



## EIT DIGITAL 2026-2027 MOC ACTIVITIES

### List of participants

Participant No. *	Participant organisation name	Country
1 (Coordinator)	EIT DIGITAL	Belgium

### Executive summary

The 2026–2027 Activities Proposal marks a decisive step in EIT Digital’s sustainable growth, reaffirming our mission to build a strong digital Europe by enabling a strong ecosystem, thereby advancing European Digital Sovereignty in full alignment with the European Commission’s priorities. It responds directly to the Draghi Report on European Competitiveness, which highlights digitalization, decarbonization, and large-scale skilling in Digital and Deep Tech as critical imperatives for Europe’s future. It also operationalizes the vision of the 28<sup>th</sup> regime by positioning EIT Digital as a borderless multi-stakeholder platform where talent, technology and capital flow freely, rooted in European values.

Through this proposal EIT Digital commits to continue successfully building and mobilizing a European talent base in critical Digital areas ensuring to equip learners with the right knowledge and mindset to tackle EU present and future challenges. It keeps strengthening the EIT label by adding new Master programmes with innovative propositions to address the European Union needs for more dynamic and digitally savvy workforce, including degrees aimed at training C-levels on cutting edge digital transformation topics, but also through programmes aimed at attracting STEM talent to the Union. The successful Master programmes on strategic and sovereign topics like Data Science, Cloud Computing and Fintech are going to be continued with particular attention to boost attractiveness among European talent through targeted scholarships.

Next to it, EIT Digital recognizes the need of Europe to not solely excel at producing research output, but also to turn its result in viable businesses, and it plans to deliver new editions of its SPIN programmes aiming to equip researchers with the right knowledge and skills to launch deep tech ventures. The programmes build on their successful implementation through 2025 and further broaden the offering based on the observed market gaps by introducing a Mini-MBA “Digital Valorisation Leaders” aimed at professionalizing technology transfer offices (TTO) as well as launching a new service, Talent Cofoundry, to facilitate the creation of balanced founding teams from venture stemming from academia.

EIT Digital is a strong supporter of the 28<sup>th</sup> regime proposed by the European Commission and well understands the needs of European innovators and entrepreneurs and, for this reason, in 2026-2027 will double down its support for European innovators and entrepreneurs through its flagship programmes, namely Venture Incubation Programme and Co-creation Accelerator, aimed at the creation of new European ventures and nurturing early-stage startups. All these activities are explicitly structured around technology domains reflecting Europe’s priorities for competitiveness, sovereignty, and sustainability. The combination of these activities represents a funnel of opportunities to future EIT Digital growth and financial sustainability. This funnel is also designed to mobilize public and private capital at scale, with equity returns reinvested into new ventures, multiplying the impact across the ecosystem.

The portfolio of activities envisaged for 2026-2027 rests on EIT Digital’s strong pan-European ecosystem of more than 300 partners, strong and serving local ecosystems through offices across the EU27. In 2026-2027, about 120 partners from 23 RIS and widening countries will be part of our ecosystem with an increasing engagement in our innovation and education activities, driving impact, sustainability, and operational excellence.

The strong focus on RIS countries remains a priority for EIT Digital, which tackles the innovation gap by working with the local ecosystem partners by facilitating collaborations to European regions with stronger innovation capacity, but also having dedicate editions of our flagship programmes from both Entrepreneurial Education and Business Creation to encourage greater participation from those countries.

The established EIT Digital Makers and Shapers series is foreseen to continue its mission of facilitating the engagement of the different sides of the knowledge triangle with the policy makers through in-depth exploration of topics and providing actionable tools for decision makers. In 2024, two reports were issued on critical topics: AgriTech: Digital Innovation for a sustainable European Agri-Food sector and Generative AI: Europe's Quest for Regulation and Industry Leadership. Future editions will also connect with global promotion efforts such as the Choose Europe initiative, positioning Europe as the preferred landing place for global talent, innovators, and investors.

The steadily growing pace of change in EIT Digital context of operations has also prompted the need for taking steps in revisiting our strategy domain of activities, reframing them in three strategic domains – Deep Tech, Strategic Tech and Green & Social Tech, and streamlining its domains of activity, in three main categories Deep Tech, Strategic Tech, Green and Social Tech – which capture the breadth of digital’s impact and reflect the inclusive approach of EIT Digital’s strategy. Hence, EIT Digital remains committed to foster diversity in its activity implementation in line with the European foundational values.

EIT Digital’s strong track record on delivering entrepreneurial talent and facilitating investment forms the basis for Activities 2026-2027, which is the next step in the execution of the EIT Digital Strategic Agenda and will deliver a record number of graduates and ventures. It also demonstrates that Europe can compete globally not only on scale and speed, but on values; trust, fairness, inclusiveness, and responsibility can be turned into Europe’s true differentiators in the digital age.

Table 1: KPI overview past and future

Area	EIT level KPIs	Validated 2023-2024	Business Plan 2025	Target 2026	Target 2027
Education	EITHE07 – Graduates from EIT-labelled programmes	978	700	690	690
	EITHE05 - Start-ups established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled MSc and PhD programmes or by learners / participants in other EIT labelled activities	5	30	20	27
	EITHE08 – Participants in non-labelled education and training	11 974	800	1910	1910
Leveraging investments in R&I	EITHE06 – Investment attracted by KIC-supported start-ups and scale-ups	€144M	€50M	€25M	€25M

To deliver on the ambition set out on the EIT Digital Strategic Agenda, EIT Digital intends to continue on successfully synergizing the EIT funding with other EU-wide and national initiatives, such as the Digital Europe Program (DEP), the European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIH), the European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDICs), Horizon Europe, the European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) with Regional Innovation Valleys and i3 programmes, the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Investment Fund (EIF), InvestEU, NextGenerationEU and the structural funds in the Member States. At the same time, these collaborations also anticipate the next framework programme (FP10), by structuring impact around Europe’s long-term priorities: mobilising talent at scale, accelerating research-to-market, scaling up deep tech ventures, and mobilising public and private capital to close Europe’s competitiveness gap. EIT Digital therefore positions itself not only as a leading orchestrator of Europe’s digital innovation landscape today, but as a ready-made, future-proof platform to deliver on FP10’s mission of strengthening Europe’s digital sovereignty, competitiveness, and scale-up capacity.

EIT Digital in the past few years has succeeded in transforming itself to successfully drive on the EIT activities as well as in delivering on all the new collaborations, making it a preferred partner for initiatives addressing top European digital policy priorities, such as the 2030 Digital Decade and the New European Innovation Agenda. In relation to the proposed activity plan, the main risks with the implementation are associated to

external factors. Specifically, in the past 5 years the EU has faced sudden challenges, such as the pandemic, geopolitical shifts, and disruptive technologies, that have prompted to revisit the initial plan and adjusting priorities to best serve the European Union.

Table 2: Summary of 2026-2027 budget

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>EIT Contribution</b>	<b>Total</b>
WP1 Entrepreneurial Education	€ 12,5M	€ 12,5M
WP2 Business Creation	€4,5M	€4,5M
WP3 EIT RIS	€ 3,5M	€ 3,5M
WP4 Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance	€ 3,4M	€ 3,4M
<b>2026-2027 Activities Proposal Total</b>	<b>€ 23,9M</b>	<b>€ 23,9M</b>

## 1. Excellence in regard to the KIC's Strategic Agenda 2021-2027

### 1.1 Objectives and ambition

The 2026-2027 Activities proposal is fundamentally aligned with EIT Digital's mission of building a strong Digital Europe through creating world players in areas strategic for Europe, thereby contributing to European Digital Sovereignty in full alignment with the top priorities of the European Commission. Our proposal directly addresses the critical findings of the Draghi Report on European competitiveness, which underlines digitalization and decarbonization as necessary areas of action for the coming years, with particular emphasis on the Union's ability to scale skilling and re-skilling capacity in Digital and Deep Tech domains.

Drawing on 15 years of experience contributing to EU Digital challenges, this proposal tackles the fundamental societal challenge of Europe's digital transformation by focusing on activities that have delivered significant impact while expanding into new territories of critical importance. The proposal responds directly to the skills priority included in the New European Innovation Agenda and represents one of the quadrants of the Digital Decade policy compass, serving as a fundamental enabling factor to achieve significant digital transformation of businesses and public services across Europe.

The proposal is guided by the EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021-2027, with increased focus on digital transformation of key sectors and organizational strengthening in terms of impact, sustainability, diversity and outreach. All activities concentrate on strategic areas essential for European digital sovereignty as identified in the SIA, namely digital tech, digital wellbeing, digital cities, digital industry and digital finance. By aligning regional excellence with these focus areas, EIT Digital leverages unique strengths and capabilities across its locations throughout Europe.

In 2026–2027, the **Entrepreneurial Education** portfolio will continue to advance EIT Digital's core mission of developing T-shaped entrepreneurial digital talent across Europe. This period marks a significant phase in expanding both the scale and scope of educational offerings as new formats are introduced and geographical reach is broadened. These efforts serve to reinforce EIT Digital's standing as a paramount global gateway for deep tech and entrepreneurial education by integrating proven high-impact programmes with innovative, forward-looking initiatives that address the evolving skills landscape in Europe and beyond. Building on the strong foundations of the 2025 Business Plan, the strategic objectives for this cycle aim to consolidate the existing education portfolio—particularly by focusing on degrees in strategically vital areas such as Data Science and Cloud, and Financial Technology—while simultaneously expanding international engagement through innovative international master's pathways. These initiatives leverage the complementary strengths of multiple ecosystems, offering a unique blend of academic excellence and entrepreneurial vitality. Concrete mechanisms ensure that educational activities translate directly into venture creation. Through the Innovation & Entrepreneurship (I&E) component of the Master's programmes, students are actively encouraged to test and validate entrepreneurial ideas. Under specific conditions that guarantee full adherence to EIT Label requirements, students may even carry out their final internship within a newly created startup, supporting the launch and early growth of a new venture. In addition, they can continue developing their entrepreneurial projects through a dedicated edition of the Speed Master, EIT Digital's venture-building programme designed for pre-seed founders.

Further ambitions include the development of high-level executive leadership capacity through the launch of the C-Suite Master in Business Excellence, a programme tailored for senior professionals who are at the forefront of driving digital transformation within their organisations. Additionally, short-term but impactful learning opportunities will be scaled, featuring two annual Summer Schools and a flexible Life-Long Learning curriculum supported by scholarships to widen access and engagement. These educational pathways will be closely integrated with industry needs through the Industrial Doctoral School, which places emphasis on research-driven innovation collaboration. This integrated approach

addresses the long-standing societal challenge of closing the digital skills gap while fostering entrepreneurial mindsets necessary to sustain Europe's competitive edge in a digitally transformed global economy. By drawing on extensive experience in mentoring entrepreneurs from ideation through to successful scaling, EIT Digital's programmes such as SpeedMaster, MentorMe, and MentorMe Advanced offer a continuum of personalized mentorship tailored to each stage of the entrepreneurial journey, enabling innovators to overcome barriers and scale their businesses efficiently.

Complementing the entrepreneurial education efforts, the SPIN programme serves as a critical bridge, equipping scientists and Technology Transfer Office professionals with the tools necessary to unlock the commercial potential of deep tech innovations emerging from European universities and research institutions. The expansion and strengthening of SPIN Explore and SPIN Rise, integral components of the Student Pre-Incubation Network, reflect a commitment to invest in early-stage entrepreneurial talent and align closely with the EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021–2027. These initiatives also respond to key recommendations from the Draghi Report on European Competitiveness, underscoring the strategic relevance of the proposal in fostering innovation ecosystems.

The commitment to building a Strong Digital Europe is further demonstrated through the professionalization and empowerment of Technology Transfer Offices and knowledge valorisation units, essential enablers of innovation that facilitate the translation of research outputs into viable business ventures. To bolster this effort, the Mini-MBA "Digital Valorisation Leaders" will be introduced to equip innovation professionals with both strategic insight and practical tools necessary for valorising breakthroughs in AI, Data, Software, and Robotics. In parallel, the Talent Cofoundry pilot is designed to address one of Europe's persistent innovation bottlenecks by helping form balanced, strong founding teams coming out of academic research, thereby increasing the likelihood of successful venture creation.

EIT Digital's digital upskilling and reskilling efforts will continue to scale through the (d)Academy, employing skill intelligence and curated learning pathways to adapt rapidly to evolving labour market demands.

This Entrepreneurial Education portfolio contributes to addressing the Knowledge Triangle Integration through multiple interconnected mechanisms. Education-Research integration is achieved through EIT Labelled Master programmes and Industrial Doctoral School, that embed entrepreneurial skills and mindsets within Europe's research and academic infrastructure. Research-Business integration focuses on Technology Transfer Offices empowerment through venture studio models and structured knowledge transfer methodologies. The SPIN Explore and Rise programmes connect Technology Transfer Office professionals with structured venture-building frameworks, while the Mini-MBA Programme "Digital Valorisation Leaders" professionalizes knowledge transfer capabilities across institutions. This approach transforms TTOs from passive IP managers into proactive venture engines and catalysts of regional innovation ecosystems. The integration of TTO-driven ventures with EIT Digital's innovation funnel creates seamless pathways from Stand-up through Start-up to Scale-up phases.

Within the **Business Creation** portfolio, continued advancement of EIT Digital's mission will be achieved through a triad of focus areas: supporting pre-seed stage startups, guiding entrepreneurs from idea to viable businesses, and enabling the critical phase of scaling startups. These objectives respond directly to the EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda as well as the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy. By enhancing programmes such as the Venture Incubation Programme and Co-creation Accelerator, the portfolio assures a robust deal flow and strengthens EIT Digital's position as a reliable partner in deep tech entrepreneurship. Supporting Master School students and graduates to launch startups leverages the unique synergy between education and business creation and ensures that emerging talent contributes actively to Europe's innovation ecosystem. The proposal also seeks to expand global partner engagement, increasing the international footprint through alliances, joint programmes, and new collaborations, while continuously fine-tuning initiatives based on market feedback to stay ahead of

rapid ecosystem changes. To support sustainable growth, emphasis is placed on fundraising initiatives to deploy commercial VC funds led by EIT Digital, alongside internal capacity building to bring knowledge and core processes in-house, creating scalable operational models.

Business-Education integration is realized through this comprehensive Business Creation portfolio, that supports entrepreneurs from idea stage through pre-seed and scale-up phases. Cross-institutional peer exchange and co-creation programmes connect academia, industry, and investors in meaningful collaboration.

The **Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)** component is designed to amplify the impact and outreach of EIT Digital in RIS countries by fostering local initiatives that engage students and innovators. Through a suite of tailored programmes, such as RIS editions of the Summer School, SPIN, MentorMe, and the Venture Incubation Programme, EIT Digital not only supports entrepreneurial education and business creation but also conducts in-depth analyses of local innovation ecosystems. These efforts are complemented by ecosystem activation activities, including events and outreach campaigns, which are developed in close collaboration with RIS partners to map and strengthen local digital and entrepreneurial capacities.

Meanwhile, the **Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance** portfolio further reinforces this approach by ensuring the continuity and expansion of regional innovation ecosystems across Europe, including RIS countries. EIT Digital's physical presence is maintained and grown through Co-Location Centres and regional offices, which serve as dynamic hubs for knowledge exchange, co-creation, and alignment with EU policy objectives. The portfolio is committed to expanding and diversifying the partner base, consolidating regional partnerships, and driving growth through targeted outreach to corporates, SMEs, universities, and public authorities. Inclusiveness and alignment with EU strategies are central to this approach, with account management ensuring sustained partner engagement and long-term impact.

Cross-border and pan-European collaboration is actively promoted by linking regional partners and integrating local innovation hubs into the broader EIT Digital ecosystem. This enables knowledge transfer, matchmaking, and joint innovation initiatives, while also supporting entrepreneurial education and business creation activities that address skills gaps and enhance competitiveness. The portfolio places strong emphasis on increasing regional participation in EIT Digital programmes, enhancing visibility and outreach, and ensuring meaningful contributions to pan-European impact. It also supports the design and delivery of events that showcase innovation capacity and entrepreneurial talent, while representing EIT Digital in external events and policy dialogues to disseminate best practices and foster cross-sectoral collaboration.

Communication and dissemination activities are strategically aligned to position EIT Digital as a leading force in digital transformation and a key player in innovation, entrepreneurship, and education. These efforts support the strategic goals of the organisation, reinforce its brand identity, and increase awareness among all relevant audiences. The communications strategy is driven by the current Strategic Innovation Agenda, aims to strengthen relationships with partners and stakeholders, and adapts to evolving focus areas to maximise engagement and influence across the European innovation landscape.

Financial Sustainability is a central objective, pursued through a deliberate strategy of leveraging both public and private resources, and diversifying revenue streams via membership contributions, co-funding arrangements, and service provision. In alignment with EIT Digital's long-term vision, every activity is systematically connected to a dedicated Financial Sustainability mechanism, ensuring that financial viability is embedded across the portfolio. These mechanisms are tailored to the nature of each initiative: some activities are structured to generate direct revenue through participation fees or service charges, while others are designed to enhance the overall value proposition for EIT Digital partners. By strengthening partner engagement and demonstrating clear added value, these initiatives not only support partner retention but also attract new paid memberships. This integrated approach ensures that

Financial Sustainability is not an afterthought, but a driving force behind the design and implementation of all activities, reinforcing EIT Digital’s resilience and capacity for long-term impact.

## 1.2 Methodology

The 2026-2027 Activities portfolio has been selected through a structured, multi-criteria process designed to ensure strategic alignment with the EIT Digital Strategic Innovation Agenda 2021–2027, with the MoU requirements and with the EIT guidelines, as well as to guarantee the maximisation of impact and Financial Sustainability.

Activities are proposed and evaluated based on their contribution to the five EIT Digital focus areas and the “student-to-unicorn” talent development funnel. Priority is given to:

- EIT Labelled education activities, or those with a clear plan for Label achievement within two years.
- Initiatives that support the twin transition (green and digital) and address EU policy priorities such as the Digital Decade.
- Activities that expand international reach and RIS participation.

The activity selection takes place at area level following these steps:

- **Internal consultation within the relevant Business Units:** The Head of each Business Unit and their Leads jointly review ongoing activities and assess proposals for new ones.
- **Evaluation criteria:** past performance -if applicable, Strategic fit, Financial Sustainability, partner capacity, scalability, and potential for innovation.
- **Approval:** Final selection is endorsed by the EIT Digital Management Committee, ensuring resource allocation is balanced across categories (Entrepreneurial Education, Business Creation, RIS, Ecosystem).

Where **Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)** is applicable, it will be managed according to the activity’s nature and the intended beneficiaries. The **Annex A on FSTP** provides a comprehensive overview of the methodology and types of calls within the EIT Digital MoC activities 2026–2027.

All activities awarded through FSTP will be monitored quarterly to assess progress, budget adherence, and impact metrics. Projects that underperform will be subject to corrective actions or potential reallocation of funds.

EIT Digital has since the beginning of its operation been committed to follow the principle and process of sound financial management and pays close attention to ensure wide pan-European coverage and impact when planning its calls for proposals.

Through this methodology, EIT Digital ensures that all selected activities are strategically relevant, financially sustainable, compliant with EIT requirements, and capable of delivering high-quality, high-impact educational and innovation outcomes at both European and global scale.

Thanks to its continuous scouting of digital innovation and education opportunities at EU level as well as in the Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries, EIT Digital is able to effectively act as a forward-looking compass for its community, ensuring that new initiatives are always strategically aligned with the evolving demands of society, industry, and the European R&I landscape. In addition, by strategically engaging with other actors and initiatives at European level (e.g. EIT, EIC, EIF, DG Connect, European Green Digital Coalition, VR/AR Coalition, European multi-stakeholder platform on ICT Standardisation, etc.) EIT Digital is able to provide input in a timely basis to the relevant bodies

and EU agencies (e.g. EUAN AI training) in charge of designing the new EU R&I frameworks and initiatives.

To deliver on the ambition set out in the EIT Digital Strategic Agenda, EIT Digital systematically builds structured synergies and complementarities with EU-level and national programmes across the full innovation value chain, from skills and talent development to innovation deployment, scale-up and investment. These synergies are embedded both at programme design level and implementation level, ensuring coherence, non-duplication, and maximised impact.

In particular, complementarities with the Digital Europe Programme (DEP) and European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) are leveraged to scale up EIT Digital's education, up-skilling and innovation deployment activities. DEP and EDIHs provide a powerful channel to translate EIT-funded pilot actions into large-scale adoption by SMEs, startups and public administrations, notably in strategic digital domains aligned with the Digital Decade objectives. EIT Digital contributes advanced curricula, entrepreneurial education assets and deep-tech expertise, while EDIHs ensure proximity to regional ecosystems and end-users.

Synergies with Horizon Europe — including the European Innovation Ecosystems (EIE) actions, Regional Innovation Valleys, and the i3 Instrument — enable EIT Digital to bridge research and innovation activities with regional and interregional development strategies. Through these complementarities, EIT Digital supports the uptake of research results into market-ready solutions, aligns innovation activities with Smart Specialisation priorities, and reinforces the inclusion of moderate and emerging innovation ecosystems, in line with its RIS mandate.

At the scale-up and investment stages, EIT Digital works in close complementarity with the European Innovation Council (EIC), the European Investment Fund (EIF), InvestEU, and NextGenerationEU instruments. EIT Digital's business creation and acceleration programmes act as a deal-flow generator and de-risking layer, preparing high-potential deep-tech ventures for follow-on financing and EIC instruments, while EIF and InvestEU mechanisms enable access to blended finance and private capital at scale.

Furthermore, EIT Digital aligns its activities with European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDICs) and Member State-level structural and recovery funds, ensuring that innovation actions are anchored in long-term European digital infrastructure and sovereignty priorities. This alignment strengthens the sustainability and replicability of EIT Digital actions beyond the duration of EIT funding.

Through these structured synergies, EIT Digital not only maximises the leverage of EIT funding but also anticipates the next Framework Programme (FP10). Its integrated model directly supports FP10 priorities by mobilising talent at scale, accelerating research-to-market pathways, scaling deep-tech ventures, and crowding in public and private investment. EIT Digital therefore positions itself as both a central orchestrator of Europe's digital innovation ecosystem today and a future-proof platform ready to deliver on FP10's objectives of digital sovereignty, competitiveness and scale-up capacity.

In line with EIT Digital's commitment to **Financial Sustainability**, each activity/programme is strategically linked to a Financial Sustainability mechanism. These mechanisms vary across initiatives: some generate direct revenue through fees, while others enhance the value proposition for EIT Digital partners, supporting retention and attracting new paid memberships. Please find below how the different programmes contribute to the Financial Sustainability strategy:

- **EIT labelled Master Programmes:** Tuition-based funding models for all EIT Labelled Master Programmes, integrating cost-sharing from partner universities, in-kind contributions, and EIT support. External co-funding is actively pursued. This product line, delivered within the EIT

Digital Master School, has reached financial sustainability thanks to strong market traction and complementary financial support from EU-funded projects.

- **C-Suite Master in Business Excellence:** A tuition-based, revenue-generating programme launched with EIT seed funding. Scalability is driven by corporate partnerships and sponsorships. This product, developed within the EIT Digital Master School, will contribute to the already achieved financial sustainability of the masters.
- **Summer Schools:** Funded through participant fees, industry sponsorships, and partner in-kind contributions. The whole portfolio of Summer Schools has reached financial sustainability through their integration within the EIT Digital Master School portfolio and the complementary access to EU funding associated with these programmes.

The table below outlines the revenue projections, quantitative targets, and timelines that support the financial sustainability of the educational programmes referenced above.

Revenue Streams	2025	2026	2027	2028
Tuition Fees	2.600 k€	2.800 k€	3.100 k€	3.600 k€
Registration Fees	80 k€	88 k€	97 k€	110 k€
Application Fees	80 k€	88 k€	97 k€	110 k€
EIT Funding	1.000 k€	1.100 k€	1.200 k€	0 k€
EU project	1.800 k€	2.000 k€	2.200 k€	2.500 k€
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.560 k€</b>	<b>6.076 k€</b>	<b>6.694 k€</b>	<b>6.320 k€</b>

- **Innovation Study Tours:** The tours will be co-funded through tuition fees, host partner contributions, and local sponsorships, ensuring scalability and reducing dependency on EIT funding. The pilot will serve as a proof-of-concept for a sustainable mobility program that can be scaled across multiple destinations. This programme is newly introduced and will be developed during the work plan period. By the end of the implementation phase, it is expected to reach a level of maturity that demonstrates financial sustainability, particularly through synergies with the Summer Schools.
- **Talent Import:** The pilot will be co-funded through tuition fees, partner contributions, and local sponsorships, reducing dependency on EIT funding and validating a sustainable financial model for future scale-up.
- **Life-Long Learning scholarships:** The pilot will be co-funded through a blended model combining EIT support, corporate sponsorships, and employer co-financing. Additionally, learners will be encouraged to contribute through symbolic tuition or pay-as-you-learn models. The initiative will explore innovative mechanisms such as learning wallets, performance-based subsidies, and digital voucher systems to validate sustainable pathways for long-term rollout. This pilot will serve to validate the programme’s market traction and support the development of a financially sustainable model, with the objective of reaching profitability within the next three to five years.
- **Industrial Doctoral School (IDSL):** Doctoral projects co-funded by industry and host universities. EIT contributions focus on programme coordination and international mobility. This programme will be sustained through the current funding sources, while its long-term sustainability will depend on securing complementary financing opportunities from additional funding streams.
- **MSO Education Support Services:** Shared services across activities reduce duplication and improve cost-efficiency per learner.
- **Global Tech Leadership:** The programme will operate under a co-funding model, with revenues generated through participation fees and institutional sponsorships. Special pricing will be offered for members of affiliated networks, and scalable delivery formats (online/hybrid) will ensure

cost-efficiency. The pilot will test demand, validate the pricing model, and explore opportunities for future revenue generation via executive education formats.

- **AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer Track:** The programme is designed for high-level participants and will follow a fee-based model, supported through tuition fees and contributions from corporate partners. Its premium positioning will validate market demand and lay the foundation for a revenue-generating executive education offer at scale, contributing to long-term Financial Sustainability.
- **EIT Labelled SpeedMaster Programme:** Combines EIT support with programme fees and institutional contributions. External co-funding is sought to sponsor new modules or support large startup cohorts.
- **MentorMe Programme & MentorMe ‘Advanced’ Programme:** Operate under a balanced funding model combining EIT support, programme fees or equity contributions from mentees, and institutional support. External co-funding is actively pursued.
- **SPIN Explore & SPIN Rise:** Balanced funding model combining EIT support with institutional contributions willing to sponsor these programmes for their researchers. External co-funding is actively pursued.
- **Mini-MBA Programme: SPIN – Digital Valorisation Leaders:** Tuition-based and revenue-generating, supported by EIT seed funding for launch. Growth is enabled through strategic partnerships and sponsorships.
- **Pilot on Talent Cofoundry: From Research Talent to Market-Ready Tech Ventures:** Co-funded by partners, tuition fees, equity contributions, and local sponsorships. The pilot will validate financial viability for long-term rollout.
- **(d)Academy:** Multi-source funding through EIT contributions, corporate subscriptions, project-based contracts, and public funding opportunities.
- **Venture Incubation Programme & Co-creation Accelerator:** Balanced funding model combining EIT support with equity contributions from startups. External co-funding is continuously pursued. The Venture Incubation Programme is expected to receive the EIT Label within two years.
- Finally, the **Regions portfolio** plays a strategic role in ensuring EIT Digital’s Financial Sustainability by actively expanding collaboration opportunities that tap into a broad spectrum of public and private resources. This includes leveraging funding schemes at the EU, national, and regional levels to support innovation and ecosystem growth. In parallel, the portfolio seeks to diversify revenue streams by strengthening mechanisms such as membership contributions, co-funding arrangements, and tailored service provision.

### **FAIR - Data management**

Personal and administrative data will be collected and managed to facilitate communication with stakeholders involved in the project implementation, including activities related to open calls. Data management will adhere to the four foundational FAIR principles: Findability, Accessibility, Interoperability, and Reusability.

All data collection, organisation, curation, storage, long-term preservation, security, quality assurance, allocation of persistent identifiers, metadata provision (aligned with disciplinary standards), licensing, and data sharing procedures will comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

A Data Management Plan (DMP), as part of Work Package 4, is scheduled for submission in the first half of 2026. This deliverable will outline the approach to data management in accordance with the principles described above.

### **Open Science**

As a fully integrated actor within Horizon Europe Pillar III, and actively engaged with several other EU programmes (e.g. Horizon Europe Pillar II, Digital Europe Programme, InvestEU), EIT Digital strongly supports the European Commission’s open science policy. This priority is seen as a key driver for improving the quality, efficiency, and responsiveness of EU research and innovation.

It is essential that all relevant stakeholders — including academia, industry, research centres, public authorities, and citizen groups — are actively involved in the research and innovation process. Such inclusive participation fosters trust in science and accelerates the deployment of technologies from laboratories to real-world applications that benefit people and businesses.

EIT Digital ensures open access to reports, articles, factsheets, and other materials, in compliance with applicable intellectual property rights. Additionally, EIT Digital leverages its social media channels and website to disseminate information about events, conferences, workshops, new publications, and achievements of its community members (e.g. partners, scaleups, students).

Strategically, EIT Digital aims to provide broad and open access to documents, repositories, and datasets wherever possible, to support project validation and transparency. To better serve the EU community, aggregated results are published annually in a report that includes both qualitative and quantitative insights into EIT Digital's activities. This report also facilitates the early identification of trends in the digital landscape, combining data-driven analysis with success stories and case studies.

To promote best practices and strengthen public trust in EU research and innovation, EIT Digital actively contributes to citizen engagement activities led by EIT and other cross-KIC initiatives.

### **Social Science**

EIT Digital firmly believes in building a strong digital Europe that safeguards European values by being inclusive, fair, and sustainable. Achieving this ambitious vision requires serious consideration of social science innovation as a cross-cutting issue, fully embedded in the design, development, and implementation of new technologies aimed at addressing societal challenges. At EIT Digital, every innovation activity proposal must describe its expected societal and economic impact. These dimensions are integral to the review and selection process. Additionally, EIT Digital's impact pathways offer a comprehensive framework of KPIs, targets, and goals to measure contributions to key societal challenges, aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). (See Annex I of the EIT Digital Strategic Agenda 2021–2027 for the full list of EIT Digital Impact Pathways).

EIT Digital addresses a range of socially relevant topics across its five focus areas. In Digital Wellbeing, it supports public health systems by deploying digital technologies not only in hospitals and care centres but also in citizens' homes. Within Digital Cities, it examines the socio-economic impact of new transport systems on daily life, including forward-looking studies and technology foresight. The Digital Industry focus area tackles the cultural, behavioural, socio-economic, and institutional changes necessary for a more sustainable and resource-efficient society. In Digital Tech and Digital Finance, EIT Digital explores how digital innovation can transform the public sector and financial institutions, fostering trust and resilience.

### **Gender Dimension**

EIT Digital's approach to gender diversity is structured around three key pillars. First, the organization promotes internal equality policies, focusing on recruitment, leadership roles, and decision-making processes. Gender representation is monitored across all major governance bodies—including C-level executives, Regional Directors, and the Supervisory Board—with notable improvements in gender ratios over time. Second, gender equality is integrated across all EIT Digital activities. In Education, the aim is to develop both female and male ICT entrepreneurs, leaders, and professionals. By attracting more female students to the EIT Digital Academy, the organization seeks to address the under-representation of women in ICT and help close the skills gap. Awareness campaigns and partner engagement ensure that gender equality efforts are consistently applied throughout the ecosystem. The *She Figures 2025* report from the European Commission highlights a concerning trend: only 22% of doctoral graduates in ICT are women. EIT Digital considers this figure unacceptably low and calls for coordinated action across the ICT sector to improve access and encourage more women to join the workforce. Third, EIT Digital engages at the EU level in policy development and targeted activities to further gender diversity. The organization contributes to numerous European initiatives and proposals focused on gender mainstreaming, including *FINEST Scaleup*, *Boosting Digital Skills* of young pupils, the *Women TechEU* Scheme, support for women entrepreneurship, the *European Network of gender-*

conscious investors, WomenUp, Supporting Women in Digital, Women in DeepTech, and Girls and Women in Digital.

To ensure meaningful progress, EIT Digital has adopted a step-by-step strategy to improve gender equality in both its activities and management. This includes establishing clear metrics and baselines to assess current gender representation, conducting regular reviews and data analysis to evaluate impact, making adjustments based on feedback and outcomes, and gradually integrating new objectives and actions to promote female participation in a realistic and sustainable manner. This incremental approach allows EIT Digital to remain agile while maintaining a strong commitment to gender balance across all levels of its operations.

SMART Performance Indicators, including targets across all core operational areas, are defined in the EIT Digital Gender Mainstreaming Policy, which can be accessed here:

[https://www.eitdigital.eu/fileadmin/2024/publications/EIT\\_Digital\\_Gender-Mainstreaming-Policy\\_v2.pdf](https://www.eitdigital.eu/fileadmin/2024/publications/EIT_Digital_Gender-Mainstreaming-Policy_v2.pdf)

## **2. Impact**

### **2.1 KIC's pathways towards impact**

EIT Digital has made substantial progress in delivering economic and societal impact, fully aligned with the objectives set out in its Strategic Innovation Agenda for 2021–2024. The achievements across education, innovation, business creation, and entrepreneurship clearly demonstrate the organization's effectiveness and commitment to its mission.

EIT Digital has surpassed expectations in key educational performance indicators. The number of graduates from EIT-labelled programs exceeded the 2021–2024 target (2.360 vs. 1.700), with a particularly notable increase in graduates from EIT RIS countries (619 compared to the initial goal of 510). Non-degree programs have also been highly successful, attracting a diverse cohort of students to the EIT Digital ecosystem. Participation in non-labelled education and training programs significantly outperformed projections, with approximately 17.791 participants in total—including 7.384 from EIT RIS countries—well above the targets of 2.850 and 855, respectively. This strong engagement highlights the project's broad educational reach and its effectiveness in attracting participants from across Europe. While the number of startups created by students and graduates (5) fell short of the four-year target of 90, it is important to note the challenges in tracking this KPI. Nevertheless, several success stories have emerged, illustrating the program's positive impact on fostering entrepreneurial journeys.

The project has demonstrated robust performance in innovation, with a total of 202 innovations successfully launched to market—surpassing the target of 265. This achievement underscores EIT Digital's role as a catalyst for digital transformation and technological advancement.

EIT Digital has exceeded its goals in supporting startups and scale-ups. More than 657 startups and scale-ups received support, surpassing the Strategic Agenda target of 427 for 2021–2024. Support for ventures in EIT RIS countries also exceeded expectations (more than 281 compared to the goal of 128), reflecting a strong commitment to regional development and inclusivity.

The project has been highly effective in attracting investment, with KIC-supported startups and scale-ups securing a total of €337 million—surpassing the €230 million target. However, investment in EIT RIS countries reached only €29,2 million, less than the expected €34,5 million. This gap highlights the need for targeted strategies to enhance investment attraction in these regions.

Overall, EIT Digital has delivered strong results, particularly in education and innovation, with significant contributions to EIT RIS countries. The organization continues to play a pivotal role in driving impact by fostering entrepreneurship, supporting innovation, and equipping individuals with the

skills needed to thrive in the digital economy. The high level of participation from EIT RIS countries demonstrates EIT Digital's commitment to reducing regional disparities and promoting inclusive growth across Europe. Progress is closely monitored through key performance indicators aligned with the EIT Impact Framework, ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

Regarding KPI EITHE06.1 “Investment attracted by KIC-supported start-ups and scale-ups”, a total of €337M was achieved between 2021 and 2024. Given that the 2025 target was €50M—with the achieved value expected to reach approximately €54M—and that the overall Strategic Agenda 2021–2027 target amounts to €440M, the remaining targets for 2026 and 2027 are therefore €25M each. As a result, the substantial overachievement during the 2021–2024 period fully explains the deviation from the Strategic Agenda target values allocated to 2026 and 2027.

For KPI EITHE06, it is also important to note that Business Creation programmes, by design, support the formation of new ventures and early-stage entrepreneurs. As a result, their capacity to raise external investment—particularly in the deep-tech domain—typically does not materialise within the first year and often requires several years of development.

EIT Digital will contribute to the EITHE06.1 and EITHE06.2 indicators not only through the EIT-funded Business Creation programmes listed in Table 2.1, but also through NEFA activities that provide access-to-finance support to startups and scaleups graduating from previous EFA cohorts (for example, ClimaTech Connect from 2025). This demonstrates both the perseverance of the entrepreneurs involved and the long-term effectiveness of those earlier programmes. Through its targeted access-to-finance services, EIT Digital is expected to make a significant contribution to the performance of KPIs EITHE06.1 and EITHE06.2.

Regarding EITHE02.5 “Revenue from the innovations launched on the market”, this KPI does not include annual targets within the Strategic Agenda, nor has it been reported in previous reporting periods, in line with the EIT Impact Framework. Instead, there is an equity commitment whereby ventures that incorporate a company during or after their participation in a EIT Digital programme, as well as startups already incorporated at the time of applying to EIT Digital calls, are required to grant five percent (5%) equity to EIT Digital.

In relation to the EIT KPIs aligned with the KIC's Strategic Agenda for 2026–2027 and achieved through non-EIT funding sources, NEFA projects—such as CyberSecDome, MADEinEU, NEXTCHAIN, CONSOLE, and LLM Bridge—demonstrate active contributions to indicators EITHE01.1, EITHE02.1, and EITHE03.1. The corresponding values have been duly reflected in the table 2.1b.

**Table 2.1 Portfolio impact aligned with the EIT Impact Framework**

	Allocated budget M€	Short-term KPIs (outputs/results)	Medium-term KPIs (outcomes)	Long-term KPIs (impact)
<b>WP1 ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS</b>				
T1.1 EIT Labelled Master Programmes execution (Data Science and Cloud, Financial Technology)	€1,08 M	EIT Digital will continue to deliver education programmes across Europe through 2 strategic EIT Labelled Master programmes: Data Science and Cloud (DSC) and Financial Technology (FT+FTB).	The programmes are targeted at master’s students in digital innovation and deep tech, involving approximately 50 learners per year. <b>EITHE07.1: 100 graduates</b> <b>EITHE05.1: 20 start-ups</b> established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	These masters directly contribute to EU policy priorities on AI, data management, cloud computing, and digital finance, and address Europe’s need for highly skilled talent in these rapidly growing sectors. The updated content of the DSC master (green digital skills and responsible AI) will ensure alignment with the EU's twin transition priorities.
T1.2 Launch of C-Suite Master in Business Excellence	€1,12 M	EIT Digital will launch the C-Suite Master in Business Excellence, an advanced executive-level programme that will address strategic leadership in digital innovation, organisational agility, sustainable business models, and cross-border market expansion.	This programme is designed for executives and senior managers, with an expected cohort of around 15–20 participants in the first intake. <b>EITHE08.1: 40 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 10 participants</b>	This master will contribute to Digital Tech and Digital Industry focus areas by building top-level leadership capacity to implement deep tech solutions at scale.
T1.3 Innovation Study Tours	€0,27 M	EIT Digital will pilot a new Innovation Study Tour model, designed to expose students to world-leading innovation ecosystems outside Europe through short, intensive mobility experiences. Students will participate in structured study visits of 5–10 days in regions such as Estonia (digital society and e-governance), the United States (entrepreneurship and venture capital), and China (digital scale-up and smart manufacturing).	These tours are designed for master’s students, PhD candidates, and professionals engaged in innovation ecosystems, and are expected to attract approximately 30–50 participants. <b>EITHE08.1: 50 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 25 participants</b>	This model globally connects entrepreneurial talent and contributes to enhancing the international dimension of its education portfolio. It supports the Strategic Innovation Agenda by expanding Europe’s exposure to international innovation leaders, fostering ecosystem internationalisation, and positioning Europe as an attractive hub for

				digital talent and innovation collaboration.
T1.4 Talent Import	€1,71 M	EIT Digital will pilot a new Talent Import model designed to attract high-potential students from outside Europe by offering a “1 year abroad + 1 year in the EU” academic pathway. This activity targets international students and researchers attracted to Europe through mobility opportunities.	This activity targets international students and researchers attracted to Europe through mobility opportunities, involving approximately 20–40 learners each year. <b>EITHE08.1: 80 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 20 participants</b>	This model contributes to building talent pipelines that connect international excellence with the European innovation ecosystem. It supports the implementation of the Strategic Innovation Agenda by extending the reach of EIT Digital’s five focus areas beyond Europe, boosting ecosystem internationalisation and enhancing Europe’s attractiveness as a global education and innovation destination.
T1.5 Summer Schools	€0,43 M	EIT Digital will organize two 2-week Summer School editions addressing EIT Digital’s five focus areas, with thematic emphasis on frontier topics such as Quantum Computing, the Metaverse, Green Digital, and AI for industry. Each Summer School combines lectures, hands-on workshops, and team-based innovation challenges proposed by industry partners.	The summer schools are open to master’s students, young professionals, and researchers interested in Deep Tech and entrepreneurship, with a total of around 150–200 participants across the two schools. <b>EITHE07.1: 400 graduates</b> <b>EITHE05.1: 10 start-ups</b> established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	Summer Schools will contribute to Europe’s digital upskilling agenda, support the Deep Tech Talent Initiative, and help bridge the skills gap by enabling access to critical tech skills.
T1.6 Life-Long Learning scholarships	€0,59 M	EIT Digital will launch a Life-Long Learning (LLL) Scholarship Initiative aimed at increasing participation in flexible, high-quality digital upskilling opportunities. The initiative will offer targeted financial support and learning opportunities to adult learners, professionals, and career changers, removing financial barriers and providing access to EIT Digital’s curated catalogue of online and hybrid courses.	These scholarships support professionals and employees pursuing upskilling and reskilling through short courses, benefiting approximately 100–150 learners per year. <b>EITHE08.1: 300 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 75 participants</b>	This activity will contribute to Europe’s digital upskilling agenda, support the Deep Tech Talent Initiative, and help bridge the skills gap by enabling continuous access to critical tech skills (e.g., AI, cybersecurity, data, green digital). By incentivising participation through scholarships, we empower individuals from diverse backgrounds to engage in relevant

				and recognised training that enhances their employability and innovation capacity. This initiative aligns with EIT Digital's strategic goal to support a digitally skilled European workforce. It adheres to EIT's focus on inclusivity and life-long learning.
T1.7 Industrial Doctoral School (IDSL)	€0,6 M	EIT Digital will continue supporting ongoing cohorts in the Industrial Doctoral School, maintaining close supervision of doctoral research projects co-designed with industry partners.	The school addresses doctoral candidates working in collaboration with industry partners, involving around 5–10 PhD candidates annually. <b>EITHE07.1: 20 graduates</b> <b>EITHE05.1: 2 start-ups</b> established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	These doctoral programs will continue to strengthen Europe's ability to transform research into innovation across all five focus areas, particularly in Digital Tech and Digital Industry, strengthening the Strategic Innovation Agenda.
T1.8 MSO Education Support Services	€0,7 M	One Master School Office offers centralised support functions to ensure operational excellence across all education activities, covering programme management systems, quality assurance, partner engagement, financial monitoring, and reporting.	More than 1500 eligible applicants across all schools' programmes. This task contributes to achieve the <b>EITHE07.1</b> targets.	This action will sustain the Strategic Innovation Agenda by sustaining the quality and scalability of the education portfolio across the EIT Digital network, ensuring consistent delivery aligned with strategic priorities.
T1.9 Global Tech Leadership	€0,41 M	A pioneering educational initiative designed to equip emerging leaders with the strategic, diplomatic, and ethical competencies needed to operate at the intersection of deep tech and international policy. Developed in collaboration with EIT Hub Silicon Valley, the program will offer a series of online and hybrid sessions led by globally recognised experts in deep tech, policy, and innovation ecosystems.	This programme targets mid-career professionals and managers in global tech companies, with an expected 20–30 participants per cohort. <b>EITHE08.1: 65 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 18 participants</b>	This initiative contributes to EIT Digital's mission of building innovation capacity in Europe and beyond, reinforcing our leadership in shaping the future of tech policy, responsible innovation, and global collaboration.
T1.10 AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer Track	€0,89 M	EIT Digital will launch a flagship Executive Education Program for Chief AI Officers (CAIOs). This program responds to the	This track is tailored to executives and decision-makers responsible for AI strategy and governance, involving	This initiative supports Europe's strategic autonomy in digital leadership, strengthens the

		growing demand for AI-focused leadership across sectors and will position EIT Digital at the forefront of AI-enabled business transformation in Europe.	approximately 25–40 participants per cohort. <b>EITHE08.1: 85 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 20 participants</b>	innovation ecosystem’s alignment with AI policy and regulation, and fosters a new generation of AI-native executive leadership.
T1.11 Master DSC and Master FT+FTB fee waivers and scholarships	€1,72 M	The fee waivers and scholarships initiative will keep supporting the enrolled talent in EIT Digital Master Schools programme financed by EIT, and help broaden the EIT Master School impact by supporting a new cohort of Master’s students aimed at attracting top European talent and promoting equitable access to advanced digital education.	These scholarships are dedicated to master’s students admitted to the Data Science Cloud, FinTech and FTB programmes, supporting around 30-40 learners over two cohorts. <b>EITHE07.1: 80 graduates</b>	These fee waivers and scholarships are strategically designed to lower financial barriers and foster inclusion, ensuring that individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds can contribute to and benefit from Europe’s digital transformation. By aligning financial support with academic excellence and labour market needs, the programme strengthens the pipeline of skilled professionals ready to lead in the evolving digital landscape.
T1.12 EIT Labelled SpeedMaster Programme	€0,14 M	EIT Digital will continue to deliver the 12-week long SpeedMaster training in 2026 and 2027, 3 batches a year, focusing on pre-seed and early-stage startup teams. The curriculum will be fine-tuned based on students feedback, and also to add specialized add-on modules like “founder’s mental health”, “female entrepreneurship” or “AI-based rapid prototyping”.	SpeedMaster trains over 100 individuals and 50 startups a year. <b>EITHE07.1: 200 graduates</b> <b>EITHE03.1: 100 supported startups</b> <b>EITHE03.2: 25 supported startups</b> <b>EITHE05.1: 5 start-ups</b> established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	The long-term effects of supporting entrepreneurial skills and tailored mentoring are expected to provide a fertile ground for innovator and entrepreneurs to take a leap and creating a venture and nurture it to success.
T1.13 MentorMe Programme	€0,41 M	EIT Digital will continue to deliver the MentorMe programme 4 times a year, focusing on pre-seed and early-stage start ups teams. This highly customized programme ensures that entrepreneurs get hands-on support in the form of monthly mentoring sessions in 4 different topics (product-market fit, team dynamics, business development, and fundraising) along with short masterclasses	An average intake of 8 pre-seed stage startups per batch (8 editions in total). <b>EITHE08.1: 64 participants</b> <b>EITHE03.1: 64 supported startups</b>	The long-term effects of supporting entrepreneurial skills and tailored mentoring are expected to provide a fertile ground for innovator and entrepreneurs to take a leap and creating a venture and nurture it to success.

		focusing on super specific subjects relevant for early-stage startups (CAC calculation, PPC strategies, hiring, etc.).		
T1.14 MentorMe 'Advanced' Programme	€0,16 M	EIT Digital will launch a new edition of the MentorMe programme called MentorMe Advanced programme. Focusing on Seed-stage or pre-Series-A startups, this workshop-oriented programme will provide hands-on support, goal-oriented mentoring and peer learning opportunities to prepare startups to become scaleups.	An average intake of 8 seed stage and pre-series-A startups per batch (4 editions in total). <b>EITHE08.1: 32 participants</b> <b>EITHE03.1: 32 supported startups</b>	The long-term effects of supporting entrepreneurial skills and tailored mentoring are expected to provide a fertile ground for innovator and entrepreneurs to take a leap and creating a venture and nurture it to success.
T1.15 SPIN Explore	€0,15 M	SPIN Explore will continue engaging university students with an entrepreneurial mindset and equipping them with the tools, exposure, and support necessary to begin their innovation journey. The programme offers a structured pathway that includes team formation, ideation training, peer learning, and access to Europe's top deep tech entrepreneurs and investors.	This programme targets Deep Tech Researchers and Technology Transfer Professionals, with 50 expected participants per cohort. <b>EITHE07.1: 100 graduates</b> <b>EITHE05.1: 5 start-ups</b> established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	The SPIN programme will support the achievement of boosting deep tech digital R&D results brought to the market in areas strategic for Europe.
T1.16 SPIN Rise	€0,76 M	SPIN Rise is a pre-incubation programme supporting early-stage student-led ventures that have demonstrated traction through SPIN Explore or similar initiatives. Over a 3-month intensive cycle, teams receive mentorship, technical and business development coaching, ecosystem access, and funding opportunities.	This programme targets Deep Tech Researchers, with 60 expected participants per cohort (8): <b>EITHE07.1: 480 graduates</b> <b>EITHE05.1: 5 start-ups</b> established by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	This initiative will contribute directly to enhancing Europe's knowledge valorisation capabilities, particularly within Tech Transfer Offices and student entrepreneurship units, and to translating early-stage research and student projects into scalable, investable startups.
T1.17 Launch of the Mini-MBA Programme: SPIN – Digital Valorisation Leaders	€0,49 M	EIT Digital will launch the Mini-MBA "Digital Valorisation Leaders", a flagship executive programme designed to equip experienced innovation professionals with the strategic skills and practical tools required to	The expected pilot cohort will consist of 15-20 innovation professionals. <b>EITHE08.1: 44 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 10 participants</b>	By focusing on the unique commercialization challenges of digital assets, such as datasets, algorithms, software frameworks, and robotic integration, the programme strengthens Europe's

		lead the valorisation of AI, Data, Software, and Robotics research.		capacity for knowledge valorisation and competitive advantage in deep tech.
T1.18 Pilot on Talent Cofoundry: From Research Talent to Market-Ready Tech Ventures	€0,42 M	EIT Digital will launch this pilot to address one of Europe's most persistent innovation bottlenecks: the difficulty of forming strong, balanced founding teams for startups emerging from academic research. Despite growing support for deep tech and digital innovation, early-stage ventures in Europe (particularly those led by researchers) often fail to progress due to lack of entrepreneurial co-founders, limited team-building support, and fragmented post-incubation pathways.	This programme targets Deep Tech Researchers who complete SPIN: Rise, with 30 expected participants per cohort. <b>EITHE08.1: 60 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 15 participants</b>	This pilot will contribute to address one of Europe's most persistent innovation bottlenecks: the difficulty of forming strong, balanced founding teams for startups emerging from academic research
T1.19 (d)Academy	€0,36 M	EIT Digital will continue the (d)Academy as a flagship initiative for Europe's digital upskilling and reskilling needs. The platform integrates skills intelligence—predicting future labour market needs—with tailored learning pathways in collaboration with universities, corporates, and public institutions.	EIT Digital aims to have at least 3,000 learners, as well as 50 companies, registered on the (d)Academy platform by end of 2027. <b>EITHE08.1: 3000 participants</b> <b>EITHE08.2: 750 participants</b>	This platform will sustain the Strategic Innovation Agenda by addressing the skills dimension of the Digital Decade policy compass, directly supporting the EU's ambition for a highly skilled digital workforce.
<b>WP2 BUSINESS CREATION</b>				
T2.1 Venture Incubation Programme	€1,88 M	EIT Digital will continue to deliver this programme with the help of 3 selected incubation partners, each supporting 8 startups in their respective geographical locations. This funnel-based programme provides access to structured mentoring and expert coaching, exposure to investors and partners via pan-European Demo Days and follow-up guidance toward seed investment readiness.	EIT Digital will support 3 incubation partners and 24 startups, out of which 12 will be financially supported. The main target group for the Venture Incubation Programme are the very early-stage entrepreneurs, with a strong idea or a basic prototype, currently at the very beginning of their journey. <b>EITHE03.1: 24 supported startups</b> <b>EITHE06.1: €12M Investment attracted by supported startups and scaleups</b>	The provision of targeted skilling and mentoring initiatives designed to nurture robust and sustainable digital ventures is a key driver for job creation and long-term employment stability within the digital sector. By equipping emerging entrepreneurs and talent with advanced digital competencies and strategic guidance, these programs not only foster the growth of innovative startups but also

				strengthen the broader digital ecosystem. This, in turn, enhances the EU's capacity to generate high-quality jobs, retain skilled professionals, and ensure the resilience and competitiveness of its digital economy.
T2.2 Co-creation Accelerator	€2,60 M	EIT Digital will launch a new co-creation programme, bringing together entrepreneurs, corporates and/or SMEs in creating, validating and deploying solutions, giving financial support, education and mentoring to the entrepreneurs, while quality assurance and bespoke support to the corporates/SMEs, to create validated and deployed digital products.	The goal is to have 3 cut-off-dates over the 2-year period, supporting 9 startup-led co-creation teams in total. The main target group for the Co-creation Accelerator are early-stage entrepreneurs, already achieving their problem-solution fit and in the process of finding their product-market fit. <b>EITHE03.1: 9 supported startups</b> <b>EITHE06.1: €8M Investment attracted by supported startups and scaleups</b>	By supporting the creation of deep tech startups and facilitating their collaboration with corporates and SMEs, the programme helps the validation and product deployment of entrepreneurs by financial support, education, mentoring and bespoke quality assurance. The programme concentrates on the strategic focus areas established in the Strategic Innovation Agenda.
<b>WP3 REGIONAL INNOVATION SCHEME (RIS)</b>				
T3.1 Summer School in RIS	€0,19 M	At least one of the two 2-week Summer Schools will be organized in a RIS country.	This summer school is addressed to master's students, young professionals, and researchers interested in Deep Tech and entrepreneurship, and will involve approximately 70–90 learners per year, corresponding to around half of the overall Summer School participation. <b>EITHE07.2: 180 graduates</b> <b>EITHE05.2: 5 start-ups</b> established in EIT RIS countries by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programme	The long-term effect of supporting these activities in EU Member States with a Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) below 50 is to significantly enhance their digital competitiveness. By fostering digital upskilling among European professionals, the programme helps build the advanced competencies required to keep pace with the rapid evolution of digital technologies. This sustained investment in digital skills not only narrows the digital divide across Europe but also strengthens the capacity of all Member States to participate fully in
T3.2 SPIN in RIS	€0,16 M	The SPIN: Rise programme will be expanded and strengthened with a stronger focus on RIS countries. Each year, four partners will be selected through an open call to deliver the	This programme targets Deep Tech Researchers, with 60 expected participants per cohort (4). <b>EITHE07.2: 240 graduates</b>	

		programme, with a commitment to ensure that two of them (50%) are based in RIS countries	<b>EITHE05.2: 5 start-ups</b> established in EIT RIS countries by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled programmes	the digital economy, driving innovation, productivity, and inclusive growth throughout the EU.
T3.3 MentorMe Programme and MentorMe Advanced in RIS	€0,18 M	MentorMe and MentorMe Advanced with RIS participants has the same 4+2 months structure as the default edition, but with an extra focus on the specialties of founders from RIS countries. Mentoring sessions and workshops will address the challenges of these regions, including skills and teams, available funding and scaling up, selling abroad and competing with more funded companies.	An average intake of 2 pre-seed stage startups per batch (4 editions in total). <b>EITHE08.2: 16 participants</b> <b>EITHE03.2: 16 supported startups</b>	
T3.4 Venture Incubation Programme in RIS	€0,81 M	The RIS Venture Incubation Programme stimulates entrepreneurship and empowers entrepreneurial teams to create new deep tech companies in RIS countries. The programme will run a single very focused edition per year in collaboration with regional partners. The incubation program will have a special focus on the challenges faced by RIS-based founders, leveraging the expertise of the RIS-focused mentors of the MentorMe programme.	The RIS Venture Incubation Programme aims to support 8 new ventures, out of which 4 will be financially supported. <b>EITHE03.2: 8 supported startups</b> <b>EITHE06.2: €4M Investment attracted by supported startups and scaleups</b>	
T3.5 Co-creation Accelerator in RIS	€1,44 M	EIT Digital's ambition for 2026–2027 is for 35% of successful Co-creation Accelerator proposals to develop or implement their solutions in RIS countries. This will include pilot customers or research and development partners in RIS countries, and activity teams with a strong presence in RIS regions.	An ideal applicant is an early-stage entrepreneur forming a co-creation team with a corporate- and/or SME customer; or even a cluster of SME customers sharing the same pre-competitive problem, which the entrepreneur is aiming to solve. <b>EITHE03.2: 4 supported startups</b> <b>EITHE06.2: €5M Investment attracted by supported startups and scaleups</b>	
T3.6 RIS Ecosystem activities	€0,78 M	The activities foreseen under this task aim to activate and strengthen local innovation	<b>EITHE22.1: 36 new and established KIC partners from RIS countries.</b>	

		ecosystems in RIS countries through a combination of outreach, research, and engagement initiatives.		
<b>WP4 INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM MAINTENANCE; DISSEMINATION AND OUTREACH; AND SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES WITH OTHER EU PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES</b>				
T4.1 Region North	€0,32 M	EIT Digital aims to strengthen regional innovation ecosystems by ensuring their continuity and expansion across the North, East and South regions, including RIS countries. It aims to maintain and grow EIT Digital's physical presence through Co-Location Centres and regional offices, positioning them as recognised nodes within the pan-European network.	<b>EITHE10.1: 400 active partners</b> collaborating in EIT Digital (research, business, HEIs; cities, regions, NGOs and other) <b>EITHE10.2: 140 active partners registered in the EIT RIS countries</b> collaborating in EIT Digital	The continuous effort in building a pan-European ecosystem is expected to have a spillover effect on supporting the creation of new digital innovation ecosystems.
T4.2 Region East	€0,36 M			
T4.3 Region South	€0,38 M			
T4.4 Central Ecosystem Coordination	€1,52 M	The Ecosystem Central Coordination is responsible for facilitating collaboration across EIT Digital's regional nodes, driving and monitoring impact, and ensuring compliance with the obligations set out in the Memorandum of Cooperation and the Grant Agreement between EIT and EIT Digital		
T4.5 Communication and dissemination	€0,61 M	The Communication and Dissemination activities at EIT Digital aim to position the organisation as the leading European force driving digital transformation, and as a key player in innovation, entrepreneurship, and education. These efforts are designed to support the strategic goals of the Pillars (Education and Innovation) across the EIT Digital ecosystem.	<b>EITHE16.1: 10 results disseminated through the EC dissemination tools</b> <b>EITHE17.1: 17200 people reached through communication activities</b>	EIT Digital continues to play a pivotal role in shaping European policy by producing targeted policy reports on strategic topics for the European Union, such as Digital Finance and Disruption in Digital Education. These contributions help inform and guide the EU's digital transformation agenda. Looking ahead, EIT Digital is committed to expanding its efforts to foster synergies with other EU and national programmes in pursuit of its mission. This includes active

				participation in several Digital Innovation Hubs and close collaboration with the European Investment Fund (EIF) on education initiatives. Such partnerships are designed to facilitate greater access to educational programmes for prospective students and to amplify the impact of digital innovation across Europe.
T4.6 EUAN AI training	€0,16 M	This training aims to build responsible, effective AI capacity across the EU Agencies Network (EUAN), which brings together 51 decentralised EU Agencies and Joint Undertakings with more than 11,000 staff across 24 Member States.	Based on prior course cycles, this training aims to reach 800 learners within two years across several training intakes. <b>EITHE17.1: 800 people reached through communication activities</b>	This training directly advances the Strategic Agenda 2021–2027 by equipping participants with essential skills for the twin digital and green transitions. It strengthens innovation capacity within public administration, ensuring that institutions are agile, future-ready, and fully compliant with evolving EU policy and regulatory frameworks.

**Table 2.1a. List of mandatory EIT KPIs (relevant under this invitation) at work package (WP) level**

EIT area	KPI Code	EIT KPI	Achieved targets (2021-2024)	Target (2026)	Target (2027)	WP(s)
<b>Education</b>	EITHE05.1	Number of start-ups established in year N by students enrolled and graduates from EIT labelled MSc and PhD programmes or by learners / participants in other EIT labelled activities.	5	20	27	1
	EITHE05.2	Start-ups established in EIT RIS countries by students enrolled and graduates from EIT-labelled programmes	4	5	5	3
	EITHE07.1	Graduates from EIT-labelled programmes.	2360	690	690	1
	EITHE07.2	Graduates from EIT-labelled programmes with citizenship in EIT RIS Countries	619	210	210	3

	EITHE08.1	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.	17791	1910	1910	1
	EITHE08.2	Participants in non-labelled education and training with citizenship in EIT RIS countries	7384	479	480	1,3
<b>Leveraging investments in R&amp;I</b>	EITHE06.1	Investment attracted by KIC-supported start-ups and scale-ups	€337M	€25M	€25M	2 and NEFA
	EITHE06.2-EITRIS	Investment attracted by KIC supported EIT RIS start-ups/scale-ups	€29,2M	€10,5M	€10,5M	3 and NEFA
	EITHE06.3-EITRIS	# EIT RIS Countries- Investment attracted by KIC supported EIT RIS start-ups/scale-ups	2	10	10	2,3
	EITHE11.1	FS revenues: Total financing generated by the KIC LE in year N	€26,9M	€23M	€25M	All WPs
	EITHE11.2	Financial sustainability (FS) coefficient (%) calculated as the total financing revenues generated by the KIC LE divided by the total EIT grant in year N		230%	250%	All WPs
	EITHE13.1	Financial asset valuation		€60M	€60M	All WPs
<b>Knowledge Triangle Integration/ KIC ecosystems</b>	EITHE10.1	Number of active partners collaborating in the KIC per profile (research; business; HEIs; cities, regions, NGOs; other).	300	350	400	4
	EITHE10.2	Active partners registered in the EIT RIS countries collaborating in the KIC	96	120	140	4
<b>Societal impact</b>	EITHE15.1	Impact on achieving Sustainable Development Goals		Strong positive	Strong positive	1,2,3
<b>Horizontal outputs</b>	EITHE16.1	# Results disseminated through the EC dissemination tools	12	5	5	4
	EITHE17.1	# People reached through communication activities		9000	9000	4
<b>RIS-specific indicators</b>	EITHE22.1	Number of new and established KIC Partners from RIS countries.	250	18	18	3

**Table 2.1b. List of EIT KPIs relevant to the KIC's Strategic Agenda in 2026-2027 and realised with non-EIT contributions, in line with the EIT Impact Framework**

<b>HE Key Impact Pathway</b>	<b>KPI Code</b>	<b>KPI</b>	<b>Achieved targets</b>	<b>Target (2026)</b>	<b>Target (2027)</b>	<b>WP(s)</b>
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			(2021-2024)			
<b>Generating innovation-based growth</b>	EITHE01.1	Intellectual property rights	17	10	10	2 and NEFA
	EITHE02.1	Number of all innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within 3 years after completion	202	35	35	2 and NEFA
	EITHE02.4	Number of innovations introduced on the market during the KAVA duration or within 3 years after completion with a sales revenue of at least 10 000 EUR documented	125	14	14	2 and NEFA
	EITHE02.2-EITRIS	EIT RIS # products or processes launched on the market by organisations from the EIT RIS countries	79	5	5	3 and NEFA
	EITHE02.3-EITRIS	# EIT RIS countries – # of EIT RIS countries related to the products introduced on the market	13	5	5	2,3 and NEFA
	EITHE02.5	Revenue from the innovations launched on the market	NA	NA	NA	
	EITHE03.1	Start-ups and scaleups supported by KICs	657	224	240	1,2 and NEFA
	EITHE03.2-EITRIS	EIT RIS Start-ups/scale-ups supported	281	57	66	1,3 and NEFA
	EITHE03.3-EITRIS	# EIT RIS countries –KIC supported start-ups/scale-ups	13	12	12	2,3 and NEFA
	EITHE04.1	Number of start-ups established in year N as a result / based on the output(s) of KAVA(s), or start-ups created for the purpose of an innovation project to organise and support the development of an asset	140	30	30	2 and NEFA
	EITHE04.2-EITRIS	EIT RIS Start-ups created of/for innovation	87	12	12	2,3 and NEFA
	EITHE04.3-EITRIS	# EIT RIS countries - start-ups created of/for innovation	11	12	12	2,3 and NEFA
<b>Horizontal</b>	EITHE18.1	% of under-represented gender in top governance and management positions		40%	40%	4
<b>Economic and societal impact</b>		In addition to the above KPIs, the KICs are expected to contribute to the economic and relevant societal impact KPIs included in the EIT Impact Framework: <a href="https://eit.europa.eu/library/eit-simplified-impact-framework">https://eit.europa.eu/library/eit-simplified-impact-framework</a>				

## **2.2. Measures to maximise impact – Communications, dissemination and exploitation, stakeholder engagement**

EIT Digital’s strategy for communications, dissemination, exploitation, and stakeholder engagement is designed to firmly establish the organisation as a leading force in Europe’s digital transformation. As an active member of the EIT Community, EIT Digital seeks to position itself at the intersection of innovation, entrepreneurship, and education, raising awareness among stakeholders—both within and beyond its ecosystem—about the impact of its activities and the opportunities for collaboration they generate. Our growth is anchored in trust and credibility, reinforced by EIT Digital’s distinctive “boots-on-the-ground” model. By cultivating meaningful, personalised relationships at the regional level and combining Direct-to-Consumer (DTC) and Business-to-Business (B2B) outreach, the organisation engages corporates, investors, and institutional stakeholders in a way that is both authentic and scalable. This blend of local presence and global reach ensures that EIT Digital’s influence is deeply rooted and widely felt.

To engage new audiences, EIT Digital is implementing a combined D2C and B2B outreach strategy. Initiatives such as the Drop-In event series and coffee cart activations across European cities are designed to connect with entrepreneurial professionals and institutional partners in informal, high-impact settings. These activations are timed to coincide with major tech events and are also used to support recruitment for the EIT Digital Master School, creating accessible entry points into the ecosystem.

At the same time, the organisation is strengthening relationships within its existing network through a structured relationship management approach. Key account managers will work closely with partners to support their strategic goals and guide them through tailored journeys in career development, entrepreneurship, and collaboration. EIT Digital also seeks to deepen its engagement with thought leaders across innovation, education, and investment, ensuring its presence in key debates and communities.

Raising awareness among national and EU-level stakeholders about the value of the knowledge triangle and EIT Digital’s role within it is another priority. The organisation is also working to increase recognition of the EIT Label and its associated programmes, targeting students, employers, and institutional partners who value certified digital education. Communication efforts are aligned with evolving focus areas and project outcomes, ensuring relevance and impact.

To become more agile and responsive to the challenges of digital transformation, EIT Digital is enhancing the efficiency of its operations in communications and stakeholder engagement. It actively communicates the results of its actions and participates in EIT-wide and Cross-KIC initiatives, ensuring their visibility through its own channels (e.g., HEI Call, EIT Awards).

In 2026–2027, external communications will focus first on building awareness around the brand change, followed by efforts to establish clear brand positioning. This will drive increased reach, engagement, and recognition among key audiences, contributing to growth in partnerships, student enrolment, and professional upskilling. EIT Digital aims to boost qualified leads across its programmes—including the Master School, Summer School, SpeedMaster, Co-creation Accelerator, and Venture Incubation—by 30 percent in 2026 and 35 percent in 2027, compared to 2025. These goals will be supported by expanded outreach and data-driven campaign optimisation, building on a proven track record of in-house campaigns that outperform industry benchmarks.

Dissemination activities are integrated across EIT Digital’s core initiatives, including the Calls for Proposals, the EIT Digital Champions scale-up competition, Grow events, and key publications such as the Annual Report, Strategic Innovation Agenda, and Makers & Shapers series. Effective outreach depends on early planning and coordination with collaboration partners, ensuring that target audiences are engaged and informed.

The strategy is guided by three core principles. First, trust and values are central, with EIT Digital’s leadership positioned as credible voices in European and global debates, and communications aligned with Europe’s values of openness, inclusiveness, and responsibility. Second, visibility and influence are achieved through digital-first campaigns, innovative storytelling formats, and a strong presence in strategic domains such as AI,

digital sovereignty, and dual-use technologies. Third, engagement and experience are prioritised through a seamless and personalised stakeholder journey, supported by real-time analytics, targeted digital marketing, and expanded regional hubs.

By 2027, EIT Digital aims to reach half million people annually through its campaigns, be recognised among the top three digital innovation organisations in EU policy debates, and attract new members from outside its existing network.

Media Type	Definition	Examples for EIT Digital	Goals
Paid Media	Visibility is purchased to amplify reach	LinkedIn sponsored posts on digital innovation topics. Google Ads for EIT Digital Academy programmes. Paid partnerships with leading tech media.	Increase visibility of training programs. Drive applications to courses. Generate leads for innovation projects.
Earned Media	Coverage gained organically through third parties	Press features on EIT Digital startups. Mentions in EU innovation policy reports. Industry awards or recognitions	Build credibility in the European innovation ecosystem. Secure consistent media coverage. Increase backlinks and SEO ranking
Shared Media	Content engagement across social platforms and communities	Posts on deep tech news (Twitter/X) LinkedIn engagement with partner communities. Hashtag campaigns (e.g. Innovation Days).	Grow community engagement. Boost social shares & comments. Strengthen networks with policymakers, startups, and investors.
Owned Media	Channels fully controlled by EIT Digital	Website (blog, case studies) Academy newsletters. Whitepapers and innovation reports	Establish thought leadership. Drive traffic to owned platforms. Convert readers into applicants, members or partners

The following table outlines our comprehensive dissemination and exploitation plan, built around our core D2C strategy and flagship programmes. This approach is designed to maximise visibility, amplify impact, and extend engagement beyond our existing network by reaching new stakeholders, sectors, and geographies.

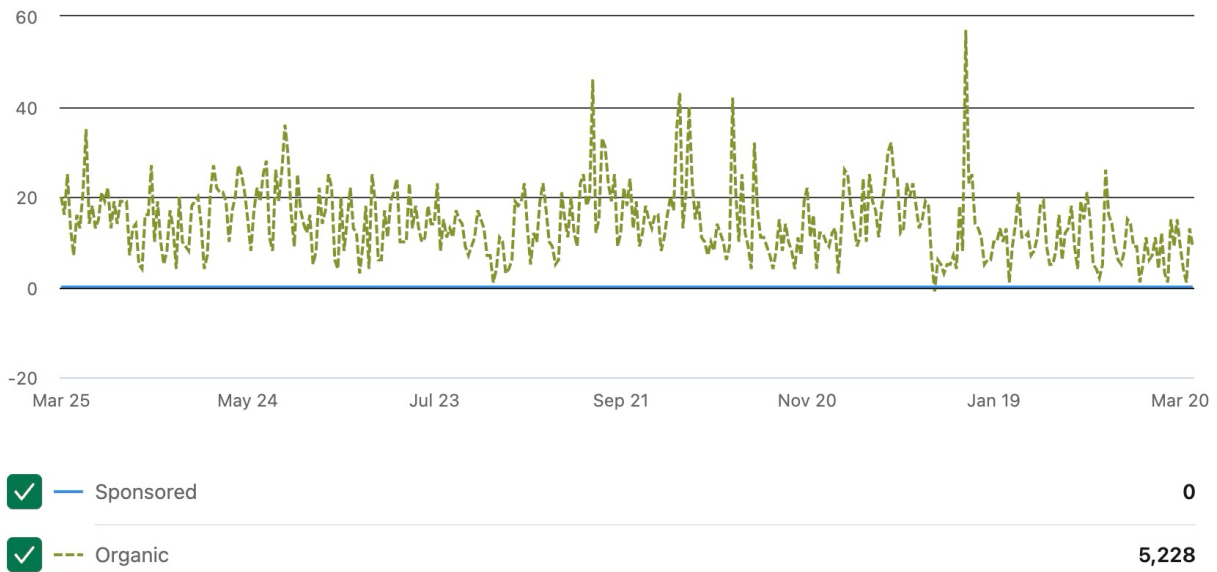
<b>PR and Media</b>	<b>Press release and exclusive interviews about our flagship initiatives</b>	Expansion announcements New Program launches New tender wins New customer acquisitions New Strategy announcement
<b>Social Media</b>	<b>Social media campaign per flagship initiative Showcase of partners and employees Thought leadership in key topics around European Competitiveness</b>	Speed Master, Co-Creation Accelerator, Master School, SPIN, CXO engagement, One Market Act, ECF, Choose Europe, Union of Skills
<b>Real Life Activations</b>	<b>Direct to Consumer engagements: Drop In Series, Airport activations, Coffee Cart sensory marketing activations</b>	Drop In Series, Byte & Slice Pizza afternoons with BsC students at partner universities, Airport activations (billboards) for the Master School Kick Off, Coffee Carts placed at key tech event - content sessions at our coffee carts, QR code elad generation
<b>Stakeholder Engagement Activities</b>	<b>Makers &amp; Shapers reports and Video recordings, Grow Digital series (100 pax max tech immersion, guiding the policymakers through the from student to unicorn journey in select cities across Europe)</b>	event example: WHAT'S NEXT FOR EUROPEAN INNOVATION, THE 28DIGITAL ECOSYSTEM REVEAL Official EIT side event during Dublin Tech Week 2026

Our strategy for extending our reach beyond the existing network—into new stakeholder groups, sectors, and geographies—relies primarily on strong organic communications and earned social media visibility, with LinkedIn serving as our principal channel. Based on our analysis of past LinkedIn performance, we focus on high-impact organic outreach and leverage the collective strength of our professional networks to amplify visibility.

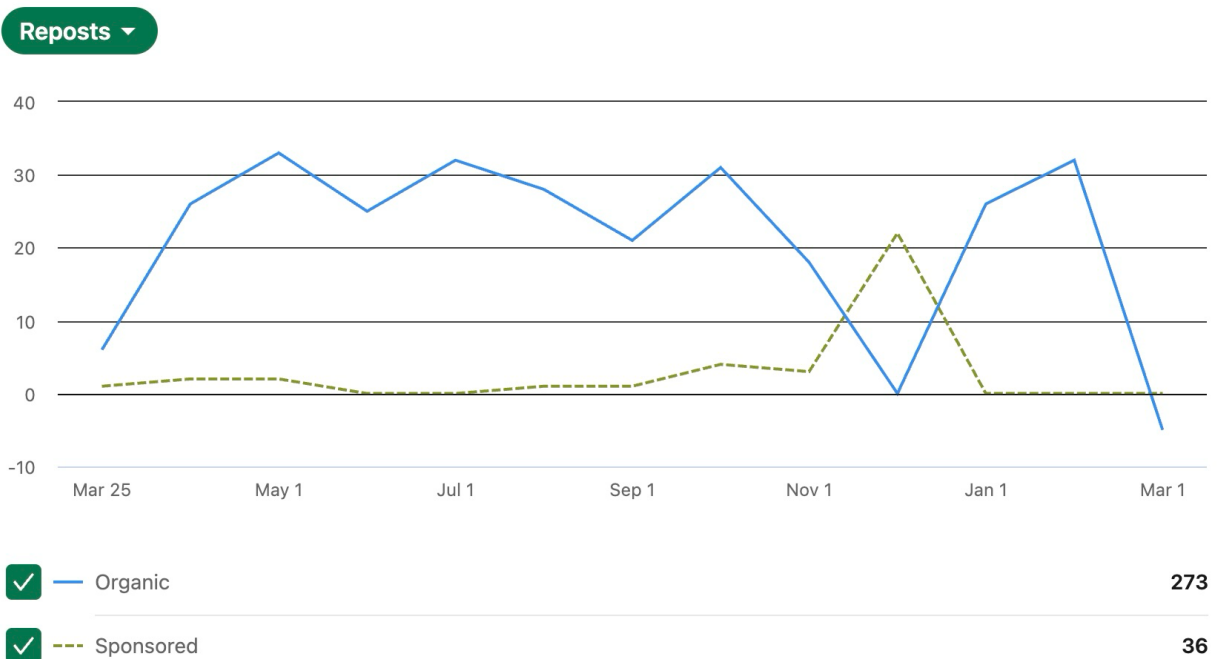
For each flagship initiative, we publish a “hero LinkedIn post” designed to drive engagement, which we then reinforce through coordinated amplification. Staff members and ecosystem partners are encouraged to comment, repost, and engage with the content, significantly boosting algorithmic performance, discoverability, and follower growth. This approach aligns with current digital behaviour trends: audiences place far greater trust in peer endorsements and authentic voices than in paid advertising—especially in the era of generative AI.

The two graphs below illustrate the effectiveness of this method, showing our LinkedIn performance over the past 365 days.

## Follower metrics



## Metrics

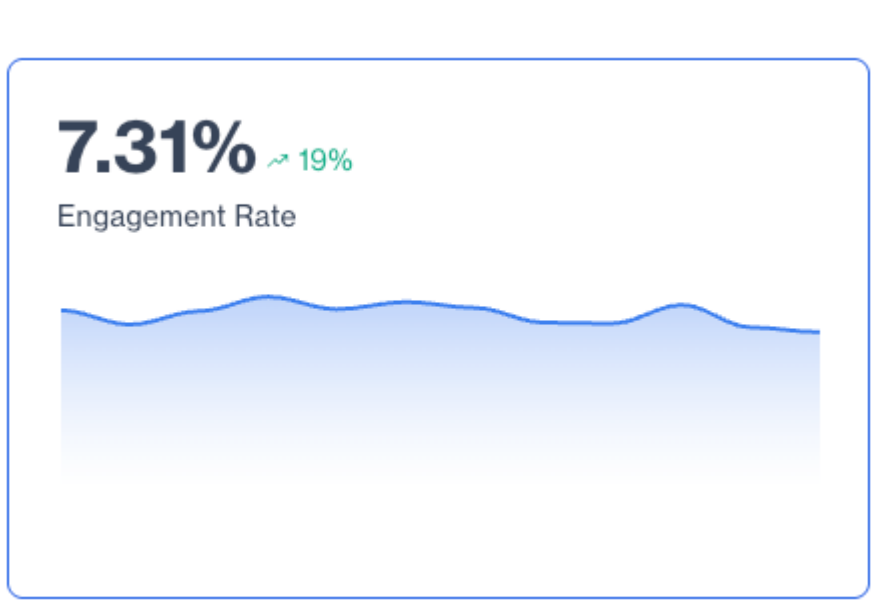


28DIGITAL's performance is underpinned by consistent, measurable growth and steadily increasing engagement quality. Our LinkedIn audience grew from 28,651 followers in 2022—an 86% increase compared with 2019—to 46,367 in 2025, representing a further 62% uplift. The gradual moderation in growth reflects natural audience saturation as the channel matures, rather than any decline in effectiveness.

More importantly, audience interaction has strengthened significantly. Our LinkedIn engagement rate rose from 4.17% in 2022—already well above the typical 2.5–3.0% industry average—to 7.31% in 2025, outperforming the 3.0–3.6% benchmark and marking a 19% year-on-year increase from 2024 alone. These results demonstrate not only sustained audience expansion but also a marked rise in engagement intensity,

validating our strong outperformance against industry norms and reinforcing the effectiveness of our dissemination strategy.

The graph below illustrates the robustness of our engagement rate over the past 12 months.



The organisation leverages a strong employee-advocacy model, empowering staff across the different CLCs to collaborate with local partners on content that highlights regional impact and reinforces the visibility of each CLC. This decentralised approach ensures that storytelling remains authentic, locally grounded, and aligned with the organisation’s broader communication objectives.

In addition, key elements of our D2C strategy—such as the Drop-in Series and Coffee Cart activations—are, in several cases, deployed directly at CLC locations. These on-site activities not only strengthen local engagement but also create high-quality content opportunities that further amplify the CLCs’ presence across our communication channels.

### 3. Quality and efficiency of implementation

#### 3.1 Work plan and resources

The design of our core portfolio is strategically centred on enabling the deep tech entrepreneurial journey, from the initial spark of an idea to the successful launch and scale-up of a startup. The portfolio of activities selected for implementation in 2026–2027 addresses critical challenges and emerging opportunities at the intersection of advanced technology, market needs, and the strategic interests of our partner community.

This proposal’s Work Package structure is fully aligned with EIT’s guidance and reflects a coherent, impact-driven approach across education, innovation, and ecosystem development:

- **WP1 Entrepreneurial Education and Skills:** This includes EIT Labelled education activities and those with a clear roadmap toward Label achievement. These initiatives aim to equip future entrepreneurs with the skills and mindset needed to thrive in the digital economy.
- **WP2 Business Creation:** Encompassing our Innovation and Investments portfolio, this WP supports entrepreneurs in transforming ideas into viable businesses. It contributes directly to the EU Startup and Scaleup Strategy by fostering innovation-driven growth and accelerating market entry.
- **WP3 Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS):** This WP features tailored RIS editions of flagship programmes, co-developed with local stakeholders. It ensures regional relevance and inclusivity while remaining aligned with EIT Digital’s overarching strategic objectives.

- **WP4 Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance; Dissemination and Outreach:** Activities under this WP are designed to strengthen pan-European collaboration by connecting regional partners across borders and integrating local innovation hubs into the wider EIT Digital ecosystem.

EIT Digital IVZW, together with EIT Digital Spain, EIT Digital Hungary and EIT Digital Finland, will play an active role in the implementation of all WPs.

The seamless integration of education, research, and business lies at the heart of the EIT model, and is a defining feature of EIT Digital’s mission. This proposal contributes to the advancement of Knowledge Triangle Integration through a set of interconnected and mutually reinforcing mechanisms that link education, research, and business:

- **Education–Research Integration**

This is achieved through EIT Labelled Master Programmes and the Industrial Doctoral School, which embed entrepreneurial capacity within Europe’s academic and research infrastructure. These programmes cultivate a new generation of innovators by combining academic excellence with hands-on experience in innovation ecosystems.

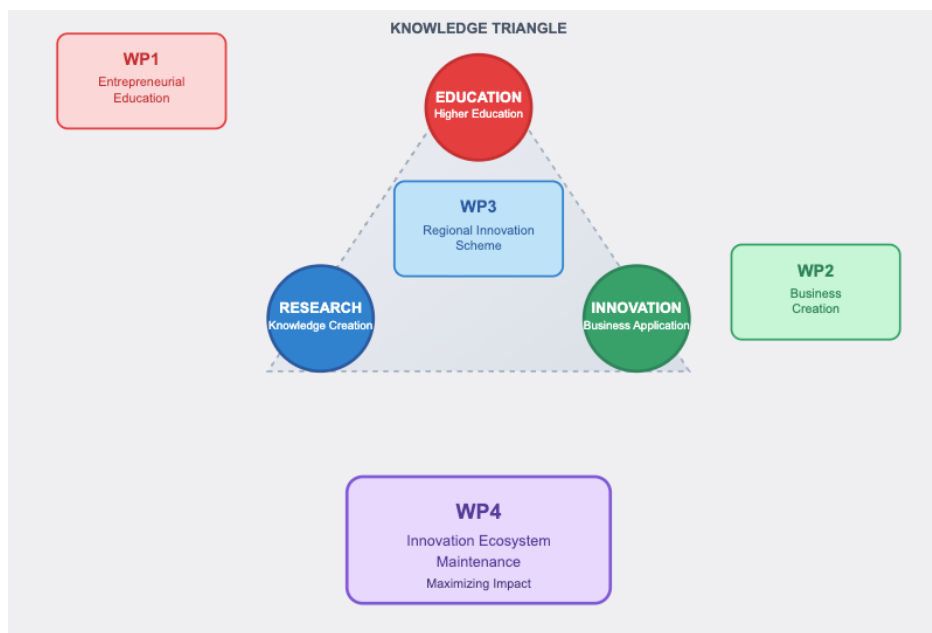
- **Research–Business Integration**

Programmes such as SPIN Explore and SPIN Rise connect TTO professionals with structured venture-building frameworks, while the Mini-MBA “Digital Valorisation Leaders” programme professionalizes knowledge transfer capabilities across institutions. This approach transforms TTOs from passive intellectual property managers into proactive venture builders and key drivers of regional innovation ecosystems.

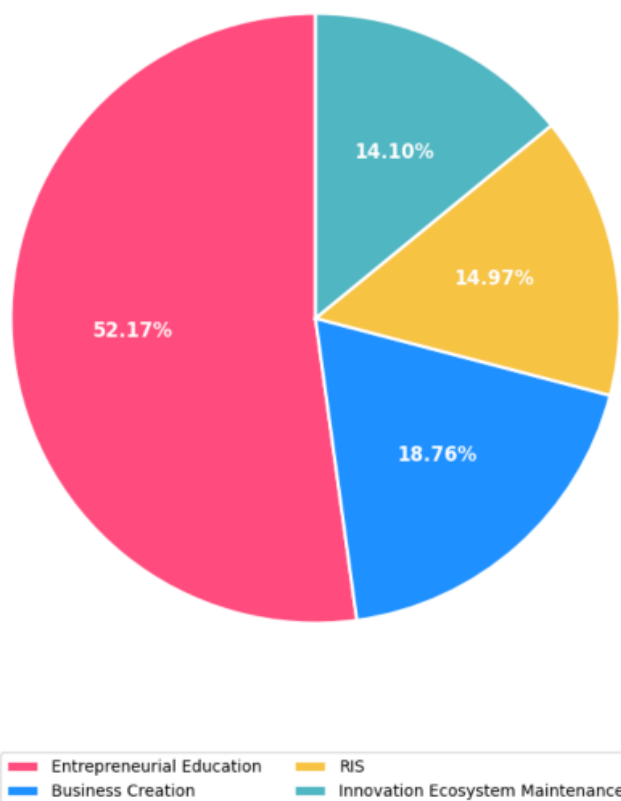
- **Business–Education Integration**

This is realised through EIT Digital’s comprehensive Business Creation portfolio, which supports entrepreneurs from the idea stage through pre-seed and scale-up phases. Programmes such as the Venture Incubation Programme and Co-creation Accelerator provide structured support for translating academic excellence into commercially viable ventures.

Together, these mechanisms form a robust and dynamic framework for Knowledge Triangle Integration, positioning EIT Digital as a catalyst for deep tech innovation, talent development, and regional competitiveness across Europe.



### Budget distribution per WP



Work package No	Work Package Title	Budget	Percentage
WP1	Entrepreneurial Education	12 497 960	52,17%
WP2	Business Creation	4 493 068	18,76%
WP3	RIS	3 586 825	14,97%
WP4	Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance	3 378 875	14,10%
Total		<b>23 956 728 €</b>	100%

**Table 3.1.1a Overview of KIC calls**

WP	Task no.	Type of activity	Type of call	Estimated number of projects	Estimated budget (EUR)
WP1	1.1	Master DSC+FT+FTB execution	Direct awards	3	480 000
WP1	1.2	Master C-Suite Business Excellence	Direct awards	1	600 000
WP1	1.3	Innovation Study Tours	Open calls	2	100 000
WP1	1.4	Talent import	Restricted call	6	1 300 000
WP1	1.5	Summer Schools	Open calls	4	340 000

WP1	1.6	Life-Long Learning Scholarships	Restricted call	4	500 000
WP1	1.7	IDSL	Direct awards	10	400 000
WP1	1.8	MSO	Direct awards	1	700 000
WP1	1.9	Global Tech Leadership	Restricted call	1	200 000
WP1	1.10	AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer	Restricted call	1	450 000
WP1	1.11	Master DSC + Master FT+FTB fee waivers and scholarships	Open calls	3	1 720 000
WP1	1.16	SPIN RISE (4 + 4 programs)	Open calls	8	550 000
WP1	1.17	SPIN x TTO (Mini-MBA Knowledge Valorisation Leaders)	Restricted calls (only Business Schools)	2	280 000
WP2	2.1	Venture Incubation Programme Non-RIS	Open calls	3 incubator partners, 35 entrepreneurial teams	1 200 000
WP2	2.2	Co-creation Accelerator Non-RIS	Open calls	9 startup-led co-creation teams	2 025 818
WP3	3.1	Summer School in RIS	Open calls	2	100 000
WP3	3.2	SPIN in RIS	Open calls	4	100 000
WP3	3.4	Venture Incubation Programme – RIS	Open calls	3 incubator partners, 22 entrepreneurial teams	560 000
WP3	3.5	Co-creation Accelerator RIS	Open calls	4 startup-led co-creation teams	1 250 000
WP3	3.6	RIS ecosystem engagement and development	Direct awards	4	60.000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>132</b>	<b>12 915 818</b>

**Table 3.1a: List of work packages**

Work package No	Work Package Title	Lead Participant No	Lead Participant Short Name	Person-Months	Start Month	End month
WP1	Entrepreneurial Education	1	EIT Digital IVZW	244	January 2026	December 2027
WP2	Business Creation	1	EIT Digital IVZW	81	January 2026	December 2027
WP3	RIS	1	EIT Digital IVZW	88	January 2026	December 2027
WP4	Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance	1	EIT Digital IVZW	229	January 2026	December 2027

**Table 3.1b: Work package description**

<b>Work package number</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Work package title</b>	<b>ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION AND SKILLS</b>

## **Objectives**

In 2026–2027, the EIT Digital’s Entrepreneurial Education portfolio will continue to advance its mission of cultivating T-shaped entrepreneurial digital talent across Europe. Building on the momentum of the 2025 Business Plan, the focus will be on consolidating and scaling impactful programmes, while expanding their reach and introducing innovative formats that respond to the evolving skills landscape both in Europe and globally.

Key objectives include strengthening strategic degree programmes in domains like Data Science and Cloud, and Financial Technology, while also attracting international talent by broadening the global scope of education through dual-location master's programmes that connect European institutions with partners in America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. The portfolio will also introduce a new C-Suite Master in Business Excellence to support executive leadership in digital transformation, and enhance short-term learning through Summer Schools and flexible Life-Long Learning formats with scholarships.

The design and continuous improvement of WP1 education activities are grounded in direct and sustained engagement with industry and innovation-ecosystem partners across the EIT Digital network. Corporate partners, startups, and research organisations actively contribute to curriculum development and participate in regular programme reviews, ensuring that learning outcomes remain aligned with the rapidly evolving labour-market needs of the deep-tech sector.

In addition to these structured review processes, partners are invited to co-design key programme milestones—such as kick-off events, industry challenges, and graduation activities. These touchpoints provide systematic opportunities for interaction with students, while also offering partners a channel to share real-time insights on emerging job profiles, skill requirements, and technological trends.

This recurring and collaborative engagement ensures that the Master School programmes and training activities remain closely attuned to both current and future demand, strengthening their relevance, responsiveness, and impact within the digital innovation ecosystem.

EIT Digital will also deepen its integration of academia and industry through its Industrial Doctoral School and expand tailored entrepreneurial training via SpeedMaster, MentorMe, and MentorMe Advanced, each designed to support different stages of the entrepreneurial journey. The SPIN programme will be further developed to empower early-stage talent and support Technology Transfer Offices in unlocking the commercial potential of deep tech innovations.

To reinforce Europe’s digital competitiveness, EIT Digital will launch the Mini-MBA “Digital Valorisation Leaders” for experienced innovation professionals and pilot the Talent Cofoundry initiative to help form strong founding teams for startups emerging from academic research. The (d)Academy will continue to scale digital upskilling and reskilling efforts.

EIT Digital is fully committed to contributing to, and integrating its education activities within, the [EIT Campus](#) framework. Through this integration, EIT Digital will actively support the objectives of the EIT Campus by expanding the range of high-quality digital and deep-tech courses available on the platform, fostering cross-KIC learning pathways, and enabling more flexible access for learners. These efforts are expected to increase both the number and diversity of individuals engaging with EIT education programmes, strengthening the overall impact of EIT Campus as a central gateway for high-quality lifelong learning in Europe.

## **Gender Dimension**

EIT Digital’s approach to gender diversity is fully aligned with the EIT Gender Equality Action Plan 2025–2027, which promotes not only balanced participation but also the systematic integration of the gender dimension across all education activities. This commitment goes beyond numerical targets to ensure that gender perspectives meaningfully inform the design, delivery, and impact of EIT Digital’s education programmes.

EIT Digital integrates the gender dimension directly into education content and programme development. Activities supported under WP1 encourage partners to embed gender perspectives when designing curricula, case studies, and innovation challenges—particularly in fields such as AI, digital finance, cybersecurity, and digital entrepreneurship, where issues such as algorithmic bias, inclusive design, and differential societal impacts are increasingly relevant. Partners are therefore encouraged to use examples, datasets, and innovation use cases that reflect gender-aware design principles and promote inclusive technology development.

Gender mainstreaming is further operationalised through the Calls for Proposals that support education activities. Call documentation will explicitly invite applicants to integrate gender considerations into the design, implementation, and expected outcomes of their proposals. From 2026 onward, the adoption of the standard KIC call template will ensure that gender mainstreaming and the integration of gender perspectives

into education content are systematically embedded within the evaluation criteria—specifically under the “Excellence” criterion. This will guarantee that proposals address inclusiveness, diversity, and gender-responsive approaches wherever relevant.

To ensure continuous improvement and full coherence with the EIT Gender Equality Action Plan 2025–2027, EIT Digital monitors the implementation of gender mainstreaming across all activities and publishes an Annual Gender Mainstreaming Report. This report tracks progress on gender participation, assesses the integration of gender perspectives into education content, and evaluates the effectiveness of the measures implemented across programmes and Calls. It enables evidence-based adjustments and reinforces accountability throughout the EIT Digital ecosystem, supporting sustained progress toward gender equality and inclusive innovation.

EIT Digital IVZW, along with EIT Digital Spain, EIT Digital Hungary, as well as the EIT Digital Education Foundation, will actively contribute to the implementation of WP1. A total of 244 person-months are proposed for allocation across the participating entities, as outlined in Table 3.1.f. The EIT Digital Education Foundation, which oversees tuition fees and scholarship cohorts, does not incur personnel costs.

The Entrepreneurial Education WP will contribute to the achievement of EIT KPIs as follows:

EITHE05.1 Target value = 47

EITHE07.1 Target Value = 1380

EITHE08.1 Target value = 3820

EITHE08.2 Target Value = 943

Contribution to non-mandatory KPIs but relevant to KIC’s Strategic Agenda in 2026-2027:

EITHE03.1 Target value: 196 (driven by SpeedMaster, MentorMe and MentorMe Advanced) and EITHE03.2 Target value: 25 (driven by SpeedMaster).

**For details regarding the unique contribution of each task to the Expected Outcomes and Expected Impact, as well as the associated budget, please refer to Table 2.1: *Portfolio Impact Aligned with the EIT Impact Framework*.**

## **Description of work**

The Work package is structured around nineteen tasks:

### **T1.1: EIT Labelled Master Programmes execution (Data Science and Cloud, Financial Technology)**

We will sustain two strategic EIT Labelled Master programmes: Data Science and Cloud (DSC) and Financial Technology (FT+FTB). In addition to delivering the programmes in continuation with past activities, we will update content of DSC including the green digital skills and responsible AI principles minor developed in the 2025 BP. Both programmes are EIT Labelled. The two masters will also be uploaded to the EIT Campus to ensure visibility and alignment with EIT standards.

### **T1.2: Launch of C-Suite Master in Business Excellence**

In 2026 we will launch the C-Suite Master in Business Excellence, an advanced executive-level programme targeting CEOs, CTOs, CIOs, and other senior leaders driving digital transformation. The programme, designed in the 2025 BP, will be implemented and will start to accept the first students. Delivery will involve top-tier faculty from EIT Digital partners, high-profile industry speakers, and applied projects in collaboration with corporate sponsors. A dedicated scholarship scheme will ensure participation from diverse geographies, sectors, and backgrounds. The C-Suite Master will be designed from inception with a plan to obtain the EIT Label within two years. It will also be uploaded to the EIT Campus to ensure visibility and alignment with EIT standards.

### **T1.3 Innovation Study Tours**

We will pilot a new Innovation Study Tour model, designed to expose students to world-leading innovation ecosystems inside and outside Europe through short, intensive mobility experiences. The program will combine ecosystem visits, interactive workshops, and cultural immersion with project-based learning, enabling students to benchmark global best practices and reflect on their applicability in the European context. The study tours will be integrated into the EIT Campus to ensure compliance with EIT visibility and operational requirements, while providing students with ECTS-compatible learning outcomes and recognition.

### **T1.4: Talent Import**

We will pilot a new Talent Import model designed to attract high-potential students from outside Europe by offering a “1 year abroad + 1 year in the EU” academic pathway. The first year will take place at accredited

partner universities in regions such as America, Asia, Africa, or Oceania, while the second year will be hosted by universities in the EIT Digital network across Europe. The programme will align with the academic standards of existing EIT Digital Master School curricula, while incorporating regional case studies, local market immersion, and cross-cultural innovation modules. We are currently promoting our ongoing Master School topics internationally, with areas of interest including Business Excellence, Cybersecurity, and Robotics. Final thematic areas are still under consideration. This activity will follow the EIT Label framework.

#### **T1.5: Summer Schools**

We will organize two 2-week Summer School editions addressing EIT Digital's five focus areas, with thematic emphasis on frontier topics such as Quantum Computing, the Metaverse, Green Digital, and AI for industry. Each Summer School combines lectures, hands-on workshops, and team-based innovation challenges proposed by industry partners. These activities foster entrepreneurial mindsets, international collaboration, and applied problem-solving skills. Summer Schools are EIT Labelled short-term programmes. The summer schools will give preference to applications from RIS countries, and we aim to ensure that at least one of the two will be organized in a RIS country. These short programs will also be uploaded to the EIT Campus to ensure visibility and alignment with EIT standards.

#### **T1.6: Life-Long Learning scholarships**

To strengthen our impact in the field of adult education and reskilling, we will launch a Life-Long Learning Scholarship Initiative aimed at increasing participation in flexible, high-quality digital upskilling opportunities. The initiative will offer targeted financial support and learning opportunities to adult learners, professionals, and career changers, removing financial barriers and providing access to EIT Digital's curated catalogue of online and hybrid courses. We will adopt a modular, learner-centric approach, allowing participants to tailor their learning journeys around personal and professional goals. The initiative will leverage existing platforms and assets—such as our AI-driven learning platform, the courses and certification path we have defined, and skills-matching tools—to deliver a scalable, cost-effective, and impact-driven life-long learning offering. Where needed, we will collaborate with employers, public authorities, and regional stakeholders to co-deliver contextualised content and promote on-the-job learning integration. All courses used as training materials for this initiative will be published to the EIT Campus.

#### **T1.7: Industrial Doctoral School (IDSL)**

We will continue supporting ongoing cohorts in the Industrial Doctoral School, maintaining close supervision of doctoral research projects co-designed with industry partners. This programme connects academia and industry to address high-impact research challenges, ensuring doctoral candidates develop the skills to commercialise research outcomes and drive market adoption. This activity is fully EIT Labelled and will be published on EIT Campus.

#### **T1.8: MSO Education Support Services**

Centralised support functions to ensure operational excellence across all education activities, covering programme management systems, quality assurance, partner engagement, financial monitoring, and reporting. This activity guarantees compliance with EIT operational and audit requirements while enabling economies of scale in programme delivery.

#### **T1.9 Global Tech Leadership**

To address the growing interdependence between technological innovation and global governance, we will pilot the Global Tech Leadership Program, a pioneering educational initiative designed to equip emerging leaders with the strategic, diplomatic, and ethical competencies needed to operate at the intersection of deep tech and international policy. Developed in collaboration with EIT Hub Silicon Valley, the program will offer a series of online and hybrid sessions led by globally recognised experts in deep tech, policy, and innovation ecosystems. Structured around five core modules—ranging from deep tech fundamentals to global tech governance and cross-border collaboration—the program targets junior diplomats, ecosystem leaders, civil society actors, and C-level executives with an interest in global affairs and tech-driven transformation. Participants will benefit from an interdisciplinary environment that promotes systems thinking, negotiation skills, and a deeper understanding of how emerging technologies influence international relations, regulations, and societal impact. This activity aligns with the EIT Label's ambition to foster innovation-oriented learning experiences. This activity will also be uploaded to the EIT Campus to ensure visibility and alignment with EIT standards.

#### **T1.10: AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer Track**

To equip Europe's senior executives with the strategic, technical, and leadership capabilities required in the age of artificial intelligence, EIT Digital will launch a flagship Executive Education Program for Chief AI Officers (CAIOs). This program responds to the growing demand for AI-focused leadership across sectors and will position EIT Digital at the forefront of AI-enabled business transformation in Europe. In collaboration

with top-tier academic and industry experts, this in-person and online program provides a comprehensive learning journey that blends theory, practice, and strategic foresight. Participants will develop AI roadmaps for their organisations, explore responsible innovation, and strengthen their ability to lead cross-functional AI teams while navigating evolving global AI regulations. This activity addresses the critical gap in executive-level education on artificial intelligence and digital transformation. It will be featured as part of the EIT Campus.

**T1.11: Master DSC and Master FT+FTB fee waivers and scholarships**

In 2026 and 2027, the fee waivers and scholarships initiative will keep supporting the enrolled talent in EIT Digital Master Schools programme financed by EIT and help broaden the EIT Master School impact by supporting a new cohort of Master's students aimed at attracting top European talent and promoting equitable access to advanced digital education. These fee waivers and scholarships are strategically designed to lower financial barriers and foster inclusion, ensuring that individuals from diverse socio-economic backgrounds can contribute to and benefit from Europe's digital transformation.

**T1.12: EIT Labelled SpeedMaster Programme**

We will continue to deliver the 12-week long SpeedMaster training in 2026 and 2027, 3 batches a year. As a flagship programme of the Innovation pillar, SpeedMaster trains over 100 individuals and 50 startups a year, contributing to entrepreneurial education, and focusing on pre-seed and early-stage startup teams. In 2026 and 2027, we will also focus on fine-tuning the curriculum based on student feedback, and also to add specialized add-on modules like "founder's mental health", "female entrepreneurship" or "AI-based rapid prototyping". In 2026, we will continue the engagement of Master School student with SpeedMaster Next Gen, a variation of the programme tailored for EIT Digital Master School Students who would like to launch their own startup. This programme is EIT Labelled and featured on the EIT Campus.

**T1.13: MentorMe Programme**

In 2026 and 2027, we plan to launch the MentorMe programme four times per year, with an average intake of eight preseed or earlystage startups per edition. This highly customised programme provides entrepreneurs with hands-on support through a 4+2month structure that includes monthly mentoring sessions across four core topics—productmarket fit, team dynamics, business development, and fundraising. Participants also benefit from targeted micromasterclasses focused on key earlystage challenges, such as CAC calculation, PPC strategies, hiring, and other specialised subjects. In addition, EIT Digital intends to deliver dedicated Green Transition / Climate Tech editions of the MentorMe programme.

The MentorMe programme places a strong emphasis on engaging entrepreneurs from RIS countries (see WP3) and founders from underrepresented groups. A strategic objective over the next two years is to obtain the EIT Label for the MentorMe programme and to ensure its publication on the EIT Campus within this timeframe.

**T1.14: MentorMe 'Advanced' Programme**

A new edition of the MentorMe programme called MentorMe Advanced will be launched in 2026. Focusing on Seed-stage or pre-Series-A startups, this workshop-oriented programme will provide hands-on support, goal-oriented mentoring and peer learning opportunities for 4+2 months to prepare startups to become scaleups. Graduates of the program are set on a path to be ready for a Series-A round faster and with less friction along the way. The programme will be integrated into the EIT Campus for dissemination.

**T1.15: SPIN Explore**

SPIN Explore is designed to engage university students with an entrepreneurial mindset and equip them with the tools, exposure, and support necessary to begin their innovation journey. The programme offers a structured pathway that includes team formation, ideation training, peer learning, and access to Europe's top deep tech entrepreneurs and investors. Participants gain tailored insights through expert talks and mentoring, encouraging them to pursue entrepreneurship as a viable career path. Delivered in collaboration with local university ecosystems, SPIN Explore acts as a pan-European springboard for identifying high-potential talent and early-stage startup teams. The programme will be integrated into the EIT Campus for dissemination.

**T1.16: SPIN Rise**

SPIN Rise is a pre-incubation programme supporting early-stage student-led ventures that have demonstrated traction through SPIN Explore or similar initiatives. Over a 3-month intensive cycle, teams receive mentorship, technical and business development coaching, ecosystem access, and funding opportunities. By providing the final push toward market readiness, SPIN Rise enables teams to develop their MVPs, validate product-market fit, and prepare for entry into formal incubators or acceleration tracks—such as EIT Digital's Stand-up and Venture Programmes. Both SPIN EXPLORE and RISE are EIT Labelled programmes and will be published on the EIT Campus.

**T1.17: Launch of the Mini-MBA Programme: SPIN – Digital Valorisation Leaders**

In 2026, EIT Digital will launch the Mini-MBA " Digital Valorisation Leaders", a flagship executive programme designed to equip experienced innovation professionals with the strategic skills and practical tools

required to lead the valorisation of AI, Data, Software, and Robotics research. This Mini-MBA responds to an acute need for domain-specific leadership in digital valorisation, where traditional technology transfer models fail to match the speed, complexity, and scalability of innovations. The Master for Valorisation Leaders will be designed from inception with a plan to obtain the EIT Label. It will also be uploaded to the EIT Campus to ensure visibility and alignment with EIT standards.

**T1.18: Pilot on Talent Cofoundry: From Research Talent to Market-Ready Tech Ventures**

Talent Cofoundry’s pilot provides a structured, end-to-end programme to fill this gap, moving teams toward co-founder discovery. The programme will begin with the selection of a group of researchers from SPIN Rise presenting strong, innovative projects, alongside entrepreneurial business students from the partner Business School. Before the main event, all participants will take part in a preparatory activity designed to support effective team formation. As part of this phase, both researchers and business students will complete a “Co-founder DNA” survey, which assesses personality, skillset, leadership style, and entrepreneurial orientation, while also considering factors such as technology verticals, TRL, and the initial ideas proposed by researchers. This pre-matching process, which can also be conducted offline, will provide valuable insights into complementarities and alignment between participants, and will serve as the basis for the formation of balanced teams. Following this preparatory stage, the participants will join a three-day intensive bootcamp, organised by a leading Business School. The bootcamp is designed to give researchers the chance to validate their ideas and acquire the entrepreneurial tools to transform them into viable ventures. Over the course of the programme, teams will strengthen their collaboration through workshops and mentoring, gaining the ability to manage diversity of skills and backgrounds, build trust, and establish effective working frameworks. At the same time, they will develop core business skills while building a shared team vision. Each training module is combined with hands-on teamwork, enabling participants to apply concepts immediately to their projects and benefit from tailored feedback from experts.

By the end of the bootcamp, participants will have refined their business ideas, consolidated their teams, and built a strong foundation for venture creation. In addition, they will gain fast-track access to the Venture Incubation Programme and MentorMe, where they will receive dedicated support to launch and incorporate their startups. The pilot follows the EIT Label model and will be integrated into the EIT Campus.

**T1.19: (d)Academy**

EIT Digital will continue the (d)Academy as a flagship initiative for Europe’s digital upskilling and reskilling needs. The platform integrates skills intelligence—predicting future labour market needs—with tailored learning pathways in collaboration with universities, corporates, and public institutions. In 2026–2027, we will enhance the platform’s sector-specific offerings (e.g., AI, cybersecurity, digital sustainability) and expand partnerships with companies to embed the (d)Academy in workforce development programmes. The platform will be integrated into the EIT Campus for dissemination.

**Table 3.1b: Work package description**

<b>Work package number</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Work package title</b>	<b>BUSINESS CREATION</b>

**Objectives**

In 2026–2027, EIT Digital’s Business Creation portfolio will continue to drive its mission of empowering European entrepreneurial talent by refining existing programmes and launching new initiatives that respond to the rapidly evolving innovation landscape. The focus will be on supporting deep tech ventures from their earliest stages through to scale-up, ensuring a robust pipeline of startups with the potential to become industry leaders.

EIT Digital will strengthen its support for pre-seed startups through initiatives such as the Venture Incubation Programme and the Co-creation Accelerator, fostering the creation and early development of high-potential ventures. Recognizing the critical importance of the idea stage, the organisation will also help entrepreneurs transform their concepts into viable businesses, offering guidance and resources to navigate the risks and challenges of early innovation.

To address the persistent challenge of scaling in Europe, EIT Digital will enhance its support mechanisms for growth-stage startups, providing tailored training, coaching, and funding to accelerate their journey to scale.

This strategy will be complemented by a strong focus on engaging EIT Digital Master School students and graduates, encouraging them to launch their own startups and leveraging EIT Digital's educational strengths. Global partnerships will be pursued to extend the reach and impact of these programmes, with EIT Digital actively seeking collaboration through industry alliances and consortia. Continuous programme enhancement will be driven by market feedback, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to the dynamic startup ecosystem.

Fundraising efforts will continue, with the goal of establishing commercially viable **EIT Digital-led venture capital funds** to secure long-term sustainability. Internally, the organisation will scale up its team and capabilities, bringing more expertise in-house, streamlining processes, and increasing capacity to deliver focused, high-impact support to Europe's next generation of digital innovators.

Our model is based on holding a minority stake in the fund management company, which gives EIT Digital access to a share of the management fees generated by the venture capital funds. Venture capital funds typically charge an annual management fee of around 2% of assets under management throughout the life of the fund. This creates a recurring and relatively predictable revenue stream that can support long-term financial sustainability.

In addition, participation in a venture capital fund structure may also provide access to the **carry vehicle**. Carried interest, or "carry," is the share of profits that the fund manager receives once the fund has returned the invested capital to investors and achieved the agreed performance threshold. This means that, beyond the annual management fees, EIT Digital could also benefit from upside participation if the fund performs well, creating a second and more performance-driven source of returns.

### **Gender Dimension**

EIT Digital's Business Creation activities in 2026–2027 will integrate the gender dimension as a core component of venture support, in line with the EIT Gender Equality Action Plan 2025–2027. This approach goes beyond balanced participation and seeks to address the structural barriers that continue to limit women's participation in entrepreneurship, particularly in deep tech and digital innovation. Through its incubation, acceleration, and scale-up support programmes, EIT Digital will aim to create more inclusive pathways for women entrepreneurs and mixed-gender founding teams, while ensuring that the ventures supported are better equipped to develop products and services that reflect the needs of diverse user groups.

In the European startup ecosystem, women remain underrepresented among founders, especially in high-growth digital and deep tech sectors, and continue to face disproportionate barriers in access to finance, networks, visibility, and investment readiness. EIT Digital considers this gap not only a matter of fairness, but also a lost innovation and market opportunity for Europe. Business Creation activities will therefore actively promote broader participation by women entrepreneurs across the full venture pipeline, from idea validation and company creation to growth and international scaling. This will include targeted outreach, inclusive selection and scouting practices, and the promotion of role models and success stories that can inspire more women to engage in entrepreneurial careers.

Beyond participation, EIT Digital will integrate the gender dimension into the design and delivery of its Business Creation programmes. Startups and scaleups supported through EIT Digital initiatives will be encouraged, where relevant, to consider how gender perspectives may affect problem definition, customer discovery, product design, user testing, data collection, algorithmic performance, commercialisation strategies, and market uptake. This is particularly important in areas such as AI, digital health, fintech, smart cities, climate tech, and cybersecurity, where products and services may otherwise unintentionally embed bias or fail to address the needs of all users. Mentoring, training, and investment-readiness support will therefore encourage founders to adopt inclusive innovation approaches and gender-aware business development practices where relevant to their technology and market.

Gender mainstreaming will also be operationalised through the Calls for Proposals and programme implementation processes supporting Business Creation activities. Call documentation and evaluation processes will explicitly encourage applicants and delivery partners to demonstrate how inclusiveness, diversity, and gender considerations are reflected in programme design, team composition, outreach strategy, and venture support methodology. As of 2026, the use of the standard KIC call template will further support the integration of gender mainstreaming into the "Excellence" criterion, helping ensure that Business Creation activities address gender-aware approaches where relevant and contribute to a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem.

To ensure measurable progress, EIT Digital will apply a step-by-step approach to improving gender equality across its Business Creation portfolio. This will include defining baseline indicators, monitoring participation and outcomes for female founders and mixed-gender teams, reviewing the gender balance of mentors, experts, speakers, and evaluators, and assessing the extent to which supported ventures integrate gender-aware innovation principles into their business models and products. Findings will contribute to EIT Digital's Annual Gender Mainstreaming Report, which tracks progress, identifies gaps, and supports evidence-based improvements across the organisation's entrepreneurship and innovation activities.

EIT Digital IVZW, together with EIT Digital Spain, EIT Digital Hungary and EIT Digital Finland, will play an active role in the implementation of WP2. A total of 81 person-months are proposed for allocation across the participating entities, as outlined in Table 3.1.f.

The WP will contribute to the achievement of EIT KPIs as follows:

EITHE06.1 Target value: €20 M

Contribution to non-mandatory KPIs but relevant to KIC's Strategic Agenda in 2026-2027:

EITHE03.1 Target value: 33

**For details regarding the unique contribution of each task to the Expected Outcomes and Expected Impact, as well as the associated budget, please refer to Table 2.1: *Portfolio Impact Aligned with the EIT Impact Framework*.**

## **Description of work**

### **T2.1: Venture Incubation Programme**

The Venture Incubation Programme is a flagship activity that EIT Digital has delivered for the past eight years, supporting approximately 300 startups since 2017. Through a distributed support model implemented in collaboration with multiple incubation partners, the programme has significantly contributed to Europe's entrepreneurial landscape and talent development.

In 2026 and 2027, EIT Digital will continue running the programme with three selected incubation partners, each supporting up to eight startups within their respective geographical regions. This funnelbased approach provides participating teams with structured mentoring and expert coaching, exposure to investors and potential partners through panEuropean Demo Days, as well as followup support to guide them toward seed investment readiness.

In addition, EIT Digital intends to deliver dedicated Green Transition / Climate Tech editions of the Venture Incubation Programme.

The Venture Incubation Programme also places a special emphasis on engaging entrepreneurs from RIS countries (see WP3) and founders from underrepresented groups. Ideally, these groups will represent at least onethird of all available programme slots.

### **T2.2: Co-creation Accelerator**

The Co-creation Accelerator is EIT Digital's next-generation co-creation programme, focusing on entrepreneurs who are looking to validate their digital products and achieve early traction at corporates and/or SMEs as pilot customers or partners. Entrepreneurs will receive financial support, mentoring, education and coaching, de-risking the deployment for the corporate and/or SME partners. Corporates and/or SME will receive quality assurance assistance, making sure that the project succeeds in a framework not dissimilar to venture clienting. Over the two-year period, a continuous open call—set to launch in April 2026—will be structured around three cut-off dates (June 2026, December 2026, and May 2027), through which minimum 13 startup-led co-creation teams will be selected and supported. An ideal applicant is (1) an early-stage entrepreneur who has already established its problem-solution fit, and now looking for early traction for the product-market fit and (2) a corporate and/or an SME (or a cluster of SMEs teaming up in the pre-competitive space for a joint effort). Startups accepted into the program will receive training relevant to their stage and also mentoring custom to their stage, vertical and solution.

In addition, EIT Digital intends to deliver dedicated Green Transition / Climate Tech editions of the Co-Creation Accelerator Programme.

The programme has a special focus on RIS countries (please refer to WP3) and founders from underrepresented groups, with a special focus on female founders (target: minimum 35% of selected entrepreneurs are female).

**Table 3.1b: Work package description**

<b>Work package number</b>	3
<b>Work package title</b>	<b>REGIONAL INNOVATION SCHEME (RIS)</b>

### Objectives

The EIT RIS work package groups Entrepreneurial Education and Business Creation, as well as ecosystem activities executed by EIT Digital in RIS countries. The activities aim to increase impact and expanding outreach of EIT Digital in RIS countries by activating local initiatives in collaboration with partners, such as increasing the engagement of students and innovators from RIS countries.

This is done via several support and engagement activities such as a tailored RIS editions of the Summer School, SPIN, MentorMe, MentorMe Advanced, Venture Incubation Programme and Co-creation Accelerator, but also by diving deeper in the state of Innovation in local ecosystems with tailored analysis.

The RIS Ecosystem activities task aims at activating the ecosystem with events and specific outreach campaigns, as well as working with RIS Partners to map out local digital ecosystem as well as its entrepreneurial capacity to design targeted initiatives that can drive increased impact.

In delivering its EIT RIS activities, EIT Digital fully adheres to the EIT RIS Implementation Framework.

EIT Digital IVZW, together with EIT Digital Spain, EIT Digital Hungary and EIT Digital Finland, will play an active role in the implementation of WP3. A total of 88 person-months are proposed for allocation across the first three participating entities, as outlined in Table 3.1.f. Regarding the involvement of EIT Digital Finland, the staff engaged in RIS activities within the Region North are formally recruited by EIT Digital IVZW for operational purposes.

The WP will contribute to the achievement of the EIT Core KPIs as following:

- EITHE05.2 Target value: 10
- EITHE06.2 Target value: €9M
- EITHE07.2 Target value: 420
- EITHE08.2 Target value: 16
- EITHE22.1 Target value: 36

Contribution to non-mandatory KPIs but relevant to KIC's Strategic Agenda in 2026-2027:

EITHE03.2 Target value: 28

**For details regarding the unique contribution of each task to the Expected Outcomes and Expected Impact, as well as the associated budget, please refer to Table 2.1: *Portfolio Impact Aligned with the EIT Impact Framework*.**

### Description of work

The RIS WP includes a collection of activities already presented in the previous WPs but tailored to the needs of the EIT RIS organizations and involving local players, with the goal to achieve a higher impact in RIS countries. It also foresees activities to be performed in collaboration with local partners aimed at further analysing the different local ecosystem in relation to Digital and women entrepreneurship in selected RIS countries. Beyond this, EIT Digital continues to be active in expanding its RIS footprint through the establishment of financially self-sustainable Regional Offices; in particular, the Northern European team will explore the possibilities to establish a Regional Office in Lithuania which, together with the Tallinn and Riga offices will ensure a full coverage of the Baltics region; the Southern European team will explore possibilities of establishing Regional Offices in Southern Italy (Bari) and Malta; the Eastern European team will work on the establishment of a Regional Office in Košice (Slovakia). Target countries have been selected based on the current Partner critical mass and on the potential that these countries have in terms of community building around specific digital technologies. As an example, Eastern Europe in recent years has developed a strong community around Cybersecurity with leading Universities, RTOs, corporates, and innovative SMEs. The other topics where EIT Digital sees strong potential are AI and Quantum Tech.

#### T3.1: Summer School in RIS

It will be delivered in collaboration with local partners. This initiative exemplifies our commitment to Deep Tech Education in RIS countries, a focus that has grown significantly in recent years. For example, in 2025, five out of eight Summer Schools were delivered with local partners, including UPM, University of the

Aegean, University of Barcelona, University of Ljubljana, and University of Naples Federico II. Looking ahead, we aim to further expand our educational offerings in RIS countries. In 2026, two Summer Schools will be implemented, with the commitment to ensure that at least one of them will take place in a RIS country. This summer school is addressed to master’s students, young professionals, and researchers interested in Deep Tech and entrepreneurship, and will involve approximately 70–90 learners, corresponding to around half of the overall Summer School participation planned under WP1.

**T3.2: SPIN in RIS**

The SPIN: Rise programme will be expanded and strengthened with a stronger focus on RIS countries. Each year, four partners will be selected through an open call to deliver the programme, with a commitment to ensure that two of them (50%) are based in RIS countries. This will facilitate outreach and engagement across RIS countries, while also ensuring that local contexts and specific challenges related to bringing research to market are properly addressed. Through this approach, SPIN contributes to building capacity and strengthening innovation ecosystems in RIS countries.

**T3.3: MentorMe Programme and MentorMe Advanced in RIS**

MentorMe and MentorMe Advanced with RIS participants has the same 4+2 months structure as the default edition, but with an extra focus on the specialties of founders from RIS countries. Mentoring sessions and workshops will address the challenges of these regions, including skills and teams, available funding and scaling up, selling abroad and competing with more funded companies. Our hand-picked mentors each have entrepreneurial or investor expertise in these countries, so they will be able to provide hands-on help for the teams.

**T3.4: Venture Incubation Programme in RIS**

For the 2026-27, the RIS Venture Incubation Programme aims to support the creation of at least 8 new ventures, (from the total of 24), supporting at least 4 with FSTP (from the total of 12). Stimulating entrepreneurship and empowering entrepreneurial teams to create new deep tech companies in RIS countries. The programme will run a single very focused edition per year in collaboration with regional partners.

The incubation program will have a special focus on the challenges faced by RIS-based founders, leveraging the expertise of the RIS-focused mentors of the MentorMe program.

**T3.5: Co-creation Accelerator in RIS:** EIT Digital’s ambition for 2026–2027 is for 35% of successful Co-creation Accelerator proposals to develop or implement their solutions in RIS countries. This may include the corporate or SME side of the co-creation team from RIS countries (see T2.2 for more), and/or the activity teams with a strong presence in RIS regions. During the CoCA implementation, EIT Digital will heed special attention to the RIS-based teams, providing them hands-on support whenever they are need, beyond the default education and mentoring sessions of the program – leveraging the expertise of the RIS-focused mentors, educators and workshop hosts supporting (among others) the MentorMe program. The goal is to create strong venture teams in the RIS countries, further strengthening the deep-tech ecosystems.

**T3.6: RIS Ecosystem activities**

The activities planned under this task aim to activate and strengthen innovation ecosystems in RIS countries through a mix of outreach, research, and engagement efforts. This includes organizing events and targeted campaigns, collaborating with RIS Partners to map and analyse local digital and entrepreneurial landscapes, and using these insights to design tailored initiatives that can generate meaningful impact. Activities will include producing ecosystem catalogues and analytical reports, hosting conferences and dissemination events, and presenting findings to key stakeholders such as policymakers, investors, corporates, SMEs, and startups. These efforts aim to increase visibility of regional innovation potential and connect local actors with EIT Digital’s pan-European network.

A key focus will be on recruitment marketing campaigns aimed at generating leads and attracting more students from RIS countries. This will be supported by the development of new partnerships and collaborations with higher education institutions and organisations based in RIS regions. The Master School and Summer School will organise dedicated recruitment events and marketing campaigns with a specific focus on RIS countries, aiming to increase student participation in these programmes and raise awareness of other EIT Digital opportunities.

**Table 3.1b: Work package description**

<b>Work package number</b>	4
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<b>Work package title</b>	<b>INNOVATION ECOSYSTEM MAINTENANCE; DISSEMINATION AND OUTREACH; AND SYNERGIES AND COMPLEMENTARITIES WITH OTHER EU PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES.</b>
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## Objectives

The **Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance** portfolio is designed to strengthen regional innovation ecosystems by ensuring their continuity and expansion across the North, East, and South regions, including RIS countries. It aims to maintain and grow EIT Digital’s physical presence through Co-Location Centres and regional offices, positioning them as recognised and influential nodes within the broader pan-European network. A central objective of the portfolio is to broaden and diversify EIT Digital’s partner base. This involves consolidating and reinforcing regional partnerships and partner commitment, while driving growth through targeted outreach to corporates, SMEs, universities, and public authorities. The portfolio also fosters cross-border and pan-European collaboration by linking regional partners across borders and integrating local innovation hubs into the broader EIT Digital ecosystem. It mobilises diverse innovation actors to collaborate, enabling knowledge transfer, matchmaking, and joint innovation initiatives.

Complementing this is EIT Digital’s **Dissemination and Outreach** strategy, which positions the organisation as a key driver of Europe’s digital transformation. Through a “boots-on-the-ground” approach, direct-to-consumer (D2C) engagement, and strong stakeholder relations, EIT Digital builds trust and cultivates meaningful connections throughout the innovation landscape. This strategy is anchored in several priorities. First, EIT Digital is committed to engaging new audiences by launching dynamic D2C campaigns. These include interactive webinars, on-the-ground coffee cart activations, and targeted recruitment events designed to attract prospective students to the Master School. Equally important is the strengthening of existing relationships. To this end, EIT Digital is introducing dedicated key account managers and embracing a customer-service mindset to ensure partners and collaborators receive tailored support and attention. In its role as a thought leader, EIT Digital aims to elevate its visibility among innovation leaders, policymakers, and investors. Promoting the EIT Label is another strategic focus, with efforts underway to boost awareness and recognition of EIT Digital’s education programmes and their contribution to developing future digital talent. Finally, EIT Digital is aligning its content strategy with evolving thematic priorities and project outcomes, ensuring that its communications remain relevant, impactful, and reflective of its mission.

EIT Digital IVZW, together with EIT Digital Spain, EIT Digital Hungary and EIT Digital Finland, will play an active role in the implementation of WP4. A total of 229 person-months are proposed for allocation across the participating entities, as outlined in Table 3.1.f.

This WP will drive the following KPIs:

- EITHE10.1 Target value: 400 by the end of 2027
- EITHE10.2 Target value: 140 by the end of 2027
- EITHE16.1 Target value: 10
- EITHE17.1 Target value: 18.000 (800 learners driven by the EUAN AI training)

This WP will also facilitate the achievement of EIT Core KPIs in WP1, WP2 and WP3 (especially EITHE05, EITHE07, EITHE08).

Contribution to non-mandatory KPIs but relevant to KIC’s Strategic Agenda in 2026-2027:

- EITHE18.1 Target value: 40%

**For details regarding the unique contribution of each task to the Expected Outcomes and Expected Impact, as well as the associated budget, please refer to Table 2.1: *Portfolio Impact Aligned with the EIT Impact Framework*.**

## Description of work

### T4.1-3 Regional Ecosystems: North, East, South

The innovation ecosystem built through local presence is one of the uniqueness of the EIT KIC model and its maintenance is an essential element to drive impact both at EU and local level.

EIT Digital continues to strengthen its regional presence and ecosystem engagement through its regional offices and Co-Location Centres in North (Helsinki, Stockholm, Tallin, Edinburgh, Eindhoven), South (Madrid, Braga, Milan, Bolzano, Trento, Paris, Rennes, Sophie Antipolis, Athens, Thessaloniki) and East

Regions (Budapest, Berlin, Munich, Cluj-Napoca), as well as the EIT Digital Hub in Silicon Valley. These spaces will remain vibrant hubs for meetings, events and partner engagement, and will support stakeholder dialogue, community-building, and skills development tailored to local contexts.

The North is building and expanding the ecosystem presence around the region: Ireland (regional office as a target), Netherlands (stronger presence in Eindhoven), Norway (innovative region), Lithuania (similar to Norway, plus RIS country) and Latvia (aiming to set up local presence in Riga through a regional office).

The East region will also establish a Cybersecurity Hub within its Digital Technology focus, serving as a dedicated competence centre - anchored in an office if relevant, but not limited to a physical location - and a new position - Digital Tech Ecosystem Specialist - will be created to oversee and coordinate the hub's development and activities.

North, East and South regions will organise online and in-person events to foster collaboration, visibility, and partner engagement. Formats include networking sessions, policy dialogues, inspirational talks, thematic seminars, and innovation days. Regional events will be designed for strong local impact and pan-European connectivity and will be central to ecosystem development. These events aim to connect stakeholders, showcase EIT Digital's portfolio, and support deep-tech entrepreneurial education.

Matchmaking and consortium building are key pillars of the regional strategy. Regions will actively facilitate collaboration among universities, research centres, corporates, SMEs, startups, and public institutions. Targeted investor and corporate engagement activities will connect scaleups to capital and market opportunities.

#### **T4.4 Ecosystem Central Coordination**

The Ecosystem Central Coordination is responsible for facilitating collaboration across EIT Digital's regional nodes, driving and monitoring impact, and ensuring compliance with the obligations set out in the Memorandum of Cooperation and the Grant Agreement between EIT and EIT Digital. In addition to these strategic functions, it also focuses on continuously streamlining and professionalizing core processes to enhance operational effectiveness and support the overall performance of the innovation ecosystem. Through central coordination, it is possible to achieve a more effective identification of synergies and subsequently a central orchestration of their pursuit.

#### **T4.5: Communication and Dissemination**

EIT Digital's communication and dissemination efforts are strategically designed to elevate brand awareness and strengthen its positioning within Europe's digital innovation landscape. The organisation is investing in a comprehensive, data-driven approach that spans paid, earned, shared, and owned media. This multifaceted strategy ensures that outreach is both targeted and impactful, reaching audiences where they are and with content that resonates. Storytelling remains at the heart of EIT Digital's communication strategy. Flagship events, compelling case studies, and the Makers & Shapers video series serve as powerful vehicles to showcase the organisation's achievements and humanise its innovation narrative. To further expand its reach, EIT Digital is embracing new digital channels such as TikTok, Reddit, and Discord, while integrating AI-enhanced tools to optimise content creation and audience engagement. By 2027, EIT Digital aims to reach half million people annually, secure a position among the top three digital innovation organisations influencing EU policy debates, and attract a quarter of its new members from outside its existing network. Stakeholder engagement is equally central to EIT Digital's mission. The organisation maintains ongoing dialogue with a wide range of actors—including EU and national policymakers, research institutions, universities, corporates, SMEs, investors, and NGOs—through meetings, events, competitions, and digital platforms. This continuous interaction fosters trust, collaboration, and shared purpose. At the same time, EIT Digital is strengthening its local engagement hubs while expanding its global presence, ensuring that its innovation activities are both locally embedded and internationally connected.

#### **T4.6: EUAN AI training**

This training aims to build responsible, effective AI capacity across the EU Agencies Network (EUAN), which brings together 51 decentralised EU Agencies and Joint Undertakings with more than 11,000 staff across 24 Member States. By providing a solid foundation and role-relevant insights that officials can apply in day-to-day work, the training ensures that a large and diverse community of EU professionals can benefit. It supports the Strategic Agenda 2021–2027 by advancing skills for the twin digital–green transition, strengthening innovation capability in public administration, and ensuring compliance with EU policy and regulatory frameworks. The approach aligns with EIT Financial Sustainability principles through a modular, scalable design, re-use of assets across cycles, and partner co-delivery procured on a best-value-for-money basis, enabling cost-effective delivery, diversified revenue potential, and long-term viability for both the Network and EIT Digital.

A short, modular programme of live online sessions (3 hours each), delivered online. Content combines general AI foundations and governance with focused sessions relevant to legal, IT, finance, and procurement functions. Delivery is coordinated by EIT Digital; specialist teaching is provided by procured partner experts. Participant feedback is included for quality assurance.

This training within this Work Package will contribute to the promotion and dissemination of EIT Digital's activities and achievements, thereby supporting the knowledge triangle model. Furthermore, it will play a key role in enabling a successful rebranding effort and enhancing the visibility of EIT Digital within the EU Agencies Network (EUAN).

**Table 3.1c: List of deliverables**

Number	Deliverable name	Short description	WP number	Short name of lead participant	Type	Dissemination level	Delivery date (in months)
D1.1 D1.3	EIT Label Programme Implementation	Report that describes the implementation of the EIT Label programme elements (at Masters, Doctoral level, professional education) as set out in the Label Handbooks as well as the labelling strategy.	WP1	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26
D1.2 D1.4	Entrepreneurial Education Portfolio report	A report on the overall implementation of the Entrepreneurial Education programmes included in WP1, considering the objectives and targets of the EIT Digital 2026-2027 Activities.	WP1	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26
D2.1 D2.2	Business Creation Portfolio report	A report on the overall implementation of the following Business Creation programmes included in WP2: Venture Incubation Programme and Co-creation Accelerator, considering the objectives and targets of the EIT Digital 2026-2027 Activities.	WP2	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26
D3.1 D3.3	EIT RIS Activity Update	Information on the main activities implemented under the EIT RIS Work Package, with a focus on data and information to be used in external communication purposes.	WP3	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26
D3.2	EIT RIS Hubs Activity Update	Information on the work of the individual RIS Hubs, including performance against their targets.	WP3	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	3
D4.1 D4.10	EIT Digital 2026-2027 calls planning	Table listing the EIT Digital calls planned for 2026 and 2027. The tentative timeline will be updated during the MoU Activities 2026-2027 implementation in order to ensure proper business continuity and address the strategic view of EIT Digital.	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	4; 14
D4.2 D4.11	FSTP calls information and documentation	A report including: <b>Call information and documentation</b> - Documentation related to the projects selection procedure which will take place in 2026 and 2027 The main information has to be published on the KIC's website and the EIT website and will be published on the	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26

		<p>Funding &amp; Tenders Portal (in line with the Commission's template). The timeline for providing the information will be agreed with the EIT and the Commission.</p> <p><b>The ranking lists (or similar)</b> will be shared with the EIT at the end of evaluation, including the experts' evaluation results and subsequent KIC management decisions.</p> <p>All evaluated and ranked projects should be included. KICs will send short summaries of each project content. No specific format is required.</p> <p>The KIC will include lists and short summaries of the projects/activities that were subject to direct award, if any.</p> <p><b>Call results and statistics</b> - Statistics on number of applications, per country, per thematic topics shall be published on the KIC's website and EIT shall be informed; a budget and funding overview; information on each activity selected for funding, including data on each participant and abstracts of the activity proposal, for publication purposes. EIT Core KPIs per activity.</p>					
D4.3 D4.12	EIT Annual KPIs targets	Table listing all the EIT KPIs stating the KIC annual targets	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26
D4.4 D4.13	Anti-Fraud Strategy Implementation	Report on the annual implementation of the KIC anti-fraud strategy	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	13, 25
D4.5 D4.14	FS yearly report (N-1)	Yearly report based on the EIT template and in line with the included instructions.	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	7, 19
D4.6	Data Management Plan	Short description of FAIR data, security, ethics, etc.	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	DMP	PU	6
D4.7	Dissemination, Exploitation and Communications' Plan	Plan for dissemination and exploitation including communication activities	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	6
D4.8 D4.15	Report on dissemination and exploitation including	A report on all Dissemination, Communication and stakeholder engagement activities and efforts covering all portfolio activities	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	14; 26

	communication activities						
D4.9 D4.16 D4.17	Stakeholders Engagement Plan	Biannual report providing an overview of the KIC's planned stakeholder engagement priorities and activities, including the priority stakeholders (e.g. EC, EP, MS, industry, academia, etc.), formats of engagement and general timeline. The overview should present clear links to the KIC's Strategic Agenda, KPIs and targets.	WP4	EIT Digital IVZW	R	SEN	7, 13, 19

**Table 3.1d: List of milestones**

Milestone number	Milestone name	Related work package(s)	Due date (in month)	Means of verification
M1	EIT labelled programmes calls	WP1	9, 21	List of granted proposals
M2	C-Suite Master in Business Excellence	WP1	9	Launch of the master
M3	SpeedMaster batches 1-6	WP1	4, 8, 12, 16, 20, 24	List of participants
M4	MentorMe batches 1-12	WP1/WP3	3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, 24	List of participants
M5	MentorMe 'Advanced' Programme	WP1/WP3	9	Launch of the programme
M6	SPIN calls completed	WP1/WP3	9, 21	List of participants
M7	Venture Incubation Programme	WP2/WP3	10, 20	List of results and winners
M8	Co-creation Accelerator	WP2/WP3	10, 20	List of results and winners
M9	EIT Digital Annual report launched	WP4	6, 18	EIT Digital Annual report
M10	Business Plan 2026-2027 amendment	WP4	12	Amended Business Plan 2026-2027

**Table 3.1e: Critical risks for implementation**

Description of risk (indicate level of (i) likelihood, and (ii) severity: Low/Medium/High)	Work package(s) involved	Proposed risk-mitigation measures
Bankruptcy of partner (i. Low; ii. High)	WP1-WP4	Staged pre-financing (per quarter whereby last quarter after submission of the Cost Report).
Partner leaving EIT Digital (i. Low; ii. Medium)	WP1-WP4	Increased effort to attract new partners aligned with strategy; as our internal agreement with the partner keeps the financial obligations intact, there is no financial risk for the current business year.

Non-performance of partner in an Activity (i. Medium; ii. Medium)	WP1-WP3	The responsibility of the performance of an Activity is with a partner (Activity Lead). EIT Digital by-laws define the formal obligations, the internal grant agreement the effect on the partner grant in case of cost changes. On a pragmatic level, cause analysis, roadblock removals by the Education/Innovation Leads, BU Heads and/or the operations team, escalation to MC.
Non-performance of Activity (i. Medium; ii. Medium)	WP1-WP4	The responsibility of the performance of an Activity is with a partner (Activity Lead). EIT Digital By-laws define the formal obligations. EIT Digital monitoring facilitates potential re-orientation / 'stop and go' decision over an Activity based on the planned progress towards (DEL/OUT/KPIs- start-up creation or MVP). On a pragmatic level, cause analysis, roadblock removals by Innovation Leader, School Head and/or the operations team, escalation to MC.
Delays in filling open positions (i. Medium; ii. Medium)	WP4	Support by external HR agency.
Departure of key persons (i. Low; ii. Low)	WP4	Close monitoring of replacement process.
Delay of sustainability revenue ramp-up (i. Medium; ii. High)	WP1, WP2, WP3	Cause analysis, sustainability strategy revision for the delayed income streams and compensation by other sources. Quarterly revenue reporting framework (with a 3-year outlook) will be developed to ensure proper monitoring and early identification of hurdles and delays.

**Table 3.1f: Summary of staff effort**

	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	Total Person-Months per Participant
<b>1 EIT Digital IVZW</b>	172	12	55	161	<b>400</b>
<b>2 EIT Digital Spain</b>	24	48	12	18	<b>102</b>
<b>3 EIT Digital Hungary</b>	48	6	21	42	<b>117</b>
<b>4 EIT Digital Finland</b>		15		8	<b>23</b>
<b>Total Person Months</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>642</b>

**Table 3.1g: ‘Subcontracting costs’ items**

<b>1 EIT Digital IVZW</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Subcontracting</b>	662 500	<p>WP1 T1.1 Master DSC+FT+FTB execution €60 000                      WP1 T1.2 Master C-Suite Business Excellence € 60 000                      WP1 T1.4 Talent import € 60 000                      WP1 T1.9: Global Tech Leadership € 120 000                      WP1 T1.10 AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer €80 000                      WP1 T1.18 TALENT Cofoundry € 160 000                      WP4 T4.6 EUAN AI training €122 500</p> <p>For T1.1, T1.2, T1.4, T1.9 and T1.10, costs for events to encourage applications of paying students, including fees paid to recruitment agents for students they successfully identify, recruit and enroll in the programmes, participation and organization of education fairs or info sessions, travel and accommodation for staff, and marketing materials or digital tools to attract and manage prospective students. These activities ensure visibility, outreach, and conversion of candidates into enrolled learners and cannot be performed directly by the KIC due to its lack of presence in the targeted regions.</p> <p>For T1.18, costs cover the organisation of bootcamps, which will be subcontracted to entities such as business schools.</p> <p>For T4.6, specialist instruction (e.g., domain-specific modules, guest interventions) will be subcontracted to experts. This is justified by the need for specialised expertise and up-to-date practice. EIT Digital retains overall programme design, pedagogical coherence, and QA.</p> <p>EIT Digital and its Co-Location Centres (CLCs) ensure full compliance with the substantive requirements of EU public procurement law, in line with Article 6.1 of the Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC). The EIT Digital Procurement Policy, last updated in January 2024, applies to the implementation of the MoC for the period 2026–2027.</p> <p>Through this Procurement Policy, EIT Digital operates fully within the framework of the EU Financial Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 2018/1046). The policy clearly sets out the procurement procedures to be followed for contracts of different values, ensuring transparency, proportionality, equal treatment, and sound financial management.</p> <p>In addition to the principles established under the Financial Regulation, EIT Digital has drawn guidance from the relevant European public procurement directives, notably Directives 2014/24/EU and 2007/66/EC, as well as from their transposition into Member States’ national legislation, including the Belgian Public Procurement Act of 14 July 2016 (No. 44225).</p> <p>The latest version of the EIT Digital Procurement Policy fully incorporates all recommendations set out in the EIT Guidelines for KIC</p>

		Procurement Policies and has been formally reviewed by the EIT, ensuring alignment with EIT requirements and best practices.
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**Table 3.1h: ‘Purchase costs’ items (travel and subsistence, equipment and other goods, works and services)**

<b>1 EIT Digital IVZW</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Travel and subsistence</b>	403 500	<p>WP1 T1.2 Master C-Suite Business Excellence € 15 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.3 Innovation Study Tours €10 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.4 Talent import € 20 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.5 Summer School 2-week €6 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.6 Life-long Learning Scholarships €13 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.7 IDSL €6 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.9 Global Tech Leadership € 10 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.10 AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer € 25 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.12 SpeedMaster €10 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.13 MentorMe non-RIS: €20 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.14 MentorMe Advanced Non-RIS: €10 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.15 SPIN Explore €10 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.16 SPIN RISE €20 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.17 Mini MBA €20 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.18 TALENT Cofoundry € 20 000</p> <p>WP2 T2.1 Venture Incubation Programme non-RIS €35 000</p> <p>WP2 T2.2 Co-creation Accelerator €35 000</p> <p>WP3 T3.1 Summer School in RIS €6 000</p> <p>WP3 T3.2 SPIN in RIS €5 000</p> <p>WP3 T3.3 MentorMe RIS and MentorMe Advanced RIS €7 500</p> <p>WP3 T3.4 Venture Incubation Programme RIS €10 000</p> <p>WP3 T3.5 Co-creation Accelerator RIS €15 000</p> <p>WP4 T4.4 Central Ecosystem Coordination €50 000</p> <p>WP4 T4.5 Communication and dissemination activities €25 000</p> <p>For T1.2, T1.3, T1.4, T1.5, T1.6, T1.7, T1.9, T1.10, T3.1 and T4.4 costs for trips to meet partners, conduct site visits in universities, and co-design and follow the implementation of the master include travel, accommodation, and staff time, enabling coordination, quality assurance, and smooth rollout of the programme with local institutions.</p> <p>For T1.15, T1.16, T1.17 and T1.18, travel costs are to attend the programmes’ bootcamps, as well as conferences and events for outreach and promotion efforts.</p> <p>For T1.12, T1.13, T1.14, T2.1, T2.2, T3.3, T3.4 and T3.5: sourcing, engaging and showcasing startups and scaleups for the programmes will require frequent travels across Europe to attend startup- and innovation-focused events. For instance: Web Summit, Slush, Latitude 59, Vienna Up, Podim, Wolves Summit, 4YFN, EBAN Summit, VivaTech. These events feature high-profile investors and are a good area to forge long-lasting partnership and create programmatic deal flows.</p> <p>For T4.5, costs associated with presence at key events (MWC, Slush, South Summit, GITEX, Delphi Forum, etc.)</p>
<b>Equipment</b>		
<b>Other goods, works and services</b>	1 167 928	<p>WP1 T1.1 Master DSC+FT+FTB execution €300 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.2 Master C-Suite Business Excellence € 20 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.3 Innovation Study Tours €100 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.4 Talent import € 50 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.5 Summer School 2-week €40 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.10 AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer € 50 000</p> <p>WP1 T1.12 SpeedMaster €13 250</p> <p>WP1 T1.13 MentorMe non-RIS: €96 318</p>

		<p>WP1 T1.14 MentorMe Advanced Non-RIS: €23 000          WP1 T1.15 SPIN Explore €20 000          WP1 T1.16 SPIN RISE €30 000          WP1 T1.17 Mini MBA €30 000          WP1 T1.18 TALENT Cofoundry € 40 000          WP1 T1.19 (d) Academy € 40 000          WP2 T2.1 Venture Incubation Programme non-RIS €52 800          WP2 T2.2 Co-creation Accelerator €36 000          WP3 T3.1 Summer School in RIS €40 000          WP3 T3.2 SPIN in RIS €2 500          WP3 T3.3 MentorMe RIS and MentorMe Advanced RIS €66 160          WP3 T3.4 Venture Incubation Programme RIS € 25 400          WP3 T3.5 Co-creation Accelerator RIS €17 500          WP4 T4.5 Communication and dissemination activities €75 000</p> <p>For T1.1, T1.2, T1.3, T1.4, T1.5, T1.10, T1.15, T1.16, T1.17, T1.18, T3.1 and T3.2, costs are associated with participation in events, fairs, and conferences aimed at promoting the education and unipreneurship programmes, as well as attracting students, researchers, professionals, research centers, and industrial partners. Additional expenditures cover the development and distribution of marketing materials, execution of online campaigns, creation of social media content, regular website updates, and dissemination of press releases to ensure broad visibility and strengthen the programmes' outreach.</p> <p>For T1.12, T1.13, T1.14, T2.1, T2.2, T3.3, T3.4 and T3.5, each initiative will have their own Demo Days (synced in time and space if possible, to preserve budget), where the graduating startups are showcasing their solutions and look for investments. We are targeting to organize these Demo Days as a side event to large-scale European startup events (like Web Summit, Slush, VivaTech, 4YFN, etc.).</p> <p>These programmes need a marketing budget for attracting and sourcing startups into programmes, including but not limited to: online ads, featured articles in startup magazines like Sifted and EU-Startups, sponsored posts, sponsored presentations and panel discussions.</p> <p>For T1.19, costs relate to usage rights for cloud services and platform software, ensuring the availability, scalability, and secure operation of the technological infrastructure.</p> <p>For T4.5, costs associated to the production of the Makers&amp;Shapers video series.</p>
<b>Remaining purchase costs (&lt;15% of pers. Costs)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	1 571 428	

<b>2 EIT Digital Spain</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Travel and subsistence</b>	50 000	<p>WP3 T3.6 RIS ecosystem engagement and development €30 000            WP4 T4.3 Region South € 20 000</p> <p>T3.6 and T4.3: Attendance at ecosystem building events to further increase the intakes for the Education/Unipreneurship/Innovation units. These events provide connections and link with attendees from RIS countries, while others are themselves in RIS countries.</p> <p>Represent EIT Digital in external events and policy dialogues, reinforcing cooperation with partners, institutions, and stakeholders, while supporting the dissemination of best practices and cross-sectoral collaboration across Europe.</p>
<b>Equipment</b>		

<b>Other goods, works and services</b>	70 000	WP3 T3.6 RIS ecosystem engagement and development €30 000 WP4 T4.3 Region South € 40 000 T3.6 and T4.3: Organisation of ecosystem events (webinars, networking sessions, Investor Days, Innovation Days) that create opportunities for knowledge transfer, matchmaking, and cross-border collaboration.
<b>Remaining purchase costs (&lt;15% of pers. Costs)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	120 000	

<b>3 EIT Digital Hungary</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Travel and subsistence</b>	50 000	WP3 T3.6 RIS ecosystem engagement and development €30 000 WP4 T4.2 Region East € 20 000 T3.6: DACH & CEE region covers most of RIS countries (both in number and geographic coverage). 4-5/year in-person cross-KIC steering committee meetings take place across the RIS region (usually these are also together with ECO/RIS HUB-related events), hence these are 3-day-long worktrips T4.2: The region will grow in number of staff - a dedicated DigitalTech specialist, and/or a Cybersecurity Hub will set up in one of the regional countries meaning at least ½ extra colleagues who will be extensively travelling to support the business plan of the region The region works in parallel on opening several new office locations which requires in person presence at events, preparation meetings, and personnel travelling to different locations Attendance at ecosystem building events to further increase the intakes for the Education/Unipreneurship/Innovation units.
<b>Equipment</b>		
<b>Other goods, works and services</b>	70 000	WP3 T3.6 RIS ecosystem engagement and development €30 000 WP4 T4.2 Region East € 40 000 T3.6: DACH & CEE region covers the most RIS countries and dissemination is part of the work to reach a wider audience: co-branding with local partners, production of banners, roll-ups, and merchandise to increase recognition of EIT Digital's presence in RIS countries. T4.2: Organisation of ecosystem events (trainings, workshop, ecosystem services). Cybersecurity & Fintech library order – available both for staff and students/professors of the CLC. Establishment and pilot activities for the new Cybersecurity Hub - workshops, stakeholder mapping, creation of shared knowledge resources, dedicated marketing and dissemination materials and services to promote the Hub.
<b>Remaining purchase costs (&lt;15% of pers. Costs)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>120 000</b>	

<b>4 EIT Digital Finland</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Travel and subsistence</b>	40 000	WP3 T3.6 RIS ecosystem engagement and development €20 000 WP4 T4.3 Region North € 20 000 T3.6 and T4.3: Region North is building and expanding the ecosystem presence around the region, including RIS regions eg. Lithuania (innovative RIS country) and Latvia (regional office as target). Connecting with these regions and carrying out ecosystem extension, EIT Digital visibility require in person presence, by extend travel to the locations.

		Region North members participate in several activities throughout each financial year, these regularly include but not limited to Slush (FI), Latitude59 (ES), sTARTUp Day (ES), Nordeep (FI), Arctic 15 (FI), Innovation Day (LT), TechChill (LT), TechArena (SW) and so on. These events often provide connections and link with attendees from RIS countries, while others are themselves in RIS countries.
<b>Equipment</b>		
<b>Other goods, works and services</b>	60 000	WP3 T3.6 RIS ecosystem engagement and development €20 000 WP4 T4.3 Region North € 40 000 T3.6 and T4.3: Region North covers over 10 countries Ireland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania (and Iceland, UK, Norway), including RIS regions. Ecosystem outreach is one of the Region North's core activities. Visibility and networking in the aforementioned countries include both general networking with the stakeholders, but also organisation of regional events and ecosystem building events (trainings, workshop, ecosystem services), as well as supporting local actors and stakeholders. Targeting the establishment of a new offices is also handled by Region North.
<b>Remaining purchase costs (&lt;15% of pers. Costs)</b>		
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 000</b>	

**Table 3.1i: 'Other costs categories' items (e.g. internally invoiced goods and services)**

<b>1 EIT Digital IVZW</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Financial support to third parties</b>	11 195 818	Please see Annex A on FSTP, which contain all the FSTP justification per WPs and tasks.
<b>4 EIT Digital Education Foundation</b>		
	<b>Cost (€)</b>	<b>Description of tasks (incl. work package number) and justification</b>
<b>Financial support to third parties</b>	1 720 000	Please see Annex A on FSTP, which contain all the FSTP justification per WPs and tasks. EIT Digital Education Foundation is responsible for managing the fee waivers and scholarships.

### 3.2 Capacity of participants and the KIC Partnership as a whole

The growing recognition of EIT Digital is clearly reflected in the remarkable expansion of its partner network, from just 30 partners in 2010 to over 300 by 2025. Looking ahead to 2026–2027, we anticipate a continued annual growth with a strategic emphasis on engaging industry players and SMEs and extending our geographic reach into RIS countries.

Our shift toward sustainable innovation, including acceleration programs and strategic partnerships, has significantly broadened EIT Digital's footprint among SMEs—60% of our partners are digital startups and SMEs—and regional and national innovation agencies, which now represent nearly 10% of our network. In 2026–2027, our focus will be on fostering cross-regional collaboration, establishing corridors that connect regional offices, partners, and students. While activities are implemented locally, we facilitate the exchange of knowledge and best practices across regions, enabling ecosystem cross-pollination and helping elevate innovation maturity levels throughout Europe.

The EIT Digital innovation, educational and training activities, supported by regional innovation offices and aligned with local RIS3 priorities, are covering all the angles of the knowledge triangle with combination of funding sources towards the main mission of EIT Digital:

- EIT Funding for educational and training activities as Master School, Summer Schools, Unipreneurship and Entrepreneurial Training
- Horizon Europe funding for interregional cooperation and venture support for SMEs and startups
- Digital Europe funding for education support in selected digital areas as semiconductors, cybersecurity, and AI.

This multi-source funding model allows us to generate impact and engage relevant stakeholders.

One of the relevant targets of EIT Digital expansion are the RIS countries, with usually low innovation index and limited number of local instruments supporting venture creation, growing, or access to deep-tech and entrepreneurial trainings. EIT Digital successfully bridge the needs of different regions across EU complementing their needs and sharing their best practices.

With a presence across all EU27 countries and beyond, a network of over 300 partners, and a strong reputation in EU R&I programmes and organisations – including EIT, EIF, EIC, DG RTD – EIT Digital is increasingly recognised as a strategic partner for EU calls, tenders and collaborative innovation and education initiatives.

**EIT Digital’s governance model** adheres fully to the EIT Principles of Good Governance. The General Assembly, comprising all members, ensures streamlined partnership representation and strong partner engagement. Partners contribute an annual fee and hold voting rights based on their involvement and support for EIT Digital’s sustainability. The Supervisory Board, responsible for strategic oversight, includes an independent Chair, five independent members, and five partner representatives. In alignment with the 2021–2027 Partnership Agreement, half of the Board members are independent. In 2022, in preparation of the EIT post year-15, the Supervisory Board endorsed EIT Digital’s mid-term strategy, confirming its continued operation as a non-profit organisation focused on ecosystem development, innovation, and entrepreneurial education, with financial sustainability achieved through balanced public and private funding.

In each country of operation, EIT Digital is represented through a legal entity, branch, or permanent establishment, all fully owned and controlled by EIT Digital IVZW. These entities employ the EIT Digital staff working in the region. Headquartered in Brussels, EIT Digital operates 17 offices across Europe—in Athens, Thessaloniki, Berlin, Budapest, Cluj-Napoca, Eindhoven, Madrid, Paris, Rennes, Edinburgh, Helsinki, Stockholm, Tallinn, Eindhoven, Milan, Bolzano and Trento—covering the entire EU27, including RIS and Horizon Europe associated countries. Additionally, we maintain a Hub in Silicon Valley, with new offices soon to open in Bari, Košice and Riga.

**EIT Digital management** is shaped as a matrix organisation. Innovation and Education Activities are driven by Chief of Innovation and Investment Officer and the Education and Skills Director, respectively, and deployed across EU27 and Horizon Europe associated countries. The Management Committee reports to the CEO, who oversees daily operations. Regional Directors, supported by Ecosystem Leads and Ecosystem Administrators, are responsible for the development and monitoring of the activities run by EIT Digital and its partners in the countries where we operate. The Innovation area also includes Business Creation activities, the portfolio is split between Acceleration and Growth phases to which a dedicate lead is appointed with the responsibility for the development and the organisation of the Activities in the strategic areas and for the monitoring of the delivery on impact and sustainability. The same team is also responsible to manage the EIT Digital equity portfolio and manages the customer acquisition and deal generation. Human Resources, led by the Head of HR reporting to the COO/CFO, supports recruitment, onboarding, performance evaluation, career development, and operational HR processes.

EIT Digital’s **Anti-Fraud Strategy** is guided by its core values and priorities, aiming to reinforce public trust across all levels—KIC Partners, the Supervisory Board, staff, and external contractors. The strategy encompasses the full anti-fraud cycle: prevention, detection, investigation, recovery, and sanction. While prevention remains central, increased emphasis is placed on detection through internal reporting and proactive random checks. EIT Digital continuously aligns its anti-fraud policies with EIT guidelines.

The 2026–2027 EIT Digital Activity Portfolio will be implemented in full compliance with EIT guidelines and MGA requirements, ensuring sound financial management, proactive risk mitigation, and adherence to anti-

fraud standards. To support this, we will organize information sessions and training for internal staff and Activity Coordinators, covering essential operational, reporting, financial, and audit procedures.

**EIT Digital monitors the impact** and sustainability of its activities through a structured set of financial and impact KPIs. These KPIs, defined for the 2025–2027 period by EIT Digital management, follow a business logic with clear responsibilities and accountability at both Regional and Pillar levels.

- KPIs are tracked monthly via dashboards, following a monitor & act approach.
- Quarterly deep-dive sessions are held per Region and Pillar to enable timely corrective actions.

The full list of KPIs includes:

- Number of Partners per Region and related income from Membership Fees.
- Non-EIT financial support attracted to sustain regional operations.
- Regional contributions to the development of EIT Digital’s education programmes.

Targets are set at the senior management level and cascaded to relevant staff within the KIC. These targets are also embedded in HR policies and the performance management system applied to all EIT Digital employees.

Regarding the **financial monitoring**, EIT Digital, with support from an external consultancy firm, prepares quarterly cost reports for all legal entities. These reports provide detailed breakdowns of costs and income by task and ledger, enabling effective tracking and forecasting at multiple levels:

- KIC level: Report for all tasks and legal entities.
- Pillar level: Monitoring costs vs. delivery across education, innovation and ecosystem
- Activity and task level: Tracking progress against budget.
- Legal entity level: Cost breakdowns for entities such as the Education Foundation, and regional offices.

All quarterly reports are cumulative throughout the fiscal year. Additionally, each legal entity undergoes an annual financial audit conducted by an external auditor.

Regarding external partners, we conduct thorough checks on the proper implementation of activities and the use of funds by all of them, ensuring full compliance with the specific rules governing FSTP. Where disputes arise, these are addressed in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions set out in the applicable contractual agreements, including provisions related to monitoring, reporting, acceptance of deliverables, and financial adjustments. EIT Digital retains the authority to take corrective measures, including suspension of payments or contractual amendments, where justified by non-compliance or material breaches, in line with established procedures.

## ANNEX A: FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THIRD PARTIES

### 1. General introduction

This annex provides a comprehensive overview of the use and management of Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) within the EIT Digital MoC activities 2026–2027. FSTP is employed as a mechanism to foster high-impact educational, innovation, and business creation initiatives by providing financial resources to eligible external organisations - such as universities, research institutions, startups, or industry partners - to deliver activities aligned with the EIT Digital Strategic Agenda 2021–2027.

EIT Digital primarily applies FSTP in entrepreneurial education, business creation programmes, and targeted RIS activities, with an overarching commitment to quality, transparency, and strategic alignment.

### 2. Methodology

The selection process for FSTP-supported activities ensures strategic alignment with EIT Digital's mission and maximises value creation, in line with the EIT Strategic Agenda.

EIT Digital applies a clear and transparent process for the publication and management of calls:

- **Open calls:** Published on the EIT Digital website, the EIT website, the Funding & Tender Portal, and the EIT Education Campus, if relevant. These calls are open to all eligible third parties.
- **Restricted calls:** Issued only in strategic, targeted contexts where a specific capability or regional partner pool is needed (e.g., Talent import).
- **Direct awards:** Used exclusively when continuity, established partnerships, or unique expertise are essential and justified (e.g., continuation of Master School or Industrial Doctoral School).

**Open calls** systematically include detailed guidelines covering:

- Objectives and expected outcomes
- Eligibility and selection criteria
- Evaluation procedures
- Budget ceilings and co-funding requirements
- Reporting obligations and compliance checks

Generally, proposals will be assessed based on the following **evaluation criteria**:

- **Strategic alignment:** Proposals must clearly align with the objectives and challenges outlined in the call. All proposals are also evaluated for their relevance to EIT Digital's five focus areas (Digital Tech, Industry, Cities, Wellbeing, Finance) and their contribution to core objectives such as talent development, entrepreneurship, and RIS outreach.
- **Excellence:** Proposals should present a well-defined set of objectives that are consistent with the call and the overarching goals of the project.
- **Impact:** Applicants must define a clear set of deliverables aligned with the call objectives. Proposals should demonstrate their potential impact on the subject of the call and their contribution to the overall project goals. Proposals are assessed for their scalability, innovation, sustainability, and ability to contribute to KPIs (e.g., start-ups created, RIS participation, etc.).
- **Implementation:** Applicants must provide credible evidence that the project team possesses the necessary skills, infrastructure, and management experience to deliver the project within the specified timeframe and budget.
- **Value for money:** Proposals must include a clear and detailed budget. Applicants should explain how they intend to make optimal use of the funding and outline their ambition to leverage additional funding sources.

The **review process** generally consists of two main stages:

1. **Individual Review:** Each member of the evaluation panel assesses proposals independently.
2. **Panel Review:** All panel members convene to discuss their individual assessments and reach a joint

evaluation for each proposal.

**Independent external experts** will assess proposals **individually** using the evaluation grid included in the call document. All evaluators will receive evaluation guidelines and templates, along with clear information about the timeline. Additionally, they will sign a declaration of confidentiality and confirm the absence of conflicts of interest. Reviewers are expected to provide scores and comments for each question in the evaluation grid, as well as an overall assessment of the proposal.

Following the individual reviews, EIT Digital conducts a **Panel Review** meeting, where external experts come together to discuss their assessments. The goal is to reach a consensus evaluation that integrates and supersedes individual reviews.

Finally, in a third and final gate, the EIT Digital Management Committee (MC) may review the outcomes and recommendations from the Panel Review to make the final selection, ensuring a strong and strategically aligned portfolio. All MC members have signed the EIT Digital Code of Conduct, which includes a formal declaration confirming the absence of any conflict of interest.

Further improvements will be implemented in 2026, including compliance with the 60/40% external–internal scoring ratio and the clear separation of criteria assessed by external and internal experts to avoid any overlap in scoring.

Selected activities should complement one another and collectively enhance ecosystem impact, education quality, and stakeholder diversity.

Applicants will be notified of the results according to the timeline specified in the relevant call document. Participation of the selected proposals will be governed by an agreement signed between the subgrantee and EIT Digital.

This methodology ensures that EIT Digital’s subgrantee selection process remains **open, transparent, and fully compliant with all applicable rules**.

The **specific criteria** for awarding financial support to third parties will be clearly defined in each individual call and will be subject to formal approval by the EIT Digital Management Committee.

### 3. Overview of the types of Education calls (open calls and partners calls)

According to the provisional financial allocations, the estimated budget for FSTP-supported Education activities is as follows:

WP	Task no.	Type of activity	Type of call	Estimated number of projects	Estimated budget (EUR)
WP1	1.3	Innovation Study Tours	Open calls	2	100 000
WP1	1.4	Talent import	Restricted call	6	1 300 000
WP1	1.5	Summer Schools	Open calls	4	340 000
WP1	1.6	Life-Long Learning Scholarships	Restricted call	4	500 000
WP1	1.9	Global Tech Leadership	Restricted call	1	200 000
WP1	1.10	AI for C-Suite, Chief AI Officer	Restricted call	1	450 000
WP1	1.11	Master DSC + Master FT+FTB fee waivers and scholarships	Open calls	3 cohorts	1 720 000
WP1	1.16	SPIN RISE (4 + 4 programs)	Open calls	8	550 000
WP1	1.17	SPIN x TTO (Mini-MBA Knowledge Valorisation Leaders)	Restricted call	2	280 000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>31</b>	<b>5 440 000 €</b>

- **Restricted calls for Talent Import:** Piloting requires strategic international partners selected for

regional relevance and readiness to co-deliver European-accredited curricula.

- **Restricted call for Mini-MBA Knowledge Valorisation Leaders:** Only Business Schools.

As the Talent Import programme and the Innovation Study Tours will involve financial support for entities established in third countries not eligible under Horizon Europe, we will adhere to EIT guidance:

- **For financial support exceeding EUR 60.000 per grant agreement:** If the entity is ineligible under national schemes, EIT funding may be granted on an exceptional basis, provided the entity's participation is deemed essential to the action and approved by the EIT.
- **For financial support below EUR 60.000 per grant agreement:** EIT Digital may award funding to third-country entities if duly justified.

#### 4. Overview of the types of Business Creation calls (open calls and partners calls)

According to the provisional financial allocations, the estimated budget for FSTP-supported Business Creation activities is as follows:

WP	Task no.	Type of activity	Type of call	Estimated number of projects	Estimated budget (EUR)
WP2	2.1	Venture Incubation Program Non-RIS	Open calls	3 incubator partners, 35 entrepreneurial teams	1 200 000
WP2	2.2	Co-creation Accelerator Non-RIS	Open calls	9 startup-led co-creation teams	2 025 818
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>47</b>	<b>3 225 818 €</b>

#### 5. Overview of the types of RIS calls (open calls and partners calls)

According to the provisional financial allocations, the estimated budget for FSTP-supported RIS activities is as follows:

WP	Task no.	Type of activity	Type of call	Estimated number of projects	Estimated budget (EUR)
WP3	3.1	Summer School in RIS	Open calls	2	100 000
WP3	3.2	SPIN in RIS	Open calls	4	100 000
WP3	3.4	Venture Incubation Program – RIS (incubator partners)	Open calls	3 incubator partners, 22 entrepreneurial teams	560 000
WP3	3.5	Co-creation Accelerator RIS	Open calls	4 startup-led co-creation teams	1 250 000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>35</b>	<b>2 010 000 €</b>

#### 6. Other types of calls (direct awards)

Projects selected through direct awards are limited in number and fully justified:

- **Direct awards to existing Masters and IDSL university partners:** Ensure continuity, academic consistency, and full exploitation of established partnerships and curricula already aligned with EIT Label criteria.
- **Direct award to launch C-Suite Master:** Developed with founding institutional partners and industry co-sponsors, thus requiring direct partnership agreements for its launch.

- **Direct award to continue carrying out the Master School Office activity:** The Master School Office is a core operational pillar of the EIT Digital Master School, responsible for managing the entire prospect-to-student journey. The higher education institution that has overseen its implementation since inception (KTH) possesses the accumulated expertise, processes, and institutional knowledge required to ensure seamless continuity. Maintaining KTH in this role through a direct award guarantees operational stability, preserves efficiency, and mitigates any risk of disruption to the student experience or programme delivery.
- **Direct awards for RIS ecosystem engagement and development activities:** Ensure continuity as there is an existing collaboration with local partners (Foundation and BGI). Their on-the-ground expertise provides valuable insights into the entrepreneurial landscape, identifies high-performing startups, and uncovers opportunities for digital transformation and growth. The key objective of these direct awards is to sustain the innovation ecosystem partners and infrastructure to be able to continue Innovation and Entrepreneurship activities in countries of RIS region. The activities that qualify for financial support, on the basis of a closed list, are: organisation of events, visibility and promotional activities, consultancy support, lead generation, partnership promotion.

These exceptions are clearly framed to balance strategic innovation with operational viability, and to avoid redundancies or duplication of efforts across regions and partners.

The direct award process is implemented in accordance with the EIT Metroline guidelines and the minimum requirements for activity selection. EIT will be informed of such awards in a timely manner through the completion of the Direct Award Request form. The evaluation and feedback process will follow the same approach as that used for open calls.

WP	Task no.	Type of activity	Type of call	Estimated number of projects	Estimated budget (EUR)
WP1	1.1	Master DSC+FT+FTB execution	Direct awards	3	480 000
WP1	1.2	Master C-Suite Business Excellence	Direct awards	1	600 000
WP1	1.7	IDSL	Direct awards	10	400 000
WP1	1.8	MSO	Direct award	1	700 000
WP3	3.6	RIS ecosystem engagement and development	Direct awards	4	60.000
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>19</b>	<b>2 240 000 €</b>

## 7. Overview of the types of calls, planning and conditions per WP

### WP1 Entrepreneurial Education and Skills

- **Open Calls:** Used for activities such as Summer Schools or SPIN, allowing wide participation from eligible universities, research organisations, TTOs, and companies across the EIT Digital network, including RIS partners. Calls will be published on the EIT Digital website, the EIT website, the Funding & Tender Portal, and the EIT Education Campus, if relevant.
- **Restricted Calls:** Applied to strategic pilots (e.g., Talent import, Mini-MBA Knowledge Valorisation Leaders) where technical or geographical requirements limit eligible participants to a specific subset of partners.
- **Direct Awards:** Considered only when the activity requires unique expertise, proprietary resources, or established partnerships that cannot be competitively sourced (e.g., continuation of EIT-labelled programmes with established academic coordinators).
- **Planning:** Annual calls will be launched in Q4 of the preceding year for implementation of the deep tech education programmes in the following academic year, ensuring sufficient time for partner preparation and student recruitment. For SPIN, annual calls will be launched in Q1 each year, ensuring sufficient time for partner preparation and student recruitment.
- **Conditions:** Calls will clearly define objectives, expected outcomes, eligibility criteria, funding ceilings, co-funding requirements, and reporting obligations. All beneficiaries will be contractually bound to comply with EIT Label quality standards, contribute to EIT KPIs, and ensure visibility

through the EIT Education Campus.

## WP2 Business Creation

- **Open calls:** Used for the Venture Incubation Programme and Co-creation Accelerator, whether we are selecting startups to support or identifying the most suitable incubation partners. The calls will be disseminated using the usual EIT Digital direct and partner channels.
- **Planning:** Annual calls will be launched for the Venture Incubation Programme in Q1 each year. In the case of the Co-creation Accelerator, one continued open call will be launched in April 2026, with 3 cut-offs review (June 2026, December 2026 and May 2027) and 3 cut-offs execution (July-December 2026; January-June 2027 and July-December 2027).
- **Conditions:** Calls will clearly define objectives, expected outcomes, eligibility criteria, funding ceilings, co-funding requirements, and reporting obligations. Each selection will have their own eligibility criteria. For instance, the Venture Innovation Programme will support startups which have been established in the calendar year or will be established during the programme. Co-creation Accelerator, on the other hand, will support later stage companies. Each programme will support only Horizon countries, with a special focus on RIS.

## WP3 EIT Digital RIS

- **Open Calls:** Used for activities such as Summer School in RIS, SPIN in RIS, Venture Incubation Programme in RIS and Co-creation Accelerator in RIS.
- **Direct Awards:** Considered only for activities such as ecosystem mapping and development in RIS countries, as there is an existing collaboration with local partners (Foundation and BGI). Their on-the-ground expertise provides valuable insights into the entrepreneurial landscape, identifies high-performing startups, and uncovers opportunities for digital transformation and growth.
- **Planning:** Open calls for the RIS editions will follow the same timeline and planning as the corresponding activities outlined in the above-mentioned WPs.
- **Conditions:** Calls will clearly define objectives, expected outcomes, eligibility criteria, funding ceilings, co-funding requirements, and reporting obligations.

## WP4 Innovation Ecosystem Maintenance: No FSTP budget under WP 4

### 8. Main elements of project implementation

The call documents provide detailed information on cost eligibility, required supporting documentation, reporting obligations, and the payment schedule.

All activities supported through FSTP are subject to continuous monitoring by EIT Digital, including quarterly progress reviews, to ensure effective implementation and to trigger payments based on the achievement of milestones, deliverables, and KPIs.

In cases of underperformance, significant delays, or any other issues that jeopardize timely implementation, EIT Digital reserves the right to discontinue or restructure the funding of the activity at any point during its implementation.

### 9. Conclusion

FSTP under the 2026–2027 activities proposal serves as a powerful tool for EIT Digital to scale impact, leverage partner strengths, and maintain agility in addressing evolving educational and innovation needs across Europe and globally. Through open, transparent, and strategically justified use of FSTP, EIT Digital ensures a high-quality portfolio of activities delivering on its mission and the broader EIT Strategic Agenda.