

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST for the selection of existing Hosting Entities of EuroHPC supercomputers to acquire an advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform (optional) and to establish an AI Factory

(Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01)

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST for the selection of Hosting Entities for acquiring or upgrading EuroHPC supercomputers with AI capabilities, an Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform (optional) and AI Factory.

(Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02)

Summary of questions

| # | Submission date | Publication date | Question | Answer |
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| 1 | 23/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Is a company which is not registered as EuroHPC data center but fulfills the technical conditions expressed in the Call and is part of ETP4HPC eligible? | <p>Please note that the eligibility criteria differ depending on the role of such company in the consortium. Please see below possible scenarios and their effect on the eligibility of such company.</p> <p>(1) Company in question applies as a coordinating applicant (Hosting Entity)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 (Upgrade to AI-ready EuroHPC supercomputer and AI Factory track), the applicant hosting entity shall be a Hosting Entity to a EuroHPC supercomputer (Cf. Section 6(a) of the Call). Thus, the company in question is not eligible.• For the call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 (AI-Supercomputer and AI Factories), such company is eligible if it represents one Participating State that is a Member |

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| | | | | <p>State of the EU or a hosting consortium of Participating States in terms provided for in Section 6(a) of the Call and if it cumulatively fulfils other eligibility conditions specified in Section 6 thereof.</p> <p>(2) Company in question applies as a member of consortium other than a coordinating hosting entity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under both tracks, the applicants may form consortia consisting of entities from the Participating States to the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking that have agreed to contribute to setting up AI Factories and/or acquisition a new AI supercomputer or upgrade of an EuroHPC supercomputer (please consult the full list of Participating States here Governance - EuroHPC JU (europa.eu)). The members of consortia shall also fulfil the criteria described in Sections 6(c)-(d) of the respective calls. |
| 2 | 24/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | For the commitment letter of the Member States, is it correct that the template provided as Annex 1c has to be used and not free-format letter is necessary? | <p>We confirm the correctness of the interpretation. Differently to previous calls where no template was provided, in the Call for Expression of Interest - Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02, we kindly request the use of the proposed form under Annex 1c with no need to prepare a different format. A free form cover</p> |

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| | | | | letter can also be included but only the fully completed form will be considered. |
| 3 | 25/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | In addition to the documents listed in Annex 1 of the call and the Checklist for Applicants, is there a partnership agreement that the consortium should sign before submitting the proposal? | Pursuant to <i>Article 9, paragraph 2 of the Council Regulation (EU) 2021/1173, and Section 6 “Eligibility Criteria”, let a) of the Call for Expression of Interest (Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02)</i> “(..) <u>The applicant hosting entity and the competent authorities of the Participating State or Participating States in a hosting consortium shall enter into an agreement to this effect</u> ”. Please be informed that evidence of this partnership agreement is not required and therefore it is not necessary to be provided when submitting the proposal. |
| 4 | 25/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Do the National Agencies co-financing the action also have to sign the declaration of honour? (p10 of the call: "Each applicant and each Participating State in a hosting consortium must complete and submit the duly signed Declaration of Honour (attached as Annex 1a)")? | Please note that the applicants shall be strictly understood as legal entities registered in one of the Participating State that is a Member State of the EU (for entities applying as coordinating applicant – Hosting Entity), or in one of the Participating States (members of consortia). The National Agencies co-financing the action are not considered as applicants, thus <u>they are not requested to provide a Declaration on Honour</u> . |
| 5 | 25/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Is there a template available for the Member State commitment (2nd document in the Applicant Checklist)? | Please be aware that a Model Commitment Letter has been provided as Annex 1c of the Call documents. In the checklist provided at the end of the application form (Annex 1), by mistake the template is mentioned as Annex 3. We |

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| | | | | apologise for the clerical error which will be corrected. Also see answer to question 2 |
| 6 | 25/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Is the legal entity form to be submitted for the coordinator only or for all partners (In the checklist it appears only for the coordinator, in the application form it also appears for applicant No 2)? | In accordance with Section 6(c) of the Call, the applicants must have a legal personality on the date of the deadline for submission of applications and <u>must be able to demonstrate their existence as a legal person</u> . In case of consortia, the criterion applies to <u>all entities involved</u> . Thus, all members of consortia, including the coordinating applicants, shall provide their individual Legal Entity Forms, as well as supporting documents proving their existence as legal persons. |
| 7 | 25/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Who should sign the Letter of Commitment (Template 1.c)? It appears in the Checklist for Applicants but is not mentioned in the Call text or in the application form. | The commitment letter of the Member State where the hosting entity is established and, in the case of a hosting consortium, of the competent authorities of the Participating States of the hosting consortium shall be signed by a Ministry designated by its Government. Also see answer to question 2 and question 5 |
| 8 | 26/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Can a Hosting Entity apply for the Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 at the first round (4 Nov 2024, 17:00) proposing “the acquisition or upgrade of a EuroHPC supercomputer with AI capabilities” and to establish an AI Factory” without proposing the “(optional) Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform” and then apply at the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 in one of the following rounds (1 Feb 2025, 17:00 / 2 May 2025, 17:00 / 1 Aug 2025, 17:00 / 3 Nov 2025, 17:00 / 31 Dec 2025, 17:00 (CET) proposing only the Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform? | Please note that the application for Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform shall be understood as <u>an additional option</u> to the application for the acquisition or upgrade of a EuroHPC supercomputer with AI capabilities and AI Factory. Each submitted proposal shall be regarded and evaluated separately, thus, the applicants cannot submit a proposal only for the Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform, irrespective of their previous submissions. |

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| 9 | 27/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | <p>Are partners from CH and UK eligible to participate to the Horizon Europe funded components (AI Factory and the AI Experimental Platform) of the proposal?</p> <p>Our considerations relate to the fact that both are EuroHPC JU members, and while the UK is already an HE associated country, CH aims to fully activate the transitional agreement in 2025 allowing participation as beneficiaries in HE and Euratom calls for proposals in the 2025 programme year.</p> | <p>Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 is open to applicant hosting entities which already host an AI-ready EuroHPC supercomputer suitable for setting up an 'AI factory' in a Participating State to the EuroHPC JU that is a Member State of the EU. The applicant hosting entity shall represent one Participating State that is a Member State or a hosting consortium of Participating States that have agreed to contribute to setting up an AI factory.</p> <p>Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 is open to applicant hosting entities that have the facilities to host and operate a new or an upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer and to set up an 'AI factory' in a Participating State to the EuroHPC JU that is a Member State of the EU. The applicant hosting entity shall represent one Participating State that is a Member State or a hosting consortium of Participating States that have agreed to contribute to the acquisition or the upgrade and to the operation of the supercomputer, and to set up an 'AI Factory'.</p> <p>The actions covering the funding of the "Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform" and the action covering the funding of the "AI Factory" will be implemented by way of grants which will be awarded on the basis of Article 195 (f) of the Financial Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046. Eligible for these actions are only Hosting</p> |
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| | | | | <p>Entities or hosting consortia identified in both Calls.</p> <p>According to Article 2(21) of the Regulation 2021/1173 establishing the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking, Participating State means a country that is a member of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking Members of the Joint Undertaking can become Member States of the EU and third countries that are associated to Horizon Europe or the Digital Europe Programme.</p> <p>Regarding the two mentioned countries, Switzerland is in transition and not yet associated to either Horizon Europe or Digital Europe Programme and thus, not eligible. The UK is associated to Horizon Europe and therefore would be eligible to become Participating State in a hosting consortium and by this, being eligible to participate in the actions funded by Horizon Europe.</p> |
| 10 | 27/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | <p>Are the letters of commitment acceptable in formats other than the template Annex 1C - Model Commitment Letter? Considering the short proposal preparation period, requiring consortium country ministries to provide their commitment in the annex model format is challenging in terms of time.</p> | <p>No, we strongly encourage the applicants to use a template commitment letter provided with the call documents. See answer to questions 2, 5 and 7 on this point.</p> |
| 11 | 27/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | <p>Can one country / organisation participate to more than one AI Factory if the systems underpinning the factories are different?</p> | <p>Please note that participation in more than one AI Factory is possible but should be duly justified in the respective applications to avoid overlapping of activities and double funding.</p> |

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| 12 | 27/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | There can be only one AI system in a member country? | Please note that the Call in section 3 of the Call text states that there will be a unitary EU contribution <u>per a new or per an upgraded</u> AI EuroHPC supercomputer. |
| 13 | 27/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Who owns the AI system, bought with two different financial sources? | Article 12a of Regulation (EU) 2021/1173 on establishing the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1732 sets out that EuroHPC Joint Undertaking shall acquire AI optimised supercomputers and shall own them. The Unions financial contribution to these systems shall cover up to 50 % of the acquisition costs and up to 50 % of the operating costs. |
| 14 | 30/09/2024 | 03/10/2024 | Is the delivery address different if the courier services are used by the applicants? (i.e., DHL) | For deliveries by courier services, including DHL, please use the address with the following postal code: <i>European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking</i> <i>Drosbach Building (DRB) - Wing E – 1st floor</i> <i>12E rue Guillaume Kroll</i> <u><i>L-1882 Luxembourg</i></u> All other deliveries shall be addressed to the address indicated in Section 11 of the Call. |
| 15 | 3/10/2024 | 3/10/2024 | Does the commitment letters need to include the amount of the financial contributions. | The financial contribution should be set out in the commitment letters. A corrected version of the respective template Annex 1C - Model Commitment Letter has been published. |
| 16 | 3/10/2024 | 4/10/2024 | Should all documents have a handwritten signature, or electronic signatures with a digital certificate will also be accepted (in which case the originally signed PDFs would be submitted on the USB stick)? | We accept the documents signed electronically (by electronic certified digital signature). Please note that a qualified electronic signature is an electronic signature that is compliant with EU |

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| | | | | Regulation No 910/2014 (eIDAS Regulation) for electronic transactions within the internal European market. For details, check: https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/wikis/display/CEFDIGITAL/eSignature+-+Get+started#eSignatureGetstarted-Citizens |
| 17 | 3/10/2024 | 4/10/2024 | With regard to the call REF: EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 "AI-optimized Supercomputer", Annex 2, please clarify the sentence before the table "In-kind contributions are marked with coloured fields". Should we consider all the coloured rows as not eligible for JU funding or are they coloured as examples? | Please note that as indicated in Section 13 - Annex 2, certain categories of the costs (marked in colour) can be covered only by the Hosting Entity, and thus, are not eligible for JU funding. The applicants are asked to provide an auditable methodology to calculate and verify the operating costs as described in Section 12.3.1 of the Call. |
| 17a | | 7/10/2024 | Corrigendum With regard to the call REF: EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 "AI-optimized Supercomputer", Annex 2, please clarify the sentence before the table "In-kind contributions are marked with coloured fields". Should we consider all the coloured rows as not eligible for JU funding or are they coloured as examples? | The reply below corrects the answer provided in Question 17 The categories of costs indicated in Section 13 - Annex 2 marked in colour can be considered as in-kind contribution from the side of the Hosting Entity/Hosting consortium. Irrespective of this, such cost could be also subject to co-financing from the JU if calculated in accordance with description provided in Section 12.3.1 of the Call. |
| 18 | 3/10/2024 | 4/10/2024 | Could you indicate when we can expect the hosting agreement (HA) model to be published? | We will publish the model Hosting Agreement as soon as it is available. |
| 19 | 3/10/2024 | 4/10/2024 | In Article 17, the Digital Europe (DEP) GA notes that a detailed communication and dissemination plan must be provided "The beneficiary must provide a detailed communication and dissemination plan, setting out the objectives, key messaging, target audiences, communication channels, social media plan, planned budget and relevant indicators for monitoring and | Please note that DEP Grant Agreement will be signed by the applicants to cover the operating costs related to the acquisition of a new AI supercomputer. The AI Factory and the experimental platform (optional) will be covered by Horizon Europe Grant Agreement. |

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| | | | evaluation". Should the EoI include communication and dissemination activities focused exclusively on the supercomputer, to be budgeted under the TCO? If so, are the costs eligible, as currently these are not listed in Annex 2 of the Call detailing the cost elements to consider in the calculation of the operating costs. | Regarding the description of the TCO, including the methodology to calculate the operating costs, please refer to Section 12.3.1 of the Call and indicative list described in Section 13 - Annex 2 thereof and Annex 2a of the DEP Model Grant Agreement (Annex 4c of the Call). |
| 20 | 3/10/2024 | 4/10/2024 | Although it references a consortium, the Horizon Europe (HE) GA is marked as mono beneficiary, is there another version that we should consider in case of a consortium behind the AI Factory? | <p>Please note that it is expected that in case of consortia, grants will be signed by the coordinating Hosting Entity on behalf of consortium.</p> <p>Please also note that the grants for AI Factories will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (Article 195(f) of the previous EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046). After the award of a grant under afore-referred Article, it is not possible to change the Hosting Entity or the composition of a Hosting Consortium anymore, further entities will not be able to join the Hosting Entity or Hosting Consortium throughout the implementation of the grant.</p> |
| 21 | 3/10/2024 | 4/10/2024 | What is the envisioned procedure for the experimental platform? Should it be similar to the acquisition of a new systems? Will it include the signature of a HA and a procurement process? | In accordance with call conditions, following the successful application for the experimental platform, the applicants will be awarded a grant (please refer Annex 4d General Model Grant Agreement for Horizon Europe). There will be no separate Hosting Agreement for the experimental platform, nor is there a procurement foreseen. |

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| | | | | <p>Please also note that the grants for the experimental platform will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (Article 195(f) of the previous EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046). After the award of a grant under afore-referred Article, it is not possible to change the Hosting Entity or the composition of a Hosting Consortium anymore, further entities will not be able to join the Hosting Entity or Hosting Consortium throughout the implementation of the grant.</p> |
| 22 | 4/10/2024 | 7/10/2024 | <p>The maximum EU contribution in the call is generally set at 50% of the eligible project costs. If there is a partner who is not able to co-finance the costs from their own or other resources, is it possible in this case to set the maximum EU contribution in the proposal at 100% of the eligible costs, while the coordinator would get a significantly lower maximum EU contribution so that in total the maximum EU contribution will not exceed 50% of the eligible costs of the project?</p> <p>If this would be possible in the proposal, we assume that the different maximum EU contribution limits would also be stated in the Grant Agreement. Would it then also be technically possible to set different limits for the maximum EU contribution for each beneficiary in the F&T portal where eligible costs are reported?</p> | <p>As set out in Section 3 of the Call text, the Union financial contribution to the EuroHPC JU shall cover up to 50 % of the acquisition costs, plus up to 50 % of the operating costs of the new AI EuroHPC supercomputer or AI upgrade, up to 50 % of the development and operation costs of an Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform, and up to 50 % of the costs associated with the setting up and operation of the “AI Factories”. The remaining total cost of ownership of the AI-optimised or AI upgraded supercomputer and those cost related to the Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform and to the “AI Factories” shall be covered by the Participating State that is a Member State where the hosting entity is established or by the Participating States in the hosting consortium.</p> |

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| | | | | As explained in Section 6 of the Call text, the applicant hosting entity shall represent one Participating State that is a Member State or a hosting consortium of Participating States that have agreed to contribute to the acquisition of the new AI EuroHPC supercomputer or the AI upgrade, the operation of the supercomputer, and to set up an 'AI Factory'. To implement the actions, the applicant hosting entity and the competent authorities of the Participating State or Participating States in a hosting consortium shall enter into an agreement and make appropriate internal arrangements. The EuroHPC JU will not enter into these arrangements. |
| 23 | 10/10/2024 | 11/10/2024 | The mandate letter (Annex 1b) contains a reference to "title and no". If this refers to the Hosting Agreement, which is not yet available, could you please announce the title and no of the aforementioned? If "title and no" refers to something else, could you please explain what is needed here? | Please note that this box does not specifically refer to the Title and No of the future Hosting Agreement. For the mandate letters, the EuroHPC JU uses a standard template in its calls for expression of interest. Thus, you can fill the box with the reference to the specific call for which you are submitting an application (call ID). |
| 24 | 07/10/2024 | 11/10/2024 | Are the costs of leasing an interim system for the period until the space and infrastructure for a larger installation of the AI Factory supercomputer is completed eligible for funding? | As set out in Section 3 of the Call, for newly acquired AI EuroHPC supercomputers, grants will be established to cover the operating costs of the supercomputer and for existing to be upgraded EuroHPC supercomputers, existing grants will be amended to cover the additional operating costs of the upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputers. A list of cost categories including an indicative lists of cost elements to be considered is attached as Annex 2. Leasing |

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| | | | | costs for an interim system are not covered by the operating grant. |
| 25 | 14/10/2024 | 15/10/2024 | Under Section 2.1.3 (Operating Costs), one is expected to provide the number and estimated average costs for staff. We assume that costs for system administrators are included as infrastructure costs. Should the costs for user support and technical support staff be included under infrastructure costs, too, or are they considered part of the AI Factory services? | <p>Please be aware that it has to be distinguished if the costs occur within the context of the infrastructure or the AI factory.</p> <p>For the infrastructure part, please refer to Annex 4c of the Call (Unit Digital Europe Programme (DEP) Grant Agreement). Annex 2a of the DEP Model Grant Agreement provides the methodology to calculate the unit costs. It also provides the cost categories and an indicative list of actions for each cost category. Regarding the system administrator, the user support and the technical support, these costs fall under the cost category "Personnel Costs". Regarding the costs that occur in the context of the AI factory, the rules of the Horizon Europe General Model Grant Agreement apply (provided as Annex 4d of the Call).</p> |
| 26 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Could you please confirm the maximum EU financial contribution for the acquisition of one new AI EuroHPC supercomputer? | <p>As explained in Section 3 of the Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02, a unitary EU contribution per a new or per an upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer of around EUR 200 million is considered appropriate. Please note that nonetheless, this does not preclude the submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts. The unitary EU contribution for this new or upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer will then be adapted (increased or decreased) to the requested EU contribution amount of the application, by also considering the number of already submitted</p> |

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| | | | | and approved applications, and the remaining Union's funds. |
| 27 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | How many EuroHPC supercomputers are expected to be funded under this call? | The contracting authority cannot make any speculations in this regard and will the number of applications on the respective cut-off dates. |
| 28 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Is there a differentiated budget slot allocated for new hosting entities versus existing ones? | As set out in Section 3 of the Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02, the Union's financial contribution both for the acquisition of new or upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputers is estimated at EUR 400 million depending on budget availability in the EuroHPC JU Programme 2024. The overall Union's financial contribution to the EuroHPC JU for the acquisition of new or upgraded AI-EuroHPC supercomputers is estimated at EUR 800 million depending on the final budget availability (DEP funds). Please note that there are no differentiated budget slots for new versus upgraded AI-EuroHPC supercomputers. |
| 29 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Regarding the evaluation criterion "<i>b) Proximity with an established data centre, or connection to it via very high-speed networks (0-10 points)</i>," in which section of the application form should this be reflected to facilitate the evaluators' task? | Please follow the structure of application form available in Annex 1. As this is a requirement related to the Hosting Entity's infrastructure, we encourage you to insert the relevant information under the Section 2.3. "Quality of the hosting facility's physical and IT infrastructure, its security and its connectivity with the rest of the Union". Please note, however, that the experts are evaluating the full proposal irrespective where the information was inserted, thus, all information provided will be evaluated by the experts. |

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| 30 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Which evaluation criterion does section 4.1.3. Trustworthy AI of the application form correspond to? | Please note that the soundness of the plans for developing Trustworthy AI is a part of evaluation criteria for the AI Factory, described under Section 8.3 point c of the Call text. The applicants shall include in their application a description of the plans they have for developing of robust guidelines and standards for AI algorithmic development aligned with the principles and requirements of the AI Act (Cf. Section 12.5 of the call). |
| 31 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Could you confirm if new hosting entities (that are not yet part of EuroHPC) can only participate through the acquisition track (Appendix I, 3. New AI Optimised Supercomputer Track)? | We confirm that track number 3 “New AI Optimised Supercomputer” is the only track foreseen for new hosting entities. Number 1 “AI Factories Track” and 2 “Upgraded AI Optimised Supercomputer Track” require an already existing EuroHPC supercomputer that is AI ready (no 1) or will be upgrade with AI capabilities (no 2). |
| 32 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | While the maximum EU contribution for establishing and running each AI Factory is set at EUR 15 million for a maximum period of 3 years, could you please clarify the maximum EU contribution and duration for which the operating costs of the new AI EuroHPC supercomputer will be covered? | As stated in Art. 12 a) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1173 on establishing the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1732, in the case of new AI-optimised EuroHPC supercomputers , the Union financial contribution shall cover up to 50% of the operating costs for a period of five years (Art. 12 a) (7), after which the ownership of the AI-optimised supercomputer may be transferred to the hosting entity or the AI-optimised supercomputer may be sold to another entity or decommissioned upon decision of the Governing Board and in accordance with the hosting agreement. |

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| 33 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | <p>Could you please confirm the maximum budget allocation for the development of the advanced experimental AI-optimised platform, if this option is included in the application and deemed valuable?</p> | <p>The total budget foreseen for the development and deployment of Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platforms (“Platforms”) is up to EUR 60 million, depending on the budget availability. As indicated in the Call conditions (Cf. Section 3), however, the final budget combination is subject to changes based on the received submissions, for instance, with increased share of budget allocated to the AI Factories. Please also note that the Union’s contribution to the Platform cannot exceed 50% of total costs. The remaining total cost related to the Platform shall be covered by the Participating State where the hosting entity is established or by the Participating States in the hosting consortium.</p> |
| 34 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | <p>Additionally, could you please clarify the duration of operation that will be covered by the funding [<i>with regard to the Advanced Experimental Platform</i>]?</p> | <p>Please note that in accordance with the Call conditions (Cf. Section 12.3 of the Call), the applicants shall indicate in the application the proposed duration of Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform (“Platform”). Such duration shall be duly justified and will be evaluated on its own merits.</p> |
| 35 | 19/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | <p>While adhering to the provided application form template, is it possible to include additional sections to facilitate the review of the content, such as an executive summary or annexes to provide any relevant documentation?</p> | <p>In order to facilitate the assessment against the evaluation criteria, we kindly ask you to complete the form and its sections strictly following the instructions provided in Annex 1 without modify its structure. Additional information/details might be provided in separate supporting documents if necessary.</p> |
| 36 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | <p>We wanted to double check on the Hosting Agreement model when is it expected to be published. It is</p> | <p>The model Hosting Agreement will be published with other Call documents once it is available.</p> |

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| | | | particularly important in order to properly address requirements for section 2.4. Quality of service to the users, namely capability to comply with the SLA. Additionally, since submission of the EoI equates with acceptance of the HA terms and conditions, we would appreciate the possibility to review and ask for clarifications if any of conditions would raise concerns. | |
| 37 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Are the Annexes listed in the Application checklist (referenced in section 4.4 Application form) to be considered in the 200 page limit. Does the Application need to include the compiled check list table? Similarly, how are potential letters of support to be considered in reference to the 200 page limit (part of or outside that account)? | Please be informed that the limit of 200 pages applies only to the form itself. Supporting letters or documents should not be included in the page limit calculation. The checklist table is provided to ensure that all the required documents are attached. |
| 38 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | The call text note that the application must be submitted in 3 (three) copies - <i>one original clearly identified as such</i> - should this be done using an original respectively copy stamp on each page part of the submission including annexes? | Please note that it is not necessary to stamp each individual page. It is sufficient to clearly separate the original, e.g. by means of a separate folder, and to label it clearly. |
| 39 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | The call text notes that the application <i>must be signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation</i> - is a final electronic signature sufficient or should all pages of the application be signed by the authorised person? | A valid electronic signature is sufficient in this case. For more details regarding the valid electronic signature, please refer to Q16. |
| 40 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | What is the level of detail / format expected for the AI Factory budget estimate that should be included in the Application? Similar question for the experimental platform cost breakdown. Is there a reference template to be used. | Please note that with reference to the budget estimation for the AI factories and the experimental platform, a template is available in Annex 4d of the General Model Grant Agreement attached to both Calls. |
| 41 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | In reference to your answer to question 21 and footnote 10 / page 8 of Call text, what is intended / should be understood by (after the) "award of the grant"? Is that the signature of the Grant Agreement or award decision? | Generally, award means the decision taken by the responsible Authorising Officer, not the signature of the Grant Agreement. However, please note that regarding the participation in |

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| | | | <p>Can additional partners be included between the award decision and the actual signature of the GA? Question raised for both types of GAs that is DEP and HE.</p> | <p>the different action financed from DEP and HE has to be distinguished. The Grant financed from DEP is a contractual arrangement between the EuroHPC JU and the hosting entity to cover the funding of the new or the upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer's operating costs. It will be a mono-beneficiary grant signed with the hosting entity only.</p> <p>The Grant for the Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of Regulation (EU) 2024/2509 of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (Article 195(f) of the previous EU Financial Regulation 2018/1046) to Hosting Entities of EuroHPC AI oriented or AI upgraded supercomputers. As this action can only be implemented alongside with the procurement for the acquisition and the operation activities of a new or upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer by the awarded Hosting Entities identified in Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02)), or the awarded Hosting Entity of an existing EuroHPC supercomputer evaluated as AI ready in Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 (please see footnote 10), the participation in this action is limited to the hosting entity, or in case of a hosting consortium, to the members of the hosting consortium. No other partners be included between the award decision and the signature of the Grant Agreement.</p> |
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| 42 | 20/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Is the new / upgraded system envisioned to serve a certain quota to the AI Factory? What is the distribution / reference quotas to consider, if any? | Unfortunately, it is not clear what quotas are meant, could you please reformulate the question. |
| 43 | 21/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | We would like to invite partners from Western Balkan countries to participate in AI Factory: Montenegro, North Macedonia and (if eligible) Bosnia and Herzegovina. They would contribute effort in AI Factory. Is this in-line with your expectations? If I am not mistaken, member states are allowed to join. | In accordance with Section 6 “Eligibility Criteria” let. d) of the call, <i>“the applicant hosting entity shall represent one Participating State that is a Member State or a hosting consortium of Participating States that have agreed to contribute to the acquisition or the upgrade and to the operation of the supercomputer, and to set up an ‘AI Factory’, (which may include several different legal entities from the same Participating State and/or from different Participating States).”</i> With respect to the countries mentioned in the question, please be informed that only Montenegro and North Macedonia are Participating States. Therefore, Bosnia and Herzegovina is not allowed to join the partnership. |
| 44 | 21/10/2024 | 22/10/2024 | Is a private company entitled to apply for “Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform” if member of the consortium? | Please note that the application on Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform (“Platform”) is an option to the main application and as such cannot be submitted as a separate application (cf. Q 8). For this reason, eligibility criteria for the Platform are the same as for the main application. The private companies which are legal entities are eligible if they fulfil all eligibility criteria provided for in Section 6 of the respective calls. |
| 45 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | In our previous question "Is the new / upgraded system envisioned to serve a certain quota to the AI Factory? What is the distribution / reference quotas to consider, | Please be informed that according to Articles 12a (2) and 17 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1173 on establishing the European High Performance |

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| | | | <p>if any?" We were referencing here the different shares of CPU-core-hours, GPU-hours and storage-hours, so a specific share dedicated to the AI factory and their users regardless other country of provenance. Is the allocation model (allocated shares) expected to be a mirroring of the proportions of the monetary contributions?</p> | <p>Computing Joint Undertaking, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1732 the Union's share of access time to the AI optimised supercomputer is directly proportionate to the Union's financial contribution and shall not exceed 50% of the total access time. As for the AI upgrades, Article 15 (5) of the mentioned Regulation provides that that the percentage of the Union's financial contribution for the acquisition costs of the grade shall be the same as the percentage of the Union's contribution to the original EuroHPC supercomputer.</p> <p>As set out in Annex 3 of the Call text, the access policy concerning the EU access time will be defined and agreed by the EuroHPC Governing Board in due time.</p> |
| 46 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>Can the AI factory consortium have different / additional partners that are not part of the supercomputer hosting consortium? We would like to engage additional partners exclusively for the activities of the AI Factory.</p> | <p>Please note that as indicated in the Call conditions (cf. footnote 7), the grants for the AI Factories will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of the EU Financial Regulation. Such grants will be only awarded to the Hosting Entities of EuroHPC AI-oriented or AI-upgraded supercomputers, therefore the applicants for AI Factories shall not include any new partners in their consortia, other than these already participating in the initial consortia for EuroHPC AI-oriented/AI-upgraded supercomputers.</p> <p>However, please also note that as indicated in Section 8.3 of the Call (cf. footnote 11), the provision of the AI factories services may be implemented in a distributed manner by different partners from the selected hosting entity/consortium of Participating States.</p> |

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| 47 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>If partners only participate to the AI Factory, can they come with their own 50% funding so not requesting national co-funding? Would that constitute an impediment? And would they still require their country MS approval/letter of commitment to be eligible?</p> | <p>Please note that in accordance with the Call conditions (cf. Section 3), the financial contribution to an AI Factory that is not covered by the Union shall be covered by the Participating State where the hosting entity is established or by the Participating States in the hosting consortium. For this reason, the commitment letter from the Participating State or Participating States in case of a Hosting Consortium is necessary requirement of the application.</p> |
| 48 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>Are recruitment costs eligible? As the Factory will require considerable resources to be put into place in short interval, we would like to know if engaging recruitment consultants would be an eligible cost?</p> | <p>Please note that the grants for the AI Factories will be awarded on the basis of Horizon Europe Grant Agreement (Cf. Annex 4d of the Call). Therefore, to be deemed eligible, the claimed costs shall fulfil the general and specific eligibility conditions.</p> <p>Concerning the general conditions, the costs to be eligible shall fulfil the criteria listed in Article 6.1 of the model Grant Agreement (i.e., incurred during the action; necessary for the action; incurred in connection with the action). For the specific eligibility criteria, please consult Article 6.2 of the model Horizon Europe Grant Agreement since the eligibility of such costs may differ depending, for instance, on type of employment or the nature of the work, etc. For instance, certain staff-related costs are not eligible under personnel costs (Article 6.2.A), however such costs may be considered eligible under other budget categories as subcontracting (Article 6.2.B) or costs for other good, works, services (Article 6.2.C).</p> |

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| 49 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>Is the organisational and operational model of the competence centres appropriate to be considered also as a model for the set up and operations of the AI Factory?</p> | <p>In principle there are similarities between the concept of CCs and AI Factories, therefore such approach could be applicable. However, please note that Annex 3 of the Call text (Section 14) explains what to understand under an AI factory. Further, Annex 1 of the Call text (Section 12) details the content of the application, including for the AI factories. The criteria against which the proposal for the AI factory will be assessed are set out in Section 8.3 of the Call text.</p> |
| 50 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>We would like to request clarification on how to structure personnel costs in the proposal. Based on the guidelines, we understand the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrastructure personnel costs should follow the rules of the <u>Digital Europe Programme (Annex 4c of the call, aligned with the template in Annex 2a), which include categories such:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>System administration</i> ○ <i>Application enablement, user support and training</i> ○ <i>Facility team</i> ○ <i>Installation team.</i> • AI Factory and AI experimental platform personnel costs are subject to the <u>Horizon Europe</u> rules (Annex 4d of the call, aligned with the template in Annex 2), which should include the following minimum requirements as indicated in the application form template: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of system administrators (FTE) expected to dedicate to the running of the supercomputer service | <p>Please be informed that for the operating costs for the AI optimised or upgraded EuroHPC supercomputer will be funded by a mono-beneficiary grant that follows the unit cost methodology, supported by the Digital Europe Programme. Annex 2a of the Unit Digital Europe Programme (DEP) Grant Agreement (Annex 4c of the Call) provides information on how to calculate the unit costs, including the unit costs for personnel. In this context, please be aware that the flat rate of 7% for indirect costs applies only to the personnel cost category, not to all direct cost categories defined by the Digital Europe Programme.</p> <p>We confirm that by contrast the personnel costs in the context of the AI factory and the AI experimental platform follow the rules defined by the Horizon Europe Programme and will be implemented through separate grants distinct from the grant covering the operating costs for the AI optimised or upgraded EuroHPC supercomputer.</p> |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Number of user support staff (FTE) expected to dedicate to the running of the users of the supercomputer and application support ○ Number of technical support staff (FTE) expected to dedicate for an Application Support Team <p>We would appreciate it if you could confirm whether this distinction between infrastructure and AI Factory/experimental platform personnel costs is correct.</p> | |
| 51 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>Could you clarify if all these personnel costs should be included under Operating Costs along with the examples provided, or if there is room to create an <u>additional category for personnel costs</u>?</p> | <p>Please be informed that the cost categories set out in Annex 2a of the Unit Digital Europe Programme (DEP) Grant Agreement (Annex 4c of the Call), i.e. the categories “site preparation cost”, “personnel costs” and “operations and maintenance”, are concluding. However, as explained in Annex 2a, the list of actions under each cost category is non-exhaustive for the operating costs. If the applicants provide well-justified additional items under a category, they can be accepted in accordance with the Unit cost methodology described in Annex 2a.</p> |
| 52 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>We noticed that Annex 2 of the HE MGA (Annex 4d of the call) is not displaying correctly and is missing some relevant footnotes. Could you kindly provide a clearer version of the template or a link to an alternative document?</p> | <p>Please note that the template of Annex 4d of our call reflects the exact content of Annex 2 of the HE MGA also available at the following link: Horizon Europe – Grants & reporting - European Commission No other version of the annex is available.</p> |

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| 53 | 22/10/2024 | 23/10/2024 | <p>Regarding one of the previous questions, could you kindly confirm the maximum budget allocation foreseen for <u>each</u> advanced experimental AI-optimised platform?</p> | <p>Unfortunately, at this stage, it is not possible to provide a maximum budget for each advanced experimental AI-optimised platform.</p> <p>As indicated in the footnote no 6 of Section 3 of the Call (p.5), the total budget foreseen for the development and deployment of Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platforms (“Platforms”) is up to EUR 60 million. The final budget is subject to changes based on the received submissions, for instance, with increased share of budget allocated to the AI Factories. Please also refer to Q33.</p> |
| 54 | 16/10/2024 | 24/10/2024 | <p>I would like to ask some clarifications on the Declaration on Honor required evidence: When all “situations of exclusion” criteria sections A-I,II,III,IV are all marked as “NO” we assume that no further evidence is required (since there are no tender specifications in the case of AI factories call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01). Thus, apart from the DoH itself, we do not plan to include further documents in the proposal, at the submission stage. Is this correct?</p> | <p>As specified in the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 text, under Section 7.4, applicants and affiliated entities must provide a Declaration on Honour certifying that they are not in any exclusion situation. In addition to the DoH form duly filled in and signed, it is required that the DoH is supported by appropriate evidence to prove they are not in any such situation.</p> <p>Please refer to Section VI (Evidence on Exclusion Criteria, p.5) of the DoH where the documentary evidence required is listed.</p> <p>The submission of the evidence is not required in case the applicant has already provided them for another procedure of EuroHPC JU and the situation has not changed (the documents must have been issued no more than one year before the date of their request by the contracting authority and must still be valid at that date); and when evidence can be accessed on a national database free of charge.</p> |

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| 55 | 16/10/2024 | 24/10/2024 | <p>I would like to ask some clarifications on the type of consortium members we are able to include in our proposal:</p> <p>Apart from beneficiaries, we can see in the Model Grant Agreement of the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 call that there are also the categories of Affiliated entities, Third parties giving in-kind contribution, subcontractors and recipients of financial support to third parties.</p> <p>Are all the above categories of partners eligible in our case?</p> <p>We are wondering since in the call description there is no extensive description apart from: “The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.”</p> | <p>Please be reminded that a grant for an AI Factory will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of the EU Financial Rules only to the existing EuroHPC Hosting Entities (cf. Q46 for more details). Therefore, the composition of consortium applying for an AI Factory (consortium members) shall reflect the composition of an initial consortium of a EuroHPC AI-oriented/AI-upgraded supercomputer, for instance, no new members can be added.</p> <p>Please also note that the grant signed after the selection will be a mono-beneficiary Horizon Europe Grant Agreement, signed with the coordinating Hosting Entity on behalf of the applying consortium. For subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contribution to the action, and recipients of financial support to third parties, standard rules of the Horizon Europe Grant Agreement will apply.</p> |
| 56 | 16/10/2024 | 24/10/2024 | <p>I would like to ask what is the planned starting date of an AI factory project in case it is submitted and approved in the first cut-off date?</p> <p>Is there a specific date? Will we be able to choose a later date within 2025?</p> | <p>There is not a specific date. The starting date of an AI Factory project will be established in the grant agreement (Annex 4d - General Model Grant Agreement, Data Sheet Point 1). The options are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first day of the month following the entry into force date; or - fixed date. |
| 57 | 16/10/2024 | 24/10/2024 | <p>I would like to ask some clarifications on the amendment made for other Participating States being able to join a hosting consortium:</p> | <p>Generally, in accordance with Article 9 of the Council Regulation (EU) 2024/1732 of 17 June 2024 after the selection of the hosting entity,</p> |

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| | | | <p>In case some eligible countries declare their intention to join a consortium, but due to time restrictions, they are not able to commit on specific funding from their side, is there a way to fully join the consortium at another stage? E.g. Could they provide to a proposal a letter of Intent/Support and as soon as they secure their national funding, to make an amendment or resubmission/extension at the next cut-off deadline of the same call? Is there any other way for them to be included in the proposal?</p> | <p>the Participating State where the selected hosting entity is established or the corresponding hosting consortium may decide to invite, subject to the prior agreement of the Commission, additional Participating States, or a consortium of private partners, to join the hosting consortium.</p> <p>However, please be reminded that the grant for an AI Factory will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of the EU Financial Rules only to the existing EuroHPC Hosting Entities (in case of Call Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01). Therefore, the composition of consortium applying for an AI Factory (consortium members) shall reflect the composition of the initial consortium of the EuroHPC AI-oriented/AI-upgraded supercomputer, for instance, no new members can be added after signature of the Grant Agreement (cf. Q46 for more details). Partners must fulfil the eligibility criteria described in the Call and shall submit all requested supporting documents. An inclusion of new partners shall neither be considered as a “re-submission” nor an amendment during a next cut-off and would only be possible until the signature of the Grant Agreement.</p> |
| 58 | 24/10/2024 | 24/10/2024 | <p>The deadline for the first cut-off is on the 4th of November (Monday). However, the 1st of November (Friday) is a bank holiday in some of the countries. Are the JU offices open on this date to collect a delivery?</p> | <p>Please note that the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking office is closed on the 1st November 2024, therefore, you should take this into consideration when organising your delivery.</p> |

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| 59 | 25/10/2024 | 25/10/2024 | <p>In your answer to Q 54 you clarified that all applicants and affiliated entities must provide, in addition to the DoH, appropriate evidence to prove that they are not in any exclusion situation. Does this also apply to evidence on selection criteria? According to the DoH it is set out in the tender specifications what evidence, when, and by which involved entity needs to be provided. Since this call is not a call for tender but a call for expression of interest these details are not given in the call text. Can you please clarify if and what kind of evidence you expect here?</p> | <p>Please note that the applicants are requested to submit the supporting documents listed in Section A.VI of the Declaration on Honour. No further supporting documents are requested at this stage.</p> <p>Please also note that the EuroHPC JU is using a standard template for the Declaration on Honour, therefore all references to procurement and/or tenders shall be understood as references to call and/or applications.</p> |
| 60 | 25/10/2024 | 25/10/2024 | <p>We plan to submit an application to the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 call, within which we would like to propose an upgrade of the existing petascale system. Within the proposal, we plan to install a new computing partition aimed for AI calculations together with a new data storage and control servers, into the existing petascale system. Installing a new partition will extend the life of an existing petascale system. However, due to technical reasons, we plan to operate the original components of the petascale system only for the period specified in the original/current Hosting Agreement. After this date, the new components ("AI upgrade") will completely replace the original ones.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is the approach described above possible given the constraints of the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 call? 2. Is it possible to agree with EuroHPC JU on a HA amendment to extend the life of the original petascale system in such a way that this life extension takes into account the fact that after the original system will not be in operation anymore, EuroHPC JU will not be provided with the 35% of the capacities of the original petascale | <p>Please be informed that in accordance with the Council Regulation 2024/1732 of 17 June 2024, the upgrade of the EuroHPC supercomputer shall be owned by the EuroHPC JU under the same conditions of ownership as the original EuroHPC supercomputer. In accordance with Article 15(5) thereof and explained in Sections 1 and 3 of the Call text, the percentage of the Union's financial contribution for the acquisition costs of the upgrade shall be the same as the percentage of the Union's financial contribution for the original EuroHPC supercomputer, <i>depreciated over the expected remaining lifetime of the original supercomputer.</i></p> <p>For this reason, the lifetime of the upgrade shall be aligned with lifetime of the original supercomputer (i.e., by submitting a proposal that would align with the lifetime of an original</p> |

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| | | | <p>system, but only 35% of the capacities of the "AI upgrade" part.</p> | <p>machine or by extension of the lifetime of the original machine). To summarise on your questions the replies thus would be:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This approach is not possible. 2. The lifetime of the upgrade needs to conclude with the lifetime of the original system. |
| 61 | 25/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>Should documentary evidence be provided for the DoH at this point in time? Similarly, is the access to databases/identification data related to such evidence (as referenced on page 6 of the DoH form) needed at the time of the submission of the EoI?</p> | <p>Please note that the applicants are requested to submit the supporting documents listed in Section A.VI of the Declaration on Honour with the submission. This applies also to evidence if it accessible on a national database free of charge.</p> |
| 62 | 28/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>When the hosting entity applies for an AI factory based on the existing supercomputer, are all the members of the initial consortium automatically considered members of the AI factory consortium even if they do not contribute with extra budget?</p> | <p>Please note that Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 is opened only for existing Hosting Entities, the applying consortia shall reflect the composition of the initial hosting consortia. This means that no new additional members shall be added (cf. Q46). However, it is not automatically assumed that all members of an initial consortium are also members of a new consortium. It is an internal decision of the consortia with regard to the final composition within the limits indicated in the Call conditions (i.e., not including all members of initial consortia).</p> |
| 63 | 28/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>What are the minimum requirements for them to be considered part of the AI factory consortium? Can they be included as affiliated entities or even beneficiaries with zero budget or is there some other scheme for other countries to participate in the consortium?</p> | <p>In terms of eligibility requirements, as explained in previous questions (cf. Q46, Q62), the composition of consortia applying for the AI Factories Call (Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01) shall reflect the composition of the initial hosting consortia. The members of the</p> |

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| | | | | <p>consortia shall fulfil the eligibility requirements indicated in Section 6 of the Call. Apart from the financial contributions, a member of a consortium could also contribute with in-kind contributions (i.e., providing an FTE or equivalent).</p> <p>Please also note that the Grant Agreement resulting from the award of an AI Factory will be a standard mono-beneficiary Horizon Europe Grant Agreement, therefore standard rules of Horizon Europe are applicable to different types of participants (cf. Q55).</p> |
| 64 | 28/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>If they are able to participate in the consortium at this stage with zero budget, in case they secure national funding (<5M€), can we have an amendment on the GA?</p> | <p>Please be informed that the GA cannot be amended. The grant for an AI Factory will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of the EU Financial Rules. The financial contribution should be set out in the commitment letters (please also refer to Q46, 55, 57).</p> |
| 65 | 23/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>Could you please confirm if a Member State is allowed to submit more than one hosting entity application in the same call, meaning more than one hosting entity from the same Member State?</p> <p>For example, would it be possible for a Member State to apply for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Upgrading a current EuroHPC supercomputer towards an AI Factory (Track 2) by an existing EuroHPC hosting entity , and 2. The acquisition of a new AI Factory optimised Supercomputer (Track 3) by a new hosting entity? | <p>Please note that there is no formal restriction to submit only one application per Member State, in particular if the two applications are submitted by different Hosting Entities/member of Hosting consortia. However, in both cases an applying Hosting Entity/a member of a Hosting Consortium shall submit an individual commitment letter from the Participating State for the respective applications. However, please note that the participation in more than one AI Factory should be duly justified in the respective</p> |

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| | | | | applications to avoid overlapping of activities and double funding. |
| 66 | 23/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>I am writing you to ask a question regarding the commitment letter of participating states for the call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 . Our question is:</p> <p>We have 3 national agencies in our country that will be co-funding this action (2 ministries and 1 regional government) Could you please confirm if it is correct to provide the Annex 1c (model commitment letter participating states) for each of them as a confirmation of the governmental support for the funding?</p> | Please be informed that in case the co-financing of the Participating State is coming from different governmental bodies (i.e., different ministries and/or regional ministries), please provide separate commitment letters. |
| 67 | 21/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>Is it eligible to host the Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform on a different location than the AI EuroHPC supercomputer in case both locations are in the same Member State? And is it eligible in case of hosting in two different Member States?</p> | Please note that an application for an Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform (“Platform”) is an option for the Hosting Entities with the goal of such Platform to provide an exploratory supercomputing infrastructure for the development, integration, testing, and co-design of a wide range of European technologies <u>suitable to be part of the new or the upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer.</u> Please also note that the application submitted for the Platform is not a separate application but an integral part of the main application and cannot be granted without awarding the main application (cf. Q44). For these reasons, it is not eligible to have two hosting sites, one hosting an EuroHPC AI-oriented supercomputer and another one hosting the Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform. |
| 68 | 21/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | <p>For the Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform is foreseen to be some state-</p> | As mentioned in the call text “The goal of such a platform shall be to develop an exploratory supercomputing infrastructure for the |

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| | | | of-the-art platform. Is it eligible to use HW components that are currently available on the market? | development, integration, testing, and co-design of a wide range of European technologies suitable to be part of a newly acquired or upgraded EuroHPC supercomputer". Therefore, key components of the platform are expected to derive from European R&D activities. |
| 69 | 21/10/2024 | 28/10/2024 | How should we prove a high degree of technical competence and specialisation in developing exploratory supercomputing infrastructure for the development, integration, testing and co-design of a wide range of European technologies being part of the AI supercomputer infrastructure? | Candidates need to provide such evidence of competencies through the three evaluation criteria foreseen by the call, namely: Excellence, Impact and Quality and efficiency of implementation. In particular, as part of the latter criterion, candidates will need to describe the "capacity and expertise of the consortium" |
| 70 | 30/12/2024 | 09/01/2025 | In a previous response, it was mentioned that the Model Hosting Agreement (HA) for Hosting Entities for AI-optimised supercomputers would be published as soon as it became available. However, following the first cut-off date of the AI-optimised supercomputers call, the model has not yet been released. Could you kindly share the document or confirm its availability | Please note that the model Hosting Agreements (HA) for Hosting Entities for AI-optimised supercomputers and Hosting Entities for AI upgrade of existing EuroHPC supercomputers were published on the JU website on 7 January 2025, together with other call documents (cf. CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST to select Hosting Entities for acquiring or upgrading EuroHPC supercomputers with AI capabilities, an Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised S - EuroHPC JU). |
| 71 | 30/12/2024 | 09/01/2025 | We would also like to confirm whether private contributions can be considered as part of the mandatory co-funding required from the Member States (MS). Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can private contributions complement or substitute the financial commitments expected from the MS under the call's guidelines? | Please note that as indicated in the call conditions (cf. Section 6 on eligibility criteria), the applicants must provide the commitment of the Member State where the hosting entity is established and, in the case of a hosting Consortium, of the competent authorities of the Participating States of the hosting consortium to cover the share of the total cost |

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| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If private contributions are allowed, how should they be detailed in the proposal to ensure compliance with the funding rules? Are there specific sections or requirements to address this in the application form? | <p>of ownership of the new or the upgraded AI EuroHPC supercomputer, and the cost of the AI Factory that are not covered by the Union contribution. Thus, the commitment(s) from private partners cannot substitute nor replace the commitment(s) made by the competent national/regional authorities. The JU does not intervene in the internal distribution of the remaining parts of the Member State/Participating States' financial contribution, i.e., the competent authorities shall confirm that remaining financial contribution for a new AI-optimised supercomputer/AI upgrade and associated AI Factory shall be covered by the Member State/Participating State(s), however, in practical terms such contributions could be covered by different entities at national level. Please also note that the private partners could contribute with in-kind contributions.</p> <p>Regarding your question on the detailed description of the financial contribution of partners in consortium, there are no specific requirements for this. However, we encourage you to set out the proposed budget in detail, in particular in the description of the total costs of ownership in the application form.</p> |
| 72 | | 09/01/2025 | <p>Corrigendum</p> <p>Although it references a consortium, the Horizon Europe (HE) GA is marked as mono beneficiary, is there another version that we should consider in case of a consortium behind the AI Factory?</p> | <p>The reply below corrects the answer provided in Question 20 (and repeated in Questions 41, 50, 55 and 63)</p> <p>Please note that in the previous answers, it was incorrectly communicated that the AI Factory grant and grant for the experimental platform</p> |

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| | | | | will be awarded as standard mono-beneficiary Horizon Europe grants. Contrary to this, please be informed that the grants will follow a standard <u>multi-beneficiary</u> Horizon Europe grant. The model Grant Agreement (Annex 4d – General Model Grant Agreement) was updated on the JU call website accordingly. |
| 73 | 12/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Country restrictions for eligible costs</p> <p>Are there any restrictions on including costs in the budget for activities that might be carried out by entities or providers located outside the Member State where the hosting entity is established? These entities would not be part of the consortium (since there would be none in this case) but could contribute to the project through activities such as subcontracting.</p> <p>We would like to clarify whether, if such a case arises, there are specific restrictions for activities performed by entities from third countries such as Switzerland, the United States, Japan, or others.</p> <p>If so, what requirements must be met for these costs to be considered eligible and approved within the framework of the project?</p> | <p>Please note that the eligibility of the costs for AI Factory grant and the grant for the Experimental Platform follows standard Horizon Europe rules on cost eligibility. For this reason, subcontracting is allowed and the subcontracting costs can be incurred if they are in line with Article 6.2.B of the Grant Agreement (cf. Annex 4d available under the link: CALL for the selection of existing Hosting Entities of EuroHPC systems to acquire an Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform and establishment of AI Factories - EuroHPC JU).</p> <p>There are no country eligibility restriction on subcontracting, however, as a general rule only limited parts of action may be subcontracted (i.e., subcontracting shall remain proportionate in terms of share and type of actions, as well as in terms of share of eligible costs). The acceptable limit will be assessed by the Granting Authority based on a proposal. Please also note that alternatively to subcontracting, certain costs by the third parties could be accounted as third parties giving in-kind contribution to the action in</p> |

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| | | | | accordance with the standard Horizon Europe rules. |
| 74 | 12/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform</p> <p>In line with the AI factory services, which can be delivered in a distributed manner through collaborations or subcontracting, is it possible for the development of the Advanced Experimental AI-Optimised Supercomputing Platform to also be carried out in a distributed manner?</p> <p>This would mean involving collaboration or subcontracting with entities external to the hosting entity (without implying any modification to the composition of the consortium or the hosting entity).</p> | Please note that as indicated in Q73, the eligibility of the costs for the Experimental Platform grant follows the standard Horizon Europe rules on cost eligibility (Cf. Article 6.2.B of the GA). Thus, the subcontracting is allowed, however, it shall be limited as indicated in Q73. |
| 75 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Is commercial access to the HPC infrastructure possible for the JU funded part?</p> <p>Is commercial access to services of the AI Factory possible for the national funded part?</p> <p>Which entity issues the invoice for commercial access?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is it the hosting entity or the hosting site or JU? ○ which legal entity keeps the revenue and what can this money be used for | <p>Please note that in accordance with the Council Regulation 2024/1732 of 17 June 2024, up to 20% of the Union's access time may be allocated to commercial services. In such cases, the level of fees will be established by the JU Governing Board. The fees generated by the commercial use of the Union's share of access time shall constitute revenue to the Joint Undertaking's budget and shall be used to cover operational costs of the Joint Undertaking.</p> <p>For the Union's access time for commercial purposes, the Joint Undertaking will provide guidance to the hosting entity on how to collect the fees from the users based on market prices, and how to transfer it to the EuroHPC JU (cf. Article II.1.6(i) of the model Hosting Agreement).</p> <p>For the national funded part, the Hosting Entity is responsible to set up the arrangements on</p> |

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| | | | | their own, including the decision on the commercial access to services. |
| 76 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | Energy costs are difficult to predict; can project funds intended for operations (e.g. energy costs) be used for additional investments during the course of the project? | Please note that the Union's contribution for operating costs, including the energy costs, will be covered by the Grant Agreement for operating costs. The Grant Agreement for operating costs will follow the unit cost methodology structured around the following cost categories: hosting site preparation; personnel costs; maintenance and operation of the supercomputer. The Hosting Entities will be asked to provide the calculation of operating costs structured around the eligible categories and be entitled to reimbursement of up to 50% of the eligible costs. In duly justified cases, in particular when there are significant variations in the costs for providing access, it can be updated with the agreement of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking and in accordance with the unit cost method through an amendment. However, please note that the total Union's contribution for the operating costs cannot exceed 50% of total operating costs <u>and</u> cannot be higher than the Union's contribution ceiling approved by the Governing Board in the decision selecting the Hosting Entity based on the application submitted, and that no new cost categories can be invented. Thus, we encourage all applicants to detail the budget for operating costs as diligently as possible as to avoid any further adjustments if not necessary. |
| 77 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | Is subcontracting permitted, and if so, what portion of the budget can be allocated to it? For example, we | Please note that subcontracting is allowed, and the subcontracting costs are eligible if they fulfil |

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| | | | require specialized expertise that cannot be hired internally (e.g., short-term, highly specialized skill sets), and we need to outsource these services to ensure the Factory's success. | the criteria provided for in Articles 6.1 and 6.2.B of the model Grant Agreement. There is no overall budget ceiling for subcontracting. However, please note that only a proportionate part of the action may be subcontracted (i.e., subcontracting shall remain proportional in terms of share and tasks subcontracted, as well as in terms of share in the eligible costs). Such limits are assessed by the granting authority based on the proposal. |
| 78 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | Are commercial engagements with partners (e.g., selling HPC capacity to large industry, leasing office space) allowed or encouraged, and how do they impact the grant agreement? | Please note that for the AI Factory grant and AI-Optimised Experimental Platform the non-profit rule applies, meaning that the grant must not produce a profit. If there is a profit, it will be deducted in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the eligible costs approved by the granting authority in accordance with Article 22.3.3 of the model Grant Agreement. |
| 79 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | Do we need to include a post-project outlook beyond the three-year term—for instance, whether there will be a Phase 2 or any follow-up plans after the project ends? | This is not necessary but useful to have. |
| 80 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | Is there a limit of Affiliated Entities in the consortium? Is there a limit of Partners in the consortium? Is there a limit of Affiliated Entities plus Partners in the consortium? | There are no such limits. Please note that the grants for AI Factories and AI-Optimised Experimental Platform will be awarded on the basis of Article 198(f) of the Financial Regulation, thus, the composition of consortium in the grant agreements shall reflect the composition of consortium applying for the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02, i.e., after the selection of the Hosting consortia no new |

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| | | | | partners/affiliated entities can be added to the consortia in grant agreements. |
| 81 | 15/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | We want to be flexible by allocating budget to Affiliated Entities (AE) and allocate budget on a use-case basis. Is it possible to have AEs with zero or very low budget? | Please note that the JU does not intervene in the allocation of financial contributions between the consortia partners. However, the tasks allocated to partners/affiliated entities in consortia shall be clearly described in the application. |
| 82 | 16/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>We are writing to request clarification regarding the documentation required to comply with the criteria established in the Declaration of Honour, particularly concerning VI – Evidence on Exclusion Criteria and III – Evidence on Selection Criteria, as outlined in Annex 1a of the Call.</p> <p>A. VI – Evidence on Exclusion Criteria:</p> <p>☐ For points (1) (a), (c), (d), (f), (g), and (h), is it sufficient to submit an electronic certificate of criminal records for legal persons? Specifically for point (1) (a) (bankruptcy, insolvency, etc.), would additional documentation be required to confirm compliance?</p> <p>☐ For points (1) (a) and (b), are the following documents sufficient:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Certificate of tax compliance issued by the competent authorities, covering VAT, Company Tax, ... o Certificate of compliance with social security contributions issued by the competent authorities | <p>With reference to your questions, please be informed that:</p> <p>A. VI – Evidence on Exclusion Criteria</p> <p>a. For points (1) (a), (c), (d), (f), (g), and (h): Yes, it is generally sufficient to submit an electronic certificate of criminal records for legal persons to cover the exclusion criteria in these points. However, please ensure that the certificate is up-to-date and issued by the relevant authorities. If not possible to submit an extract of criminal record, please provide an equivalent document recently issued by a judicial or administrative authority in the country of establishment of the person showing that those requirements are satisfied.</p> <p>b. For points (a) and (b), the certificates proposed should be sufficient; it is pivotal that the certificates provided are recent and issued by the competent authorities of the country of establishment. If not</p> |

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| | | | <p>B. III – Evidence on Selection Criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you confirm if no additional documentation is required under III – Evidence on Selection Criteria for this specific call? <p>We would greatly appreciate your confirmation on whether the proposed list of documents is adequate or if additional documents are necessary for either section VI or section III.</p> | <p>issued by the country of establishment, they may be replaced by a sworn statement made before a judicial authority or notary or, failing that, a solemn statement made before an administrative authority or a qualified professional body in its country of establishment.</p> <p>B. III – Evidence on Selection Criteria: No additional documentation is required under Section III – Evidence on Selection Criteria of the Declaration on Honour for this specific call, provided that all information requested in the Call is included and clearly documented.</p> |
| 83 | 20/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>How should we include Affiliated Entities? They are not foreseen in any of the provided templates.</p> | <p>Please include the affiliated entities under the section dedicated for applicants by creating an additional table. It must be clearly indicated to which partner an affiliated entity is linked.</p> |
| 84 | 20/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Which documents should the Affiliated Entities provide at the time of proposal submission?</p> | <p>Please note that all consortium members, including the affiliated entities, are requested to provide documents requested under Section 6. Eligibility criteria, including the DoH and supporting documents; documents referring to the legal status of such entities; mandate for the consortium leader, and if contributing financially, the commitment letter from the participating state(s) where the affiliated entities are established.</p> |
| 85 | 21/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Can the Member State, within the framework of its co-financing commitments, fund certain cost items that are not eligible under the Digital Europe Programme but are</p> | <p>The question is not clear, can you please precise the question and explain further what is meant by other funding sources?</p> |

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| | | | <p>aligned with the objectives of the call and eligible under the given funding source?</p> <p>For example, could the construction of a data centre building, which is ineligible for EuroHPC funding (where only site preparation and adaptation costs are eligible), be included as part of the Member State's co-financing contribution?</p> | <p>In general, please note that the co-funding requirement relates to eligible costs. The construction of the data centre is not an eligible cost, (please see Annex 4c - Unit Digital Europe Programme (DEP) Grant Agreement). However, please also note that certain site preparation and adaptation cost of the hosting site incurred by the hosting entity that can be directly accounted to the AI supercomputer may be considered eligible, please see section 12.3 of the Call and Annex 2a of Annex 4c - Unit Digital Europe Programme (DEP) Grant Agreement).</p> |
| 86 | 21/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Could such expenses, eligible under other funding sources, be considered as in-kind contributions for the purposes of the Total Cost of Ownership (TCO)? If so, how should they be reflected in the proposal?</p> | <p>Could you please precise the question.</p> <p>In general, please be aware that the grant on the operating costs of the AI optimised or upgraded supercomputer is governed by the rules of the Digital Europe Programme while the grants on the AI factories and the AI experimental platform follow the rules of Horizon Europe.</p> |
| 87 | 21/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | <p>Within the scope of the Advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform, would efforts exploring quantum computing technologies for enhancing AI capabilities (i.e., Quantum Machine Learning) align with the objective to develop exploratory supercomputing infrastructure for testing and co-designing European technologies? Would such efforts be considered eligible under the call?</p> | <p>An experimental platform that integrates Quantum Computing capabilities with traditional AI supercomputing resources is an acceptable concept. Notice that the Experimental Platform need to be submitted as part of an overall AI Factory proposal and not as a stand-alone action.</p> |

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| 88 | 21/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | Could you provide an estimated timeframe for responding to the inquiry? We would like to confirm whether the final deadline for submitting questions is next Friday, the 24th. | Please be informed that we will provide a thorough response to all the queries in a timely manner. We confirm that the deadline for submitting question is next Friday, 24 January. |
| 89 | 22/01/2025 | 23/01/2025 | As mentioned in previous replies, the grant for AI Factory services will be a standard Horizon Europe grant. Can the applicants make use of the financial support for third parties under this call? | Please note that the financial support for third parties (art. 9.4 of the model Grant Agreement) is not allowed under this call. |
| 90 | 15/01/2025 | 27/01/2025 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Is renting of Office Space including furniture for the AI-Hub eligible for funding? 2) Are rental costs eligible for 25% overheads? 3) Are finder's fee for the foreseen office space of the AI-Hub eligible? 4) Are operational costs for the AI-Hub like cleaning, toilet paper, internet, energy and similar eligible? 5) Under which cost category should the office space be allocated? 6) Are adaption costs of the AI-Hub's office space eligible? | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The PO should judge / evaluate if the office space renting and the furniture are linked and used only for the purpose of the action to be implemented. If this is the case this expenditure should be indicated under category C (Equipment - infrastructure rent...) In order to be eligible, the office space should be fully dedicated to the project and must be identifiable in the accounts. 2) Under the HE programme, all direct costs under the categories A-D, except sub-contracting are eligible for the indirect costs. 3) In our opinion, this position should be covered by the indirect costs. 4) This position should be covered by overheads. 5) Please see above (question1). |

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| | | | | 6) This position should be covered by overheads. |
| 91 | 15/01/2025 | 27/01/2025 | Do we need three offers for the AI-Hub facilities (already at time of Proposal submission)? | Not necessarily at the time of the proposal, but the 3 offers might be requested at the time of payment or in case of audit. |
| 92 | 16/01/2025 | 27/01/2025 | <p>We are writing to request clarification regarding the eligibility of non-recoverable VAT as an eligible cost under the Horizon Europe calls, as established in the Model Grant Agreement.</p> <p>In the case of the Digital Europe Programme, it is specified that VAT should not be included in the TCO.</p> <p>However, in the case of Horizon Europe, the Model Grant Agreement states that subcontracting and purchase costs for the action, including non-deductible or non-refundable taxes, duties, and charges, may be considered eligible provided they meet the general eligibility conditions and are incurred in accordance with the beneficiary's usual purchasing practices. On the other hand, it expressly excludes deductible or refundable VAT when it concerns public entities acting as public authorities.</p> <p>For a public entity that engages in both taxable and VAT-exempt activities, the pro-rata rule may apply. As a result, only a portion of the VAT incurred is deductible,</p> | <p>Some entities have a mixed VAT status. They are subject to VAT for certain activities and not subject to it for others.</p> <p>The fields of activities, subject to VAT or not, are usually defined when registering the entity by the tax authority.</p> <p>An official document from the tax authority, which allows us to clearly identify the field and their status (subject to VAT or not), should be provided with the proposal.</p> <p>To avoid any misunderstanding or unpleasant consequences we recommend that at the time of the payment, that VAT should be clearly indicated.</p> |

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| | | | <p>while the remainder is non-recoverable. This non-recoverable percentage is calculated and reported annually in the tax return model.</p> <p>In this context, we would like to confirm the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can the non-recoverable VAT, calculated according to the aforementioned pro-rata rule, be considered an eligible cost under Horizon Europe? 2. If so, what documentation would be required to justify this cost? <p>We thank you in advance for your guidance on this matter and remain at your disposal to provide any additional information you may require.</p> | |
| 93 | 23/01/2025 | 27/01/2025 | <p>Concerning the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST, if in the proposed project a newly acquired AI-optimised supercomputer is planned, it will be owned by the EuroHPC JU?</p> | <p>Yes, in accordance with the JU Regulation of 2024 (Cf. EUR-Lex - 02021R1173-20240709 - EN - EUR-Lex), the JU shall acquire AI-optimised supercomputers and shall own them (Art. 12a(1) thereof). At the earliest five years after the successful acceptance test by the AI-optimised supercomputer installed in a hosting entity, the JU Governing Board may decide whether the ownership of the AI-optimised super-computer will transferred to that hosting entity or the AI-optimised supercomputer may be sold to another entity or decommissioned.</p> |
| 94 | 23/01/2025 | 27/01/2025 | <p>Concerning the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST, If there will be fee-based services for big industry by the AI Factory, does the</p> | <p>Please note that such fees will be analysed in accordance with the EU state aid rules and the Hosting Entities will be informed by the Commission about the guidelines Please see</p> |

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| | | | <p>hosting university (our university) participate in the income and how? Are there any regulations in subject matter as stated above? <i>"The European Commission will provide guidelines in due time on this matter"</i></p> | <p>section 1, p. 36 of the concept paper annexed to the Call (Annex 3: "AI Factories" Concept Paper).</p> |
| 95 | 24/01/2025 | 27/01/2025 | <p>Regarding Minerva project, can applicants incorporate their local Minerva action as part of their AI Factory activities, e.g. if there are a total of 4 FTE involved on Minerva, 2 FTE be declared as contribution on the AIF and not ask of course to receive back a contribution from EuroHPC since they are already funded by Minerva.</p> | <p>Please be informed that Minerva and the AI Factories are separate grants which need to be kept separate and for which it has to be ensured that there is no double funding.</p> |
| 96 | 28/01/2025 | 29/01/2025 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With respect to the Declaration of Honours of each partner: Do we need to attach any proofs to these forms? What does "tender" on page 7 refer to? 2. With respect to the Mandate letters (if applicable; see template in Annex 1b): The call says that the existing Hosting Entities do not get a new hosting agreement for AI Factory only? If this is not correct, we have to give a "Title & No" as part of the form. However, as said, the FAQ says that there won't be a new hosting agreement. 3. With respect to Commitment letters (5th checklist item): Do we understand it correctly that we need only one commitment letter by a competent authority for the contribution of all entities from the same country? | <p>Please see the answers to your questions below</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As set out in section 7.4 of the Call text and in Annex 1, section 3.4. of the Call "Checklist for applicants", the Declarations on honour are sufficient and no evidence is needed at this stage. Regarding the reference to procurements, please be aware that the Declaration on honour is a template used for different selection procedures, please ignore the reference to procurement procedures. 2. Please be informed that there will be no new Hosting Agreement in case of an application for the selection of an existing Hosting Entity of a EuroHPC supercomputers to acquire an advanced Experimental AI-optimised Supercomputing Platform (optional) and |

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| | | | | <p>to establish an AI Factory. Your assumption is correct.</p> <p>3. The commitment letter (Annex 1c of the Call) refers to country of the hosting entity or country of each consortium member. The commitment letter needs to confirm the contribution for the AI factory, and if applicable, the advanced experimental AI optimised platform (please see last sentence of the commitment letter. Your assumption is correct, one commitment letter for one Participating State's contribution is sufficient.</p> |
| 97 | 29/01/2025 | 29/01/2025 | <p>How the hosting entity participates in the fees from the users based on market prices (in its own access time, not Union's access)? How big is the Union's access time.</p> <p>All we know from the "Hosting Agreement - AI Supercomputer": "The operating costs of the EuroHPC AI-optimised supercomputer to be covered by Union contribution will be reimbursed through a grant agreement to be signed in that regard ("Grant Agreement for operating costs of the AI-optimised supercomputer"). The Grant Agreement for operating costs of the AI-optimised supercomputer will also define the rules and conditions for the operation of the supercomputer." "In addition, a grant agreement will be signed between the EuroHPC JU and the Hosting Entity to cover the funding for the development of the AI Factory around the</p> | <p>Please note that we need to distinguish and clarify certain aspects you raised in your question.</p> <p>Our previous reply was concerning the part on AI Factories services, and it was related to the state aid rules. For this question, we are not able to provide you more information than already provided. The guidelines will be provided by the European Commission.</p> <p>Below, you are referring to the access time to the AI-optimised supercomputer. The access to the EuroHPC supercomputer is defined in the JU Regulation (Council Regulation 2024/1732 of 17 June 2024). In accordance with Article 17(1) thereof, the Union's access time to an AI-optimised EuroHPC supercomputer is directly proportional to the financial contribution of the Union to the total costs of ownership of such</p> |

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| | | | <p>EuroHPC AI-optimised supercomputer and the AI Factory operation, as well as to establish the rules and conditions for providing services related to the AI Factory ("Grant Agreement for the AI Factory")."</p> <p>"i) In the situation where the Union's access time is allocated for commercial purposes in accordance with Article 18 of the JU Regulation and in line with the JU Access Policy, for the Union's access time, the Joint Undertaking will provide guidance to the hosting entity on how to collect the fees from the users based on market prices, and how to transfer it to the EuroHPC JU. Such fees generated from the commercial access will constitute revenue to the Joint Undertaking and shall be used to cover operational costs of the Joint Undertaking. "</p> <p>Theres no "guidance to the hosting entity on how to collect the fees" or "Grant Agreement for the AI Factory" on the linked website.</p> <p>If you could please point out the concrete parts of the documents and the documents itself, it would be possible to decide if the investment is feasible and cost-effective for hosting entity.</p> | <p>supercomputer and shall not exceed 50% of the total access time. The remaining access time is allocated to the Hosting Entity/partners in the Hosting consortium. The JU does not intervene in the allocation of the access time of the Hosting Entity/Hosting consortium. Regarding the Union's time, based on the decision of the JU's Governing Board, up to 20% of the Union's access time may be allocated to commercial access and the fees generated by the commercial use will constitute revenue of the JU (cf. Article 18 of the Regulation. If such decision is made by the Governing Board, the JU will inform the Hosting Entity and will provide guidelines on how to collect such fees in accordance with cited-below Article of the Hosting Agreement.</p> <p>Concerning your question on the Grant Agreement, please note that as indicated in the call conditions, the AI Factory grant will be a standard Horizon Europe Grant Agreement. The model grant agreement is part of the call documents available on our website (Cf. Annex 4d for the call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02). Also, for clarification, the Grant Agreement for the operating costs of the AI-optimised supercomputer will be a standard DEP Grant Agreement (cf. Annex 4c for the call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02).</p> |
| 98 | 29/01/2025 | 29/01/2025 | <p>We are finalizing our proposal for the new EuroHPC AI Factory and approaching the deadline for the second cut-off.</p> | <p>To meet the deadline for the second cut-off, you need to send your application (3 paper copies + USB sticks), duly filled and signed, via</p> |

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| | | | <p>According to the EuroHPC official submission procedure, the proposal must be submitted in three (3) copies (one original, clearly identified as such, plus two copies), along with an electronic copy on a USB stick, and signed by the authorized person.</p> <p>I would appreciate your clarification on whether we can submit an electronic copy via email or a repository to meet the 2nd cut-off deadline while simultaneously sending the paper copies by post, with the postmark date serving as proof of timely submission.</p> | <p>post/courier services before the deadline, or deliver the application in person to the JU premises. Once you have a shipment receipt, you can send us an electronic copy as a proof. Simultaneously, upon request, we can provide you with a link to CIRCABC platform where you can submit an electronic version of the application. Please note that the electronic submission via CIRCABC does not replace the submission of the original application. Only when we receive an original application sent via post/courier services or delivered in person, we will consider your application valid.</p> |
| 99 | 28/02/2025 | 07/03/2025 | <p>I. Is it known whether the fees, payments will be received by hosting unit or the state of the hosting unit in the case of "the remaining access time is allocated to the Hosting Entity"? Who will benefit from the access time is allocated to the Hosting Entity (mu university as a hosting unit or my state (for example, Ministry of Digitization)?</p> <p>II. If "Regarding the Union's time, based on the decision of the JU's Governing Board, up to 20% of the Union's access time may be allocated to commercial access and the fees generated by the commercial use will constitute revenue of the JU"?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is the percentage for commercial use known for hosting unit? | <p>Ad I.) Please note that the remaining part of the access time, meaning the access time, which is not the Union's access time, is allocated to the Hosting Entity/Hosting consortium (national access time). In case of a hosting consortium, the members of the consortium shall agree internally on the proportion of national access time for consortium members. The JU does not intervene in the allocation of the national access time.</p> <p>Ad II.) Please note that the commercial access you are referring to concerns only the Union's access time. According to the EuroHPC JU's access policy, the Peer-Review Office, under the supervision of the Executive Director, is responsible for implementing the allocation of computing time on behalf of the Governing Board. The Executive Director will instruct the</p> |

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| | | | <p>III. Could the fees be charged only to big industry or also to startups and SMEs? Is big industry defined somewhere in the documents?</p> | <p>participating hosting entities about the implementation of the projects.</p> <p>Ad III.) Please note that for the AI Factory services, they shall be allocated to the SMEs and start-ups free of charge. The allocation of services for the big industry shall be covered by the state aid rules and shall follow the state aid rules.</p> |
| 100 | 08/03/2025 | 09/03/2025 | <p>We have a powerful consortium who would like to apply for the EU AI Factories. But as it is necessary to own a specific HPC we were wondering if the HPC of the military university would suit for the application?</p> | <p>Please note that there are two calls for expressions of interest for establishing an AI Factory with different eligibility criteria.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) EuroHPC Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-01 (under the following link) for existing EuroHPC Hosting Entities to establish an AI Factory. This call is open only to existing EuroHPC JU Hosting Entities (i.e., Hosting Entities with whom the EuroHPC signed Hosting Agreements), which host already a aa EuroHPC supercomputer. Legal entities that are not EuroHPC Hosting Entities are not eligible under this call. 2) EuroHPC Call EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 (under the following link) to acquire a new AI-optimised supercomputer or an upgrade and establish an AI Factory. In accordance with the call conditions, there is no pre-requisite to have an HPC machine in order to apply for a new AI-Optimised supercomputer and establish an AI Factory around the new system. The applicants shall fulfil the requirements listed in Section 6 of the |

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| | | | | <p>call, i.e., being established in a Member State of the EU (coordinating entity) or in the JU Participating State (members of the hosting consortia). The call is open to legal entities that have a legal personality on the date of the deadline for the submission of applications and must be able to demonstrate their existence as a legal person. There is no restriction for military universities as long as they fulfil other criteria. However, regarding the use of EuroHPC supercomputers please be aware that Article 16 (1) of Regulation (EU) 2021/1173 on establishing the European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2024/1732 amending Regulation (EU) 2021/1173 as regards a EuroHPC initiative for start-ups in order to boost European Leadership in trustworthy artificial intelligence provides that the use of EuroHPC supercomputers shall be open to users from public and private sectors and shall focus on civilian applications. Paragraph 2 of that Article provides that the AI-optimised supercomputers and EuroHPC supercomputers upgraded for AI capabilities shall be used primarily for the development, testing, evaluation and validation of large scale, general</p> |
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| | | | | <p>purpose AI training models and emerging AI applications, as well as for the further development of AI solutions in the Union requiring High Performance Computing and the execution of large-scale AI algorithms for the resolution of science problems. Please also note that under this call, it is not possible to apply for an AI Factory only.</p> |
| 101 | 19/02/2025 | 17/03/2025 | <p>In the EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02 call text for the optional experimental system component, it says;</p> <p><u>"The evaluation of this optional part will not have any impact on the overall score of the application, i.e., the evaluation of this part will be considered separately and will not affect the final ranking or selection of applications regarding the other parts of this Call for Expression of Interest."</u></p> <p>In the FAQ document, it says (Q67)</p> <p>"Please also note that the application submitted for the Platform is not a separate application but an integral part of the main application and cannot be granted without awarding the main application (cf. Q44)."</p> <p>We would like to understand what happens if the experimental system is scored below the critical threshold (i.e., < 10/15 total or < 3/5 per</p> | <p>We confirm that the evaluation of the experimental platform is not taken into account in the final scoring of the application. For CEI Ref. EUROHPC-2024-CEI-AI-02, only the scoring for the AI-optimised system/upgrade and for the associated AI Factory will be a part of the final outcome. If the experimental platform is scored below the threshold, and the AI-optimised system/upgrade and the AI Factory parts will be scored above the threshold, the application will be proposed for funding (subject to the final decision of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking Governing Board). Q67 which you are referring to indicates that the option of the experimental platform is an integral part of the application in the meaning that the applicants cannot apply only for the experimental platform without applying for an AI-Optimised supercomputer/upgrade and the associated AI Factory.</p> |

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| | | | <p>criterion), but the other of the proposal are scored above their critical thresholds? I.e., would a rejection of the experimental system component lead to a rejection of the full proposal or is it fully independent? In other words, could the other parts (AI facility and AI factory) still be granted if the (optional) experimental component would be rejected?</p> | |
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