



EuroHPC
Joint Undertaking



Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL)

Call for proposals

EuroHPC Virtual Training Academy
(DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02)

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of **High Performance Computing (Specific Objective 1)** 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 [2021/694](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the Annual Work Programme 2023² of the **European High-Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU)**

The call covers the following **topics**:

- **DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02-01: EuroHPC Virtual Training Academy**

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

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

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

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, outcomes and deliverables, KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables, targeted stakeholders, type of action and funding rate and specific topic conditions (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - 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')

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

² EuroHPC Decision No 24/2023 of 14 August 2023 concerning the amendment of the Joint Undertaking's Work Programme and Budget for the year 2023

- recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

You are also encouraged to visit the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking website www.eurohpc-ju.europa.eu to consult the list of projects funded previously.

1. Background

The Digital Compass provides the proposed EU's vision and concrete targets for the digital transformation by 2030. One cardinal area is skills with the ambition to reach 20 million ICT specialists employed in the economy in 2030. The Digital Education Action Plan foresees several Actions including a European Digital Education Content Framework, a European Digital Skills Certificate³ and a European approach to micro-credentials⁴. This is in line with other efforts for pan-European frameworks for skills and qualifications such as the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)⁵, that provides a common reference framework translating between national qualification systems, and ESCO, the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations⁶.

Skills in the area of High Performance Computing (HPC) are critical and cross-cutting elements for many disciplines including the STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) and social sciences, but also for the development of innovative business models and advanced industrial products. Training a sustainable workforce with digital skills and knowledge in the area of HPC, addressing the specific needs of R&D, business and advanced industrial HPC services is a major challenge to achieve these ambitions.

While many existing training and education offers rely on HPC, for example in academic STEM education programmes, action on the European level is required to develop a common basis for interdisciplinary HPC to support the adoption of education standards, mobility, the recognition of qualifications across countries and sectors as well as the uptake of advanced digital technologies in the Union. Significant coordination effort is needed to provide such a common basis for the development of syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations and qualification standards across Europe to create a uniform training and education ecosystem. A pan-European standardised framework will support existing training programmes with a structured foundation of competences and qualifications to enable the development of a skilled, mobile, and competitive workforce in the Union.

Contributes to the Commission's priority 'A Europe fit for the Digital Age'

³ <https://education.ec.europa.eu/focus-topics/digital-education/action-plan>

⁴ COM(2021) 770 final, COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on a European approach to micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability

⁵ <https://europa.eu/europass/en/europass-tools/european-qualifications-framework>

⁶ <https://esco.ec.europa.eu/en/about-esco/what-esco>

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

DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02-01 - EuroHPC Virtual Training Academy

Objectives

Central objective of the action is to establish the EuroHPC Academy covering the multidisciplinary field of HPC, including related areas such as emerging technologies (e. g. quantum computing), and its cross-cutting dimension. The Academy should significantly contribute to the development of coordinated HPC education programmes addressing a wide range of stakeholders, including academic education programmes, professional training, short-term courses, individual and independent learning. The action will ensure the availability of common quality and qualification standards in HPC, the compatibility of training modules and learning objectives as well as the uptake of standardisation of training and education in the European HPC ecosystem. Based on a skill tree identifying HPC key competences in a systematic and structured approach, the action will significantly improve the quality and availability of HPC training for European HPC users. A broadly recognised certification scheme for HPC competences in combination with high quality didactically consistent content, including exercises and assessments, will encourage also individual and independent learning. Overall, the Academy will significantly contribute to a more knowledgeable HPC workforce driving innovation and competitiveness in the European economy.

Scope

The activities of the EuroHPC Academy will be centred around several action pillars. The pillars represent key strategic components and work together to achieve the objectives of the virtual academy.

1. Competence and qualification framework (CQF)
2. Reference course material for the modular CQF
3. Assessment and certification scheme
4. Technical infrastructure

The EuroHPC Academy will support training providers with the implementation of HPC education, training, qualifications and assessments. It will provide structured material, exercises and assessments linked to a certification scheme which will incentivise also individual and independent learning. Central for the widest possible adoption of services are cooperation activities with the relevant stakeholders and communities including, but not limited to, Hosting Entities of EuroHPC supercomputers and EuroHPC initiatives such as the network of National Competence Centres for HPC (EUROCC 2, CASTIEL 2), the European MSc programme for HPC (EUMaster4HPC) and the European skills platform (HPC SPECTRA). As the EuroHPC Academy will exercise authority over the modular HPC curriculum, learning objectives and qualification standard, the consortium will establish close cooperations and effective feedback loops. Specifically with higher education institutions cooperations are of outstanding importance to ensure alignment and compatibility of the modular CQF with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The CQF should allow training providers a maximum of freedom for the implementation according to the requirements of their target groups,

while ensuring a common standard for the assessment of competences and the certification of qualifications.

1. Competence and qualification framework (CQF)

The CQF should be based on a skill tree, providing a breakdown of HPC competences into learning modules, linked to specific learning objectives. The skills tree will cover the multidisciplinary field of HPC in a hierarchical organisation of competencies, starting at a high-level with a breakdown into fine-grained competences defined by modules. Each module should be associated with distinct specific learning objectives. The scope of a module should correspond to content which can be conveyed in a one to four hour lecture, workshop or training. Prerequisites and dependent skills should be clearly lined out for each module. The modules should fit into existing curricula, e.g., in STEM subjects.

The CQF should enable the easy creation of curricula and courses for specific skill sets by supporting the identification of prerequisites, dependencies and required modules. It will assist training providers in the creation of target group specific courses in HPC with varying syllabuses, e.g. addressing short-term training on specific HPC topics, professional training, different HPC profiles, higher education programmes and curricula, supplementary parts of existing STEM curricula, etc.

The development of the CQF should take into account preceding work, for example by the HPC Certification Forum, to define the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for different levels of HPC expertise, considering the different needs of the HPC industry, research communities and labour market across Europe. The CQF will provide the basis for the development of HPC training programs and the certification process.

2. Reference course material for the modular CQF

The academy will enable access to a repository of teaching and learning material providing a reference implementation of the modules identified in the skill tree, including exercises, exam questions and corresponding solutions. While the development of course material is not within the scope of the action, the consortium will develop a mechanism for financial support to third parties to acquire the necessary material. The material should be implemented in a uniform corporate EuroHPC design and provided under a permissive license.

Each third party receiving financial support for providing course material must allow the free use and modification of the material, including for commercial teaching purposes. The consortium should ensure that an appropriate legal declaration is provided by all third parties.

The course material for the specific modules should be obtained by open calls for lecture material of the respective modules. To ensure harmonisation the consortium should provide guidance on scope, structure and layout, including a EuroHPC design and templates that the content providers should use to create the material. The content should be adapted to the modules of the skill tree, didactically coherent and provide the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve the respective learning objectives. In addition, content in each module should be accompanied by exercises and exam questions and corresponding solutions that cover the specific content of the module and are well-suited for the assessment whether the learning objectives have been achieved. The consortium will ensure professional, didactically consistent, appealing and well designed teaching/learning material across the modules.

The consortium should award grants to third parties, based on the principles of competitive calls and best value for money, for the development of the reference

materials for the modules of the CQF.-It is expected that a grant up to 4000 EUR per module, depending on the complexity and availability of the content, will be appropriate to address the challenge. The consortium will be responsible to implement effective measures for acceptance and quality assurance of the material, which should be clearly described in the proposal. The total third party funding contribution should be at least 1 Mio EUR for an estimated number of 500 modules. Licensing, ownership and liability issues should be addressed by the consortium to ensure the free use of content for commercial and non-commercial use, including for derivative work and modifications. The material should be provided to the European communities free of charge through a platform implemented and operated within this action.

3. Assessments and certification scheme

The academy will establish an assessment and certification scheme that provides participants with a proof of their competencies and skills. The consortium should set up all necessary prerequisites to take online exams for each module using the exam questions provided by the content providers. The users should be able to take the module exam online via the examination platform without supervision and at any time. Hence users may test their knowledge in certain areas without prior training or as a placement test before attending HPC training.

After successfully passing an assessment, participants may obtain a EuroHPC certificate confirming that the learning objectives of the specific module have been achieved. The consortium will ensure that the certification process is designed to be widely recognized and accepted across Europe, in particular by higher education institutions and in the private sector labour market. This should be ensured by cooperation with the relevant stakeholders as appropriate. The award of certificates may be subject to additional obligations, such as supervised exams, which will be defined by the EuroHPC Academy.

The consortium should establish quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that the assessment via the exams and certification processes meet high quality standards. This would include regular evaluation and review of the modules, exam questions and the certification process.

4. Technical infrastructure

The consortium is expected to establish and operate the necessary technical infrastructure to support the activities of the EuroHPC Academy. This should include a web-based solution providing an implementation of the skill tree where users can easily identify HPC competences, skills, modules, learning objectives, their dependencies and corresponding course material. Moreover, the proposed solution should provide the possibility for online exams. The proposed solution should enable the easy creation of HPC courses and curricula by selecting elements of the skill tree and the respective base line (prior knowledge) to generate the corresponding course material including exercises/worksheets and assessments. Each module in the skill tree should be linked to the respective reference course material and to the exam for the module.

In general, the platform should be open for submission of alternative course material by the HPC communities, providing alternative implementations of specific modules including translations.

After the end of the current EuroHPC project HPC SPECTRA, the EuroHPC Academy will merge the training platforms and continue the operation of the complementary activities, such as a European training calendar, under the EuroHPC Academy.

In order to ensure the sustainability of the EuroHPC Academy beyond the duration of the grant, the consortium is required to develop detailed documentation for the operation of the technical infrastructure, ensuring the seamless handover of the platform after the end of the action, including all data to the EuroHPC JU or a third party acting on behalf of the EuroHPC JU. The EuroHPC JU may become the owner of the infrastructure, content and data after the end of the action.

The JU considers that proposals requesting a contribution from the EU of up to EUR 6 million and a duration of 4 years would allow this specific challenge to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of proposals requesting another duration or other amounts. Only one proposal will be selected.

Proposals Outcomes and deliverables

Expected Outcomes:

- A EuroHPC Competence and Qualification Framework (CQF) for HPC based on a modular skills tree of competences and learning objectives, addressing the gap between basic digital skills and domain specific specialist knowledge.
- Wide adoption of the CQF by the HPC community in Europe, including higher education institutions and professional training providers.
- A certification scheme linked to the CQF with broad acceptance of qualifications as proof of HPC competences by education and training providers, public and private employers.
- Increased competitiveness and innovation by contributing to the development of a more skilled and knowledgeable HPC workforce, which will enhance the competitiveness and innovation potential of European companies and research institutions.
- Increased mobility and improved career opportunities by facilitating the recognition and validation of HPC skills and qualifications across Europe, making it easier for HPC professionals to move between different countries and for employers to compare and assess the qualifications of potential candidates.
- Improved quality assurance by promoting transparency and trust in the HPC training and certification system. It supports HPC training programs to align with the needs of the HPC industry and research community and meet high quality standards.
- Cooperation and exchange between education and training providers across Europe, by enabling the sharing of best practices, resources, and expertise, and foster innovation in teaching and learning. Overall, a more dynamic and competitive HPC education and training environment is established, which will benefit learners, educators, and employers alike.

Mandatory deliverables:

- didactic concept and action plan to ensure an effective, harmonised and overall coherent implementation of the teaching and learning materials
- content of the skill tree, learning modules, learning objectives
- EuroHPC Academy design and templates for teaching materials

- repository and online platform for content including lecture materials, exercise and exam questions including solutions
- dissemination and outreach strategy with implementation plan to achieve the widest possible participation in calls launched by the consortium to acquire teaching and learning materials
- report on financial support to third parties for all modules and costs including country specific statistics, also in electronic form as requested by the JU
- implementation of the EuroHPC certificate
- statistics on usage, taken exams and issued certificates
- merged training platform from HPC SPECTRA
- detailed documentation for the operation of the technical infrastructure
- report on cooperation and adoption of the modular CQF by training providers including feedback
- Quality assurance strategy and implementation plan
- Impact analysis (reached target groups, enhanced uptake of HPC skills, acceptance of HPC qualifications and certificates in public and private sectors)

KPIs to measure outcomes and deliverables

KPIs on the following information should be collected centrally in a structured format to measure the progress of the action towards the proposed targets. The KPIs should be reported to the JU on request and at least every six months. The reported KPIs should include the breakdown by topic if applicable.

- Number of defined learning modules with complete learning objectives
- Number of modules with incomplete and complete training material
- Number of exercises and exam questions
- Number of modules with incomplete set of exercises and exam questions
- Number of taken exams
- Number of certificates issued
- Number of visitors on website and use of learning modules/exams
- Number of outreach activities
- Number of collaborations with relevant stakeholders and communities
- Number of feedback loops completed with relevant stakeholders and communities including breakdown by sector (e. g. higher education institutions, public training providers etc.)
- report on adoption and use by the consortium members including breakdown by member, level of adoption, delivered modules as part of higher education programmes etc.

Targeted stakeholders


The consortium which will implement the action must demonstrate an established track record of HPC, training and education and proven experience with the design and implementation of complex education programmes. The coordinator and key contributors should be higher education institutions with proven excellence in teaching, which should be explained and substantiated in the application, and strong education programmes in the broader areas of HPC such as computer science/engineering, numerical simulation and quantum computing. Participants should provide a letter of commitment by the competent manager of the organisation to adopt the modular CQF

in as many training and education programmes as possible, including a list of identified degree programmes/courses, and promote the adoption in the sector.

Members of the consortium must have a clearly defined role with significant resources (at least 10% of the overall personnel resources) as well as leadership responsibilities for tasks and deliverables proportional to their resources. The number of participants is expected to be up to 8 partners to ensure an effective management and implementation.

Type of action and funding rate

DIGITAL JU CSA — 100% funding rate

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

Specific topic conditions

- For this topic, multi-beneficiary applications are mandatory and specific conditions for the consortium composition apply (*see section 6*)
- For this topic, following reimbursement option for equipment costs applies: depreciation only (*see section 10*)
- For this topic, 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 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*
- The granting authority can fund a maximum of one project.

3. Available budget

The available call budget is **EUR 6 000 000**.

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

Topic	Topic budget
DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02-01	EUR 6 000 000

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:	07 November 2023
<u>Deadline for submission:</u>	<u>06 June 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> <u>(Brussels)</u>
Evaluation:	June/July 2024
Information on evaluation results:	August 2024
GA signature:	November 2024

5. Admissibility and documents

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

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

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

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

- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*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/calculator: 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) (template available in Part B) : applicable**
 - ethics issues table: not applicable
 - security issues table: not applicable
 - ownership control declaration: not applicable

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

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

Proposals are limited to maximum **70 pages** (Part B) for topic DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02-01. 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 or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature ([list of participating countries](#)^[OBJ])

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

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

Specific cases

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 persons⁷.

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'⁸. ⚠ Please note that if

⁷ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

⁸ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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)*⁹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)¹⁰). 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:

- a consortium of **a minimum of 3 independent entities** (beneficiaries; not affiliated entities) from 3 different eligible countries
- consortium members are expected contribute to the project with a share of at least 10% of the total declared personnel resources and the number of partners should not exceed eight.

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 be implemented on behalf of EuroHPC JU with clear visibility of EuroHPC JU as funding body of the action, clear association of the training platform and call for participation in the International HPC Summer School with the EuroHPC JU and appropriate prominence of the EuroHPC JU logo in all related communication and dissemination activities. 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 this call under the following conditions:

- the calls must be open, published widely and conform to EU standards concerning transparency, equal treatment, conflict of interest and

⁹ 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](#).

¹⁰ 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).

confidentiality¹¹

- the outcome of the call must be published on the participants' websites, including information on the number of received applications, awarded grants, gender and geographical distribution.
- the calls must have a clear European dimension.
- the consortium must set specific objectives, guidelines and acceptance criteria before payment for each supported third-party project and ensure appropriate monitoring, quality checks and reporting with qualitative and quantitative KPIs.

¹¹ The EuroHPC JU reserves the right to monitor and participate in the selection process of all participants (students, lecturers) for the International HPC Summer School including access to all applications, committee and panel meetings, and other related documents.

- the consortium must establish fair and transparent assessment criteria for the success of the supported third party projects
- financial support is limited to citizens of an EU Member State or EuroHPC JU Participating State and with their primary place of residence and employment in a EU Member State or EuroHPC JU Participating State.

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

Security

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

These rules (governed by Decision [2015/444](#)¹² 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 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.

¹² 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).

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

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

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- prefinancing paid in instalments
- (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)

or

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

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

Operational capacity

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

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

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

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

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- 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 participate¹³:

- 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 misconduct¹⁴ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation,

¹³ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

¹⁴ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

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 that¹⁵:

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

8. Evaluation and award procedure

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


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁵ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

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 budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

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

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

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

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

Starting date and project duration

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

Project duration:

- 48 months for topic DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02-01

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 6 000 000 per project for topic DIGITAL-EUROHPC-JU-2023-ACADEMY-02-01

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
 - 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 cost¹⁶: Yes

¹⁶ 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).

- travel and subsistence unit costs¹⁷: Yes
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: allowed for grants
 - maximum amount per third party as described in the call text
 - at least EUR 1 Million of the total grant amount must be provided as financial support to third parties.
 - 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 (categories A-D, except costs declared in category D.1, volunteers costs and other exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e. they cannot be declared as cost
 - kick off meeting: costs for kickoff 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

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).

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

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

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

¹⁷ 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).

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

Prefinancing guarantees

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

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

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

Prefinancing guarantees are 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 to results in case of a public emergency: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: Yes

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

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

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*:

- specific rules for PAC Grants for Procurement: No
- specific rules for Grants for Financial Support: Yes
- specific rules for blending operations: No

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: info@eurohpc-ju.europa.eu

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

13. Important



IMPORTANT

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

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

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

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **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 Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

Annex 1

Digital Europe types of action

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

Simple Grants

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

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: pre-financing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

SME Support Actions

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

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

Payment model: pre-financing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs)

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

Funding rate: 100%

Payment model: pre-financing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

Grants for Procurement

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

Funding rate: 50%

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

PAC Grants for Procurement

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

Funding rate: 50%

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

Grants for Financial Support

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

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

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

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

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

Lump Sum Grants

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

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: pre-financing – second (third) pre-financing (as there is no cost reporting) – final payment

Framework Partnerships (FPAs) and Specific Grants (SGAs)

FPAs

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

Funding rate: no funding for FPA

SGAs

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

Funding rate: 50%

Payment model: pre-financing – (x) interim payment(s) – final payment

Annex 2

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

Security restrictions Article 12(5) and (6)

If indicated in the Digital Europe Work Programme, and if justified for security reasons, topics can exclude the participation of legal entities *established* in a third country or DEP associated country, or established in the EU territory but *controlled* by a third country or third country legal entities (including DEP associated countries)¹⁸.

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 reasons¹⁹.

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

¹⁸ See Article 12(5) and (6) of the Digital Europe Regulation 2021/694

¹⁹ See Article 18(4) of the Digital Europe Regulation 2021/694.