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SpeedLauncher 2025

Join us in boosting entrepreneurial education for a strong digital Europe.



EIT Digital SpeedLauncher 2025

1. Introduction

EIT Digital is looking for Partners in **RIS countries** to support the development and deployment of the **entrepreneurial education** through SpeedLauncher Program. Duration of project support is until the end of 2025. EIT Digital is seeking for entrepreneurial education providers like incubators, accelerators, university entrepreneurship centers, university TTOs, venture builders, industry associations, science and tech parks, VC funds or similar organizations with capacity and expertise to support the program delivery.

To this end, EIT Digital launches an open call with submission deadline 21st May 2025. The process is guided by the [EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda 2022-2025 \(SIA\)](#), which identifies the five focus areas of the EIT Digital strategy: Digital Tech, Digital Industry, Digital Cities, Digital Wellbeing and Digital Finance and further engage the RIS ecosystem by mobilizing local, regional and national organizations. An overview is available on pages 10 (RIS) and 13 (Focus Areas) of the SIA. As a result, proposals are expected to be aligned with these areas.

2. The SpeedLauncher Program

The **SpeedLauncher** is EIT Digital's initiative for supporting the innovators and aspiring entrepreneurs in development of entrepreneurial skills through a 12-week-long structured education, designed to equip participants with practical knowledge in problem identification, ideation, validation, technology adoption, business planning, and go-to-market strategies. The program provides a safe environment for aspiring founders to explore entrepreneurship, upskill, and gain the confidence to launch their ventures.

The **SpeedLauncher** of EIT Digital, which is the subject of this open call, focuses on personal growth, upskilling, and reskilling, and is designed to empower aspiring founders and individuals from RIS countries curious about entrepreneurship. By allowing participants to explore and learn essential entrepreneurial skills, this part of the program instills in them the confidence and gives them the tools to take the leap toward becoming successful entrepreneurs. To that sense, EIT Digital SpeedLauncher is supporting a competitive, knowledge-based economy capable of sustainable growth requires integration of the two sides of the so-called Knowledge Triangle: education and innovation achieved by industry.

The SpeedLauncher is executed and delivered in collaboration with EIT Digital Innovation Partners in order to facilitate connecting the teams to EIT Digital's ecosystem, offering access to expert mentors, investors, and partners across Europe, focusing on Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS) countries, ensuring that individuals from less innovative regions benefit from EIT Digital's reach and full range of activities.

EIT Digital reserves the right to choose at its entire discretion and without any further liability on EIT Digital's part, to not execute this edition of the program if the number of applications does not reach the required amount for the development of the program. EIT Digital shall

communicate said circumstance to the applicants of the cancelled edition as soon as reasonably possible. In addition, the retention of proposals received will be conditional on funding being made available by EIT. If the necessary funding is not secured, EIT Digital reserves the right to delay, modify, or cancel any collaboration agreements.

For more details on the SpeedLauncher 2025, please refer to the Annex A.

3. How to participate

EIT Digital is a partnership-based organization. Both EIT Digital's Partners and non-Partners organizations are encouraged applying. However, those organizations that are not yet a Partner are expected to initiate their application for partnership before the submission of the proposal. If the proposal is selected, the application must then be completed before the start of the activity.

It is highly recommended to be in contact with EIT Digital before the submission date to ensure a clear understanding of the partnership requirements.

More information including details on how to become a partner are available at: <https://www.eitdigital.eu/our-community/become-a-partner/>

Eligible countries are the Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU) including their outermost regions and countries which associated to Horizon Europe¹.

Note: Participation from RIS countries is encouraged and positively evaluated.

The Speedlauncher [website](#) contains information about the [FAQs](#) for this call.

4. Proposal Submission

Proposals need to be filled and submitted via the EIT Digital submission system before the deadline on the 21st of May 2025, 5 pm CEST (Brussels time).

Should the quality or number of proposals be insufficient, EIT Digital reserves the right to open a second submission after the 21st of May 2025 to collect and assess new Partner proposals.

Please [contact the relevant Region](#) if you need assistance or have further questions about EIT Digital in general and SpeedLauncher 2025 in particular.

5. Funding requirements

The maximum EIT funding amount is 25,000 € per program edition, while the maximum budget for this call is 75,000 €. The co-funding requirement for the Partner at the Activity

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

level, in line with the EIT Digital financial sustainability strategy, is minimally 50% of the total budget of the KIC Added Value Activity (KAVA).

The following are examples of an Activity budget setup:

- Total Activity budget: 50,000 €
- EIT funding amount requested: 25,000 €
- Partners must provide minimally 50% in co-funding, i.e., at least 25,000 €.

Type of Financial Support: The financial support offered by EIT Digital is structured in the form of reimbursement of actual costs declared in the activity proposal budget. The funds are released in several tranches during a time frame of 9-12 months. The pre-financing tranche (25%) is due upon completion of signatures of Grant and Partnership Agreements (expected July – September 2025). The remaining amount (max 75%), linked to evaluation report is due April – June 2026.

6. Evaluation Process

Each eligible submitted application shall be evaluated by experts (minimum 2 external and 1 internal expert). The main selection criteria are the demonstration of capabilities to deliver a local edition of SpeedLauncher that in the view of the evaluators holds the most promise to be successful.

Evaluation Criteria

The assessment by EIT Digital experts will be based on the questions below. Internal reviewers will be asked to provide an assessment for each question, as well as an assessment and comments of the whole proposal.

Evaluation Stages

- Eligibility Check: Verification of basic eligibility criteria compliance;
- Expert Review: Detailed assessment by independent experts based on specific criteria;
- Consensus Meeting: Final discussion and scoring by a panel to decide on the selected proposals.

Scoring Methodology

Proposals are evaluated on a scale of 0 to 5:

- 0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to mission or incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 – Very good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Eligibility check

Eligibility Criteria
Eligible countries are the Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU) including their outermost regions and countries which associated to Horizon Europe.
The proposal requests a maximum of €25,000 of EIT funding.
The activity partners own contribution (co-funding) must be at least 50% of the activity's budget.

Award Criteria

The following questions ought to be addressed in applicants' proposals:

Excellence

- **Outreach Capacity and Diversity:** How effectively does the proposal showcase strategies and past performance in attracting a diverse range of applicants, particularly in increasing female participation and engagement from RIS countries? *(Score range: 0-5)*
- **Entrepreneurial Success Rate:** Does the proposal clearly demonstrate a track record of supporting entrepreneurs and startups, including measurable success rates of participants after completing the program? *(Score range: 0-5)*

Impact

- **Alignment with EIT Digital's Strategic Objectives:** To what extent does the proposal contribute to EIT Digital's overarching goals, such as driving innovation and advancing technological development? *(Score range: 0-5)*
- **Business Acumen:** How well does the proposal present a clear strategy or capability to help entrepreneurs gain commercial traction and achieve long-term success after the program? *(Score range: 0-5)*

Quality and Efficiency of Implementation

- **Program Delivery Capacity:** How effectively does the proposal demonstrate the ability to plan, organize, and execute a local edition of the relevant components of SpeedLauncher? *(Score range: 0-5)*
- **Ecosystem Activation:** Does the proposal provide evidence of a strong track record or potential in connecting entrepreneurs and startups—especially in RIS countries—with funding opportunities and external investors? *(Score range: 0-5)*

Minimum Threshold

Each criterion must score at least 3 out of 5.

The overall minimum threshold is 18 of the total possible score of 30. Proposals are finally ranked based on total score. To resolve any overall score tie, priority will be assigned by following the order listed below:

1. Higher average Impact questions scoring;
2. Higher average Excellence questions scoring;

If proposals are still tied after the assessments above, the Management Committee of EIT Digital will untie the ranking at its discretion.

Feedback and Revision

Applicants will receive constructive feedback for improvement.

Proposals close to the threshold with score equal to or greater than 16 may be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit.

Final Selection

Final selection will be based on the proposal's ability to meet the scoring criteria while also considering strategic alignment with EIT Digital's objectives.

This revised scoring structure is tailored to emphasize the key aspects crucial for the success of local editions of the SpeedLauncher, ensuring a comprehensive evaluation of potential partners' ability to contribute meaningfully to the program's goals.

EIT Digital reserves the right to establish a reserve list for those proposals passing all thresholds that due to budget constraints cannot be funded. The duration of the reserve list is 75 days from the start of the Activity Execution. The validity of the reserve list may be extended by decision of the EIT Digital's Management Committee.

If for any reasons the selected partners do not sign the Grant Agreement within 60 days after the start of the Activity Execution, EIT Digital may select the next proposal on the reserve list ranking without launching an additional call. In case of finally unused budget, the application might become eligible for funding, e.g. in case an accepted proposal is unable to complete the project.

Candidates should note that their inclusion on the reserve list does not imply any entitlement to participate in the SpeedLauncher program.

7. Appeal procedure

EIT Digital will, in good faith, address any potential disputes on the outcome of the selection process described in this document in a timely manner. An appeal should be issued, by the

proposers, to the attention of the relevant Regional Director, by factually underpinning the alleged shortcomings in the evaluation and feedback provided by EIT Digital.

To respect the tight timeline, the following will apply:

1. Publication of the results and feedback to selected/rejected activities: approximately 1 week after the submittal deadline;
2. Proposers should bring the appeal to the attention of the relevant Regional Director within five business days from the publication of the results;
3. The Regional Director examines the appeal, and if the grounds for the appeal are found with merit, then the appeal will be sent for a second review by the Management Committee. The EIT Digital Management Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision.

8. Timeline

EIT Digital launches on 24th of March 2025 an open call with submission deadline on 21st of May 2025.

Action	Date
Submission system opens	March 24 2025
Application closing	May 21 2025
Individual review by Experts	May 15 - May 19 2025
Review Gate	May 20 2025
Feedback to selected/rejected activities	May 21 2025
Appeal window (5 days)	May 28 2025
Proposal adjustments window (5 business days)	May 28 2025
Standstill period	May 21 - Jun 2 2025
Activities start	Mon, Jun 9 2025

In the event of any updates to the call, all proposers with an open proposal will be directly informed. Additionally, a public announcement will be prominently displayed at the top of the website in red to ensure visibility for all potential applicants.

Annex A

Structure of the SpeedLauncher

The 12-week EIT Digital SpeedLauncher program is designed to empower aspiring founders and those curious about entrepreneurship by providing a supportive environment to explore and develop essential entrepreneurial skills. The program emphasizes personal growth, upskilling, and reskilling, equipping participants with the confidence and tools needed to take the leap toward launching their own ventures.

Through a hands-on curriculum, participants will gain practical knowledge in problem identification, ideation and validation, team formation, technology adoption, business planning, and go-to-market strategies. Graduates of the program will leave with a solid foundation in key entrepreneurial concepts, tailored mentorship, and the skills necessary to navigate different stages of the entrepreneurial journey in the digital domain. The ultimate goal is to help participants confidently pursue entrepreneurship and successfully build and scale promising digital businesses.

The SpeedLauncher program supports both teams and individuals in developing their entrepreneurial skills. It begins with an intensive bootcamp, followed by a virtual entrepreneurial education and skills development phase. This edition of SpeedLauncher is delivered in collaboration with EIT Digital and an EIT Digital Innovation Partner. Oversight is provided by the SpeedLauncher Committee, which includes two representatives from EIT Digital and two from the EIT Digital Innovation Partner.

The SpeedLauncher will help aspiring entrepreneurs to:

- Develop essential skills like problem identification, ideation and validation; team selection; technology adoption; business planning and go-to-market strategies.
- Equip the entrepreneurs with fundamental hands-on knowledge and skills, focusing on key moments along the entrepreneurial journey in the digital domain.
- Help selected teams to focus on market verticals & offer, shifting from a product to a market perspective.

Annex B

Activity Monitoring

All activities selected for funding undergo continuous monitoring by EIT Digital to ensure effective progress and implementation and to trigger payments according to the achievement of milestone, deliverables and KPIs. The mid-term monitoring at the end of the third month (M3) will cover several aspects relating to the activity implementation including, but not limited to: achievement of outputs, milestones, deliverables and KPIs; risk management; financial management; quality assurance; progress against KPI achievement and impact delivery; communication and dissemination; co-branding; and progress towards

commercialization and exploitation of results. EIT Digital will request mid-term reporting of actual costs incurred with the subgrant, as well as regular reporting of KPIs and deliverables.

In the case of under-performance, significant delay of implementation, misconduct of the consortium, or any other reason jeopardizing the timely implementation of the activity identified during the monitoring process, EIT Digital reserves the right to discontinue or restructure the funding of the activity at any point during its implementation.

Annex C

Gender Equality

EIT Digital is committed to promoting gender equality and diversity across all its activities, as outlined in its Gender Mainstreaming Policy. Applicants are encouraged to integrate gender considerations into the design of their proposed activities, ensuring inclusivity and equal opportunities. Additionally, during the contract performance, applicants should share their measures and strategies that promote gender equality, contributing to a more equitable digital innovation ecosystem.

Annex D

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Each Activity needs to define its target values for a set of relevant KPIs, consisting of:

# Participants in non-labelled education and training	EITHE08.1	<p>Description: Number of successful participants in EIT professional development courses, online training courses and other education/training activities delivered or in a process of delivery (by country and type of programme), including data on country of citizenship and gender. Only participants, who successfully finished the programme, will be counted. For this KPI, only those education and training activities which have clearly defined learning outcomes, and which carries out competency assessment method are applicable.</p> <p>Eligibility: To be eligible, the participants must have undergone a competency assessment after the training and mentoring activities within year N (one of the implementation years of the running BP 2023-2025). Their gender needs to be reported.</p>
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Annex D

Conflict of Interest

Beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation that could compromise the impartial and objective implementation of the Agreement for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest (“conflict of interest”).

Beneficiaries must formally notify the granting authority without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

The granting authority may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

D.1. Consequences of non-compliance

If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced.

Annex E: Communication, Dissemination and Visibility

E.1. Communication, Dissemination and Promotion

Dissemination plan including communications and outreach is required for each activity in line with HE Guidance. Unless otherwise agreed with EIT Digital, the partners of the selected Innovation Activities must promote the activity and its results by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public).

Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the partners must inform EIT Digital.

E.2. Visibility: the European Flag and Funding Statement

Unless otherwise agreed with EIT Digital, communication activities of the partners related to the Innovation Activity (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by EIT Digital must acknowledge the EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages where appropriate). [Other allowed layouts/backgrounds can be found in the EIT Digital Intranet](#) noting that the EIT Digital brand will have evolved by the time funded/selected activities.



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The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text.

Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support.

When displayed in association with other logos (e.g. logos of partners), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of their obligations under this Article, the partners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT Digital. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means. At EIT Digital request partners must use updated or changed visual identity as provided in EIT Digital Intranet page.

E.3. Quality of Information: Disclaimer

Any communication or dissemination activity related to the Innovation Activity must use factually accurate information.

Moreover, it must indicate the following disclaimer (translated into local languages where appropriate):

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or EIT Digital. Neither the European Union nor EIT Digital can be held responsible for them.”

E.4. Specific Communication, Dissemination and Visibility Rules

If a beneficiary breaches any of its obligations under this Article, the grant may be reduced.

E.5. Dissemination, communication, and exploitation of the results of the activities

Applicants need to respect the provisions of Article 16 regarding the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) — Background And Results — Access Rights And Rights and Article 17 regarding Communication, dissemination and visibility of the (Model) Grant Agreement. Applicants should engage in dissemination, communication and exploitation of the results of the activities.

E.6. Intellectual property

Participating entities agree to respect IPR Rules (Article 16) of the (Model) Grant Agreement.

E.7. Data Management Plan

The selected activities will be required to create a Data Management Plan and ensure compliance with GDPR (if applicable). The plan will need to describe the data management life cycle for the data to be collected, processed, and/or generated by a project in accordance with FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) principles. More information can be found in the [HE MGA - Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement](#) (also available on the intranet).