



Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)

Call for proposals

Cloud Data and TEF
(DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01)

Version 1.0
17 November 2021



HISTORY OF CHANGES			
Version	Publication Date	Change	Page
1.0	17.11.2021	▪ Initial version (new MFF).	
		▪	
		▪	
		▪	



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
 Directorate-General Communications Networks, Content and Technology
 CNECT.R – Resources and Support
CNECT.R.5 – Programme Implementation

Contents

0. INTRODUCTION	7
1. BACKGROUND	8
2. OBJECTIVES — SCOPE — OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES — KPIS TO MEASURE OUTCOMES AND DELIVERABLES — TARGETED STAKEHOLDERS — TYPE OF ACTION — SPECIFIC TOPIC CONDITIONS	9
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD – Market place for federated cloud-to-edge based services	9
Objectives	9
Scope	10
Outcomes and deliverables	11
KPIs to measure ‘Outcomes and deliverable’	12
Targeted stakeholders	12
Type of action	12
Specific topic conditions	12
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA - Secretariat for the alliance on industrial data, edge and cloud	12
Objectives	12
Scope	13
Outcomes and deliverables	14
KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables	15
Targeted stakeholders	15
Type of action	15
Specific topic conditions	15
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE - Testing and experimentation facility for edge AI	16
Objectives	16
Scope	16
Outcomes and deliverables	17
KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables	17
Targeted stakeholders	18
Type of action	18
Specific topic conditions	18
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH - Secretariat for the alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies	18
Objectives	18

Scope	19
Outcomes and deliverables	20
KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables	20
Targeted stakeholders	20
Type of action	21
Specific topic conditions	21
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL – Preparatory actions for the European green deal	
data space.....	21
Objectives	21
Scope	22
<i>Outcomes and deliverables</i>	23
KPIs to measure ‘Outcomes and deliverable’	23
Targeted stakeholders	23
Type of action	23
Specific topic conditions	24
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM - Preparatory actions for the data space for smart	
communities	24
Objectives	24
Scope	24
Outcomes and deliverables	28
KPIs to measure ‘Outcomes and deliverable’	29
Targeted stakeholders	29
Type of action	29
Specific topic conditions	29
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB – Preparatory actions for the data space for mobility	29
Objectives	29
Scope	30
Outcomes and deliverables	30
KPIs to measure ‘Outcomes and deliverable’	30
Targeted stakeholders	31
Type of action	31
Specific topic conditions	31
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT - Preparatory actions for data spaces for	
manufacturing	31
Objectives	31
Scope	31
Outcomes and deliverables	33
KPIs to measure ‘Outcomes and deliverable’	33
Targeted stakeholders	33
Type of action	33
Specific topic conditions	33
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS - Federated European infrastructure for genomics data .	34
Objectives	34
Scope	34
Outcomes and deliverables	35
KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables	36
Targeted stakeholders	36
Type of action	37
Specific topic conditions	37
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE - Data spaces support centre	37
Objectives	37

Scope	37
Outcomes and deliverables	39
KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables	39
Targeted stakeholders	39
Type of action	39
Specific topic conditions	39
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-PREP-ACTION-AI - Preparatory actions for the AI on demand platform	40
Objectives	40
Scope	40
Outcomes and deliverables	41
KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables	42
Targeted stakeholders	42
Type of action	42
Specific topic conditions	42
3. AVAILABLE BUDGET	43
4. TIMETABLE AND DEADLINES	43
5. ADMISSIBILITY AND DOCUMENTS.....	44
6. ELIGIBILITY.....	45
Eligible participants (eligible countries).....	45
Consortium composition	46
Eligible activities	47
Geographic location (target countries).....	48
Ethics.....	48
Security	48
7. FINANCIAL AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND EXCLUSION	49
Financial capacity.....	49
Operational capacity.....	50
Exclusion	50
8. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCEDURE	51
9. AWARD CRITERIA.....	52
10. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL SET-UP OF THE GRANT AGREEMENTS	53
Starting date and project duration	53
Milestones and deliverables	54
Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount	54
Budget categories and cost eligibility rules	55
Reporting and payment arrangements	57
Prefinancing guarantees	58
Certificates.....	58
Liability regime for recoveries	58
Provisions concerning the project implementation	59
Other specificities	60
Non-compliance and breach of contract	60

11. HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION	60
12. HELP	61
13. IMPORTANT.....	62
ANNEX 1	65
ANNEX 2	68

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of **Cloud, Data and Artificial Intelligence** under the **Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)**.

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

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (Digital Europe Regulation 2021/694¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2021/2022 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Commission, Directorate-General for Communication, Networks, Content and Technology (DG CONNECT)**.

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD** – Market place for federated cloud-to-edge based services
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA** - Secretariat for the alliance on industrial data, edge and cloud
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE** - Testing and experimentation facility for edge AI
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH** - Secretariat for the alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL** – Preparatory actions for the green deal data space
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM** – Preparatory actions for the data space for smart communities
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB** – Preparatory actions for the data space for mobility
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT** - Preparatory actions for data spaces for manufacturing
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS** - Federated European infrastructure for genomics data
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE** – Data spaces support centre
- **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-AI** - Preparatory actions for the AI-on-demand platform

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.

¹ Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe programme (OJ L166, 11.05.2021).

² Commission Implementing Decision C/2021/7914 of 10.11.2021 concerning the adoption of the multiannual work programme for 2021 - 2022 and the financing decision for the implementation of the Digital Europe Programme.

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, activities that can be funded and the expected results (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)
 - 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*).

1. Background

The Specific Objective 2 of the Digital Europe Programme aims to reinforce the EU's core Artificial Intelligence (AI) capacities as a crucial driver for the digital transformation of the public and private sectors. The EU data strategy³ outlined the importance of building a thriving ecosystem of private actors to generate economic and societal value from data, while preserving high privacy, security, safety and ethical standards. It announced that the Commission will invest in a High Impact Project that will fund infrastructures, data-sharing tools, architectures and governance mechanisms for thriving data-sharing and Artificial Intelligence ecosystems.

To reach these objectives, three main interlinked work strands are foreseen in the first two years of implementation of the Digital Europe Programme:

- The deployment of **cloud-to-edge infrastructure and services** compliant with EU rules, notably on security, data protection and privacy and environmental aspects. Open-source by default, they will ensure fluid data

³ Communication from the Commission, A European strategy for data; COM/2020/66 final

flows. Completing the picture, the deployment of the Testing and Experimentation Facility for edge-AI will support the green transition with support to advanced low-power computing technologies. Such facility should be a role model in showing effective ways to comply with existing legislation, and taking into account relevant codes of conduct and guidelines.

- The deployment of a Data for EU strand with a focus on building **common data spaces**, based on the above federated cloud-to-edge infrastructure and services that are accessible to businesses and the public sector across the EU. The objective is the creation of data infrastructure with tailored governance mechanisms that will enable secure and cross-border access to key datasets in the targeted thematic areas. Focus will be on data spaces for Green deal, smart communities, mobility, manufacturing, agriculture, cultural heritage, health, media, skills, language technologies, financial sector, public administrations and tourism. Data spaces will be supported by a Data Space Support Centre in order to guarantee coordination between the various initiatives and guarantee that data could be accessed across different sectors. The centre will ensure the best use of the cloud-to-edge infrastructure and services to serve the needs of these data spaces.
- The deployment of **AI reference testing and experimentation facilities** with a focus on four prioritized application sectors (i.e. health, smart communities, manufacturing, and agriculture)⁴. These facilities will provide common, highly specialised resources to be shared at European level. In addition, the **AI-on-demand platform** will be consolidated as a catalogue of AI-based resources and marketplace, for trustworthy AI tools made in Europe for both private and public sector use.

The present call covers actions in the three aforementioned strands.

2. Objectives – Scope – Outcomes and deliverables – KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables – Targeted stakeholders – Type of action – specific topic conditions

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD – Market place for federated cloud-to-edge based services

Objectives

The objective is to deploy and operate an EU online marketplace for cloud and edge services. The marketplace should be the single point of access for trusted services, notably European cloud and edge services, building blocks deployed under the Common Services Platform developed under the Digital Europe Programme and more generally any software and data processing services developed under EU programmes such as the Digital Europe Programme, Horizon 2020 or Horizon Europe. It should as well complement the AI-on-demand platform, in providing access to the necessary cloud services. By facilitating access to these services for crucial EU sectors, the catalogue of curated services, i.e. of services that comply with EU rules and requirements, should improve the EU's open strategic autonomy. This will ensure that

⁴ The Commission has worked intensively with Member States to refine to prioritise the four selected sectors (see also the [Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence 2021 Review](#))

the digital transformation of the economy is undertaken on the basis of secure, fair, inclusive and resource-efficient infrastructures and services.

As a minimum, the EU online marketplace will provide a brokerage for the transaction and delivery of cloud infrastructures and services offered to entities from the public sector. Over time, it should become a critical resource for supplying cloud-to-edge services to the public sector, services of general interest and, where applicable, the private sector in particular SMEs. The call described in this section will be restricted according to the basis of art 12.6 of the Digital Europe Programme Regulation.

The marketplace itself should become self-sustainable financially and operationally by the end of this first grant. It should therefore be revenue-driven, wherever necessary. Its implementation, supervision of transparency and fair rules of operation and long-term sustainability should be guaranteed and governed by a broad range of relevant stakeholders (cloud service providers, cloud users, regulators, the public sector and civil society) who would for example, implement the principles included in the upcoming EU Cloud Rulebook⁵. The Commission will support the retained consortium in consulting relevant stakeholders to identify the appropriate governance.

Scope

The chosen project shall:

- Define clear rules for the open, fair and transparent functioning of the marketplace, including how these would be guaranteed in the long term through an appropriate and transparent governance structure in cooperation with (EU) public authorities;
- Deploy the technical infrastructure of the marketplace platform, with a focus on customer experience, user-friendliness, and inclusion and equality principles;
- Ensure that the marketplace is built over the cloud-to-edge middleware platform developed under the Digital Europe Programme;
- Operate the platform according to high security, energy and resource efficiency, data protection, ethical standards and interoperability/portability requirements;
- Ensure the integration of state-of-the-art identity and access management services on the marketplace platform to support its operations;
- Design a curation/vetting process, involving (EU) public authorities and auditing bodies, for services offered on the marketplace, notably for sector-specific services in regulated sectors (e.g. the public sector, health, energy, finance...);
- Adopt the appropriate governance to ensure the proper supervision of the marketplace by all relevant stakeholders, including EU and national public authorities and auditing agencies, fostering interconnections with similar marketplaces and service catalogues that exist in some Member States;

⁵ Foreseen in the EU Data Strategy, *ibid*

- Where marketplaces exist that are developed by Member States public authorities or that address specific areas (such as the AI-on-demand platform developed under the Digital Europe Programme), this marketplace will put in place the required mechanisms to offer a seamless and integrated end-user experience.
- Enable access on such platforms, through a single EU portal for cloud users, to an online catalogue of existing cloud-to-edge based service offerings (such as predictive analytics, data visualisation, edge services, Artificial Intelligence services and language technology services) that are compliant with a pre-defined set of EU rules and requirements (to be compiled in the EU Cloud Rulebook);
- Implement a service brokerage functionality to enable transactions between providers and users to take place on the marketplace;
- Ensure a vendor-neutral technical architecture and reference framework;
- Develop an agile and future-proof revenue model to cement long-term commercial viability of the EU online marketplace, while ensuring unbiased competition and strict vendor neutrality in the positioning of services on the marketplace; and, (If necessary), ensure the integration of trusted payment services on the marketplace platform to facilitate transactions;
- Report regularly (at least once per month) to the Commission throughout the deployment phase of the project.

Where possible, open source software should be used for the development of the marketplace, notably to demonstrate transparency, vendor- independence and neutrality in the offering of services on the platform.

In order to foster common building blocks, the project supported under this action will liaise with those supported by the Data Spaces Support Centre in the areas of data spaces, pool data provision, demand for the cloud and the promotion of competitive and seamless access and use of cloud infrastructures and services.

Outcomes and deliverables

Outcomes:

- Strengthen the competitiveness and the innovation of the European economy and of Common Data Spaces in the green digital age.
- Improve availability of highly trustworthy, curated cloud and edge services that serve the interests of crucial sectors dealing with sensitive data, such as the public sector.
- Increase cloud-to-edge services uptake among public entities and private sectors that lag behind in cloud adoption, such as the European health sector.

Deliverables:

- The proper governance mechanism to supervise the marketplace by all relevant stakeholders, possibly through the setup of a legal entity.
- A large-scale and user-friendly interoperable European marketplace for cloud-to-edge based services for public and private entities across the EU and

Common Data Spaces. Interconnections of the marketplace with existing national cloud marketplaces.

KPIs to measure 'Outcomes and deliverable'

Impact 1: Design and offer an EU marketplace for federated cloud-to-edge based services: KPI a: Number of European cloud-to-edge based services offered on the marketplace. KPI b: Number of functionalities offered by the marketplaces: (a) catalogue, (b) brokerage, (c) transaction, (d) delivery of federated cloud to edge based services). KPI c: Number of unique user organisations on the marketplace. KPI d: average frequency of use of the marketplace by client organisations. KPI e: diversity of stakeholders involved: (i) public entities, (ii) companies, (iii) SMEs and (iv) actors of Common Data Spaces. KPI f: user satisfaction

Targeted stakeholders

European cloud providers, public entities, SMEs, telecommunication companies, IoT and edge providers, software companies, IT professional service companies, security companies, green service companies and providers and users of Common Data Spaces.

Type of action

Simple Grants — 50% funding rate

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

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (*see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2*)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*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:
 - N/A

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA - Secretariat for the alliance on industrial data, edge and cloud

Objectives

This action is set to support the operational activities of the European Alliance for Industrial data, Cloud and Edge launched by the European Commission on 19 July 2021⁶.

⁶ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/cloud-alliance>

The Alliance stems from the European strategy for data from 19 February 2020 and the European industrial strategy updated on 5 March 2021. Its purpose is to gather relevant stakeholders, including industry, civil society organisations, Member States representatives and other experts, from across Europe, in view of strengthening Europe's industrial capacities in disruptive cloud and edge technologies. The Alliance should help to overcome the current fragmentation of the European cloud market, and foster the engagement of actors of the cloud and data ecosystem currently acting mainly at local and national level.

The activities of the Alliance will contribute to deliver on the EU's digital targets for 2030, including the establishment of climate-neutral, highly resource and energy-efficient, sustainable data centres; the deployment of 10,000 climate-neutral highly secure edge nodes across the EU; and raising the percentage of European enterprises using advanced cloud computing services in Europe to 75%.

The Alliance will focus on fostering the joint development and deployment of next generation EU native cloud and edge technologies that meet the requirements to process Europe's sensitive personal and/or highly sensitive business and public sector data sets, by addressing use cases for all sectors of the economy, as well as the need of common European Data Spaces. It will also provide expertise on standards and requirements for cloud services operating in the EU market.

In carrying out its tasks, the Alliance should seek to foster and create synergies with other relevant EU investment initiatives (e.g. in connected technology areas such as AI, HPC, 5G). The Alliance should be connected to other regional and global market developments on data and cloud by creating synergies with initiatives, such as Gaia-X.

The Secretariat should support the work of the members of the Alliance in carrying out the main tasks of the Alliance:

- Leverage investment synergies across EU and Member States for joint development and deployment of the next generation of European cloud and edge technologies, by helping to streamline all available investment resources, including EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Digital Europe Programme, Connecting Europe Facility 2 and the European Defence Fund), national programmes (including funded by NextGeneration EU), as well as private investment instruments (e.g. EIB).
- Creating synergies with the deployment of common European data spaces, in close cooperation with the future Data Spaces Support Centre, and foster solutions that meet the needs of European businesses and public sector dealing with sensitive personal, and highly sensitive business and public sector data.
- Providing expertise on common standards and requirements in the context of the preparation of the EU Rulebook as well as the development of common specifications for public procurement of cloud services, as foreseen in the European strategy for data.

Scope

- In practice, the secretariat should provide following support services to the Alliance:
- Assist, advise and help coordinate the work of the Alliance including the development of work programmes and roadmaps.
- Support the day to day stakeholder-led operational work of the Alliance

- Edit the processing, approval and publication of the documents agreed by the alliance.
- Provide a digital collaborative working space, and administrative support for the organisation and the follow-up of relevant thematic working groups, in close cooperation with the Chair/Vice-Chairs, in view of delivering on the Alliance's milestones;
- Set up and maintain a dedicated service with practical aids for the decision procedures of the Alliance
- Provide logistical support and handle the practical organisation of meetings, workshops and events agreed by the Alliance. This includes announcements, registration facilities, draft agendas, reports, notes, minutes, physical or virtual hosting, meeting rooms, translation, report taking and communications.
- Preparation and organisation of the annual General Assembly with all members of the Alliance, in close coordination with the European Commission and the Steering committee of the Alliance;
- Preparation and organisation of the annual Alliance Forum with all members of the Alliance and interested stakeholders, in close coordination with the European Commission;
- Disseminate the Alliance's work
- Provide communication services to ensure the work of the Alliance is available and known
- Create and maintain an Alliance's website and ensuring day-to-day content creation to inform the broader audience about the Alliance's activities.
- Expand and ensure a representative Alliance community by promoting the Alliance towards relevant stakeholders that meet the eligibility criteria;
- Provide support and assistance to individual members on the procedures of the Alliance
- Support the on-boarding new members in the Alliance's work.
- Shape the work of the Alliance for building and maintaining a strategic industrial vision on investment technology priorities in cloud and edge technologies
- Coordinate communications with the European Commission and any other external organization including the Common European Data Spaces on behalf of the Alliance
- Manage financial aspects, the IT services, legal services and the human resources.

The Secretariat of the Alliance should ensure the principles of inclusivity and diversity for the activities it is entrusted with.

Outcomes and deliverables

The Secretariat of the European Alliance is expected to deliver::

- Annual Report on the work of the secretariat including at least financial states of the secretariat, accession requests, meetings held and list of documents delivered by the Alliance
- Rolling Roadmap for Cloud and Edge in Europe
- Editorial support for position papers
- Handbooks on access procedures and decision-taking of the Alliance
- Meeting minutes
- Workshop reports

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Number of Alliance members engaged and active in the network and contributing in the thematic working groups as well as attending the General Assembly;
- Number of Member states covered by the Alliance
- Number of alliance members engaging in cross-sectoral strategic partnership to provide the technology solutions identified by the Alliance;
- Number of total and external participants in workshops and events
- Delivery delay between events and meetings/workshops reports Alliance stakeholders satisfaction

Targeted stakeholders

The consortium should be representative of the European data processing value chain and of the technology priorities of the Alliance⁷, including the supply and user side. It should be representative of the types of stakeholders that are eligible to the Alliance (industry, civil society, public sector, academic, and other experts) and guarantee the Union's security (including cybersecurity) and public policy interests. The consortium should be inclusive and diverse, in terms of gender and geography.

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (see section 10)

⁷ See Section 3 of the Terms of Reference of the European Alliance for Industrial Data, Edge and Cloud: <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/dae/redirection/document/78363>

- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - o 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-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE - Testing and experimentation facility for edge AI

Objectives

The overall aim of the Testing and Experimentation Facility (TEF) for Edge AI hardware is to ensure the availability in Europe of trusted, high-performance, low-power edge components and technologies to support the massive data-processing requirements of AI and the digital transformation. The emergence of novel computing paradigms, such as neuromorphic, provides an opportunity for the European industry to take the lead in a new generation of edge and distributed computing systems.

The Edge AI TEF will also contribute to societal challenges, in terms of:

- supporting the implementation of the Green Deal, by reducing energy consumption versus centralised computing solutions, also thanks to ground-breaking ultra-low power operation (100 to 1000 times more efficient) and very limited use of the data infrastructure (data transmission consumes even more energy than computing); further, edge AI components enable environmental monitoring as well as increased energy-efficiency of buildings and smart cities;
- protection of personal data and privacy by processing within the edge device;
- security and resilience avoiding or limiting dependency on the network;
- safety and efficiency by reducing latency to near-real-time (e.g. for automotive or manufacturing applications).
- European sovereignty in generation and management of sensitive data with trusted, secure components;
- Open technological autonomy by reducing and diversifying strategic dependencies on components that may expose the EU to supply chain disruptions and security vulnerabilities, or not respecting European values in terms of safety, privacy, AI, equality, ethics or environmental aspects.

Scope

This project aims at delivering a European platform that will enable companies to develop, test and experiment AI product prototypes based on advanced low-power computing technologies, custom-designed for their application environment. It involves the set-up of facilities for design, fabrication, integration and verification, employing leading-edge equipment with advanced semiconductor process and fabrication technologies. Such a platform will be able to bring novel embedded AI technologies to high Technology Readiness Levels (TRLs), delivering prototypes for field validation that can significantly accelerate industrialization and time-to-market for edge AI components, resulting in a competitive advantage for the European ecosystem.

The TEF will realise a joint distributed platform (pilot line) to be led by EU centres of excellence in microelectronics technologies for advanced computing and key industrial actors of the microelectronics ecosystem such as integrated device manufacturers (IDMs) foundries and system integrators. The platform will be open to exploitation by EU industries, including SMEs, through direct support or through projects funded by other European or National programmes. In particular, strong cooperation is envisaged with the Joint Undertaking on Key Digital Technologies, which may support projects in close coordination with the TEF on Edge AI, as well as other EU partnerships in the area of AI, HPC, 5G/6G and cloud computing. Opportunities for future synergies with related actions on quantum computing infrastructure will also be evaluated.

Through the collaboration of a network of European Digital Innovation Hubs, the Edge AI TEF will provide also SMEs and Start-ups with fast and simple access to world-class testing facilities, rich networks of stakeholders and potential customers.

In cooperation with the sectorial TEFs in Manufacturing, Agri-food, Healthcare, Smart communities, the AI components delivered by the Edge AI TEF can be implemented in connected autonomous objects to be integrated in a distributed AI platform for applications such as industrial Internet of Things (IoT), precision agriculture, autonomous vehicles, implanted/wearable medical devices.

The selection of projects to be supported by the Edge AI TEF will be based on the character of innovation, on the business potential and on the strategic dimension for Europe.

The TEF infrastructure will put in place advanced semiconductor equipment that may also serve as a basis for quantum computing technologies, therefore opportunities for synergies with related Digital Europe actions on quantum computing infrastructure will be evaluated.

The first phase of the project will focus on the procurement, installation and preparation of the infrastructure, developing the necessary interfaces and testing of existing solutions, and the development of frameworks for hardware/software co-design and prototyping. In the following phases, the project will develop innovative prototypes employing the most advanced architectures and technologies beyond the state-of-the-art, incorporating energy efficiency, operational trust and security, which will be tested and validated in the respective field of application, before transfer for industrialization and production by IDMs or foundries. Personnel costs incurred by beneficiaries to carry out the above activities next to procurement, will be considered eligible.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Procurement and preparation of the infrastructure
- Equipment installation, design tool finalisation, definition of device functionalities with users, distribution
- Production of System Exploration Platform software for emulation of hardware
- Progress of key building blocks (such as sensing, in-memory computing, 3D architectures) to higher TRLs and validation of their design kits
- Integration of building blocks into solutions, implementing rules and procedures for testing and transfer to industry

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Achievement of infrastructure development milestones according to workplan
- Software tools available and validated


- Integration of platforms across the different sites
- Demonstrated progress towards higher TRL levels in relevant processes
- Maturity of process, stability and yield
- Performance improvements vs current state-of-the-art in terms of power efficiency

Targeted stakeholders

The consortium should include Research and Technology Organisations with advanced logic nodes infrastructure, and may involve silicon wafer manufacturers, device manufacturers, IC design companies, system integrators.

Type of action

Grants for Procurement – 50% funding rate

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

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (*see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2*)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: full costs only
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - N/A

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH - Secretariat for the alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies

Objectives

This action is set to support the operational activities of the industrial Alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies launched by the European Commission on 19 July 2021⁸. The Alliance stems from the European industrial strategy updated on 5 March 2021. Its purpose is to gather relevant stakeholders, including industry, Member States representatives and other experts, with relevant activities in the EU and EEA in view of strengthening Europe's industrial capacities in the design and manufacturing of advanced processors and other electronic components.

The Alliance⁹ should reinforce the European electronics design ecosystem, in particular including design at leading-edge nodes and open-source hardware

⁸ <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/alliance-processors-and-semiconductor-technologies>

⁹ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/api/document/78327>

solutions, to develop the most powerful and resource efficient processors. It should also support the establishment of the necessary manufacturing capacity, which may include assembly testing and advanced packaging, by a diversified mix of local and global players, to produce the next generation of trusted processors and other electronic components and technologies needed to meet this objective. This will translate into a twin track to be developed in parallel: moving Europe towards a production capacity of 16 nm to 10 nm, as well as below 5 nm to 2 nm (and beyond).

The activities of the Alliance will contribute to deliver on the EU's digital targets for 2030, by addressing use cases for all sectors of the economy, notably mobility, communications, industrial manufacturing, security, and health.

In carrying out its tasks, the Alliance should seek, among others, to foster and create synergies and to ensure the efficient cross-coordination between various public and private initiatives of R&D, innovation and deployment in electronic components and systems. It also should foster new collaboration and partnership across its participants, including SMEs, reinforcing the ecosystem and bringing about new investment opportunities.

Scope

The Secretariat shall support the day-to-day work of the members of the Alliance in carrying out the main tasks of the Alliance as defined in the Alliance Terms of Reference¹⁰. These latter would notably perform planning, analysis and identification of critical gaps in the semiconductor value chain, development of strategic objectives and roadmaps, leverage investment and innovation synergies.

This action also consists in providing the following support services to the Alliance:

- organisation and administrative support of relevant thematic working groups, and their follow up, in view of ensuring progress towards and delivering on the Alliance's milestones, in close collaboration with the Chair/Vice-Chairs;
- operations of a Member States' platform to enhance coherence and synergies across activities, in particular, with the IPCEI, the Key Digital Technologies Joint Undertaking, the Digital Europe Programme, the European Defence Fund, national programmes and the Pact for Skills, as well as private investment instruments (e.g. EIB),
- Preparation and organisation of the annual General Assembly and Forum, and follow-up with all members of the Alliance, in close coordination with the European Commission and the Steering committee of the Alliance;
- communication and exchanges between the European Commission, Alliance members and all other stakeholders with an interest in the fields of work of the Alliance.
- Disseminating the Alliance's work
- Creation and maintenance of the Alliance's website, a digital collaboration platform and day-to-day content creation to inform the broader audience about the Alliance's activities
- Expand and ensure a representative Alliance community by promoting the Alliance towards relevant stakeholders that meet the eligibility criteria;

¹⁰ <https://ec.europa.eu/newsroom/api/document/78326>

- Support the on-boarding new members in the Alliance's work.

The Secretariat of the Alliance shall ensure the principles of open access, transparency and necessity for the activities it is entrusted with.

Outcomes and deliverables

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

- The development of strategic roadmaps and research and investment plans for processor design, including at leading-edge nodes and alternative architectures, for example through open-source hardware, that support significant improvements in energy performance and speed;
- The development of strategic roadmaps and research and investment plans for advanced process technology manufacturing, including at leading nodes towards the 2nm, that takes into account the full semiconductor value-chain;
- The identification of obstacles and bottlenecks for the advancement of processor design and advanced manufacturing capabilities;
- The identification of the needs of end-users for the next decade;
- The creation of more opportunities for exploitation by SMEs of advanced chip technologies in innovative products;
- The reinforcement of the technology transfers between academia and the industry, including early-stage companies;
- The creation of upskilling and reskilling opportunities for workers and students.

It will deliver a platform of support services of the Alliance's members, working groups, steering committees and the relevant events and meetings as described above.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

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

Targeted stakeholders

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

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2)
- 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 proposal addresses environmental sustainability and the European Green Deal goals, in terms of direct effects and/or in awareness of environmental effects

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL – Preparatory actions for the European green deal data space

Objectives

The European Green Deal Data space will develop as the data ecosystems¹¹ of the strategies and actions plans for the European Green Deal. In particular:

- The [2030 Biodiversity strategy](#)¹²
- The EU Forest Strategy for 2030¹³
- The [Zero-pollution action plan](#)¹⁴
- The [Chemicals strategy for sustainability](#)¹⁵
- The [Circular economy action plan](#)¹⁶
- The [Climate change adaptation strategy](#)¹⁷

¹¹ Data ecosystem: a platform that combines data from numerous providers and builds value through the usage of processed data.

¹² European Commission, [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Bringing nature back into our lives](#), COM(2020) 380

¹³ European Commission, [Communication on the New EU Forest Strategy for 2030](#), COM(2021) 572

¹⁴ European Commission, [Pathway to a Healthy Planet for All. EU Action Plan: 'Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil'](#), COM(2021) 400

¹⁵ European Commission, [Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability. Towards a Toxic-Free Environment](#), COM(2020) 667, with [Annex](#)

¹⁶ European Commission, [A New Circular Economy Action Plan for a Cleaner and More Competitive Europe](#), COM(2020)98

- The Farm to Fork strategy¹⁸
- The [Sustainable and smart mobility strategy](#)¹⁹
- [The Environmental Compliance Assurance strategy and action plan](#)²⁰

The European Green Deal data space will interconnect currently fragmented and dispersed data from various data ecosystems, both for/from the private and public sector. It will offer an interoperable, trusted IT environment, for data management and processing, and a set of rules of legislative, administrative and contractual nature that determine the rights of access to and processing of the data.

The Green Deal Data space will support activities and integrate data assets from the Horizon Europe programme²¹, the [EU Space programme](#), in particular the [Copernicus programme](#)²², the European Marine Observation and Data network (EMODnet)²³.

The Green Deal data space will be set up in synergy with other actions supported by the Digital Europe Work Programme, in particular:

- Relevant high quality data expected to derive from the activities related to High Value Datasets in the framework of the Public sector Open data for AI and Open Data Platform.
- The development of other sectoral data spaces where relevant for the European Green Deal (e.g. the Smart Communities Data Space, the Mobility Data Space, the Energy Data Space, the Agricultural Data Space, the Data Space for Public Administrations, the European Open Science Cloud, the industrial (manufacturing) data space.
- The Destination Earth initiative.

Scope

The action will establish a data governance mechanism, with a detailed roadmap on how the data space should progressively develop into a pan-European Green Deal data space, by connecting EU programmes, national, regional and local data ecosystems at EU level.

The roadmap should describe how to integrate the various activities contributing to the European Green Deal data space in line with existing policy priorities and existing

¹⁷ European Commission, [Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), COM/2021/82 final

¹⁸ European Commission, Communication on A Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food system, COM(2020) 381

¹⁹ European Commission, [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future](#), COM(2020) 789, annex ([action plan](#)), [supporting document](#) SWD(2020) 331

²⁰ EU actions to improve environmental compliance and governance, COM/2018/010 final

²¹ In particular those funded under Cluster 4 “Digital, Industry and Space”, Cluster 5 “Climate, energy and Mobility”, Cluster 6 “Food, Bioeconomy, Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment” and the relevant Missions) and the space programmes (e.g. Galileo and Copernicus) providing massive amounts of data including in real time

²² [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/696 establishing the Union Space Programme and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme.](#)

²³ [European Marine Observation and Data Network \(EMODnet\) \(europa.eu\)](#)

initiatives, enabling all relevant actors to access and use the data needed for their purposes in compliance with the dataspace governance scheme.

For the development of dataspace governance scheme, the action will have to interact with the '[GreenData4All](#)' initiative²⁴.

The action will have to work in partnership with the Data Spaces Support Centre in order to ensure alignment with the European Data Spaces Technical Framework and the rest of the ecosystem of data spaces. The joint work will target the definition of:

- the data space reference architecture, building blocks and common toolboxes to be used;
- the common standards, including semantic standards and interoperability protocols, both domain-specific;
- The data governance models, business models and strategies for running data spaces.

The action should also establish links to relevant initiatives under the Green Deal to ensure a user-driven development of the data space, in particular those (e.g. Horizon Europe activities such as the Green Deal Missions) that will provide significant opportunities to test, experiment and up-scale the input to and use of the data space with local partners.

Applicants are invited to describe in the proposal the concrete methodology they will put in place and the full range of activities contemplated for each of the objectives presented. The work plan should detail how the project objectives will be achieved and provide concrete milestones as well as relevant KPIs for each objective.

Outcomes and deliverables

- A sustainable data governance scheme as well as a blueprint that connects existing national, regional and local data ecosystems and enables public and private stakeholders to access relevant data;
- A priority list of types of datasets relevant to the European Green Deal strategies and actions plans;
- A roadmap towards the common European Green Deal data space

KPIs to measure 'Outcomes and deliverable'

Number of data spaces/ecosystems/communities contributing to the roadmap for the future EU Green Deal data space

Targeted stakeholders

Consortium should be representative of the community under the INSPIRE Directive and the stakeholders (policy, science, business) around the Destination Earth initiative as well as stakeholders relevant for Green Deal priority actions such as climate change, circular economy, zero-pollution, biodiversity, forestation and environmental compliance assurance.

Type of action

²⁴ [GreenData4All – updated rules on geospatial environmental data and access to environmental information \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/en/press-communications/infographic/infographic-green-data-4-all-2021-08-10-100x100x100x100.pdf)

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (see section 6)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: 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

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM - Preparatory actions for the data space for smart communitiesObjectives

The **data space for smart communities** will bring together existing local data ecosystems, and relevant stakeholders, public and private, to join efforts and identify common principles for sharing large pools of data at the EU level²⁵, ensuring wide geographical coverage²⁶. The identification of common priority datasets linked to the environment and climate-related challenges will create the necessary critical mass and increase the potential for sharing data solutions between communities across borders and sectors and help them meet the objectives of the European Green Deal. The action will contribute to the definition of the technical infrastructure for data sharing across relevant domains (in particular, traffic, electricity, pollution, extreme weather events, water, sewage, waste management, urban infrastructure, etc.), in order to create cross-domain innovation²⁷ and move towards the Green transition in each local context²⁸.

Scope

²⁵ For support to communities less advanced in establishing data ecosystems, see topic middleware.

²⁶ As stipulated in the DEP Regulation Art 16(3)-(4)

²⁷ In compliance with existing sectoral legislation

²⁸ For inspiration and background information see the Workshop Report of the Expert Consultation held on 25/06/2020 here: : <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/expert-workshop-common-european-smart-communities-data-space>, the Workshop on 'Data-driven cities : fostering common data spaces for urban sustainability' held on 08/12/2020 : <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/data-driven-communities-fostering-local-data-ecosystem-sustainability> as well as the series of workshops on B2G data sharing: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/b2g-data-sharing-cities-series-5-workshops>

Smart cities and communities use digital technologies to improve resource management, address complex challenges and improve the quality of life for their citizens. Together with the Digital Twins developed under the Destination Earth initiative, they are therefore at the forefront of the envisaged 'twin digital and green' transition and facilitate cities' and communities' systemic transformation towards climate-neutrality by digital means, as foreseen by the Horizon Europe Mission on 'Climate-neutral and smart cities'²⁹ and the Mission on 'Adaptation to Climate Change'. Despite the efforts of opening up their data, most EU cities and communities are not yet fully benefitting from the opportunities data offer. Current developments show that from merely making services and data available online, governments and local administrations are now moving towards the paradigm of data sharing.

The data space for smart communities should create a secure IT environment for data sharing across relevant domains in a local context. The first activities, supported through this call will ensure the establishment of a data governance mechanism, with a detailed roadmap on how the data space should progressively develop into a pan-European smart communities' data space, by connecting these local data ecosystems at EU level. Tapping into common datasets, under similar conditions will facilitate the development and portability of data-driven services. In addition, as highlighted by the Coordinated Plan on AI³⁰, by bringing together the necessary stakeholders, developing and sharing algorithms trained on high quality local data, it will facilitate the increase of AI-enabled data services and foster a European market for AI-enabled urban digital solutions. While cities and communities may be able to leverage useful data for their purposes, the mechanisms often do not scale up and fail to lead to a European network of local data ecosystems.

The action should therefore, aim at setting up a common framework for the progressive connection of local data ecosystems in the EU. It should, first, (i) develop a multi-stakeholder data governance scheme and, second, (ii) a so-called 'blueprint' for the data space for smart communities. It should also (iii) bring an agreed set of priority datasets into conformity with the new blueprint standards and principles and propose a strategy for their take-up. Finally, it should (iv) develop a roadmap towards a full-fledged pan-EU smart communities' data space. The selected solutions should be open, based on common standards, APIs and interoperable data formats and commonly agreed, open architectural approaches.

First, in order to develop the data governance scheme, the project should bring together relevant stakeholders and sectors, starting from the most promising use cases related to the Green Deal objectives (see validation pilots in the Work Programme section 2.2.1.2.2.) at local level and support their progressive harmonisation. It should identify common principles, roles and responsibilities, clarify access rights, conditions for processing, re-use of data, as well as appropriately address personal data management, data protection and trust. These aspects could be supported by various functionalities deemed relevant by the stakeholders³¹. The data governance scheme should also define how data quality will be ensured and how the data space will be managed and owned in future.

²⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/horizon-europe-next-research-and-innovation-framework-programme/mission-area-climate-neutral-and-smart-cities_en

³⁰ COM(2018) 795 final

³¹ E.g. The Data Governance Act (COM(2020) 767 final) identifies different types of data intermediaries, handling both personal and non-personal data.

Second, the consortium should create a blueprint, a detailed plan that guides stakeholders through the principles and processes of data sharing; defining roles, responsibilities and processes. It should propose an architecture for the connection of local data ecosystems at EU level that will secure easy, cross-border access to key datasets in the targeted area. It shall serve as a rulebook with regard to handling legal, business, technical and administrative issues. It should promote commonly agreed tools, standards and templates as well as a code of conduct.

Third, stakeholders will jointly agree on the core datasets³² / data themes (with relevance for the Green Deal objectives, in particular those related to mobility, climate change adaptation, energy flows, urban infrastructure as well for pursuing the zero pollution ambitions) to be accessed, shared, and re-used across EU cities and communities, following similar conditions. Geolocation / spatial data would be important to consider³³, as well as relevant datasets from the INSPIRE Directive³⁴ and the High Value Datasets³⁵.

Finally, the consortium should develop a roadmap towards a full-fledged pan-EU smart communities' data space, which, based on the validation pilots (see Work Programme section 2.2.1.2.2.) can enable a swift move to a full scale data sharing environment for smart cities and communities.

The data space should ensure inclusive citizen participation and be demand-led; both addressing cities' and communities' concrete needs as well as ensuring a citizen-oriented service design. It should spur innovation and improve decision-making as well as allow the creation of new smart city applications that can be ported from community to community.

The action will have to work in partnership with the Data Spaces Support Centre (see topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE) in order to ensure alignment with the European Data Spaces Technical Framework and the rest of the ecosystem of data spaces in Work Programme section 2.2.1 thereof. The joint work will target the definition of:

- the data space reference architecture, building blocks and common toolboxes to be used;
- the common standards, including semantic standards and interoperability protocols, both domain-specific and crosscutting. This needs to be built on work already made at EU and national level;

³² Datasets are a collection of related sets of information that are composed of separate elements but can be manipulated as a unit by a computer, while data themes are a higher level categorisation of subject.

³³ See the Workshop Report of the Expert Consultation held on 25/06/2020 here: <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/expert-workshop-common-european-smart-communities-data-space> as well as the Workshop on 'Data-driven cities : fostering common data spaces for urban sustainability' held on 08/12/2020 : <https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/events/data-driven-communities-fostering-local-data-ecosystem-sustainability>

³⁴ <https://inspire-geoportal.ec.europa.eu/>

³⁵ The Open Data Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/1024) introduces the concept of High Value Datasets (HVD). Organisations in the scope of the Directive will have to make those datasets available free of charge, in machine-readable format and via APIs, and, where relevant, as a bulk download. The implementing regulation with a list of HVDs will be published in Q2 2021. (<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/5b20f52a-db7e-11ea-adf7-01aa75ed71a1/language-en>).

- The data governance models, business models and strategies for running data spaces.

Furthermore, the project is encouraged to cooperate with the Testing and Experimentation Facility for smart cities and communities (see Work Programme topic 2.3.2.4.), to define European test and training data sets and to provide support in their establishment.

The activities related to the creation of a **data space for smart communities** will include the following:

- Development of a multi-stakeholder **data governance scheme**, bringing together local data ecosystem stakeholders, to jointly work on a European data space for smart communities. The data governance scheme should include common principles, clarity on access rights, conditions for accessing, sharing, processing and re-use as well as rules on how to open up existing data ecosystems; all in line with EU principles and values as well as relevant, existing legislation³⁶. It should also consider the importance of personal data management and take into account past and ongoing work done on this issue, in line with the GDPR.
- Elaboration of a **blueprint for the European data space for smart communities** based on existing EU legislation and data policies, as well as on common principles agreed at sector or local levels. It should contain rules on how data elements are published, shared and re-used, assuring a uniform delivery of services and data. It should also define common principles for ensuring a minimum level of data categorisation, curation (for the quality of the data), cataloguing (to offer intelligent discovery) and crowdsourcing (to engage other data owners at local level). The blueprint should propose an appropriate conceptual architecture and when appropriate, refer to existing **building blocks**³⁷, comply with commonly agreed standards and principles³⁸ and ensure interoperability. It should address, or extend where relevant, mechanisms for bringing non-regulatory measures such as recommended standard contract terms for services and data access, specifications for quality (certification), transactions functionalities ('clearing house'), security and privacy (including trust and identity), and ensuring these are applied across all local data ecosystems.
- Bring an agreed set of priority **datasets** and data themes (public, private, including citizen-collected, etc.)³⁹, including real time data, into conformity with the new blueprint standards and principles for the connected data space for smart communities. A strategy on how to make them accessible, reusable and interoperable across domains and borders in the data space should be addressed.

³⁶ such as the ITS Directive (2010/40/EU) and its Delegated Regulations

³⁷ Technologies such as eID (digital identity), eDelivery (secure data exchange), the Context Broker and the Big Data Test Infrastructure and others, already widely used by EU-wide cross-border systems, should be considered to facilitate interoperability among the actors.

³⁸ Following for example the Minimal Interoperability Mechanisms (MIMs) Plus, work of SEMIC, the reference community for semantic interoperability, the INSPIRE and location interoperability data models, SAREF as well as the forthcoming interoperability framework for smart cities and communities (EIF4SCC).

³⁹ In addition to the relevant High Value Datasets.

- Developing a **roadmap towards a fully-fledged, connected pan-EU smart communities' data space**. The roadmap should include plans for standardisation, stakeholders' engagement, middleware development, plans for the connection of local data ecosystems in synergy with the work of the Data Spaces Support Centre (see topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE), as well as a long-term (economic) sustainability plan to ensure the smooth transfer of assets and specifications, and any related IPRs to any organisation that will own or manage the commons in the future.

The activities (and expected outcomes) will be validated, and improved through pilot projects to be funded later in the Work Programme (see section 2.2.1.2.2.). The European data space for smart communities will benefit from other relevant data spaces and the work accomplished by other DIGITAL programme actions⁴⁰ such as the Common Services Platform, whenever necessary. The data space for smart communities will grow organically and will progressively work towards a vendor-agnostic infrastructure (benefitting from the work done elsewhere in the DIGITAL programme) and should build on the different EU initiatives⁴¹ and data ecosystems⁴² and strengthening EU repositories of data. The CSA is therefore, required to consider using the forthcoming cloud-to-edge-based services as well as the smart middleware platforms. The project will also have to ensure a close collaboration with the Data Spaces Support Centre for the identification of common components such as building blocks, standards and interoperability mechanisms. Furthermore, the project is encouraged to cooperate with the Testing and Experimentation Facilities for smart cities and communities (see Work Programme topic 2.3.2.4), to define European test and training data sets and to provide support in their establishment. The action should also establish links to those Horizon Europe missions that work with communities and cities as key implementing partners (e.g. Mission on Climate Neutral and Smart Cities and Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change), which would provide significant opportunities to test, experiment and up-scale the input to and use of the data space with local partners.

Applicants are invited to describe in the proposal the concrete methodology they will put in place and the full range of activities contemplated for each of the objectives presented. The work plan should detail how the project objectives will be achieved and provide concrete milestones as well as relevant KPIs for each objective.

Outcomes and deliverables

- A sustainable **data governance scheme as well as a blueprint for the common European data space for smart communities**, including a **priority list of compliant datasets** that connects existing local data ecosystems and EU systems and enables (public and private) stakeholders such as SMEs and others to develop cross-sector, cross-community, AI-enabled data services;
- A detailed **roadmap** towards a full-fledged **pan-EU smart communities' data space** that will be interconnected with the Green Deal data space (see also Work Programme topic 2.2.1.1), and will include a set of technical

⁴⁰ The action should follow activities of other dataspace promoted by the Digital and Horizon Europe programmes such as the mobility, energy, public sector and other future dataspace.

⁴¹ E.g. Copernicus land monitoring service pan-EU and local component, ISPIRE, Destination Earth, etc.

⁴² It should also consider the importance of personal data management and take into account past and ongoing work done on this issue, in line with the GDPR.

specifications for interoperability with the European Data Spaces Technical Framework.

KPIs to measure 'Outcomes and deliverable'

- Number of cities or communities (geographical coverage) involved/supporting the established governance scheme
- Number of priority data sets agreed as part of the data space
- Number of validation workshops including a wide range of EU and Member States organisations representing smart cities and communities, EU standardisation bodies as well as public and private data owners at local level

Targeted stakeholders

Consortium should involve private and public organisations with relevant experience in smart and sustainable cities' solutions or any other organisation (such as data brokers, data stewards, data integrators) participating in data interoperability activities, as well as public and private users from cities and communities. Other stakeholders could include representatives from the public sector, industry, academia, standards organisations, civil society and citizens.

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (*see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2*)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic following reimbursement option for equipment costs apply: 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

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB – Preparatory actions for the data space for mobility

Objectives

The objective is to contribute to the further development of the common European mobility data space announced in the Data Strategy and in the Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, built and operated in full compliance with existing EU legislation in the mobility and transport sectors.

The specific aim is to support the creation of a technical infrastructure combined with governance mechanisms that will facilitate easy, cross-border access to key data resources in this area, on the basis of and in full alignment with existing and upcoming mobility and transport initiatives (some of which are regulated) that are organising the sharing of data for both passengers and freight in the domains and become an integral part of the emerging European data and cloud services infrastructure.

Scope

Under the control of Commission services, **support** will be provided to the ongoing Commission initiative launched on the common European mobility data space, in particular on:

- making an inventory of existing data platforms and marketplaces (“data ecosystems”) which allow storage, processing or sharing of mobility and transport data. Bringing these initiatives together by mapping and providing a catalogue of transport data eco-systems, as well as describing the data types, data quality, related access conditions and (web)links.
- identifying gaps and overlaps of data currently covered (or not covered) by existing initiatives in view of possibly launching additional initiatives to cover such gaps.
- identifying common building blocks which could contribute to the long-term convergence of existing and new data-related initiatives in transport, serving private, public and industrial data sharing. Explore possible options for suitable frameworks for sharing, managing data exchange across existing and emerging data initiatives in the mobility sector. Include reflections on incentives schemes to motivate participants to provide data.
- identifying opportunities for integrating the mobility data space and/or data ecosystems in the emerging European data and cloud services infrastructure.

The awarded consortium will work in liaison with the Data Spaces Support Centre (topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE) and the Alliance for Industrial Data, Cloud and Edge, to ensure alignment with the European Data Spaces Technical Framework with and the rest of the ecosystem in section work programme section 2.2.1 thereof, notably concerning common tools such as:

- a data space reference architecture, building blocks, common toolboxes and cloud services;
- common standards, including semantic standards and interoperability protocols, both domain-specific and crosscutting;
- data governance models, business models and strategies for running data spaces, with the aim to recommend possible common tools, building on existing data ecosystems.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Inventory of existing platforms sharing data relevant for mobility.
- An analysis regarding gaps and overlaps of data, and identifying potential common building blocks, feeding into the Commission preparatory work establishing the mobility data space.

KPIs to measure 'Outcomes and deliverable'

- Effectiveness of the approach in terms of appropriate representativeness of private sector, associations, advisors, third parties, public administration and/or governmental bodies.
- Quality and credibility of the analysis for the mobility data space and coherence of the recommended building blocks with the European Data Spaces Technical Framework and other sectorial data spaces.

Targeted stakeholders

Consortium should include at least suppliers and users mainly represented by their associations, leading research institutes, and organisation with legal expertise and key competences in mobility, economics, data and cloud technologies.

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (see section 6)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: 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

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT - Preparatory actions for data spaces for manufacturing

Objectives

The preparatory action will establish a multi-stakeholder data governance, an inventory of existing data platforms for manufacturing and a blueprint for manufacturing-specific building blocks which could contribute to the long-term convergence of existing and new data-related initiatives in manufacturing by making use of the Data Space technical infrastructure. The preparatory actions will support the deployment of these data spaces for manufacturing, and propose sustainable business models and incentives schemes to motivate participants to share data.

Scope

The action contributes to the definition of the technical infrastructure for data sharing and re-use within the manufacturing sector and across relevant sectors. The action

will bring together existing national, regional and local data ecosystems, and relevant stakeholders, to join efforts and identify common principles for sharing industrial data and re-using large pools of data at the EU level.

The funding will enable the establishment of a data governance mechanism, with a detailed roadmap on how embryonic data spaces for manufacturing should progressively accelerate into a pan-European manufacturing data space and reach out to a very large user base, in particular SMEs. The manufacturing data space will grow organically, building on different solutions, initiatives and data ecosystems across the EU. The project will lay down the foundations of the common European data spaces by:

- Developing a multi-stakeholder data governance scheme, bringing together national, regional and local data ecosystem stakeholders, to jointly agree on the data interoperability requirements and interfaces, and data federation models. The scheme will also review options in an existing or new governance body to ensure openness, conformity and evolution of these, in agreement with the private sector.
- Delivering sustainable business models for the data spaces, which incentivise data sharing and reuse of the private sector, such as data brokerage, data valuation, and service bundling and pricing.
- Elaborating an inventory of existing data platforms for manufacturing and a blueprint for manufacturing-specific building blocks which could contribute to the long-term convergence of existing and new data-related initiatives in manufacturing by making use of the Data Space technical infrastructure. It will ensure that the data spaces for manufacturing are based on existing EU legislation and data policies, as well as on common principles agreed at sector or local levels as well as data sharing and reuse template contractual arrangements. The blueprint will clarify the building blocks and common elements necessary for the management of industrial data in data spaces for manufacturing (connectors, vocabularies, ...) from the value-added data applications delivered by competing suppliers. It will also propose migration paths for the convergence of broadly established industrial systems to manufacturing data spaces and the data space Technical Infrastructure.
- Bringing an agreed set of priority datasets and data themes, including real-time data into conformity with the new blueprint standards and principles.

The action will have to work in partnership with the Data Spaces Support Centre (see topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE) in order to ensure alignment with the European Data Spaces Technical Framework and the rest of the ecosystem of data spaces in work programme section 2.2.1 thereof. The joint work will target the definition of:

- the data space reference architecture, building blocks and common toolboxes to be used;
- the common standards, including semantic standards and interoperability protocols, both domain-specific and crosscutting;
- The data governance models, business models and strategies for running data spaces.

Furthermore, the action should work with the European Digital Innovation Hubs and the Manufacturing Testing and Experimentation Facilities for developing a model concerning the long term sustainability of the Manufacturing Dataspaces.

Outcomes and deliverables

The selected action will deliver:

- A sustainable data governance scheme and the identification of a proper governance body, including, where relevant, European Digital Innovation Hubs and Testing and Experimentation facilities.
- An inventory of existing data platforms for manufacturing and a blueprint for manufacturing-specific building blocks which could contribute to the long-term convergence of existing and new data-related initiatives in manufacturing by making use of the Data Space technical infrastructure.
- A detailed roadmap towards pan-EU data spaces for manufacturing and migration paths for the convergence of broadly established industrial systems to manufacturing data spaces and the data space Technical Infrastructure.

KPIs to measure 'Outcomes and deliverable'

- Number of relevant stakeholders involved/supporting the established governance scheme and detailed roadmap, including data providers and users, service providers, associations, intermediaries and governmental bodies
- Number of validation workshops with industry decision makers representing the data provider and data user perspective, and level of participation (in number, representability, individual level of decision making of the attendees) and degree of agreement to the proposals for the governance scheme and/or detailed roadmap.
- Number of technology and data space service providers offering middleware based on the solutions identified by the network/supporting the blueprint.
- Number of data providers offering data sets based on the standards and conditions identified by the network.

Targeted stakeholders

Consortium should include at least suppliers and users mainly represented by their associations, leading research institutes, any other organisation (such as data brokers, data stewards, data integrators) participating in data interoperability activities and organisations with legal expertise.

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (see section 6)

- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)
- The following part of the award criteria in section 9 is exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the proposal can overcome financial obstacles such as the lack of market finance

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS - Federated European infrastructure for genomics data

Objectives

The main objective is to deploy sustainable and secure cross-border linkage of and access to a multitude of genomic and related phenotypic, clinical and other datasets across Europe based on the progress achieved in the context of the 1+ Million Genomes initiative (1+MG).⁴³ Authorised data users, such as clinicians, researchers and innovators, will be able to advance our understanding of genomics for more precise and faster clinical decision-making, diagnostics, treatments and predictive medicine, and for improved public health measures that will benefit citizens, healthcare systems and the overall economy.

The technical infrastructure will be combined with sustainable governance mechanisms that will secure easy, cross-border access to key datasets in the targeted area, in line with the European data governance rules. GDPR-compliant and privacy-preserving authentication and data analysis services will be essential to ensure trust and protection of the identity of data provider and user. In addition, findability of the available data and access to the providers and services have to be addressed.

The genomic data infrastructure should be aligned with the developments under the European Health Data Space (EHDS). Appropriate collaboration/coordination mechanisms with the Joint Action TEHDAS and projects developing EHDS (or its components, e.g. electronic health records, rare disease registers and cancer images) need to be established and applied during the project lifetime.

In order to maximise the societal benefits of health data use, the genomic data infrastructure should be supported by advanced IT tools and capacities, e.g. AI, HPC, cloud, blockchain and trust solutions, as appropriate for enabling secure access to and distributed analysis of complex datasets. Moreover, support should be ensured to the creation, extension and adaptation (e.g. FAIRification) of genetic/genomic datasets.

The deployment of the infrastructure needs to be complemented and supported by communication actions with the aim of ensuring and maintaining high level of awareness, acceptance and trust in the main groups of stakeholders, notably European citizens, data holders, health professionals, researchers and public health authorities.

Scope

This action will support the deployment of the infrastructure needed to make harmonised European genomic data resources and linked clinical, phenotypic and other information, where available and relevant, securely findable and accessible

⁴³ <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/european-1-million-genomes-initiative>

across national borders. It may also support extension or upgrade of existing datasets and creation of new ones.

The implementation of the action should follow the specifications and guidelines developed within the 1+MG initiative (e.g. as regards interoperability and architecture supporting distributed and hybrid systems, specifications on reference APIs, meta-data, data structure and quality, legal requirements etc.) and leverage the outcomes of the H2020 Coordination and Support Action 'Beyond 1 Million Genomes' (B1MG).⁴⁴ It should also take into account and use the outcomes of other relevant projects.

The infrastructure is expected to provide a federated network of connected genomic databases, deploying trust mechanisms (security and privacy by design), enabling data discovery, querying and use of appropriate computing capacities for distributed data analysis and providing a minimum of core services to facilitate the operation of the federated network. The federated system will comprise nodes with datasets, a common platform offering a (meta)-data catalogue, a single entry point for data queries and output delivery, links to high performance computing capacities and data access control, secure authorisation and authentication services, and access to other relevant services. The infrastructure will provide trusted environment for processing/forwarding data queries and ensure that the agreed data governance is well implemented.

To ensure maximum data protection, the data will be in principle analysed using distributed data analysis, while fully taking into account the applicable data protection requirements and the EU's international obligations. Data transfer across national borders and/or central storage, if and when needed, may take place on a voluntary basis in accordance with the applicable EU and national legal requirements. The system connecting harmonised locally stored data sources should provide at least the following functionalities: data discoverability, data reception/access, secure interfaces (APIs), data access management, and data processing (analysis). It should be based on FAIR principles, including common interoperability standards and mechanisms.

The action is expected, throughout its lifetime, to inform and consult the country representatives in the 1+MG initiative. It should lead to defining a sustainable business model and setting up a coordination entity that will supervise the activities, run and maintain the system and its services, ensure the necessary agreements within the project and with Member States, and monitor the implementation of such agreements. The governance structures will ensure that the rights and duties of both public and private participants are duly respected.

The action should support the coordination of the multi-country project 'Genome of Europe' launched in the context of the 1+MG initiative towards creation of a European network of harmonised national genomic reference cohorts representative for the European population.

It should also design and implement a comprehensive communication strategy covering all relevant stakeholders and communication channels, both at the European and national levels.

Outcomes and deliverables

The following elements are expected to be delivered by the selected project:

⁴⁴ <http://b1mg-project.eu/>

- Secure federated infrastructure and data governance needed to enable sustainable and secure cross-border linkage of genomic data sets in compliance with the relevant and agreed legal, ethical, quality and interoperability requirements and standards based on the progress achieved by the 1+MG initiative.
- Platform performing distributed analysis of genetic/genomic data and any linked clinical/phenotypic information; it should be based on the principle of federated access to data sources, include a federated/multi-party authorisation and authentication system, and enable application of appropriate secure multi-party and/or high-end computing, AI and simulation techniques and resources.
- Clear description of the roles and responsibilities related to personal data and privacy protection, for humans and computers, applicable during project lifetime and after its finalisation.
- Business model including an uptake strategy explaining the motivation, incentives and conditions for all stakeholders at the different levels (national, European, global) to support the European genomic data infrastructure towards its sustainability, including data controllers, patients, citizens, data users, service providers (e.g. IT and biotech companies), healthcare systems and public authorities at large.
- Sustained coordination mechanism for the European genomic data infrastructure and for the Genome of Europe multi-country project launched in the context of the 1+MG initiative.
- Communication strategy – to be designed and implemented at the European and national level.
- Capacity building measures necessary to ensure the establishment, sustainable operation and successful uptake of the infrastructure.
- Financial support to the relevant stakeholders to enable extension, upgrade, creation and/or physical connection of further data sources beyond the project consortium or to implement the communication strategy and for capacity-building.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

Number of different databanks and platforms connected to the European genomic data infrastructure – at least 20 from at least 13 different EU/associated countries by the end of the project.

Volume of genomic data accessible through the project – with the objective to achieve at least 1 million by 2022, and further sizeable increase by the end of the project.

Number of authorised users connected to the European genomic data infrastructure in operational mode – at least 100 by the end of the project.

Number of countries in which the communication strategy has been implemented – at least all EU/associated countries where databanks/platforms have been connected to the European genomic data infrastructure.

Targeted stakeholders

Public and private entities such as (but not limited to): public administrations (national, regional and local level), hospitals, research institutes, biobanks, research agencies, research infrastructures, not-for-profit organisations, industry, SMEs.

Type of action

Simple Grants — 50% funding rate

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

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (*see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2*)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation and full cost for listed equipment (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, financial support to third parties is allowed (*see section 10*)
- The following parts of the award criteria in section 9 are exceptionally NOT applicable for this topic:
 - extent to which the 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-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE - Data spaces support centre

Objectives

The objective of this action is to set up and operate a Support Centre, which coordinates all relevant actions on sectorial data spaces and makes available (blueprint) architectures and data infrastructure requirements for the data spaces, including possible technologies, processes, standard and tools that will allow reuse of data across sectors by the public sector and European businesses, notably SMEs.

It will also support the work of the envisaged Data Innovation Board in view of enhancing the interoperability of data as well as data sharing services between different sectors and domains. In particular, it will identify cross-sector standards to be used and developed for data use and cross-sector data sharing, it will carry out cross-sectoral comparisons and identify best practices with regards to sectoral requirements for security, access procedures, while taking into account sector-specific standardisations activities.

Scope

The creation of the Support Centre will have three main work strands.

1. The first work strand will support the creation of a network of stakeholders that will have the following main tasks:
 - Support the creation of a community of practice in the field of data sharing. The community will have to include and engage in the discussion also the participants to the projects supported under Data for EU (see work programme section 2.2).
 - Liaise with the actions under section 2.1.1 of the work programme, promote the competitive and seamless access and use of cloud infrastructures and services. and promote the competitive and seamless access and use of cloud infrastructures and services.
2. The second work strand in collaboration with the network of stakeholders will have the following main tasks:
 - Identify the common requirements for data infrastructure across sectoral data spaces (e.g. technical design, functionality, operation and governance, legal and ethical aspects)
 - Define the guiding design principles for the creation of data spaces
 - Identify architecture and technical data governance frameworks establishing enabling schemata both at sector or domain level and for cross-sector data use;
 - Identify the common building blocks essential for the creation of the sectoral data spaces and define technical specifications. These will include: identification & authentication of parties, access rights management and access control, mechanisms for recording consent including portability of such consent, standards and interoperability protocols, data analytics technologies including natural language processing technologies, metadata and data models for sharing data across sectors and data exchange mechanisms.
 - Identify common standards, including semantic standards and interoperability protocols – both domain-specific and crosscutting.
 - Identify and promote data governance models, business models and strategies for running data spaces;
 - Identify and suggest ways to address legal issues and other market-relevant barriers.
 - Identify common toolboxes to be used across Data Spaces
3. The third strand will aim to create a platform to support the knowledge exchange between all actors in the data economy and provide support for the deployment of the common building blocks necessary for implementation of sectoral common data spaces. The platform will have the following main tasks:
 - Offer and promote the use of common architecture and technical data governance especially those identified by the network of stakeholders.
 - Identify missing solutions by using the guiding design principles and develop the necessary technical specifications to be procured under action 2.1.1 of the work programme. All solutions should be open source software, should be possible to use for cross-data space, cross-domain synergies and fertilisation;

- Test and approve the solutions and make them proactively available to the data spaces.
- Publish good practices for standards, technical tools such as APIs, and provide advice on other practical and legal questions.
- Give access to model contract clauses tested in previous data transactions and backed by public authorities.
- Liaise with all relevant activities in the programme including concurrent data space initiatives, to facilitate access to data for AI, with Advanced Digital Skills actions and with European Digital Innovation Hubs, especially, but not exclusively to support the participation of SMEs.
- Liaise with relevant related initiatives at European and international level including those funded under the research programmes Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe.
- Provide support to the preparation of new data spaces as indicated in the Data Strategy.

Outcomes and deliverables

The outcome of this action will be the creation of a Support Centre, which will promote and coordinate all relevant actions on sectorial data spaces and will make available technologies, processes, standard and tools that will support the deployment of common data spaces and will allow reuse of data across sectors.

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Number of stakeholders engaged in the network
- Number of the identified standards, technical specifications and building blocks
- Number of technology providers offering middleware based on the solutions identified by the network.

Targeted stakeholders

Public and private organisations, including SMEs, interested in the participation in and use of European Data Spaces in quality of data providers, data users and data intermediaries; standardisation bodies.

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2)

- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*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 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-2021-CLOUD-AI-PREP-ACTION-AI - Preparatory actions for the AI on demand platform

Objectives

The overall objective of the AI-on-demand platform is to provide a catalogue of AI-based resources and a marketplace, providing central, easy and simple access to AI tools that are made in Europe and are 'trustworthy'⁴⁵, a distinguishing character for businesses and public administrations.

This support action is expected prepare the development of the AI-on-demand platform described above, in order to optimise its design and maximise its impact.

Scope

The project will define the requirements and mechanisms for the AI-on-demand platform in order to:

- take into account ongoing work on the Adopt AI programme which supports procurement of AI systems for public administrations⁴⁶
- serve the needs of both public administrations as well as the user industry, in particular SMEs, addressing the major industrial sectors in Europe, with high potential for large scale deployment
- best support the wide uptake of trustworthy AI "made in Europe", in line with AI regulatory framework on AI for the benefit of European economy, society and also addressing environmental challenges

⁴⁵ The proposal for a regulation laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence (COM(2021) 206 final) and the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence 2021 review, aim to turn Europe into the global hub for trustworthy AI

⁴⁶ See reference in the [Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence 2021 Review](#)

- Interconnect with the cloud for computing requirements and with the data spaces
- Interconnect with the Testing and Experimentation Facilities, and the Digital Innovation Hubs

To this end, the funded activities will:

- Collect and consolidate the requirements and needs, mobilising a wide community of relevant stakeholders such as representatives of public administrations, businesses (in particular SMEs and start-ups) and technical experts, in key sectors, including through the European Digital Innovation Hubs. The requirements should be prioritised on the basis of their related impact in terms of potential for large scale deployment, social, economic and environmental impacts.
- Provide a mapping of existing AI tools, incl. AI solutions already procured by public administrations in Member States, and identify gaps and future needs. This work should build on information provided by relevant analyses and projects⁴⁷.
- Define mechanisms to guarantee that the resources that would be made available and deployed on the AI platform under work programme topic 2.3.1.2 are trustworthy and “made in Europe”. This should take into account requirements stemming from the (future) AI regulatory framework, including the voluntary self-regulatory schemes. The platform to be deployed under work programme topic 2.3.1.2 should then develop a service for the implementation of such mechanism. This should take into account requirements stemming from the (future) AI regulatory framework, including the voluntary self-regulatory schemes. The platform to be deployed should then develop a service for the implementation of such mechanism.
- Propose and prepare an instrument for long-term sustainability of the platform; this may include the development of an underlying foundation or association, a solid business and governance model.
- Define, in collaboration with the relevant actions funded under the Specific Objective 2 of the Digital Europe Programme, technical mechanisms and governance to ensure seamless interaction between the AI-on-demand platform with the underlying necessary resources, such as the Data Spaces and the Cloud-to-edge and HPC resources developed in this programme.
- Define mechanisms to engage with the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs), to connect to stakeholders, provide them with the AI resources, and implement a train-the-trainer programme about the use of AI for digital transformation.

Outcomes and deliverables

- Roadmap and plan to deploy the AI-on-demand Platform (2.3.2.2), incl. requirements and mechanisms of the platform, optimising its service on the basis of users’ needs and strengthening the AI developers’ community, to support wide uptake of trustworthy AI “made in Europe” by industry, in particular SMEs, and public administrations.

⁴⁷Such as [AI4EU](#) and analyses of the use of AI in public administration.

- Sustainability plan
- Gap analysis and mapping of AI solutions procured by public administrations

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

- Validation of the requirements by a representative set of the relevant stakeholders (incl. end users)
- Concrete and efficient mechanisms to operate the AI on demand platform
- Efficient mechanisms and governance to connect the AI-on-demand platform to the other key relevant actions of the DIGITAL Europe Programme
- Efficient mechanisms to engage with EDIHs, public administrations and AI solution providers
- Credibility of long-term sustainability plan

Targeted stakeholders

RTOs, industry and other public and private organisations, including where relevant IT consulting companies with relevant expertise and experience to define the requirements and mechanisms for the AI-on-demand platform as described in the objectives and scope above.

Type of action

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, security restrictions under Article 12(6) of the Digital Europe Regulation apply (*see sections 6 and 10 and Annex 2*)
- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability 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 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 available call budget is **EUR 140 000 000**. This budget might be increased by maximum 20%.

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

Topic	Topic budget
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD – Market place for federated cloud-to-edge based services	EUR 20 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA - Secretariat for the alliance on industrial data, edge and cloud	EUR 1 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE - Testing and experimentation facility for edge AI	EUR 78 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH - Secretariat for the alliance on processors and semiconductor technologies	EUR 1 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL – Preparatory actions for the green deal data space	EUR 2 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM – Preparatory actions for the data space for smart communities	EUR 1 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB – Preparatory actions for data Spaces for mobility	EUR 1 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT - Preparatory actions for data spaces for manufacturing	EUR 1 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS - Federated European infrastructure for genomics data	EUR 20 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE – Data spaces support centre	EUR 14 000 000
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-AI - Preparatory actions for the AI-on-demand platform	EUR 1 000 000

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:	17 November 2021

<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	22 February 2022 – 17:00:00 CET (Brussels)
Evaluation:	14 March to 29 April 2022
Information on evaluation results:	End of May 2022
GA signature:	September 2022

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 link in the invitation letter). 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 (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*to be uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table: not applicable
 - 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): applicable**
 - **ethics issues table: applicable**
 - **security issues table: applicable**
 - **ownership control declaration: 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** except for **Coordination and Support Actions** where the maximum is **50 pages** (Part B). Evaluators will not consider any additional pages.

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

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

6. Eligibility

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

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

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - non-EU countries:
 - listed EEA countries and countries associated to the Digital Europe Programme (list of [countries](#)⁽⁶⁸⁾) or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature⁴⁸

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 be aware that **all topics of this call are subject to restrictions due to security**, therefore entities must not be directly or indirectly controlled from a country that is not an eligible country. **All entities⁴⁹ have to fill in and submit a declaration on ownership and control.**

Moreover:

- participation in any capacity (as beneficiary, affiliated entity, associated partner, subcontractor or recipient of financial support to third parties) is limited to entities from eligible countries
- project activities (included subcontracted work) must take place in eligible countries (*see section geographic location below and section 10*)
- the Grant Agreement may provide for IPR restrictions (*see section 10*).

Specific cases

⁴⁸ Proposals including entities from countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement that does not enter into force before the signature of the grant might be declared ineligible. In those cases the consortium will be asked to replace the participant concerned (or redistribute the tasks between the other participants). If this is not possible and the consortium cannot propose any other acceptable solution, the proposal will have to be rejected.

⁴⁹ Except for entities that are validated as public bodies by the Central Validation Service.

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 persons⁵⁰.

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'⁵¹. ⚠ 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 (*see above*) may participate in the call and can sign grants if the negotiations are concluded before grant signature (with retroactive effect, if provided in the agreement).

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)*⁵² and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)⁵³). 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).

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

[Consortium composition](#)

Proposals must be submitted by:

for topics:

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB

⁵⁰ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁵¹ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁵² 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](#).

⁵³ 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).

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-AI

- a consortium of at least 3 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) and which complies with the following conditions:
 - minimum 3 independent entities from 3 different eligible countries

for topic:

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS

- a consortium of at least 5 applicants (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) and which complies with the following conditions:
 - minimum 5 independent entities from 5 different eligible countries.

for topics:

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH

- n/a

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*).

Financial support to third parties is allowed in topic **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS**, for grants 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.

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

Geographic location (target countries)

Due to restrictions due to security:

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

Ethics

Projects must comply with:

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

Proposals under this call for proposals 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](#)⁵⁴ 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 clearing (FSC) from the competent national security authority (NSA), in

⁵⁴ See Commission Decision 2015/544/EU, Euratom of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

- 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 clearing may have to be provided before grant signature. The granting authority will assess the need for clearing 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 clearing.

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 operational 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).

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 participate⁵⁵:

- 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 misconduct⁵⁶ (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)

⁵⁵ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁵⁶ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information,

- 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 Regulation No [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 refused if it turns out that⁵⁷:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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

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

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

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

- 1) Proposals focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked proposals will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion


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.

⁵⁷ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

'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. 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 are 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:

- **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*
- **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

– 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 call budget. 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. Retroactive application can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons — but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration:

- **36 months** for topics:
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD

- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH
- **30 months** for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE
- **12 months** for topics:
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB
- **between 36 and 42 months** for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE
- **between 12 and 18 months** for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL
- **between 12 and 24 months** for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT
- **between 36 and 48 months** for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS
- **between 6 and 9 months** for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-AI

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 (maximum grant amount):

EUR 20 000 000 per project for topics:

- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS

EUR 1 000 000 per project for topics:

- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT
- DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-AI

EUR 78 000 000 per project for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE

EUR 2 000 000 per project for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL

EUR 14 000 000 per project for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE

The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

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

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement. This rate depends on the type of action which applies to the topic, *see section 2*. Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

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

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

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

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees, A.2 Natural persons under direct contract, A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties (for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS)
 - 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): Yes

- SME owner/natural person unit cost⁵⁸: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit costs⁵⁹: No (only actual costs)
- equipment costs:
 - depreciation for topics:
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-INDUSTRIAL-DATA
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DATA-TECH
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-GREEN-DEAL
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-SMART-COMM
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-DS-MOB
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-ACTS-DS-MANUFACT
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-PREP-AI
 - full cost for topic
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE
 - depreciation + full cost for listed equipment for topic
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for topic:
 - DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-FEI-DS-GENOMICS:**
 - maximum amount per third party EUR 250 000; 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;
 - not exceeding 40% of the total grant amount
 - a maximum of EUR 750 000 per eligible country
 - the third parties have to be independent from each other
 - Financial support to third parties can be proposed to enable the extension, upgrade, creation and/or physical connection of further data sources beyond the project consortium or to implement the communication strategy and for capacity building.
 - The sub-grants can be used for following purposes:
 - Establishment or upgrade of technical infrastructure, necessary e.g. to connect national genomic data

⁵⁸ 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)7715).

⁵⁹ 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).

resources to the federated European genomic data infrastructure or to establish interconnections at the national level, based on clear business models;

- Creation/extension of genomic data sets (e.g. sequencing) and/or adaptation/harmonisation of existing data in accordance with the applicable legal requirements and data standards;
 - FAIRification of data and computing resources at data location, including machine-readable representation by applicable standards of genomic data and metadata, data storage and transfer services, APIs, HPC services, and access protocols;
 - Capacity building;
 - Actions implementing the communication strategy at the national level.
- internally invoiced goods and services (costs unit cost according to usual cost accounting practices): Yes
 - indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs.
 - 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 **50%** 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** (with cost reporting through the use of resources report). There will be one or more **additional prefinancing payments** linked to a prefinancing report for topic DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE.

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

Prefinancing guarantees

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

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

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

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us 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.

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 rights for the granting authority to results in case of a public emergency: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: Yes for topics:

DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-PREP-ACTION-AI

- special IPR obligations linked to restrictions due to security:
 - exploitation in eligible countries: Yes (for all topics)
 - first exploitation obligation in eligible countries: Yes (for topics:
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-DS-MARKETPLACE-CLOUD
DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-SUPPCENTRE
- limitations to transfers and licensing: Yes (for all topics)

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 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 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 [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.

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](#)
- FAQs 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 "[Write to us](#)"

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. This limit for subcontracting is not applicable for grants for procurements (topic **DIGITAL-2021-CLOUD-AI-01-TEF-EDGE**).

- **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).
- **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 double funding** — There is a strict prohibition of double 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 declared to two different EU actions.
- **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).
- **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 Model 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 a 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 one of them (or it 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](#).

Annex 1**Digital Europe types of action**

The Digital Europe Programme will use the following actions to implement grants:

Simple Grants

Description: The Simple Grants 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: 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: 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: Type of action for which 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: 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: Type of action with 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

Framework Partnerships (FPAs) and Specific Grants (SGAs)

FPAs

Description: An FPA establishes 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 coordinator of the FPA has to be the coordinator of each SGA signed under the FPA and will always take to role of single contact point for the granting authority. All the other partners of the FPA can participate in any SGA. 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

Lump Sum Grant

Description: Lump Sum Grants 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). The granting authority defines a methodology for calculating the amount of the lump sum. There is an overall amount, i.e. the lump sum will cover the beneficiaries' direct and indirect eligible costs. 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: 50%

Payment model: Prefinancing – second (third) prefinancing (as there is no cost reporting) – final payment

Annex 2**Eligibility restrictions under Articles 12(5) and (6) and 18(4) of the Digital Europe Regulation****Security restrictions Article 12(5) and (6)**

If indicated in the Digital Europe Work Programme, and if justified for security reasons, topics can exclude the participation of legal entities *established* in a third country or associated country, or established in the EU territory but *controlled* by a third country or third country legal entities (including associated countries)⁶⁰.

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 EU MS or EU legal entities will be able to participate — with no exceptions.
- In SO1 and SO2, entities controlled by third countries or third country legal entities may be able to participate if they comply with certain conditions set up in the Work Programme. To that end, additional rules will be imposed on those legal entities, which need to be followed if they want to participate.

The activation of this article 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.

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 reasons⁶¹.

The application of this article 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 *the Guidance on ownership control restrictions in EU grants*.

⁶⁰ See Article 12(5) and (6) of the Digital Europe Regulation 2021/694

⁶¹ See Article 18(4) of the Digital Europe Regulation 2021/694.