy¹⁰. In particular, it will support successful implementation of the Apply AI Strategy flagship initiative **“European network of AI-powered advanced screening centres”**¹¹.

At the end, this topic will directly contribute to the AI Continent Action Plan’s objectives of creating an AI-ready healthcare workforce and deployment of AI

⁹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/ai-continent-action-plan>

¹⁰ [Apply AI Strategy | Shaping Europe’s digital future](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/apply-ai-strategy)

¹¹ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/ai-screening-centres>

solutions in healthcare settings, delivering tangible benefits for patients and health systems efficiency.

Scope

The project funded under this topic should design and deliver training programmes to increase the AI readiness of healthcare organisations and their workforce and support the effective uptake of AI solutions in healthcare settings.

The training programmes should cover relevant and latest technology developments and advanced digital skills. These could include hands-on technical skills as well as business considerations such as business case preparation for the uptake of AI in health solutions. Applicants should describe how the programmes will be jointly **designed by all the relevant stakeholders, including members of the “European network of AI-powered advanced screening centres”**.

The target audience of the training programmes includes in particular healthcare professionals and managers, as well as computer and data scientists, programmers, and software developers working in the healthcare sector. The training must reflect the learning needs of the target audience and vary in depth and technical complexity to accommodate different levels of expertise and learning preferences.

The training courses should be made available to members of the “European network of AI-powered advanced screening centres” at least quarterly. The training courses can also be offered to interested participants outside the network. The training sessions and material should be available in English and other EU languages, considering the needs of the target audience that should be established as part of the project activities. The training catalogue and content should be adapted regularly, according to target audience feedback.

All training courses must be added to the catalogue of Training Offers in the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform¹² and consequently updated to increase visibility and attract learners.

Whenever applicable, the project should foster the use of the HealthData@EU infrastructure and other European health data infrastructures (Genomic Data Infrastructure, Cancer Image Europe, the European Virtual Human Twins advanced platform, ICU data space), explore synergies and build on relevant education and training activities developed and provided in the context of those initiatives, as well as in the relevant projects funded under DIGITAL-ECCC-2025-DEPLOY-CYBER-08-CyberHEALTH — Dedicated action to reinforce hospitals and healthcare providers and by EU4Health or Erasmus+ providing digital skills training for the health workforce. Special attention should be given to projects funded under the Digital Europe Programme, Specific objective 4 – Advanced digital skills¹³, projects providing educational programmes for the healthcare sector, to coordination and support action LEADSx2030¹⁴, as well as the project funded under the call for ELEVATE: European League of Advanced Digital Skills Academies¹⁵.

Proposals with high ambitions in terms of the number of participants trained and successful completion of the programmes, as well as delivering excellent programmes, are likely to be assessed more positively. Additionally, proposals delivering their activities in several Member States, and proposals striving for

¹² <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/opportunities/training>

¹³ DIGITAL Projects Brochure (<https://zenodo.org/records/17597443>)

¹⁴ <https://advancedskills.eu/>

¹⁵ [ELEVATE: European League of Advanced Digital Skills Academies](#)

reaching gender balance in their training participation, are likely to have more added value.

It is intended that two proposals will be funded under this topic, with a maximum EU grant amount of EUR 3.9 million per project. The total available EU funding for this topic is 7.8 million EUR (see *section 3*).

All proposals selected for funding under this topic will be expected to collaborate, in particular for the mapping of learning needs. Applicants are also encouraged to propose other areas for collaboration and co-creation. Proposals are expected to include a budget covering the costs of such potential joint activities. The details of these joint activities will be defined during the grant agreement preparation phase.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Initiatives implemented for the target audience to collect knowledge on learning needs in the area of AI uptake in health (co-created by all projects funded under this topic)
- Training programmes in the area of advanced digital skills for AI uptake in health, designed jointly by higher education institutions, vocational training providers, research organisations, businesses and other stakeholders in digital health, in collaboration with the network of AI-powered advanced screening centres, and delivered.
- Final analysis of the completed training and the achievement level reached in improved skills.
- Introductory pages hosted in the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform, showcasing existing and forthcoming education and training initiatives and promoting training offers to the relevant audience.
- Training catalogue with detailed course planning and timetable, regularly updated.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

To demonstrate the intended IMPACT of the project and support its monitoring, the applicants are expected to set clear, pertinent targets and define measurement methods for all measurable outcomes and deliverables. At least the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) must be defined:

- Number of hospitals and healthcare organisations consulted to identify AI-related skills gaps (at least 30, of which at least 20 belonging to the European network of AI-powered advanced screening centres)
- Number of education and training programmes designed and delivered specified by: specific target groups, level of digital skills acquired (from basic to advanced), duration of the different programmes, and the AI solutions applied
- Number of hospitals whose staff received the training
- Number of participants successfully completing training offerings
- Number of eligible countries reached by the project activities, including dissemination and communication activities (at least 15 Member States)

Additional KPIs and their targets should be proposed by applicants in the project proposal as appropriate.

Targeted stakeholders

The target audience of the training programmes includes healthcare professionals and managers, as well as computer and data scientists, programmers, and software developers working in the healthcare sector. The training courses should be made **available to members of the “European network of AI-powered advanced screening centres”, as well as to interested participants outside the network.**

The applicant consortia are highly encouraged to include industry, higher education institutions, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), research organisations, vocational training providers, national and regional governments, labour unions, industrial associations, education service providers.

Type of action and funding rate

Lump Sum 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*)
- 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-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs

Objectives

The objective of this topic is to ensure the establishment of new National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs and national platforms in Member States and DIGITAL associated countries that do not have one yet, as well as the expansion and continued operation of activities of already established National Coalitions and national websites. This project will be implemented through a coordination and support action, which will fund a consortium whose responsibility is to ensure that the activities listed in this call are carried out.

The exchange of relevant content and data on digital skills and jobs at EU and national level between the national websites and the [Digital Skills and Jobs Platform](#) (DSJP) will help students and job seekers to find training / traineeship opportunities,

support enterprises in addressing their skills needs, train employees, facilitate scale-up of innovative training solutions, strengthen cooperation between the National Coalitions and enable learning across sectors and borders, as well as recommend a learning path to end users.

This project will contribute to reaching the targets set in the Digital Decade Policy Programme of increasing to 80% the number of European adults possessing at least a basic level of digital skills and reaching 20 million ICT professionals in Europe, while promoting access to women in this field in order to bridge the gender gap in the **technology sector, by 2030, and contributing to the EU's competitiveness and technological sovereignty.**

Scope

The project funded under this topic will aim to further extend the activities of the **National Coalitions' websites established under CEF-TC 2019-2020 and DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06-SKILLS¹⁶**, as well as support the creation of National Coalitions or websites in Member States and DIGITAL associated countries that do not have any yet.

Activities will:

- Develop and connect the infrastructures (websites) of National Coalitions that are not yet connected to the DSJP through interoperable interconnections, integrating and enabling exchanges with the Core Platform components.
- Provide access to national/regional/local actors and practices, building interoperable links to provide services relevant to the local context.
- Expand and engage National Coalitions that are already connected to the DSJP.

Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) is allowed for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs** under certain conditions (*see section 10*). When drawing up their plan for the use of FSTP, the consortium should identify the National Coalitions already established/funded under CEF-TC 2019-2020 and DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06-SKILLS (including via FSTP) that are not part of the consortium and that can be funded under FSTP. The consortium must also look into attracting new National Coalitions in Member States and DIGITAL associated countries that do not have one yet. The consortium must ensure a balanced allocation of the overall project budget between activities directly implemented by the consortium and those supported through FSTP. The total amount allocated for FSTP should not exceed 30% of the total project budget. The maximum amount of FTSP awarded per third party must not exceed EUR 150.000. The level of FSTP must be proportionate to the scale and scope of the activities to be implemented in accordance with the requirements set out for this topic.

Outcomes and deliverables

As a minimum, the consortium must ensure that all National Coalitions funded under this project carry out the following activities, and proposals are highly encouraged to cover those points (including General Provisions) explicitly under the proposal section IMPLEMENTATION:

Activity 1: Web development

¹⁶ [National Digital Skills & Jobs Coalitions | Digital Skills & Jobs Platform](#)

- 1.1. Development of one national website/database per participating Member State that do not have an established national website. The national website, serving as a **“web antenna” (or link) to the DSJP, must provide current content and data on digital skills and jobs in a consistent, coherent and structured way in the official language(s) of the concerned country. Content must include interoperable links to the DSJP, as well as to websites of other national coalitions in line with the Technical Specifications¹⁷.**
- 1.2. Upgrade and maintenance of the national websites in Member State where these have already been established, in line with planned updates and needs of the DSJP (e.g. the upcoming Advanced Digital Skills Academies).
- 1.3. Technical maintenance, support and security updates must be provided for the national websites.

Activity 2: Services, Content and Community-related activities

Expected outputs to be delivered in official language(s) and published on the national websites of all National Coalitions (except 2.1):

- 2.1. Presentation of the National Coalition and its members (for new National Coalitions only): an interoperable part based on the technical specifications provided under Activity 1, covering digital skills for the labour force, ICT professionals and other digital experts, education, citizens.
- 2.2. Presentation of relevant DSJP content (EU initiatives in digital skills and jobs, EU funding opportunities, news, events, etc.). National Coalitions should also present additional relevant content from the Advanced Digital Skills Academies, according to their territorial needs and specificities. This should include also the promotion of relevant actions and initiatives such as DigComp 3.0¹⁸ (to support its uptake in Member States and its translation to the national context), the activities of the European League of Advanced Digital Skills (ELEVATE)¹⁹ and the Advanced Digital Skills Competitions²⁰.
- 2.3. Create and implement an interoperable repository of good practices, using the API model (from Activity 1) and connected to the DSJP repository based on the technical specifications (from Activity 1) and a common, uniform approach. The proposed project must select and promote good practices that address gaps and local specificities.
- 2.4. Create and implement an interoperable repository of resources on digital skills, with a specific section making available national and regional strategies and measures (particularly those relevant to the achievement of the Digital Decade **Policy Programme’s objectives on digital skills**), training curricula, non-proprietary MOOCs, details on methodologies, case studies and other training material.
- 2.5. Present relevant and innovative training opportunities on advanced digital skills currently available and targeted at end users. Presented training opportunities should cover diverse settings (online, classroom, boot camps, work-based) and diverse formats (part-time, full-time, short-term), offered by a wide range of providers (industry, formal education and training, open

¹⁷ https://wayback.archive-it.org/12090/20221204045558/https://ec.europa.eu/inea/sites/default/files/2019-2_european_platform_for_digital_skills_and_jobs_technical_specifications_corrigendum_05082019.pdf

¹⁸ [DigComp 3.0 - Joint Research Centre - European Commission](#)

¹⁹ [DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-09-LEAGUE-OF-ACADEMIES](#)

²⁰ [DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-09-COMPETITIONS](#)

learning) to ensure flexibility and relevance to users. Stakeholders shall submit for publication upcoming training opportunities on Training offers of the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform²¹ via the online editorial process and the National Coalition should implement a review procedure prior to publication. If such platforms/databases presenting relevant training offers on digital skills already exist at national and/or regional level, the National Coalition should ensure visibility and links to those databases to facilitate search of relevant training opportunities by end users and increase overall transparency.

- 2.6. Present funding opportunities for digital skills at national and European level, including for example relevant calls for proposals, loans for upskilling (e.g. income sharing agreements) and other financial instruments.
- 2.7. Events: each National Coalition should regularly publish relevant events in their online calendar, ensuring interoperability with DSJP.
- 2.8. News production and skills intelligence: each National Coalition must allow stakeholders to post, comment on, and discuss news on various digital skills-related topics and information on the skills most needed in the country. It should also regularly publish news announcements.
- 2.9. Webinars/online events, peer-to-peer learning and exchange of experience: the National Coalition must organise and publish webinars to inform stakeholders in the country and other National Coalitions about digital skills development, approaches, and good practices. The National Coalition must also contribute, through national digital skills experts, to webinars/workshops organised by the DSJP, to peer review the content of the DSJP and identify links with national content and stakeholders.
- 2.10. Communication, promotion and community management: the National Coalition should ensure, in agreement with the DSJP, a common layout with recognisable features and sufficient promotion and communication about the content published on the national website. This will also encourage replicability and facilitate scaling of innovative solutions. In particular, the National Coalition should disseminate press releases and use online communication tools, such as newsletters and social media. It should also support the **members' efforts to inform their audiences about the platform services and content**. It should encourage stakeholders to contribute actively to online activities on the DSJP and make resources available through the repository.

Activity 3: Post-editing and localisation of content

All National Coalitions must provide translation of content and post-edit services from English to the official language(s) and vice versa, rendering content relevant for the local context.

The national websites must reuse the information on the DSJP by publishing it in their official language(s) (e.g. EU policy information, skills intelligence, selected good practices, events, news, funding opportunities, content relevant for national stakeholders and activities). Conversely, the National Coalitions will review English translations of their content for the DSJP, which will disseminate information from the national websites (e.g. good practices, funding/training opportunities, events, news).

The National Coalitions will access services from the European Commission's Machine Translation system eTranslation.

²¹ <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en/opportunities/training>

General provisions

In the proposed project, the consortium must ensure that all National Coalitions:

- Outline the methodology for the selection of good practices, training offers and related resources (see points 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5 above under Activity 2) and explain how this methodology ensures their high quality. The proposed project should demonstrate how the foreseen promotional activity (see points 2.9 - 2.10 above under Activity 2) takes into account dimensions like replicability and visibility/accessibility for end users.
- Encourage registration of all National Coalition members to the stakeholder engagement tool of the Core Platform and support their participation in related discussions and activities.
- Ensure regular and frequent updates/exchanges of data between the Core Platform and the national website.
- Ensure appropriate compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). When relevant and lawful, the National Coalitions will comply with the obligation to inform the individuals by sending privacy notices and by obtaining consent. The notice regarding the information on the publication of personal data, or the consent request, will need to refer not only to the publication on the national website, but also on any further publication of the same information on the DSJP and on all the other National Coalitions/networks of **actors' websites connected to the DSJP, which might re-publish** the information in their national official languages.
- Comply with European and/or national level cybersecurity rules as applicable.
- Report on their activities to the Core Platform coordinator on an annual basis.
- Demonstrate how the services will be kept technically and financially sustainable beyond the end of the funded project.
- Demonstrate to what extent a wide range of disciplines and fields are covered.
- Demonstrate synergies with initiatives that are active in the area of digital skills and jobs, including ELEVATE, the European Digital Innovation Hubs and the European Data Space for Skills, the specialised education programmes in key capacity areas funded under DEP Specific Objective 4 (SO4) and helping the uptake of the Advanced Digital Skills Academies²².
- By the end of the project, the consortium must be in a position to demonstrate that all the activities listed above have been duly accomplished in accordance with required specifications.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

Proposals are highly encouraged to cover the points below explicitly under the proposal section IMPACT.

The consortium should address how it will ensure the continuity (financial and technical) of all the National websites beyond EU-funded projects.

²² See topics under the Specific objective 4 (SO4) – Advanced digital skills - of the [Digital Europe programme Work Programme](https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/work-programmes-digital) (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/work-programmes-digital>)

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure outcomes and deliverables should be **provided by the consortium. They should reflect the proposal's main outcomes and deliverables.**

As a minimum, the consortium must ensure that all National Coalitions meet the following KPIs over the project duration (unless otherwise specified):

- Dedicated section which describes the National Coalition and its mandate, members and activities
- Structured overview of relevant national and regional digital skills strategies, including a description of each strategy and link to official documents where available
- Structured overview listing relevant EU initiatives and programmes in digital skills and jobs, news and events
- Publication of at least 20 good practices from the national/regional/local level, with in depth presentation of 3 good practices
- Publication of at least 8 good practices from the Core Platform
- Publication of at least 10 resources on digital skills
- Publication of at least 50 training opportunities targeting different groups of end users
- Publication of at least 10 national and international financing opportunities in the field of digital skills
- Publication of at least 20 relevant events per year
- Publication of at least 3 original news/announcements per month
- Publication of at least 3 news/announcements from the Core Platform per month
- Publication and distribution of at least 2 original press releases per year

Targeted stakeholders

National Coalitions websites act as single points of access in each Member State and other DIGITAL associated countries, providing jobseekers, students and the general population with access to relevant training initiatives tailored to their needs. Many National Coalitions also address the persistent gender gap in the ICT sector via tailored training opportunities and awareness raising actions aimed at attracting more women and girls to digital careers. Additionally, National Coalitions serve as meeting points for ICT associations, businesses, training and education providers, public authorities, providing a forum for cooperation and the design solutions to attract, train and retain ICT professionals. More broadly, the project will improve visibility of training opportunities, resources and funding across national digital ecosystems, supporting progress towards the Digital Decade targets on digital skills.

This project will fund a single consortium responsible for ensuring that the activities are implemented and the KPIs outlined above are achieved. The consortium members must therefore clearly demonstrate their capacity and expertise to deliver the expected outcomes and deliverables.

The selected consortium will be responsible for organising the implementation of the action and determining how the budget will be allocated and managed, including the distribution of Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP). Established National Coalitions are therefore strongly encouraged to participate as members of the consortium.

As a single consortium will be responsible for ensuring that the activities listed above are completed by all the National Coalitions (established and new), it is imperative that the consortium coordinator has experience in managing projects of this scale and scope. The relevant experience should be demonstrated in section Implementation of the proposal and in the list of previous projects, which must be submitted as an annex.

The consortium must ensure that they have the sufficient technical knowledge (including IT) required to achieve the activities listed above.

The following stakeholders are encouraged to apply as consortium members:

- Established Digital Skills and Jobs National Coalitions funded under CEF-TC 2019-2020 and DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06-SKILLS²³
- Private, public or civil society organisations who are in a position to manage projects of this scale and scope
- Private or public organisations who have the technical knowledge (including IT) required to achieve the activities listed above.

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, 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 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*

²³ [Project C4DD](#)

DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech accelerator

Objectives

The purpose of this topic is to assist European EdTech startups and SMEs in transforming concepts for educational solutions into matured and fully tested applications and solutions. This topic will also help support the effective and ethical application of GenAI technologies to education and training, in alignment with the objectives of the GenAI4EU initiative²⁴.

Scope

Converging around the goal of learning improvement, the EdTech ecosystem comprises multiple interdependent players. It has at its core tech providers, developing EdTech products and services, and practitioners, such as learners, teachers, school leaders/administrators. Within this ecosystem, EdTech accelerators play the role of supporting tech providers with speeding up their market entry and scaling their existing solutions, in the early stages of their business development.

The winning consortium will set up an EdTech accelerator programme to benefit minimum three cohorts of startups/SMEs. The programme will cover the full cycle of selection, acceleration, piloting and post-piloting phases, guided by the following specifications:

1. Selection phase

The most promising solutions developed by EdTech startups/SMEs will be selected through open calls for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP). An outline of the open calls requirements will include prerequisites related to the go-to-market (GTM) readiness, the expected technology maturity level (e.g. Minimum Viable Product (MVP), minimum TRL²⁵), the innovative value, the educational relevance and effectiveness and the commitment to ethical and legal compliance at national and EU-level (e.g. GDPR, AI-related). To the extent possible, the proposals will lay out conditions to ensure that the selected solutions will span a variety of application areas, including, but not limited to, learning contents, serious games, feedback and assessment tools, personalised experiences, tutoring, assistive technology for learners with disabilities or special education needs. Special emphasis will be placed on accelerating innovative solutions using advanced technologies (e.g. AI, XR). Similarly with respect to the targeted users, all education levels (primary, secondary, higher education, VET, lifelong learning and up/reskilling) should ideally be represented.

The proposals should include a short description of the key elements in the open call requirements. It is highly recommended that a variety of use-case application areas and good coverage across education levels should be ensured.

2. Acceleration phase

Through activities such as mentoring, coaching, training, masterclasses, workshops, peer learning and expert clinics, the acceleration phase will validate the educational **intervention logic and strengthen the solution's readiness for market entry. It will also prepare the solution for the piloting phase, by properly aligning it to the users' needs and conditions for smooth usage, deployment and integration.** Moreover, any ethics,

²⁴ The 'GenAI4EU' initiative aims to support the development of novel use cases and emerging applications in Europe's 14 industrial ecosystems, as well as the public sector. Application areas include robotics, health, biotech, manufacturing, mobility, climate and virtual worlds (Commission launches AI innovation package).

²⁵ Recommended TRL 4 (<https://horizoneuropencportal.eu/store/trl-assessment>)

legal, and compliance requirements, including GDPR, safeguarding, accessibility, and AI-related frameworks will be addressed.

The proposals are expected to explain how the acceleration phase is going to be carried out.

3. Piloting phase

For the piloting phase, the proposals will explain what real educational settings the consortium will put in place for the solutions to be tested, how quantitative and qualitative evidence will be collected to validate usability, learning impact, and adoption potential.

4. Post-piloting phase

Over the post-piloting phase, the EdTech startups/SMEs will capitalise on the evidence **and intelligence on the users' needs and behaviour acquired during the piloting phase** and refine their GTM strategy. Proposals are expected to describe how they plan to assist EdTech startups/SMEs with the adoption and scale-up of their products during this phase, including by connecting them with procurement and investor readiness programmes, networking and matchmaking events, opportunities for collaboration with education institutions.

As part of its scope, the project will organise dissemination and communication activities both to advertise the open calls and to promote the accelerated solutions, as soon as the first cohort has completed the programme. The project will strive to gain interest and trust from the European EdTech ecosystem stakeholders, in particular practitioners and investors, by highlighting the key strengths of the products, for example, in terms of the educational added value, pedagogical impact, and **compliance with the EU's AI ethics principles. It will also build collaborations and partnerships** that would be beneficial for the selected EdTech startups/SMEs.

Based on the intelligence collected and material developed throughout the accelerator programme, a GTM guide will be produced. It will also incorporate, where meaningful, outputs of relevant EU-funded initiatives such as EmpowerED²⁶ or Digital Education Acceleration Hub²⁷. Access to the GTM guide, along with any other relevant project outputs will be made available on the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP)²⁸. Furthermore, the consortium is expected to collaborate and share their results with **the upcoming action "4.8 Digital Infrastructures in Education and Training Institutions"**²⁹.

Outcomes and deliverables

This topic will bring an important contribution to the Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) by supporting the private actors in the digital education ecosystem. Therefore, the project should take on board and synergise with previous work done by the Digital Education Accelerator Hub. The project should provide at minimum:

- Three open calls (at least one call per year) launched and managed providing FSTP to at least 20 EdTech start-ups/SMEs from across Member states (MS) and eligible countries (a minimum of 60% of the total project budget should be spent on FSTP). The individual amounts of the FSTP are up to the future

²⁶ <https://www.empowerededtech.eu/>

²⁷ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/digital-education-hub/accelerator-programme>

²⁸ <https://digital-skills-jobs.europa.eu/en>

²⁹ Digital Europe Work Programme 2025-2027 (<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/activities/work-programmes-digital>)

consortium to define, as long as they comply with the conditions stated under section 10, and do not exceed the maximum ceiling of 150.000 EUR per third party. Minimum 3 (three) of the selected solutions should employ extended reality (XR) technology features.

- Three cycles of the acceleration programme, including all its different phases, developed and implemented. The duration of a cycle should be of 10 to 12 months.
- A go-to-market (GTM) guide to educate and inspire other EdTech startups/SMEs with practical advice and structured approach on how to scale and increase chances of having their solutions adopted by the users, including how to navigate procurement processes or how to approach investors.
- A report on the implementation of the accelerator programme, including descriptions of the pilots, lessons learned as well as recommendations for programme improvement and policy implementation.
- European-wide communication and awareness raising activities.
- At least one big event per year organised to reach a large number of investors, market partners, ministries of education (or other ministries), education establishments, learning content providers, training providers, and other stakeholders in the field.
- GTM guide and other project outputs made available on the DSJP.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

At minimum, the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be provided:

- Number of accelerated solutions, including the XR-driven ones.
- Number of education institutions (i.e. schools, VET, universities, life-long learning institutes, re/upskilling centres) participating in real educational settings during piloting phase.
- Number of MS national and regional authorities supporting the accelerator.

Targeted stakeholders

This action is targeted to provide support to EdTech startups and SMEs.

The applicant consortia are highly encouraged to include non-governmental organisations, higher education institutions, venture capitalists, companies, educational and training institutions.

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, 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 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 12 500 000.

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

Topic	Topic budget
Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health	EUR 7 800 000
National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs	EUR 2 000 000
EdTech accelerator	EUR 2 700 000

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:	21 April 2026
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>01 October 2026 – 17:00:00 CEST</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	October-November 2026
Information on evaluation results:	December 2026
GA signature:	February 2027

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: applicable for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP**
 - CVs of core project team: not applicable
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*): applicable for topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP**, **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS**, and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**

For topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP**, please be aware that since the detailed budget table serves as the basis for fixing the lump sums for the grants (and since lump sums must be reliable proxies for the actual costs of a project), the costs you include MUST comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#)). This is particularly important for purchases and subcontracting, which must comply with best value for money (or if appropriate the lowest price) and be free of any conflict of interests. If the budget table contains ineligible costs, the grant may be reduced (even later on during the project implementation or after their end).

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 (Part B) for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP** (Lump sum grant). Proposals are limited to maximum 50 pages (Part B) for topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH** (Coordination and Support Actions). 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:
 - 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*).


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).

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 persons³⁰.

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'**³¹.  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

³⁰ See Article 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³¹ For the definitions, see Articles 190(2) and 200(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

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)³². 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 2020/2092³³. 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 [DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health](#):

- minimum of 4 independent applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from at least 4 different eligible countries.

for topic [DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs](#):

- minimum of 5 independent applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from at least 4 different eligible countries of which minimum 4 applicants must be National Coalitions funded under CEF-TC-2019-2, CEF-TC-2020-2 or DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06-SKILLS.

All already established National Coalitions are highly encouraged to apply as members of the consortium.

for topic [DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech accelerator](#):

- minimum of 4 independent applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from at least 4 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.

³² 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](#).

³³ 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).

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*).

Financial support to third parties is allowed in **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH** for grants or similar forms of support and prizes 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 accepted in projects which perform the activities listed under the section 2 *Scope* of topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS**.

Financial support to third parties will be accepted in projects which propose educational solutions as explained under the section 2 *Scope* of topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**.

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.

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](#)³⁴ and its implementing rules **and/or** national rules) provide for instance that:

- projects involving information classified TRES SECRET UE/EU TOP SECRET (or

³⁴ 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).

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.

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
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years) (*template available in Part B*).

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 participate³⁵:

- 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 misconduct³⁶ (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 resisted³⁷ 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.

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that³⁸:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information

³⁵ See Articles 138 and 143 of EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

³⁶ **'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.**

³⁷ **'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, 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.**

³⁸ See Article 143 EU Financial Regulation [2024/2509](#).

- 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 (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 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

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-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health**: indicative 48 months
- for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs**: between 24 and 36 months
- for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech accelerator**: indicative 36 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-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health**: max EUR 3.9 million per project
- for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs**: max EUR 2 million per project

- for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech accelerator**: max EUR 2.7 million per project.

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

For topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH— EdTech accelerator**, 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*).

For topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health**, the grant will be a lump sum grant. This means that it will reimburse a fixed amount, based on a lump sum or financing not linked to costs. The amount will be fixed by the granting authority on the basis of the estimated project budget and a funding rate of 50% .

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 topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS — Digital Skills and Jobs Platform: The National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH — EdTech Accelerator** (actual costs grants) are:*

- 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 topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**)
 - D.2 Internally invoiced goods and services

- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for these topics:

- personnel costs:
 - average personnel costs (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices)³⁹: Yes
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost⁴⁰: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit costs⁴¹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs:
 - depreciation (for topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**)
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants or similar and prizes:
 - for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS**: maximum amount per third party EUR [150 000]; 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. The budget used for FSTP should not exceed 30% of the total budget.
 - for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**: maximum amount per third party EUR [150 000]; 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. A minimum of 60% of the total project budget should be spent on FSTP.
 - internally invoiced goods and services (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices)⁴²: Yes
- 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

³⁹ [Decision](#) of 29 June 2021 authorising the use of unit costs based on usual cost accounting practices for actions under the Digital Europe Programme.

⁴⁰ 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).

⁴¹ 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).

⁴² [Decision](#) of 29 June 2021 authorising the use of unit costs based on usual cost accounting practices for actions under the Digital Europe Programme.

after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed

- project websites for topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP**: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' **websites or social media** accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible.
- project websites for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS**: costs for the creation and operation of the national websites as well as communication costs for presenting the project on the **participants' social media accounts are eligible; costs for other websites** than national websites carrying out the activities listed in this call are not eligible.
- other ineligible costs: No.

*Budget categories for topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP** — Advanced Digital Skills for AI Uptake in Health (lump sum grant):*

- Lump sum contributions ⁴³

Specific cost eligibility rules for this topic:

- the lump sum amount must be calculated based on estimated project budget (actual cost) and using the detailed budget table/calculator provided
- the lump sum calculation should respect the following conditions:
 - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: the estimated budget must comply with the basic eligibility conditions for EU actual cost grants (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6](#))
 - for lump sums based on estimated project budgets: costs for financial support to third parties is not allowed.

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 project (float of normally 65% of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). 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 for all 3 topics (with cost reporting through the use of resources report applicable only for topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**. Cost reporting through the use of resources report is not applicable for lump sum topic **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-DIGITAL-HEALTH-STEP**).

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.

⁴³ [Decision](#) of 25 March 2026 authorising the use of lump sum contributions under the Digital Europe Programme 2021-2027.

 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 for all 3 topics under this call but keeping records on the costs declared only for topics **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-NATIONAL-COALITIONS** and **DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-10-EDTECH**.

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: Yes

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: No
- specific rules for blending operations: No

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 EULogin 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 via the [Write to us](#) form.

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.

- 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*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).

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

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)⁴⁴.

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 the following associated countries have a positive assessment: Switzerland.
 - 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, participants⁴⁵ 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 EU restricted calls with ownership and control restrictions](#)*).

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:

⁴⁴ See Article 12(5) and (6) of the Digital Europe Regulation [2021/694](#).

⁴⁵ 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 reasons⁴⁶.

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 EU restricted calls with ownership and control restrictions](#)^{*}.

⁴⁶ See Article 18(4) of the Digital Europe Regulation [2021/694](#).