DIGITAL EUROPE

European Digital Innovation Hubs

Work programme 2021-2023

DRAFT

 *16 November 2020*

DISCLAIMER

All the budget figures in this document are purely indicative and
DO NOT REPRESENT the final budget allocation

Introduction

This document sets out the work programme for the first three years of the Digital Europe Programme related to European Digital Innovation Hubs.

It follows the extensive consultation with Member States, stakeholders and the public on drafts of the strategic orientations for the programme. It uses as reference point the Annex1 of the Digital Europe Programme’s regulation.

Digital technologies are profoundly changing our daily life, our way of working and doing business, the way we understand and use our natural resources and environment and the way people interact, communicate and educate themselves. The von der Leyen’s Commission has presented an ambitious strategy in its digital package of February 19th 2020. The [Council conclusions on shaping Europe’s digital future adopted on the 9th of June 2020](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/register/en/content/out?typ=SET&i=ADV&RESULTSET=1&DOC_TITLE=&CONTENTS=&DOC_ID=8711%2F20&DOS_INTERINST=&DOC_SUBJECT=&DOC_SUBTYPE=&DOC_DATE=&document_date_from_date=&document_date_from_date_submit=&document_date_to_date=&document_date_to_date_submit=&MEET_DATE=&meeting_date_from_date=&meeting_date_from_date_submit=&meeting_date_to_date=&meeting_date_to_date_submit=&DOC_LANCD=EN&ROWSPP=25&NRROWS=500&ORDERBY=DOC_DATE+DESC) confirmed this ambition.

The COVID-19 crisis has further highlighted the critical role of digital technologies and infrastructures in our lives and demonstrated how our societies and economies rely on digital solutions. The crisis confirmed how important it is for Europe not to be dependent on systems and solutions coming from other regions of the world.

The efforts needed are not limited to Research and Development. The EU must drastically improve its digital capacities. This includes digital technologies, as well as the necessary digital skills for EU workers. Europe must also develop key digital infrastructures and strengthen its industrial base, enhance its resilience and flexibility both in terms of technologies and supply chains. Delivering this will require massive public and private investment and common efforts that no Member State alone could secure. In that context, the European data strategy has announced a High Impact project on European data spaces, encompassing data sharing architectures and governance mechanisms, as well as the European federation of energy-efficient and trustworthy cloud infrastructures and related services.

The programme objectives

The Digital Europe programme will reinforce EU critical digital capacities by focusing on the key areas of artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity, advanced computing, data infrastructure, governance and processing, and their deployment and best use for critical sectors like energy and environment, manufacturing, agriculture and health. The Digital Europe programme will actively encourage proposers to include Horizon Europe / Horizon 2020 digital innovations that are ‘market mature’ and/or demonstrate disruptive potential (as per indicator systems of the JRC’s Innovation Radar[[1]](#footnote-2)  methodology). The programme also targets upskilling to provide a workforce for these advanced digital technologies. It supports industry, SME’s, and public administration in their digital transformation with a reinforced network of European Digital Innovation Hubs. Digital Europe will accelerate the recovery and drive the digital transformation of Europe.

The twin transitions to a green and digital Europe remain the defining challenges of this generation. This is reflected throughout the Commission’s proposals. Digital Europe will deliver on the goals set out in the European Data strategy of creating a true European data economy. It will help bring European human centred AI-solutions as set out in white paper on AI and it will unleash the powers of digital to reach Europe’s common goal of being climate neutral in 2050 as set out in the European Green Deal.

In order to fulfil its mission, Digital Europe will deploy a network of European Digital Innovation Hubs offering, for public and private organisations all across Europe, access to technology testing and support in their digital transformation.

The European Digital Innovation Hubs are an important tool in Europe’s industrial policy and SME policy to support companies in the twin (green and digital) transition. Together with the Enterprise Europe Network and Startup Europe they are close to local companies, speak their language and will provide a seamless service. The objective of the Digital Europe Programme is to create a network of “European Digital Innovation Hubs” (EDIH), covering all regions of Europe.

Indicative Budget and implementation

At the time of writing the final budget is not decided yet. The budget brackets (in current prices) indicated in this document are only indicative, adding up to the amount included in the overall MFF agreement of 10 November 2020 (based on EUCO July 2020 agreement i.e. with a cut of 17,4 % to the original Commission proposal of EUR 9,2 billion in current prices). The cut is applied linearly to the Strategic Objectives. However, as MFF negotiations are still ongoing the budget figures in this document might be subject to change.

Digital Europe is implemented by means of multiannual work programmes. There are independent work programmes for those parts which are implemented under indirect management (High Performance Computing and Cybersecurity), and for the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EIDH), which need a longer duration for the financing decision. Activities in this work programme are implemented in direct management by the European Commission, as foreseen in the legislative proposal. Synergies and complementarities of the activities in the various work programmes will be ensured.

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# Accelerating best use of technologies: European Digital Innovation Hubs

The actions included in this work programme focus on the creation of a network of “European Digital Innovation Hubs” (EDIH), aiming to cover all regions of Europe.

A European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH) is a single entity or a coordinated group of entities with complementary expertise and a not-for-profit objective to support on a large scale the digital transformation of companies (especially SMEs and small mid-caps) and/or public sector organisations conducting non-economic activities. EDIHs provide services such as testing before investing, training and skills development, support to find investments, networking and access to ecosystems.

The selection of the EDIHs will follow a two-step process: First, an Expression of Interest (1.1) will request Member States to designate potential EDIHs through a national process, and secondly the European Commission will launch two restricted calls (1.2) for proposals in which only designated potential EDIHs are eligible to participate. This will allow those potential EDIHs who did not manage to succeed at the first instance to reapply a second time. All those entities selected after the two restricted calls will form the Initial Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs.

A Seal of Excellence will be awarded to those potential EDIHs that passed the threshold but which cannot be funded because of lack of budget available in Digital Europe Programme. This will allow MS or regions to fund these entities. Once they are in operation they will also be able to use the label “European Digital Innovation Hub” and will be full members of the network.

This network will be supported by the Digital Transformation Accelerator (see 1.3).

## Expression of Interest to Member States and Associated Countries to designate candidate European Digital Innovation Hubs

Objective

The objective is to obtain a list of candidate European Digital Innovation Hubs, proposed by Member States and Associated Countries, which will be allowed to respond to the restricted calls for the Initial Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs.

Scope

All Member States and Associated Countries are requested to designate a number of potential EDIHs geographically spread (in case they will have more than one EDIH) over the country, that respond to the demand of industry and public sector while taking into account existing assets and National priorities. They have to be selected through an open and competitive process in accordance with national procedures, administrative and institutional structures. This process can have happened in the past, but not before 1 May 2016.

Member States and Associated Countries are invited to designate a number of potential EDIH included between the minimum and maximum numbers recommended in the table below. However, they are free to designate a different number of hubs according to their specific geographical and sectoral needs. They can also designate more hubs than what could be funded in order to raise the competition during the restricted call process. The total amount of funding foreseen in the budget table for any one country will be the maximum amount of co-funding foreseen in Digital Europe Programme for all EDIHs of that country during the duration of the Programme. Countries will foresee to co-fund the selected EDIHs in their territory by providing matching funding.

Several countries can jointly propose cross-border trans-national hubs, serving neighbouring regions in different countries.

Designated candidate EDIHs should have:

* appropriate competences related to the functions of the European Digital Innovation Hubs defined above;
* appropriate management capacity, staff and infrastructure necessary to carry out the functions defined above;
* operational and legal means to apply the administrative, contractual and financial management rules laid down at Union level;
* appropriate financial viability, corresponding to the level of Union funds they will be called upon to manage and demonstrated, where appropriate, through guarantees, issued preferably by a public authority.

Given the importance of Artificial Intelligence and its wide applicability in all sectors, the European Commission expects that at least one of the hubs designated in each country will have expertise in AI. Most Member States have also signed in 2019 the Digital Declaration on smart agriculture and rural areas[[2]](#footnote-3), where Digital Innovation Hubs play an important role. These hubs may be proposed as European Digital Innovation Hubs with a specialisation on digitalised agriculture.

As a proof of their designation, Member States should provide a letter to all designated potential EDIHs declaring that they have been selected by the Member State to participate in the restricted calls (see 1.2). Potential EDIHs should attach this letter to their application to the restricted calls.

Expression of interest

The table below illustrates the number of hubs foreseen for each country. This table will be updated with Associated States, once agreements between these countries and the Union have been reached.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Country** | **Projected budget** (1000 €) | Recommended **min # of hubs[[3]](#footnote-4)** | Recommended **max # of hubs**  | **NUTS 2 regions** | **Budget per year** |
|  Austria | 20,132 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2,876 |
|  Croatia | 12,715 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1,816 |
|  Cyprus | 6,357 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0,908 |
|  Estonia | 7,417 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1,06 |
|  Finland | 14,834 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2,119 |
|  France | 83,706 | 12 | 24 | 27 | 11,958 |
|  Greece | 22,251 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 3,179 |
|  Ireland | 13,774 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1,968 |
|  Italy | 80,528 | 12 | 23 | 21 | 11,504 |
|  Latvia | 8,477 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1,211 |
|  Malta | 6,357 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0,908 |
|  Poland | 55,098 | 8 | 16 | 17 | 7,871 |
|  Spain | 62,515 | 9 | 18 | 19 | 8,931 |
| Belgium | 22,251 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 3,179 |
| Bulgaria | 18,013 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 2,573 |
| Czech Republic | 22,251 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 3,179 |
| Denmark | 14,834 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 2,119 |
| Germany | 101,719 | 15 | 29 | 38 | 14,531 |
| Hungary | 22,251 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 3,179 |
| Lithuania | 11,655 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1,665 |
| Luxembourg | 6,357 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0,908 |
| Netherlands | 30,728 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 4,39 |
| Portugal | 22,251 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 3,179 |
| Romania | 34,966 | 5 | 10 | 8 | 4,995 |
| Slovakia | 14,834 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2,119 |
| Slovenia | 8,477 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1,211 |
| Sweden | 22,251 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 3,179 |
| **Total** | **747** | **107** | **211** | **240** | **106,714** |

## Initial Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs

Objective

Select the Initial Network of European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH) from all designated candidate entities resulting from the Expression of Interest (1.1). Upgrade these entities to provide the complete set of services of an EDIH, including the necessary infrastructure, in a specific geographical area, covering the needs of the local SMEs, small mid-caps and/or public sector organisations with respect to their digital transformation. Network these EDIHs with each other and with other projects selected in Digital Europe Programme developing capacities in High Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Advanced Digital Skills and accelarating the best use of technologies.

Scope

Each EDIH will provide services based on a specific focus/expertise, which will support the local private and public sector with their digital and green transformation. This specialisation can be strengthened over time. The services will be provided on an open, transparent and non-discriminatory basis and will be targeted mainly to SMEs, small-midcaps and public sector organisations conducting non-economic activities.

Each EDIH will act as access point to the European network of EDIHs, helping local companies and public actors to get support from other EDIHs in case the needed competences fall outside the competence of the local EDIH, ensuring that every stakeholder gets the best support, wherever it is available in Europe. The EDIHs will be active in networking with other hubs, sharing best practices and specialist knowledge, in bringing companies into contact with other companies of their value chain, and in seeking synergies with innovators and early adopters - including artists and other creatives – that bringing companies EDIHs will also play a brokering role between public administrations and companies providing e-government technologies. In all the networking activities, EDIHs will be supported by the Digital Transformation Accelerator (see 1.3), and therefore it is compulsory that EDIHs participate actively to the relevant support activities of the Digital Transformation Accelerator, such as the matchmaking events and capacity building events.

Each EDIH will make available the relevant experimentation facilities related to its specialisation. SMEs, small mid-caps and the public sector will be able to test the technologies proposed, including where relevant their environmental impact, and the feasibility of applying these technologies to their business before further investing in it.

Furthermore, they will act as a multiplier and widely diffuse the use of all the digital capacities built up under the different specific objectives of the Digital Europe Programme on High Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Advanced Digital Skills and accelarating the best use of technologies. For this purpose, the EDIHs will participate to a “Train the trainer” programme where the specialists of the digital capacities train the EDIHs on how to use the capacities, so that the EDIHs can help their stakeholders to make use of them. It should be avoided that there is duplication of actions of the High Performance Computing competence centers and the Cybersecurity centers and the EDIHs, and therefore working arrangements will be agreed among them, where the focus of the EDIHS will be on their role as multiplier and reaching out to all regions in Europe. The “Train the trainer” events will be organised by the Digital Transformation Accelerator, but EDIHs will foresee participation in those events in their budget.

EDIHs will maintain structured long-term relationships with the relevant local actors like regional authorities, industrial clusters, SME associations, business development agencies, incubators, accelerators, chambers of commerce, and partners of the European Enterprise Network (EEN). Specifically, EDIHs will offer a seamless service with EEN and Startup Europe, e.g. by offering joint investor-related events, organising common trainings, workshops or info days, directing SME from EEN to EDIHs and from EDIHs to EEN as needed. It is expected that local EEN nodes that team up with a local EDIH will sign a Memorandum of Understanding to regulate their collaboration.

Finally, EDIHs will act as interface with the European Commission to support the implementation of specific sectorial policies, SME policies and eGovernment policies. This will imply that EDIHs specialised in a specific sector might be asked by the EC to contribute with their input to policies related to their sector of competence, and to participate to specific actions. One example for this is the “Adopt AI” programme, that is currently under development as a result of the White Paper on AI[[4]](#footnote-5).

The Digital Transformation Accelerator will also have the role to report on overall Key Performance Indicators of the network, and therefore each EDIH will provide them with the necessary information.

The support provided by MSs for EDIHs is subject to State aid control. Where State aid is provided for a full pass on to the EDIHs’ users, it does not need to be notified to the Commission when it is granted to EDIHs in line with the GBER Regulation (for example under Article 28 GBER: Aid for Innovation Advisory Services, Article 25 of the GBER: support for RDI projects) or the de minimis[[5]](#footnote-6) Regulation. In this regard, it is understood that EDIHs will fully pass on all the State aid to their users and any State aid left at the level of EDIHs will have to be recovered[[6]](#footnote-7) or MSs must make sure that any aid left at the level of the EDIH fulfils the compatibility conditions set out in Article 27 of the GBER on support for innovation clusters.

Under Art 28 of the GBER, SME users accessing EDIHs services can benefit from State aid passed on by the EDIHs in the form of charges below market prices. In particular, Art 28 (4) the GBER states “*In the particular case of aid for innovation advisory and support services the aid intensity can be increased up to 100% of the eligible costs provided that the total amount of aid for innovation advisory and support services does not exceed EUR 200.000 per undertaking within any three year period.* ” On this basis, any SME would be allowed to use the EDIH services/functions for free or at reduced price up to a maximum value/aid element of €200,000. Therefore, in their proposal, each EDIH should present a price list, based on market prices if these exist, and display the available reductions it plans to offer to SMEs. If market prices do not exist, then the prices should be based on the full costs incurred by the EDIH in providing these services and a reasonable profit. The price list would apply to all stakeholders but SMEs could receive the services for free or at reduced costs, as long as the limit of EUR 200.000 per three year period is respected. With a view to the threshold set out in Art 28 of the GBER per user, EDIHs should also be obliged to monitor the reductions granted to any SMEs to make sure that the threshold of EUR200,000 is not exceeded, and should likewise inform the SMEs about the amount of reductions they benefitted from, on an annual basis.

Furthermore, Art 25 of the GBER may be used to grant EDIHs users – both large undertakings and SMEs - access below market prices, if the users need to access EDIHs services in the context of a research and development project. The proportion of the market price paid by such users, which may also be supported by State aid, depends on the category of the research activity concerned and whether the user is a SME or a large enterprise (see Art. 25 of the GBER Regulation for aid intensities applicable to support for RDI activities). In order to ensure that all State aid granted initially to EDIHs is fully passed on to the users, detailed accounting records need to be maintained by EDIHs to account for the State aid it has received to be transferred to the users.

The EDIHs need to also ensure (in their accounting records) that any amounts of aid that are provided to the EDIHs to benefit their own activities (for example aid granted under Aritcle 27 of the GBER) are clearly separated from the outset, from the amounts which are to be fully passed on to the final users in the form of reduced access prices[[7]](#footnote-8).

The restricted calls for the creation of the EDIH network can be considered EU Synergies calls, meaning they may be linked with Calls for proposals under the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

Synergy actions may be eligible to receive a grant from more than one EU programme or fund, provided that the funding under the grants does not go above 100% of the eligible costs and contributions declared to them. The funding rate from the Digital Europe programme may be adapted to reflect this.

 Outcomes and deliverables

At the end of the project, a balanced network of EDIH will cover all regions in Europe, addressing the needs of the public and private sectors, including all economic sectors, offering a wide range of specialised digital transformation services.

A set of Key Performance Indicators will be collected and analysed with the support of the Digital Transformation Accelerator:

* Increase in digital maturity of organizations that have used the services of the EDIH network. Digital maturity will be defined on the basis of a questionnaire assessing the categories of intelligence, connectivity, flexibility, automation, sustainability, servitisation, social aspects. The sustainability category will focus on the use of digital technologies to improve environmental sustainability.
* Market maturity and market creation potential of innovations, as defined in the JRC’s Innovation Radar methodology[[8]](#footnote-9).

Type of action

Simple grants. Cross-border EDIH are possible; in this case, each Member State involved will provide the co-financing for participants legally established in their country.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of action | Simple grant (50% co-funding) , synergy action |
| Indicative Budget | [170 MEUR] |
| Indicative time of call opening  | February 2021, November 2021 |
| Indicative duration of the action | 3 yrs |

## Digital transformation accelerator

Objective

The Digital Transformation Accelerator (DTA) should enable the effectiveness and efficiency of the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs, with the core objective to accelerate the digital transformation of the European economy.

Scope

The DTA will provide the following services to the network of EDIHs.

* Community building and training:
	+ Guidance for hubs: this may include guidance to set up new hubs, re-usable support tools (templates, webinars, guidelines, good practices, reusable capacities, etc.), carefully selected good practice cases, twinning programmes, etc.
	+ Provisioning of training services and material (e.g. on-line videos / tutorials, physical and on-line workshops) covering the needs of the EDIH. Technological and financial aspects should be covered, e.g. by providing training about InvestEU, DEP, Horizon Europe and other relevant programmes.
	+ Organisation of appropriate on-line and physical events to support matchmaking where needs for specific competences are advertised and matching hubs may be found. Such matchmaking should be supported by a digital matchmaking marketplace.
	+ Community building events dedicated to groups of EDIHs sharing similar interests (e.g. technology, geographical area, industry sector), and engaging with DIHs or similar organisations that are not part of the European DIH network. A specific target will be setting up links between EDIHs and DIHs focused on agriculture, health or public administration.
* Train the trainer: developing ways to transfer the knowledge generated on how to access the Digital Capacities build up under the different Specific Objectives of the Digital Europe Progamme on High Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Advanced Digital Skills and Accelarating the best use of technologies to the EDIHs and vice versa, for instance by organising regular training workshops and providing appropriate training material. This will allow EDIHs to further diffuse advanced knowledge to their own stakeholders, and ensure wide use of the digital capacities developed with the support of Digital Europe Programme.
* Connection to relevant initiatives: providing to interested EDIH the possibility to engage with regional, national and European policymakers, Startup Europe, the Enterprise Europe Network, the Interoperability Knowledge and Support Centre and any other relevant initiative. The DTA will help hubs to get in touch with the right organisations and people, and will provide information and support as needed, also to national and regional policy makers. They will also be the first contact point for international collaboration between the EDIHs and relevant organisations from third countries, and can e.g. advise on study visits.
* Impact assessment and roadmapping: these services cover the collection and analysis of the key performance indicators (KPI) defined for the EDIH. The DTA will help EDIHs in the yearly collection of the relevant data, including by providing the needed IT tools and support for the data collection. As a result of the impact assessment, the DTA will provide a yearly summary report identifying the needed improvements in the EDIH network, defining a roadmap for the future actions.
* Online presence, external communication, tools and support: the DTA will be the first online point of contact for all the information related to the EDIHs. It will provide a curated web portal with links to all the relevant online resources, continuously updated, including e.g. the training courses supported by advanced digital skills pillar of Digital Europe Programme. The DTA will take care of external communications and media presence for the network of EDIH and will support individual EDIH in communication activities when needed. The DTA will also manage an interactive catalogue of European Digital Innovation Hubs and other digital capacities funded by the Digital Europe Programme, and will make available the appropriate IT tools to support online activities related to the services provided. This may include, e.g.: collaboration and teleconferencing tools, secure storage, online training tools, etc. In general, the DTA will provide the IT support needed for common activities involving several EDIH and relevant stakeholders.

Outcomes and deliverables

As a result of this action, the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs will efficiently deliver digital transformation services to the European SME and to the public sector. The following specific impacts are expected:

* A network of EDIHs where all stakeholders will obtain the best possible support and new European value chains are created;
* A set of training and networking events, both on-line and physical improving the capacity of each EDIH and ability to widely diffuse the digital capacities build up through the Digital Europe Programme;
* Broad availability of collaboration tools for activities;
* Availability of high quality KPIs for the EDIH network;
* A fully functional interactive catalogue of EDIH;
* A recognizable online presence, including easy availability of public information relevant for the EDIH network and related European initiatives.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Type of action | Procurement – open call  |
| Indicative Budget | [5 MEUR] |
| Indicative time of tender publication  | Q1 2021 |
| Indicative duration of the action | 3 yrs |

# Implementation

## Main implementation measures and EU financial contribution

The different nature and specificities of the actions indicated in the previous chapters require distinctive implementation measures. Each of these will therefore be achieved through various implementation modes as follow.

Proposers are strongly encouraged to follow green public procurement principles and take account of life cycle costs[[9]](#footnote-10).

## Procurement

Procurement actions will be carried out in compliance with the applicable EU public procurement rules. The procedures will be implemented either through direct calls for tenders or by using existing framework contracts.

## Grants – Calls for proposals

### Evaluation process

The evaluation of proposals will be based on the principles of transparency and equal treatment. It will be carried out by the Commission services and one Executive Agency with the assistance of independent experts. The award and selection criteria will be applied to each submitted proposal. The three sets of criteria are described in detail in Annex 2 of this Work Programme.

Only proposals meeting the requirements of the eligibility criteria in the call text will be evaluated further.

Each of the eligible proposals will be evaluated against the award criteria, while each individual applicant must demonstrate their financial and operational capacity to carry out the proposed action or work programme.

Proposals responding to a specific topic as defined in the previous chapters of this Work Programme will be evaluated both individually and comparatively. The comparative assessment of proposals will cover all proposals responding to the same topic.

Proposals that achieve a score greater than or equal to the threshold will be ranked within the objective. These rankings will determine the order of priority for funding. Following evaluation of award criteria, the Commission establishes a Selection Decision taking into account the scores and ranking of the proposals, the programme priorities and the available budget. In case it is specified in the call text that *only one proposal per Member State will be selected*, only the proposal with the higher ranking will be selected in case more proposals from a same Member State have passed the threshold. The Selection Decision will include proposals to be invited to prepare the Grant Agreement.

The coordinators of all submitted proposals will be informed in writing about the outcome of the evaluation for their proposal(s).

### Selection of independent experts for evaluation and reviews

The Commission and the Executive Agency will select independent experts to assist with the evaluation of proposals and with the review of project results as well as for other purposes where specific expertise might be required for implementation of the Programme. Experts are invited to apply using the mechanisms and tools provided for in the H2020 Framework Programme[[10]](#footnote-11) and a list of experts appropriate to the requirements of the Digital Europe programme and each of its area will be established. Experts will be selected from this list on the basis of their ability to perform the tasks assigned to them, taking into account the thematic requirements of the topic, and with consideration of geographical and gender balance.

### Indicative implementation calendar

The indicative calendar for the implementation of the DEP calls for proposals in 2021 and 2022 is shown in the table below.

More information about these calls will be available on: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home.

| **Date** | **Milestone** |
| --- | --- |
| Q1 2021 | WP published, 1st call opens |
| Q2 2021 | 1st call closes |
| Q2 – Q3 2021 | Evaluation 1st call |
| Q4 2021 | 2nd call opens |
| Q4 2021 | Information to applicants on 1st call results, and Grant Agreements for 1st call signed. |
| Q1 2021 | 2nd call closes,  |
| Q2 2022 | Evaluation 2nd call |
| Q2 2022 | Information to applicants from 2nd call |
| Q3 2022 | 2nd call Grant Agreements signed  |

# Annexes

## Annex 1 - Call planning

* Call identifier: XXXXXX
* Indicative opening date: XXXXX 2020 [[11]](#footnote-12)
* Indicative closing date: XXXXX 2020 [[12]](#footnote-13)
* Subject area:
* Eligibility and admissibility conditions: The conditions are described in Annex 2 to this Work Programme and will be further explained in the call text
* Evaluation criteria, scoring and threshold: The criteria, scoring and threshold are described in Annex 2 to this Work Programme.
* Call identifier: XXXXXX
* Indicative opening date: XXXXX 2020 [[13]](#footnote-14)
* Indicative closing date: XXXXX 2020 [[14]](#footnote-15)
* Subject area:
* Eligibility and admissibility conditions: The conditions are described in Annex 2 to this Work Programme and will be further explained in the call text
* Evaluation criteria, scoring and threshold: The criteria, scoring and threshold are described in Annex 2 to this Work Programme.

## Annex 2 – Evaluation criteria for the Calls for Proposals

1. https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/innovation-radar [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/eu-member-states-join-forces-digitalisation-european-agriculture-and-rural-areas [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Based on an average funding per EDIH of 1 M€ per year from Digital Europe Programme [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/white-paper-artificial-intelligence-european-approach-excellence-and-trust\_en [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. COMMISSION REGULATION (EU) No 1407/2013 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. The MSs should put in place a claw-back mechanism in order to ensure that any amount of aid not passed on to the final users by the end of contractual period will be recovered, so as to guarantee that the EDIHs do not have any advantage. The recovery of funds will be calculated based on the amount of aid given to EDIHs minus the discounts given to the users. In cases where the entire amount of aid is not passed on to the final users, the MS must ensure that the amount to be recovered shall bear interest throughout the period running from the date on which they were put at the disposal of the EDIHs until the actual recovery. This interest should be established in accordance with the provisions of the Communication on the revision of the method for setting the reference and discount rates and with the provisions of Articles 9 to 11 of the Implementing Regulation. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. for the purpose of calculating the value of the aid passed on to the final users, the value of the discounts granted to the final users will be discounted to their value at the date at which the public funds were put at the disposal of the relevant EDIHs, in accordance with the dispositions of the Communication on the revision of the method for setting the reference and discount rates and with the dispositions of Articles 9 to 11 of Commission Regulation (EC) No 794/20046(hereafter "the Implementing Regulation"). The total amount of aid passed on to the final users will be calculated as the discounted value of the rebates given and this amount will be compared with the value of the public funds put at the disposition of the EDIHs. This is to ensure that the EDIHs do not benefit from having access to the funds until it is passed on to the final users. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/innovation-radar [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/gpp/index_en.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/experts/index.html [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior or after the envisaged date of publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. The Director-General responsible may delay or anticipate this deadline by up to two months. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. The Director-General responsible for the call may publish it up to one month prior or after the envisaged date of publication. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. The Director-General responsible may delay or anticipate this deadline by up to two months. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)