



Union Secure Connectivity Programme (IRIS²)

Call for proposals

European Quantum Communication Infrastructure (EuroQCI)
DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI

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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 quantum communication infrastructures under the Union Secure Connectivity Programme (IRIS²).

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (Union Secure Connectivity Regulation (EU) 2023/588¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2023-2027 IRIS² Work Programme² and will be managed by the European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT).



Please note that this call is receiving funds from the Union Secure Connectivity programme, and proposals submitted in response to any of the topic are expected to contribute in particular to this Programme's objectives.

The call covers the following topics:

- DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI -01 – Maturing of a European industrial ecosystem for security-certified terrestrial QKD technologies and systems
- DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI -02 – Coordinate deployment for the EuroQCI (CSA)
- DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI -03 – Support standardisation for the EuroQCI (CSA)

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)

¹ Regulation (EU) 2023/588 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2023 establishing the Union Secure Connectivity Programme for the period 2023-2027.

² Commission Implementing Decision C(2025) 1776 final of 28th March 2025 concerning the adoption of the work programme for 2023-2027 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Union Secure Connectivity Programme.

- evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
- award criteria (section 9)
- legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
- how to submit an application (section 11).
- the Online Manual outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (**'Portal'**)
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application.
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the Funding and Tenders Portal to consult the list of projects funded previously.³

1. Background

Europe's critical infrastructures and sensitive communications and data are vulnerable to cyber-attacks and other security threats. Advances in supercomputing and the advent of quantum computing may soon undermine modern encryption systems, threatening the security of transmitted data and secure access to remotely stored data **in the long term. To keep the EU's government data and critical infrastructures safe in** the medium and long term, the EU must develop new and more secure forms of encryption and devise **new ways of protecting the EU's critical communication and data** assets.

To address this challenge, and as set out in the Joint Cybersecurity Strategy⁴, the Commission is working with Member States and the European Space Agency towards the deployment of a secure quantum communication infrastructure (EuroQCI) spanning the entire EU, including its overseas territories, to meet the needs of national governments and public services of general interest. The EuroQCI will provide an unprecedented way of securing communications and data, integrating innovative and secure quantum products and systems into conventional communication infrastructures, by enhancing them with an additional layer of security based on quantum physics.

The EuroQCI will consist of a terrestrial component relying on new and/or existing fibre communication networks linking strategic sites at national and cross-border level, complemented by a space satellite component to cross-link and cover the entire EU. As

³ See:

- <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/digital-2021-qci-01-industrial>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/digital-2021-qci-01-deploy-national>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/digital-2021-qci-01-euroqci-qkd>
- <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/digital-2022-qci-02-deploy-national>

⁴ [JOIN\(2020\) 18 final](#)

it will contribute to the security of the Union, it will ultimately use technologies developed and manufactured in the EU.

Additionally, the Union should ensure the provision of resilient, global, secure, protected, uninterrupted, guaranteed and flexible communication solutions for evolving governmental needs and requirements, built on a Union technological and industrial base, in order to **increase the resilience of Member States' and Union institutions'** operations. In support to the achievement of this objectives, the IRIS² regulation established the Union Secure Connectivity Programme in 2023. Since then, the EuroQCI has been part of IRIS², for the purpose of its gradual integration into the Union secure connectivity system.

The EuroQCI's deployment is supported by the Digital Europe Programme and by the Connecting Europe Facility (Digital), which are supporting the initial development and deployment of national quantum communication infrastructure networks and their interconnection between neighbouring countries, as well as the interconnection of the **EuroQCI's terrestrial and space segments**.

In addition to the above, the IRIS² is supporting the further development and gradual integration of EuroQCI initiative into the secure connectivity system to allow for quantum distribution of cryptographic keys (QKD). This programme will contribute to meeting the objectives of the EuroQCI Declaration by developing a EuroQCI space and ground infrastructure as well as by supporting the development of QKD technologies and the deployment of the EuroQCI terrestrial infrastructure. To date, QKD technology and products are not sufficiently mature to be used for the protection of EU classified information (EUCI). The main issues concerning QKD security, such as standardisation, analysis and evaluation methodology, still need to be solved. IRIS² therefore supports the development of secure QKD technologies to allow for the use of approved cryptographic products in the EuroQCI system when available.

The present call funded by the IRIS² programme, will build on those already funded under the Digital Europe Programme and the Connecting Europe Facility (digital) to **support the next phase of the EuroQCI's development and deployment**.

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

DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-01 — Maturing of a European industrial ecosystem for security-certified terrestrial QKD technologies and systems

Objectives

To stimulate the maturing and the transition to security certified (common criteria) of compact and efficient European components and systems for quantum key distribution and quantum secure networks, ready for integration into telecom networks, and compliant with security requirements (e.g. protection profile). Contribute to the development of a European industrial quantum communication ecosystem, including a thriving SME sector.

Scope

- Maturing of technological components and their integration into end-to-end systems and market-ready, high performance and ultra-efficient solutions, favouring Small Form Factor (SFF) and cost-effective designs with a relevant manufacturing readiness level. This may include:

- *the development and integration of hardware and software elements* such as photonic integrated circuits for QKD transmitters, receivers, QRNGs and light-sources, non-standard fibres, processing algorithms on reprogrammable platforms, cost-effective and easily deployable single-photon detectors, and advanced technologies like memories, repeaters.
 - *the development of complete QKD systems*, covering the integration of software defined networking controllers and orchestrators to **allow for dynamic routing functionalities**, integrate different **multi-vendor and multi-operator** networks, possibly with key management systems in the application layer integrating PQC, **implement real-time-adaptive key management, and implement** network optimization **and anomaly detection** tools also based on artificial intelligence.
 - *the integration of multiplexing and switching techniques* for coexistence of QKD with conventional communications traffic and technology.
 - *the development of a comprehensive multi-layered approach for securing trusted nodes* (such as increased protection against side-channel and optical attacks, physical security, cybersecurity measures to protect control systems) and the incorporation, as possible, of protocols to eliminate classes of vulnerabilities.
- Preparing the compliance of European quantum key distribution components and systems with EuroQCI security requirements and their security certification. This requires close collaboration with Certification Bodies. Projects are expected to collaborate with the EuroQCI testing and evaluation infrastructure, both by providing QKD devices as test vehicles as well as by engaging in their testing and validation.

Outcomes and deliverables

- European quantum key distribution components and systems mature, compact, efficient, integrable, security certified, with relevant manufacturing readiness and ready for deployment in telecom networks.
- Contribution to a technologically autonomous European quantum communication ecosystem.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

Competitive quantum communication systems that are ready for industrialisation and deployment.

Competitive quantum communication systems that are security certified.

Targeted stakeholders

Industry partners, including RTOs if relevant.

Type of action and funding rate

SME Support Actions — 50% funding rate except for SMEs where a rate of 75% applies

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

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, eligibility and security restrictions apply (see section 6)
- For this topic, the following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, first exploitation obligations apply (*see section 10*)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects

DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-02 – Coordinate deployment for the EuroQCI (CSA)

Objectives

To ensure a coherent EuroQCI initiative and support the Commission, ESA and the Member States by providing key support functions in coordination, industrialisation, dissemination and alignment, enabling national and cross-border EuroQCI networks to discuss progress, to identify and utilise synergies in their work, share best practices and information about EU components and their certifications, supporting QKD standardisation efforts, and coordinating overall progress towards a fully functional EuroQCI.

Scope

- Facilitate connections and dialogue between the national and cross-border EuroQCI projects: support discussions on user requirements and use cases, standardisation and return of experience from the deployment of advanced national quantum systems and networks including on EU QKD components and systems.
- Provide support to the Commission, Member States, and other stakeholders in the deployment of EuroQCI.
- Produce a consolidated overview of the deployment of EuroQCI in Member States and a catalogue of approaches and technologies implemented in national EuroQCI projects.
- Coordinate inputs to support discussions and decisions on the further development of national and cross-border deployment plans and strategic efforts, with a view to achieving an overall EuroQCI system (space and terrestrial segments).
- Coordinate activities for developing an EU QKD ecosystem and the industrialisation of QKD devices in the EU.
- Organise outreach events and activities, prepare communication materials, promote the EuroQCI initiative, and ensure interactions with other relevant initiatives.

Outcomes and deliverables

- An assessment of the deployments of EuroQCI networks and systems for the operational phase of EuroQCI.
- Consolidated analysis of national and cross-border deployments, identifying the complementary activities (including technology developments) required to establish a complete EuroQCI system.
- Recommendations for the next phases of the operational and security-compliant pan-European EuroQCI networks.
- Contribution to a technologically autonomous European quantum communication ecosystem.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

Number of Member States participating

Number of EuroQCI demonstrations organised

Number of thematic meetings for stakeholders organised

Targeted stakeholders

Consortium of RTOs and industry partners

Type of action and funding rate

Coordination and Support Actions — 95% funding rate

- For more information on types of action, see Annex 1.

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, eligibility and security restrictions apply (see section 6)
- For this topic, the following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation (see section 10)
- For this topic, first exploitation obligations apply (see section 10)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects

DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-03 – Support standardisation for the EuroQCI (CSA)

Objectives

To implement appropriate necessary standardisation activities to efficiently support an operational EuroQCI infrastructure with dedicated QKD and quantum cryptography services. While the available QKD products have now been made available by industry for a market of early adopters and innovators, there is the need to intensify standardization efforts at all levels, from QKD components, systems and applications to network capabilities and components for future quantum networks, to enable integration of quantum devices into wider complex systems, to build a solid industrial

base and anticipate foreseeable work on components for future quantum networks and future certification.

Scope

Proposals may include the following activities:

- Overview of current QKD standardization activities
- Standardization of QKD components such as, among others, single-photon sources, entanglement-based sources, QKD transmitters/receivers and detectors, ultra-low loss optical fibres. Activities on requirements on the performance of the system, definition of benchmarking tests, the definition of metrics, calibration at operational environment and monitoring of the correct behaviour over the entire lifetime of the system are encouraged.
- Standardization of multiplexing of quantum signals with third-party classical and noise compensation technology.
- Standardization of software-hardware interfaces, as well as harmonization of interoperable key management system APIs.
- Standardization of systems and applications for the operation of an entire network and multiple networks, covering network capabilities such as routing, control and management capabilities, interoperability between different SDN systems, roaming for cross-border connections.
- Standardization of hybridisation schemes for combined QKD/PQC.
- Evaluation and certification of QKD protocols, via formalization of a rigorous assessment of different types of implementation constraints in the security proofs. Accelerating work on certification, by strengthening interdisciplinary collaboration between national authorities, accredited evaluation laboratories and other relevant initiatives.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Sets of standards for QKD components and systems.
- Interoperable systems and applications for the operation of an entire network and multiple networks.
- Specific requirements, benchmarking tests and metrics on performance and monitoring of subsystems that are specifically required for QKD purposes.
- Formalized assessments for the acceptance of QKD protocols.
- Contribution to a technologically autonomous European quantum communication ecosystem.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

Number of EU stakeholders involved in standardization bodies

Number of proposed standards

Targeted stakeholders

Consortium of RTOs and industry partners

Type of action and funding rate

Coordination and Support Actions — 95% funding rate



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

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, eligibility and security restrictions apply (see section 6)
- For this topic, the following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, first exploitation obligations apply (*see section 10*)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the proposal 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 36 000 000.

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

Topic	Topic budget
DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-01 – Maturing of a European industrial ecosystem for security-certified terrestrial QKD technologies and systems	EUR 30 000 000
DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-02 – Coordinate deployment for the EuroQCI (CSA)	EUR 3 000 000
DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-03 – Support standardisation for the EuroQCI (CSA)	EUR 3 000 000

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

4. Timetable and deadlines

Timetable and deadlines (indicative)	
Call opening:	15 th July 2025
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>16th October 2025 – 17:00:00 CEST (Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	October to November 2025
Information on evaluation results:	December 2025
GA signature:	Q1 2026

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 [Search Funding & Tenders](#) 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. It also includes the security and ethics issues tables (*to be filled in directly online*)

- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)



Please note that this call is receiving funds from the Union Secure Connectivity programme, and proposals submitted in response to any of the **topic are expected to contribute in particular to this Programme's objectives.**

- mandatory annexes and supporting documents (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator: not applicable
 - CVs of core project team: not applicable
 - activity reports of last year: not applicable
 - list of previous projects: not applicable
 - ownership control declarations: applicable

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 the 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.

Proposals are limited to maximum 70 pages (Part B), except for Coordination and Support actions (DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-02 and DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-03), where the maximum is 50 pages (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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



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

6. Eligibility

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 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))

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.

Please note that this call is subject to restrictions due to security reasons.

For this reason, eligibility and participation conditions as per *article 22* of the Union Secure Connectivity Regulation (which are set out in *Article 24* of the Union Space Programme)⁵ applies for all topics. In particular:

(a) the eligible legal entities⁶ are established in a Member State and its executive management structures are established in that Member State; (b) the eligible legal entities commit to carry out all relevant activities in one or more Member States; and

(c) the eligible legal entities are not to be subject to control by a third country or by a third country entity

Please note that:

- **'executive management structure'** means the body of a legal entity appointed in accordance with national law, and which, where applicable, reports to the chief executive officer or any other person having comparable decisional power, and which is empowered to **establish the legal entity's strategy, objectives and overall direction**, and oversees and monitors management decision-making.

- **'control'** means the ability to exercise a decisive influence over a legal entity directly, or indirectly through one or more intermediate legal entities.

- the eligibility and participation conditions are implemented in the strictest way as defined in *Article 24.2*. In this call, *Article 24.3* and *Article 24.4* of the Union Space Programme do NOT apply (no possibility for waiver).

In order to determine the ownership and control status, participants⁷ will be required to fill in and submit an [ownership control declaration](#) as part of the proposal (and later on be requested to submit supporting documents) (see [Guidance on participation in DEP, HE, EDF and CEF-DIG restricted calls](#)).

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:

- 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.

5 REGULATION (EU) 2021/696 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 28 April 2021 establishing the Union Space Programme and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) No 912/2010, (EU) No 1285/2013 and (EU) No 377/2014 and Decision No 541/2014/EU

⁶All entities, including beneficiaries and affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors, third parties.

⁷ Beneficiaries and affiliated entities, associated partners and subcontractors — except for entities that are validated as public bodies by the Central Validation Service.

Specific cases

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).

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 persons⁸.

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'**⁹. ⚠ 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).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. 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)*¹⁰) and entities covered by *Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/05*¹¹). 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 2020/2092¹². 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](#).

Eligible activities

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

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

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*).

⁸ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁹ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁰ 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](#).

¹¹ Commission guidelines No 2013/C 205/05 on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

¹² 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).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Due to restrictions due to security:

- for all topics: the proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*)

Ethic

Projects must comply with:

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

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

For proposals involving development, testing, deployment, use or distribution of AI systems, the ethics review will in particular check compliance with the principles of human agency and oversight, diversity/fairness, transparency and responsible social impact, while the experts performing the technical evaluation will assess the robustness of the AI systems (i.e. their reliability not to cause unintentional harm).

Security

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

These rules (governed by Decision [2015/444](#)¹³ and its implementing rules **and/or** national rules) provide for instance that:

- projects involving information classified TRES SECRET UE/EU TOP SECRET (or equivalent) can NOT be funded
- classified information must be marked in accordance with the applicable security instructions in the SAL
- information with classification levels CONFIDENTIEL UE/EU CONFIDENTIAL or above (and RESTREINT UE/ EU RESTRICTED, if required by national rules) may be:
 - created or accessed only on premises with facility security clearance (FSC) from the competent national security authority (NSA), in accordance with the national rules
 - handled only in a secured area accredited by the competent NSA
 - accessed and handled only by persons with valid personnel security clearance (PSC) and a need-to-know
- at the end of the grant, the classified information must either be returned or continue to be protected in accordance with the applicable rules

¹³ 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).

- 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 these projects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

or

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



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

Operational capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate¹⁴:

- 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 misconduct¹⁵ (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

¹⁴ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁵ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

- 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)

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that¹⁶:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

An evaluation committee (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.

¹⁶ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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. 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

Award criteria	Minimum pass score	Maximum score
Relevance	3	5
Implementation	3	5
Impact	3	5
Overall (pass) scores	9	15

Maximum points: 15 points.

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

Overall threshold: 9 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-IRIS2-2025-QCI-01: 48 months
- for topic: DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-02: 42 months
- for topic: DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-03: 36 months

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 (maximum grant amount):

- for topic DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-01: between EUR 5 000 000 and EUR 10 000 000 per project
- for topic DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-02: EUR 3 000 000 per project
- for topic DIGITAL-IRIS2-2025-QCI-03: EUR 3 000 000 per project

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

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

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

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

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.2 Internally invoiced goods and services
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:

- average personnel costs (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices)¹⁷: Yes
- SME owner/natural person unit cost¹⁸: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit costs¹⁹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs:
 - depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
 - internally invoiced goods and services (unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices)²⁰: Yes
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteer costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick-off meeting: costs for kick-off meeting organised by the granting authority are eligible (travel costs for maximum 2 persons, return ticket to Brussels and accommodation for one night) only if the meeting takes place after the project starting date set out in the Grant Agreement; the starting date can be changed through an amendment, if needed
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' **websites or social** media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible
 - restrictions due to security:
 - country restrictions for subcontracting costs: Yes, subcontracted work must be performed in the eligible countries
 - eligible cost country restrictions: Yes, only costs for activities carried out in eligible countries are eligible

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

¹⁷ [Decision](#) authorising the use of unit costs based on usual cost accounting practices for actions under the Digital Europe Programme and EuroQCI actions under the Union Security Connectivity programme.

¹⁸ 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).

¹⁹ 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).

²⁰ [Decision](#) authorising the use of unit costs based on usual cost accounting practices for actions under the Digital Europe Programme and EuroQCI actions under the Union Security Connectivity programme.

before starting date/financial guarantee (if required) – whichever is the latest.

There will be one or more interim payments (with cost reporting through the use of resources report).

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.



Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if 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 of all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

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

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

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

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

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

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

Certificates

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

Liability regime for recoveries

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

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

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

or

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

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

Provisions concerning the project implementation

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

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

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

- background and list of background: Yes
- protection of results: Yes
- exploitation of results: Yes
- rights of use on results: Yes
- access to results for policy purposes: Yes
- access to results in case of a public emergency: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: No
- special IPR obligations linked to restrictions due to security:
 - exploitation in eligible countries: Yes
 - first exploitation obligation in eligible countries: Yes
 - limitations to transfers and licensing: 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
- special obligations linked to restrictions due to security:
 - implementation in case of restrictions due to security or EU strategic autonomy: Yes

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

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



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

11. How to submit an application

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

Submission is a 2-step process:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

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

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

b) submit the proposal

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) 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.



Please note that **for these calls, any reference in the application forms and other templates to the Digital Europe Programme shall be read and understood as Union Security Connectivity Programme.**

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 might 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 to the following email address: CNECT-QCI@ec.europa.eu.

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).
- 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. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, 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 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](#).

Annex 1

Types of action

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: 95%

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