



Venture Incubation Program 2026

Venture Incubation Program 2026 Startup Call

Rules and regulations for applicants

Join us in building what's next

(under KIC Business Plan 2026-2027)

28DIGITAL

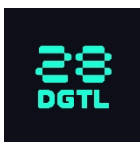
Brussels, 9 April 2026

<https://28DIGITAL.eu>



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Abbreviations

EIT	European Institute of Innovation and Technology
KIC	Knowledge and Innovation Community
EIT SIA	EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda
PA	Partnership Agreement
HE MGA	Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement
KIC SA	KIC Strategic Agenda
BP	Business Plan
EIT KPIs	Key Performance Indicators set by EIT
KAVA	KIC-added value activity
FSTP	Financial support to third parties
MC	28DIGITAL Management Committee
MoC	Memorandum of Cooperation

Definitions

Knowledge Triangle Integration	The EIT is established to complement existing Union and national policies and initiatives by fostering the integration of the knowledge triangle – higher education, research and innovation, and business creation – across the Union.
Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement	The Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement (HE MGA) sets out the rights and obligations and the terms and conditions applicable to the implementation of the EIT grant.
Deliverable	Deliverables are tangible or intangible goods or service produced during the project implementation phase. They track the progress made towards a project’s objectives and may take the form of a report, document, software product, course, event or any other building block of a project. The deliverables specified need to fully demonstrate the project’s achievements and the judicious use of public funds.
EIT KPI	Set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) defined by the EIT that reflect the EIT operational objectives for education, entrepreneurship, and innovation. These KPIs are used to measure how effectively a KIC/project meets the objectives of the EIT.



1. Introduction

1.1. Information on the EIT

European Institute of Innovation and Technology

The European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) is a European Union body with a legal personality and a wide legal capacity accorded to legal persons under national law. The EIT was created in 2008 by the European Union (EU) to enhance Europe's global competitiveness by fostering collaboration between businesses, research institutions, and higher education organizations.

The EIT is governed by [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/695](#) (EIT Regulation), which aligns the EIT's mission with the EU's priorities and the objectives of Horizon Europe on evolving research, innovation, economic growth, job creation, global competitiveness, sustainable growth, higher education and entrepreneurship, by means of the Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), which address specific societal challenges and are established and supported by the EIT.

The [EIT Strategic Innovation Agenda \(SIA\) 2021-2027](#) is aligned with Horizon Europe and lays down the priority fields and the strategy of the EIT for future initiatives, capacity to generate the best innovation added-value, objectives, key actions, mode of operation, expected results, impact, as well as an estimate of the resources needed for the duration of Horizon Europe.

Horizon Europe Regulation

The [Horizon Europe Regulation \(EU\) 2021/695](#) foresees that the EIT takes part in the implementation of the Horizon Europe Program in accordance with its strategic objectives for the period 2021 to 2027, as laid down in the Strategic Innovation Agenda of the EIT, and taking into account the strategic planning of Horizon Europe.

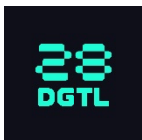
EIT and Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) relations

The EIT Regulation defines KICs as large-scale Institutionalised European Partnerships of higher education institutions, research organisations, companies and other stakeholders in the innovation process in the form of a strategic network, regardless of its legal form, based on joint mid- to long-term innovation planning to meet the EIT's challenges and contribute to attaining the objectives established.

According to the EIT Regulation, and without prejudice to the partnership agreements and grant agreements between the EIT and each KIC, the KICs have substantial autonomy to establish their internal organisation and composition, as well as their agenda and working methods, provided that they result in progress towards achieving the objectives of the EIT and the KICs, taking into account the strategic planning of Horizon Europe and the strategic direction of the EIT set out in the SIA and by the Governing Board.

Contractual framework between the EIT and the KICs

KIC 28DIGITAL (formerly EIT Digital) entered into a Partnership Agreement ("PA") with the European Institute of Innovation and Technology ("EIT"), effective as of 1 January 2021 until December 31, 2024, establishing a long-term cooperation laying down the general terms and conditions under which the KIC



28DIGITAL (formerly KIC EIT Digital) must operate as an institutionalised European partnership under the Horizon Europe Program.

Following the successful completion of the PA, as demonstrated by the positive outcome of the final review of 28DIGITAL (formerly EIT Digital), the EIT and 28DIGITAL have entered into a Memorandum of Cooperation ('MoC') for a period of three years (2025-2027), starting on 1 January 2025 until 31 December 2027, in line with the Horizon Europe Framework Program for Research and Innovation.

The MoC aims to keep the KIC 28DIGITAL as an active member of the EIT Community after the expiry of the Partnership Agreement, and which includes the conditions for access to EIT competitive calls for some specific activities and transnational activities with a high Union added value and establishes the general terms and conditions governing the cooperation between the EIT and the KIC after the expiry of the Partnership Agreement.

As part of the activities supported by the MoC, 28DIGITAL has defined the Business Plan 2026-2027 within which this Venture Incubation Program will function and for which the contractual arrangements are being processed, and will be consolidated in an EIT grant for the calendar years 2026 and 2027 ("Relevant "Period,"), hereinafter "the EIT Grant", to the 28DIGITAL in accordance with and subject to the terms and conditions of the (M)GA.

The Grant Agreement (GA)¹ is the contractual instrument laying down the provisions concerning the implementation of the KIC activities (KIC Business Plan, Cross-KIC activities, etc.) through grants, on an annual or multi-annual basis of up to three years with the KICs. Business plans describe the main objectives and expected results and actions taken by the KICs.

The Grant Agreement 2026-2027 between the EIT and 28DIGITAL enters into force on January 1, 2026 once signed.

Contractual framework between the KIC and the subgrantees

In accordance with the Grant Agreement (Annex 5), the KIC launches calls (i.e. open calls or KIC partnership calls) in order to select projects or award prizes. The KIC awards a "financial support to third parties" (i.e. the so called "subgrants" and "prizes") for the implementation of these projects and signs subgrant agreements ("Financial Support Agreements") with the selected entities or consortia.

1.2. Information on 28DIGITAL

1.2.1. Vision and mission

By mobilising a global multi-stakeholder platform, rooted in European values and open to the world, we turn knowledge into innovation, scale startups into global ventures, and build the next generation of digital talent to shape a fair, competitive, and human-centric digital future.

¹ Horizon Europe Model Grant Agreement: [general-mga_horizon-euratom_en.pdf](#)



We operate in domains where digital technology and innovation drive societal progress, addressing major global challenges and delivering tangible benefits for people, businesses, and the planet.

Our focus is on areas that reflect Europe's leadership potential, advancing tech sovereignty, enhancing competitiveness, and supporting a more sustainable and resilient future.

Technologies such as AI, cybersecurity, advanced computing, and robotics are not confined to a single sector; they are powerful enablers of societal transformation, defence and dual-use innovation, and sustainability. Their impact depends on how we develop, apply, and scale them across strategic domain.

28DIGITAL was founded upon the initiative of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), a body of the European Union. 28DIGITAL received EUR 1.1B funding and strategic guidance from the EIT over 15 years as an EIT Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC). Following the successful signature of a Memorandum of Cooperation, the EIT and 28DIGITAL collaborate to further boost innovation in digital transformation across Europe and beyond.

1.2.2 Strategic objectives

This activity is aligned with 28DIGITAL's three strategic domains:

1. Deep Tech

Deep Tech covers breakthrough science-driven technologies that redefine what is possible across health, mobility, manufacturing, computing, and advanced digital infrastructures, including innovations emerging from academic research and technology transfer activities. We are looking for ventures developing novel materials, next-generation computing, AI-powered systems, robotics, sensing, advanced simulation, and enabling technologies backed by strong R&D foundations and significant scalability potential.

Keywords: Deep Tech: advanced computing, AI/ML, robotics, sensors, materials, quantum-inspired, edge/cloud, data systems.

2. Strategic Tech

Strategic Tech includes critical technologies that strengthen Europe's security, autonomy, and geopolitical resilience. This spans cybersecurity, secure digital identity, privacy-preserving data infrastructures, resilient mobility systems, dual-use technologies, trusted AI, edge/cloud sovereign architectures, and solutions supporting national or regional strategic infrastructure.

Keywords: cybersecurity, digital identity, secure data, dual-use tech, mobility systems, situational awareness.



3. Green & Social Tech

Green & Social Tech supports technologies that accelerate Europe’s digital-green transition and strengthen societal well-being. This includes sustainable manufacturing, circular economy models, low-carbon mobility, energy-efficient systems, environmental monitoring, and climate-resilient infrastructure, as well as digital solutions that address social challenges, improve inclusion, enhance public-sector innovation, and modernise essential services (GovTech). We are looking for ventures that combine digital excellence with measurable environmental and/or social impact.

Keywords: circularity, decarbonisation, energy efficiency, sustainable production, climate technologies, GovTech, social impact, community resilience, inclusion-driven innovation.



2. Overview of key information on the call

Call reference number, acronym	Venture Incubation Program 2026 – Start-ups call
Call opening and deadline for applications	Call opening date: 9 April 2026 Deadline for submission of applications: 9 June 2026
Evaluation and implementation timeline (indicative)	Evaluation of proposals: June 2026 Communication of results to applicants: 26 June 2026 Signature of the prize agreement: June 2026 Tentative start of the projects: 6 July 2026 Tentative end of the projects: 31 December 2026
Maximum EIT funding allocated to this call	The maximum EIT funding allocated to this Call is up to EUR 600,000. Maximum funding per startup is EUR 30,000. Based of funding availability we aim to support maximum of 25 startups in Stage 1 (Growth Prize). Funding condition: this collaboration is contingent upon receiving funding from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). If the necessary funding is not secured, 28DIGITAL reserves the right to delay, modify, or cancel any collaboration agreements. Furthermore, 28DIGITAL may adjust agreements based on changes in circumstances or the availability of funding.
List of call documents	Intranet Page with links will all documents/templates and more information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open Call Document • Application form as available on the submission platform • Growth Prize Agreement template • Final Prize Agreement template • SAFE Agreement
List of reference documents (with links)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIT Impact Framework (2022-2027) with codes.pdf • Annotated Grant Agreement
Link to the submission portal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://28digital.eu/venture-incubation-program/ • https://workspaces.28digital.eu/PROMISE/PRIVATE/CUSTOMER/EITDIGITAL/FORMS/VIP2026/vip.aspx
Topics to be addressed	Development or support of early-stage startups and entrepreneurial in following domains: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deep Tech • Strategic Technologies for Europe • Green & Social Tech
Contact point Q&A	For questions contact venture_program@28digital.eu The FAQ containing general questions (in an anonymized form) made by the applicants within the submission period can be found here: https://28digital.eu/venture-incubation-program/



Venture Incubation Program 2026

Further information to interested applicants

Additional Information:

- An information session is scheduled for **9 April 2026** to promote the call and provide guidance to interested entrepreneurs, teams, and early-stage startups.



3. Description of the subject matter of the call

3.1. Purpose and scope of activities

The Venture Incubation Program (VIP) is 28DIGITAL's initiative which reaffirms its commitment to seed, establish, scale, and grow deep-tech ventures across Europe, in alignment with the European Union's agenda to turn the EU into a cradle of world-leading startups and scaleups. This call contributes directly to the objectives articulated in the EU Startup & Scaleup Strategy and echoes the recommendations of the Draghi competitiveness report on fostering innovation and removing barriers to scale in Europe.

The 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program is a two-stage competition whose mission is to support, through a 12-week-long structured training and incubation program, the establishment of digital and deep technology-based ventures, including projects and spin-offs originating from the universities research organisation, and academic laboratories seeking to realise the commercial potential of their innovation. This complies with EIT core KPIs of venture support and venture creation by helping entrepreneurs to:

- Develop and validate a Minimum Viable Product (MVP)
- Incorporate and grow the company in one of the EU Member States
- Position the company for further growth, access to finance, and expansion.

The 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program is supporting a competitive, knowledge-based economy capable of sustainable growth by connecting two sides of the so-called Knowledge Triangle: education and innovation, in collaboration with industry.

The Venture Incubation Program is delivered in collaboration with 28DIGITAL Partners and is designed to connect founders with 28DIGITAL's ecosystem. The program provides access to expert mentors, investors, and partners across Europe, ensuring that individuals from less mature entrepreneurial ecosystems can fully benefit from 28DIGITAL's reach and range of activities.

28DIGITAL reserves the right to choose at its entire discretion and without any further liability on 28DIGITAL's part, to not execute this edition of the program if the number of applications does not reach the required amount for the delivery of the program. 28DIGITAL shall communicate said circumstance to the applicants of the cancelled edition as soon as reasonably possible. In addition, the program will be run under the Funding Condition: this collaboration is contingent upon receiving funding from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). If the necessary funding is not secured, 28DIGITAL reserves the right to delay, modify, or cancel any collaboration agreements. Furthermore, 28DIGITAL may adjust agreements based on changes in circumstances or the availability of funding.

The Venture Incubation Program 2026 focuses on digital innovation in three domains:



- **DeepTech²**: Breakthrough science-based technologies that shape the future of industry and society, transforming what's possible in health, mobility, manufacturing, and beyond.
- **Strategic Tech**: Critical capabilities for security, autonomy, and geopolitical influence, where innovation supports both civil and dual-use applications.
- **Green & Social Tech**: Sustainable technologies that enable the twin digital and green transition, accelerating decarbonization, circularity and social impact.

We understand it is not easy to grow a new venture in these domains, and our goal is to support teams all over Europe to succeed in their ambitions to bring to market new and disruptive technologies.

Thanks to 28DIGITAL's support, you will get access to our European ecosystem of innovators, corporates, Research and Transfer Organisations (RTOs), universities, SMEs, startups and scaleups, and you will receive resources, including financial support, to build your venture, further develop your technology, sign up customers and attract additional investors.

3.2. Main requirements for applicants

The call is open to:

- Multidisciplinary teams (minimum two members), including teams composed of researchers, PhD candidates, or academic innovators, or
- Startups incorporated in 2025 (or later),

provided that applicants are residents of, or established in, one of the following eligible countries:

EU Member States: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

Selected Horizon Europe Associated Countries: Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Türkiye, Ukraine.

Startups incorporated before 1 January 2025 are not eligible.

Applicants must:

- Operate within one of 28DIGITAL's strategic domains.

² Deep technology or DeepTech is a classification of an institution, an organisation or a start-up company, with the expressed objective of providing advanced and emerging technology solutions to deep societal challenges. They present scientific or engineering challenges requiring lengthy research and development, and large capital investment before successful commercialization. Their primary risk is technical risk, while market risk is often significantly lower due to the clear potential value of solution to society. The underlying scientific or engineering problems being solved by DeepTech companies generate valuable intellectual property and are hard to reproduce. Moreover, the solutions provided by deep technology and applications are critical for solving the complex global challenges that humanity faces, including climate change, sustainable energy or health.



- Demonstrate a prototype, Proof-of-Concept, or near-MVP stage.
- Be an early-stage team or startup, before any significant revenue streams are set.
- Submit only one application.

3.3. Main requirements for project implementation

3.3.1 Project duration

The Venture Incubation Program is divided in:

- **Stage 1:** pre-Acceleration Phase (Growth Package)
This corresponds to a 12-week period during which teams receive structured entrepreneurial support, mentoring, investor readiness preparation, and a Demo Day. Completing participation in the pre-Acceleration Phase gives teams access to the Growth Package, a cash prize of EUR 5,000.
- **Stage 2:** Final Prize
This is a performance-based stage awarded based on MVP progress, product-market fit, follow-on funding secured and proof of commercial traction. Teams that have completed Stage 1 successfully and incorporated their company, may apply to Stage 2.

The pre-Acceleration Phase shall include all mandatory program components defined in Annex A.

Stage 2 shall be implemented following successful completion of Stage 1 and incorporation of the venture in one of the EU Member States.

The exact timeline and key dates are specified in the Call document's overview in Chapter 2.

3.3.2. Project implementation

The Venture Incubation Program shall be executed and delivered by 28DIGITAL Partners under the supervision of the Venture Incubation Program Committee. Participants are encouraged to promote gender-balanced team composition, inclusive participation, and equal access to opportunities throughout program implementation.

The program will be delivered by 28DIGITAL Partners under the oversight of the Venture Incubation Program Committee composed of:

- two (2) representatives appointed by 28DIGITAL; and
- two (2) representatives appointed by the Venture Incubation Program Partner.

The Committee is responsible for supervising program delivery, monitoring progress, and ensuring alignment with the objectives of the Venture Incubation Program.

3.3.2.1 Stage 1: pre-Acceleration Phase (Growth Package)

Selected applicants shall participate in a 12-week pre-Acceleration Phase comprising of:



- A two-day bootcamp.
- An eight-week virtual mentoring program.
- A Demo (Pitch) Day.
- Structured MVP validation support.
- Market testing and customer discovery activities.
- Investor readiness preparation.

The Growth Package consists of:

- Participation in the pre-Acceleration Phase of the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program; and
- A cash prize of **EUR 5,000**.

Participation in the pre-Acceleration Phase is mandatory to remain eligible for the program and for progression to Stage 2 (Final Prize).

The pre-Acceleration Phase includes structured entrepreneurial support activities such as a bootcamp, workshops, mentoring delivered by qualified experts, investor readiness preparation, and a Demo Day.

The objective of the Growth Package is to support selected teams in developing and validating their Minimum Viable Product (MVP) and establishing their venture through company incorporation in one of the EU Member States.

Participants are required to actively engage in all mandatory program components.

By the end of Stage 1, participants must demonstrate:

- Development and validation of a functional Minimum Viable Product (MVP).
- Evidence of structured market validation and customer engagement.
- A defined go-to-market and fundraising roadmap.
- Incorporation of one (and only one) legal entity in one of the EU Member States (if applying as a team).

Failure to meet participation or milestone requirements may result in exclusion from Stage 2 and/or withdrawal of support.

3.3.2.1.1 Selected Teams' Obligations

Teams will receive confirmation from 28DIGITAL that they have been selected. 28DIGITAL will then provide them with the following package of documents to sign:

The "Venture Incubation Program 2026-Growth Package PRIZE AGREEMENT", which includes:

- A Rules & Regulations acceptance confirmation;
- Signed copy of a SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) letter,

which will be all countersigned by an authorized representative of 28DIGITAL.

Each team member must sign the agreement within three (3) working days of receiving the electronic signature request. All team members are required to complete the signature within this deadline.



3.3.2.1.2 Growth Package Prize

Signature of all documents listed in Section 3.3.2.1.1 is required in order to receive the Growth Package prize. The prize is awarded as a single package and cannot be divided into separate components. Once all agreements listed in Section 3.3.2.1.1 have been signed, the EUR 5,000 cash prize shall be paid within three weeks to the bank account specified in the application.

Prize winners shall be responsible for any taxes, wire transfer fees, or other costs associated with the payment of the prize amounts.

3.3.2.2 Stage 2: Final Prize

Only applicants who have:

- a) Successfully completed Stage 1; and
- b) Incorporated their venture in one of the EU Member States,

shall be eligible to apply for the Final Prize.

The Final Prize shall be awarded based on performance, including:

- Quality and advancement of the MVP.
- Evidence of product-market fit.
- Follow-on funding secured.
- Demonstrated commercial traction.

3.3.2.2.1 Final Prize Amount

The Final Prize amount consists of three tranches:

1. **EUR 10,000**: first tranche awarded to applications with a cumulative score greater than or equal to 16 (see Section 5.5.2);
2. **EUR 10,000**: second tranche awarded to a maximum of eight (8) ventures that have:
 - a) received or are in the process of receiving a minimum of EUR 50,000 in Follow-on Funding from a third party as defined in Section 3.3.2.2.2 (a), and
 - b) provided Adequate Proof of Follow-on Funding to 28DIGITAL – according to Section 3.3.2.2 (b) – before the 24th of November 2026, 23:59 CET.

The allocation of the second tranche shall be determined on a **first-come, first-served** basis among the ventures participating in the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Programme in 2026.

3. **EUR 5,000**: third tranche awarded to a maximum of four (4) ventures that have received the second tranche and in addition have successfully deployed their product/service in the market and achieved commercial traction as defined in Sections 3.3.2.2 (c) and 3.3.2.2 (d).



3.3.2.2.2 Definitions of Follow-on funding & Adequate Proof of Follow-on Funding, Commercial Traction & Adequate Proof of Commercial Traction

a. Definition of Follow-on Funding

Follow-on Funding is defined as either:

- a signed commitment (e.g. term sheet) on the provision of funding of at least EUR 50,000 in cash by a third party with a clearly expressed interest in acquiring equity in the applicant's company. Loans, without the intent to acquire equity in the applicant's company, are excluded. Convertible notes with the provision to convert into equity are included;

Or

- a signed cash prize commitment from a third party of at least EUR 50,000 awarded to the incorporated venture for their achievements.

b. Definition of Adequate Proof of Follow-on Funding

Adequate Proof of Follow-on Funding is defined as a written contract signed and stamped where required, by both the incorporated applicant venture and the third party fund provider before the 24th of November 2026, 23:59 CET.

c. Definition of Commercial Traction

Commercial Traction is defined as either

- a documented sales revenue of at least EUR 10,000;

Or

- at least 200 satisfied users in the case of open access products or services.

d. Definition of Adequate Proof of Commercial Traction

Adequate Proof of Commercial Traction is a proof of sale defined as documents, such as invoices or online sales records, certifying cumulated financial transactions sold to a customer for at least EUR 10,000.

Exceptionally 28DIGITAL can consider substitute evidence documents such as a sales contract or an order form dated and signed by the customer with the time frame of the purchase and price indicated.

For open access:

Declaration of honour or links to websites showing the number of users who downloaded the product or service, and the number of users who provided satisfactory feedback.

The proofs must be provided by electronic means via the online application platform.

Submissions will be possible from the start of the Final Prize submission period until the 24th of November 2026 23:59 CET. 28DIGITAL does not take responsibility for technical problems on the website.



The timestamp of the receipt of the proof document, as registered by the application portal, shall determine eligibility, as only the first ten (10) submissions will be considered eligible. Applicants from all regional editions of the program may qualify for the second and third tranches of the Final Prize.

The validity of the submitted documentation will be checked and confirmed by 28DIGITAL's Legal Department only after the 25th of November 2026. No information regarding the validity of the submitted proof or the number of requests received for the second tranche of the Final Prize will be shared with applicants before that date.

28DIGITAL shall publish on its website, in the section dedicated to the Venture Incubation Program, the list of ventures that have provided adequate proof of follow-on funding and proof of commercial traction in accordance with this clause, together with the timestamp of receipt of the proof documents registered by 28DIGITAL.

3.3.2.2.3 Selected Ventures' Obligations

Ventures will receive confirmation from 28DIGITAL that they have been selected. 28DIGITAL will then provide them with the following package of documents to sign:

The "Venture Incubation Program 2026-Final PRIZE AGREEMENT", which includes among other documents:

- Conditions from the Framework Participation Agreement (FPA), and
- the set of Rules & Regulations.

Each team member must sign the agreement within three (3) working days of receiving the electronic signature request. All team members are required to complete the signature within this deadline.

3.3.2.2.4 Final Prize Payment

Signature of the documents in Section 3.2.2.3 is required to receive the first tranche of the Final Prize. If all agreements in Section 3.3.2.3 have been executed, the EUR 10,000 cash prize shall be issued within no more than two weeks. If applications qualify for the second tranche of the Final Prize, as defined in Section 3.3.2.1, and meet the requirements in Section 3.3.2.2, the second tranche of EUR 10,000 shall be issued no later than the 31st of December 2026. The Final Prize can only be awarded to a single venture.

Prize winners shall be responsible for any taxes, wire transfer fees, or other costs associated with the payment of the prize amounts.

3.3.2.2.5 Equity Commitment

Participation in the Venture Incubation Program implies the commitment of participating ventures to provide equity to 28DIGITAL.

Ventures that incorporate a company during or following participation in the program, or startups that are already incorporated at the time of application, shall grant five percent (5%) equity to 28DIGITAL, in



accordance with the terms of the SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) Agreement provided by 28DIGITAL.

This equity commitment applies irrespective of whether the venture is awarded the Final Prize.

Ventures are expected to execute the SAFE Agreement within the timeframe specified by 28DIGITAL following company incorporation or, in the case of already incorporated startups, following admission to the program.

3.3.3. Deliverables

Participants shall submit the following deliverables during program implementation:

- Evidence of MVP development and validation.
- Documentation of market testing and customer engagement.
- Incorporation certificate (where applicable).
- Final presentation materials submitted for evaluation.
- Documentation required for KPI reporting.

All deliverables shall be submitted in accordance with the formats and deadlines specified by 28DIGITAL.

3.3.4. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Venture Incubation Program contributes to relevant EIT Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including but not limited to:

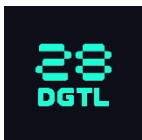
- EITHE03.1 – Supported startups.
- EITHE02.4 – Innovations launched on the market.
- EITHE06.1 – Investment raised.
- RIS-related indicators, where applicable.

Participants shall support the collection and provision of evidence necessary for KPI reporting during and after program completion. 28DIGITAL shall conduct structured monitoring throughout program implementation. Monitoring may include milestone verification, participation tracking, progress assessment, and KPI validation. In cases of non-compliance, underperformance, or failure to meet agreed milestones, 28DIGITAL reserves the right to reduce, suspend, or terminate participation and/or financial support.

3.3.5. Monitoring and reporting

Participants shall comply with 28DIGITAL's monitoring and reporting requirements. Monitoring shall include:

- Participation tracking.



- Verification of deliverables.
- Milestone assessment.
- KPI documentation and evidence collection.
- Financial reporting (where applicable).

Participants may be required to provide follow-up impact data after completion of the program, including information on:

- Revenue generation.
- Investment raised.
- Job creation.
- Commercialization progress.

28DIGITAL reserves the right to request additional documentation to verify reported achievements.

Failure to comply with monitoring and reporting obligations may result in reduction, suspension, or recovery of financial support.

3.3.6. Fast-Tracking conditions and requirements

Below are the conditions and requirements governing the fast-tracking of the best-performing participants from the EIT-labelled programs **SpeedMaster >_NextGen** and **SPIN: Rise**, into **Stage 1** of the Venture Incubation Program.

This mechanism is designed to ensure that high-potential teams can enter the incubation pathway efficiently, based on demonstrated performance, commitment, and readiness.

SpeedMaster >_NextGen

Participants must fulfil all the following conditions to qualify for fast-track:

1. Enrolled and actively participated in the SpeedMaster>_Next Gen program.
2. Submitted all required deliverables following each lesson.
3. Prepared and submitted a final pitch deck using the predefined template, demonstrating application of the knowledge acquired throughout the program.
4. Achieved a minimum overall score of 75/100 in the program assessments.
5. No individual evaluation component is graded below 50%.

Estimated Number of Fast-Tracked Participants

It is anticipated that **4–8 ventures** from SpeedMaster >_NextGen will meet the above criteria and be fast-tracked into Stage 1 of the Venture Incubation Program.



SPIN: Rise

Participants must fulfil all the following conditions to qualify for fast-track:

1. Completed 80% of the mandatory online sessions and completed the in-person SPIN: Rise Bootcamp.
2. Prepared and submitted a final pitch deck using the predefined template, demonstrating application of the knowledge acquired throughout the program.
3. Are selected by the Jury during the in-person SPIN: Rise Bootcamp, based on the following criteria:
 - Clarity, structure, and engagement of the presentation for a non-expert audience.
 - Thoughtfulness and effectiveness in responding to Jury questions and handling uncertainty.

Estimated Number of Fast-Tracked Participants

It is anticipated that **3-5 participants** from each track of SPIN: Rise will meet the above criteria and be fast-tracked into Stage 1 of the Venture Incubation Program.

4. Financial aspects of the call

4.1. KIC funding

The total prize budget allocated to the Venture Incubation Program 2026 amounts to EUR 600,000, subject to the availability of funding from the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

Financial support under this call consists exclusively of prize-based funding, structured in two stages:

- A Growth Prize of EUR 5,000, awarded to selected participants in Stage 1.
- A Final Prize of EUR 10,000 (first tranche only), EUR 20,000 (first and second tranche) or EUR 25,000 (first, second and third tranche), awarded in Stage 2 based on performance.

The number of selected participants and the distribution of Final Prizes shall depend on the available budget and the quality of applications received. 28DIGITAL reserves the right to adjust the number of selected participants and/or prize allocations within the limits of the total budget.

4.2. Co-funding rate

No financial co-funding is required from participating teams or startups under this call.

4.3. Payment arrangements

Financial support under this call is provided in the form of prizes and is not based on reimbursement of actual costs. The following agreements shall govern participation:

- Growth Prize Agreement (Stage 1).



- SAFE Agreement (Stage 1).
- Final Prize Agreement (Stage 2).

The Growth Prize shall be paid upon signature of the Growth Prize Agreement and SAFE.

The Final Prize shall be payable only to incorporated ventures that successfully complete Stage 1, and:

- Fulfil all eligibility requirements.
- Meet the defined performance criteria.
- Sign the Final Prize Agreement.

All payments are subject to compliance with monitoring, reporting, and contractual obligations.

Participants shall be responsible for any taxes, fees, or other costs associated with receipt of the prize.

4.4 Financial sustainability requirements

In alignment with 28DIGITAL's financial sustainability strategy, incorporated ventures participating in the program will enter a SAFE (Simple Agreement for Future Equity) with 28DIGITAL.

The SAFE constitutes a contractual commitment to provide future equity of five percent (5%) to 28DIGITAL under defined terms and conditions. The SAFE mechanism forms part of 28DIGITAL's long-term sustainability and portfolio development strategy.

4.5 Cost eligibility

As financial support is awarded in the form of prizes, no cost reporting or reimbursement of actual costs is required.

5. Call criteria

Following the deadline for submission, the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria checks will be performed for each proposal in line with the following criteria.

5.1. Admissibility

Applications will be considered admissible if they are:

- submitted before the deadline indicated in the Call documentation.
- submitted through the designated online application platform.
- complete and contain all required sections and mandatory declarations.
- submitted in English.
- respecting the page limits, formatting instructions, and file requirements (if applicable).
- clearly readable, accessible in standard digital formats and do not contain corrupted, password-protected, or unreadable files.



Applications that do not comply with the admissibility criteria shall not be evaluated further. Any proposals submitted after the deadline will be inadmissible. Only proposals satisfying all the admissibility criteria shall pass on to the eligibility criteria assessment stage.

5.2 Eligibility

Following the admissibility check, only proposals complying with the following conditions will be considered eligible for further evaluation:

- A multidisciplinary team composed of at least two (2) individuals; including teams composed of researchers, PhD candidates, or academic innovators, or
- A startup incorporated in 2025 (or later). Startups incorporated before 1 January 2025 are not eligible.
- Applicants must be residents of, or established in, one of the eligible countries defined in Section 3.2 of this Call.
- Each team or startup may submit one (1) application only.

5.3 Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participation in the Call and from the award if they are in one of the situations referred to in Article 138(1) of the EU Financial Regulation. Applicants that are subject to EU administrative sanctions (i.e. exclusion) or are in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU grants can NOT participate:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- they are in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- they are guilty of grave professional misconduct (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- they are guilty of fraud, corruption, having links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- they have shown significant deficiencies in complying with their main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).



- they are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/9534 (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant); or
- they have created under a different jurisdiction an entity with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).
- have misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or have failed to supply that information; or
- were previously involved in the preparation of documents used in the award procedure where this entails a breach of the principle of equality of treatment, including distortion of competition, that cannot be remedied otherwise.

5.4 Selection criteria

5.4.1 Growth Prize

The selection process will focus on how well the team has prepared the submission and how convincingly the venture demonstrates readiness to develop and validate an MVP and establish a new company. Submissions that describe exciting technological breakthroughs, including research-driven innovations, but fail to show a clear path to commercialisation will not score well. **The goal of the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program is not to fund science, but to support the execution of the MVP and the establishment of a scalable venture.**

The selection will focus in particular on:

- The solution to a clearly identified market challenge within one of the 28DIGITAL strategic domains and the fit of the envisioned MVP to solve such a challenge, demonstrated by validation of at least a first mock-up prototype.
- The venture's business model, how it will be implemented and its scalability.
- Of the utmost importance, the quality of the team and its capability to execute the identified strategy, including clearly identified technical and business skills.
- The overall quality of the submission and clarity of communication.

5.4.2 Final Prize

The selection for Stage 2 (Final Prize) will focus on ventures that:

- Have successfully completed Stage 1.
- Have developed and validated an MVP.
- Have incorporated one (and only one) company in one of the EU Member States.
- Are able to sign the Final Prize Agreement.

Only applicants meeting these conditions may proceed to Stage 2 evaluation.



5.5 Award criteria

5.5.1 Stage 1: Growth Package

Maximum cumulative score (a-c) : 30 points.

Minimum cumulative score (a-c): 16 points.

(a) Excellence	Maximum cumulative score: 10
Is the proposed product or service based on a credible and feasible technological or innovation concept, with a clear development stage, meaningful differentiation from existing solutions, and an appropriate approach to intellectual property where relevant?	5
Does the proposed product or service demonstrate a clear and compelling value proposition, identifiable customer benefits, and a meaningful improvement compared to existing alternatives or current practices?	5

(b) Impact	Maximum cumulative score: 10
Does the team clearly identify the target customer and the business or market need being addressed, with credible evidence that the problem is significant and that there is potential demand for the proposed solution?	5
Does the proposed solution demonstrate credible potential for market growth, scalability, and expansion beyond the initial market, with indications that it could become attractive for future investment?	5

(c) Quality and efficiency of the implementation	Maximum cumulative score: 10
Does the team demonstrate the appropriate balance of technical and business expertise, motivation, and operational capacity to implement the work effectively, including evidence of a gender-balanced team or credible measures to foster gender balance in the team and decision-making roles?	5



(c) Quality and efficiency of the implementation	Maximum cumulative score: 10
Has the team identified the main risks related to technology, market adoption, and regulatory or legal factors, and do they show credible understanding of how these risks could be managed?	5

Each sub-criterion will be scored from 0 (Insufficient) to 5 (Excellent):

0 – Insufficient: The criterion is not addressed or is addressed in a very limited manner.

1 – Poor: The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious weaknesses.

2 – Fair: The application broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses.

3 – Good: The application addresses the criterion well but some shortcomings are present.

4 – Very Good: The application addresses the criterion very well with minor shortcomings.

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

5.5.2 Stage 2: Final Prize

Only ventures meeting the Stage 2 Selection Criteria (Section 5.4.2) will be evaluated. Evaluation will follow the same three criteria and the same 0–5 scoring scale.

(a) Excellence	Maximum cumulative score: 10
Is the MVP developed to an advanced and functional level, demonstrating practical implementation beyond a conceptual or “paper-based” solution?	5
Has the team developed the MVP around clearly prioritised “minimum” features, supported by explicit hypotheses regarding user needs, functionality, or performance that are being tested?	5

(b) Impact	Maximum score: 5
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Based on the MVP testing, does the team provide credible evidence that the solution meets real customer needs, supported by analysis of target users and qualitative or quantitative validation results?	5
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(c) Quality and efficiency of the implementation	Maximum score: 5
Does the MVP validation generate data of sufficient quality and relevance to support conclusions about the solution’s feasibility, customer value, or market potential?	5

Maximum cumulative score (a-c): 20 points.

Minimum cumulative score (a-c): 16 points.

Final Prize awards will be granted based on ranking, available budget, and compliance with program obligations, including signature of the SAFE Agreement.

Each sub-criterion will be scored from 0 (Insufficient) to 5 (Excellent):

- 0 – Insufficient: The criterion is not addressed or is addressed in a very limited manner.
- 1 – Poor: The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair: The application broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – Good: The application addresses the criterion well but some shortcomings are present.
- 4 – Very Good: The application addresses the criterion very well with minor shortcomings.
- 5 – Excellent: The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

6. Evaluation procedure

6.1 Admissibility and eligibility, exclusion and selection stages

Following the deadline for submission, the evaluation will consist of the following steps:

Admissibility check (Section 5.1)



Eligibility check (Section 5.2)

Exclusion check (Section 5.3)

Selection criteria (Section 5.4)

6.2 Evaluation of proposals

6.2.1 Stage 1: Growth Package

Each eligible application will be evaluated by at least three (3) Selection Panel members, including at least two (2) external experts. The evaluation will follow this procedure:

1. Individual assessment by each panel member.
2. Scoring of each sub-criterion from 0 to 5.
3. Written comments for each criterion.
4. Consensus meeting to agree on final scores.

Based on the consensus scores:

1. A ranking list will be established.
2. Up to 30% of the highest-scoring evaluated proposals, with a maximum of 35 teams, will be invited to the interview stage.

During the interview phase, the Selection Panel will assess:

1. Technological understanding.
2. Market awareness.
3. Team capability.
4. Execution readiness.

Scores may be confirmed or adjusted following the interviews. A final ranking will then be established. Growth Packages will be awarded according to:

1. Final ranking.
2. Available budget.

With EUR 600,000 available, we aim to support a maximum of 25 startups in Stage 1 (Growth Package). A reserve list may be established.

In case of a score tie, priority may be given to the proposal with the higher score under the Impact criterion.

6.2.2 Stage 2: Final Prize

Only ventures that:

1. Successfully completed Stage 1.
2. Incorporated their startup in one of the EU Member States.
3. Complied with program requirements.



may apply for the Final Prize. Applications will be evaluated by at least three (3) Selection Panel members, including at least two (2) external experts. The evaluation will include:

1. Individual assessment.
2. Scoring from 0 to 5 for each of the four sub-criteria.
3. Consensus meeting to agree on final scores.

A final ranking will be established based on the cumulative score across sub-criteria (maximum 20 points). Final Prize awards will be granted based on:

1. Ranking.
2. Available budget.
3. Compliance with contractual obligations, including signature of the SAFE Agreement.

In case of a score tie, priority may be given to the proposal with the higher score under the Impact criterion.

6.2.3. Assessment methodology

The assessment of proposals will be carried out in accordance with the award criteria defined in Section 5.5. Each eligible application will be evaluated by at least three (3) Selection Panel members, including at least two (2) external experts with relevant technical and business expertise. Each sub-criterion will be scored on a scale from 0 to 5, defined as follows:

- 0 – Insufficient: The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor: The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair: The proposal broadly addresses the criterion but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – Good: The proposal addresses the criterion well, but some shortcomings are present.
- 4 – Very Good: The proposal addresses the criterion very well, with only minor shortcomings.
- 5 – Excellent: The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are negligible.

The assessment will follow a two-step procedure:

1. Individual evaluation.

Each Selection Panel member will:

- Independently review the proposal.
- Score each sub-criterion from 0 to 5.
- Provide qualitative comments justifying the assigned scores.

2. Consensus meeting.

After completion of the individual evaluations, the Selection Panel will hold a consensus meeting to:

- Discuss individual scores and comments.



- Agree on a final score for each sub-criterion.
- Establish a ranked list of proposals.

The consensus meeting score will constitute the official evaluation result.

Where interviews are foreseen (Stage 1), shortlisted applicants will be invited to an online interview and pitch session. Following the interview, the Selection Panel may confirm or adjust the evaluation scores if the additional information provided justifies it. The final ranking will be established based on the cumulative score across all sub-criteria.

In case of a score tie, priority may be given to the proposal with the higher score under the Impact criterion.

All evaluations will be conducted under confidentiality and in the absence of conflicts of interest.

6.2.4 Results of the evaluation: award, reserve list

28DIGITAL reserves the right to establish a reserve list for those proposals passing all thresholds that due to budget constraints cannot be funded. The duration of the reserve list is 75 days from the start of the activity execution. The validity of the reserve list may be extended by decision of 28DIGITAL's Management Committee.

6.3 Communication of evaluation results to applicants

6.3.1 Communication of evaluation results

All applicants will be informed in writing of the outcome of the evaluation process.

Successful applicants will receive instructions regarding:

- Signature of the Growth Prize Agreement and SAFE Agreement (Stage 1).
- Signature of the Final Prize Agreement (Stage 2).

Failure to sign the required agreements within the specified timeframe may result in withdrawal of the award.

6.4 Publication of recipients of prizes

The KIC shall make available (on a dedicated page on its website) information on recipients of funds (only legal persons or entities without a legal personality) financed from the EIT budget, no later than 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the funds were legally committed.

The following information shall be published, having due regard for the requirements of confidentiality and security, in particular the protection of personal data:

(a) the recipient's full legal name and the country where it is established.

(b) the amount committed and, in case of a commitment with multiple recipients, the breakdown of this amount per recipient where available.



(c) subject of grant or contract.

6.5 Appeal process

28DIGITAL will address, in good faith and in a timely manner, any appeal relating to the outcome of the selection process described in this document.

Appeals shall be addressed to the attention of the [Venture Incubation Program Team](#) by factually underpinning the alleged errors in the selection process followed by 28DIGITAL within 5 business days date of publication of the results. The Venture Incubation Program Team will examine the appeal and, if possible, grounds for appeal are found, then the appeal will be sent for a consideration by the Management Committee. The 28DIGITAL Management Committee will review the appeal and make a final decision.

The grounds for appeal are:

- Process errors
- Technical problems beyond the control of applicants (not related with submission in the last minute)
- Obvious human/mechanical errors made by 28DIGITAL staff.

Please note: Experts provide independent assessment, and their scoring and feedback cannot be re-evaluated in the appealing process by 28DIGITAL. Therefore, disagreement with the scores or comments of the evaluators does not constitute admissible grounds for a request for review.

7. Other terms and conditions

7.1 Acceptance of the call conditions

28DIGITAL reserves the right to make reasonable amendments and additions to the call conditions. Amendments and additions to the call conditions shall be valid only before the submission deadline, and if made available to all potential applicants at the same time on the top of the call page of the Venture Incubation Program 2026.

28DIGITAL may declare the extend the call application period in case no sufficient number and/or quality of applications are received, or if the applications do not meet the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria.

By submitting the application form, the applicant agrees to the present call conditions. Applicants agree that they have no legal entitlement to funding.



7.2 Cancellation of the call

28DIGITAL reserves the right to cancel the call at any time before the signature of the Prize Agreement(s) without the obligation to compensate applicants, in particular where its objectives can no longer be met, provided that the applicants are informed in a transparent manner in writing as follows:

- If the cancellation takes place before the award: on the call page of the 28DIGITAL website.
- If the cancellation takes place following the communication of the results to the applicants: during the standstill period or any time before the signature of the Prize Agreement in writing directly to the selected applicants.

7.3 Data protection

28DIGITAL ensures that any processing of personal data shall be performed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). As a data subject, you have the right of access, the right to rectification, the right to erasure, the right to restrict processing, the right to data portability, the right to object, and the right not to be subject to a decision based solely on automated processing. If you have a question about personal data processing or want to exercise your data subject rights, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at privacy@28DIGITAL.eu

The collected personal data will be used solely for the evaluation of the applications and the conduct of the call process. The data controller is the Venture Incubation Program Team.

Personal data will be deleted 5 years after the announcement of the results of the call in case of unsuccessful applications and 7 years for successful applicants.

By submitting your application to this call, you consent that 28DIGITAL will collect, transfer, process, store, and delete your data in accordance with the aforementioned conditions.

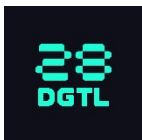
For more information on the processing of your personal data, please consult the privacy statement of 28DIGITAL at <https://28DIGITAL.eu/legal-notice>

7.4 Confidentiality

28DIGITAL undertakes to use any confidential information shared by the applicants solely for the purposes of the evaluation process.

Confidential information shall mean data and/or information (in any form) that is proprietary to, or possessed by, the applicants and not generally known to the public, or that has not yet been revealed whether in tangible or intangible form, that is identified as confidential in writing or when disclosed orally.

Confidential information included in the application form must be expressly labelled by the applicant as such in the form. As regards confidential information expressly labelled as such in the call process,



28DIGITAL undertakes to (i) not disclose them in any way and any form, without the prior written authorization of the applicant; and (ii) not to use them for purposes other than those strictly necessary for participation in the call.

Confidential information may be shared among 28DIGITAL and its subsidiaries solely for the purposes of the call process. 28DIGITAL undertakes to impose this confidentiality obligation on its employees and the employees of its subsidiaries and its collaborators, as well as on independent experts and all subjects who, by virtue of participating in the conduct of the call, including as members of the Evaluation Committee, may have access to such confidential data and information.

The applicants agree that data and information regarding the selected projects' implementation (e.g. success stories) not labelled as confidential may be disclosed in connection with the activities of 28DIGITAL.

7.5 Avoidance of conflict of interest

28DIGITAL is committed to ensure the avoidance of conflict of interest (regarding all actors) and comply with the principles of transparency, non-discrimination and sound financial management.

Measures to avoid potential conflict of interest or unequal treatment of applicants are ensured including through appropriate conflict of interest declaration and assessment process, established written communication channels and independent and fair complaints/redress procedures.

In case an applicant becomes aware of a potential conflict of interest affecting the conduct of the call process, it shall notify 28DIGITAL of the conflict of interest without any delay.

7.6 Ethics and values

The proposal must comply with:

- ethical principles (including the highest standards of research integrity) and
- applicable EU, international and national law, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and its Supplementary Protocols.

No financial support/EIT funding can be granted, within or outside the EU, for activities that are prohibited in all Member States. No financial support/EIT funding can be granted in a Member State for an activity which is forbidden in that Member State.

Please refer to the financial support agreement for further requirements.

7.7 Intellectual property rights

Applicants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. By submitting their application, applicants confirm that they own or lawfully hold, and have secured or



will secure in due time, all rights and permissions necessary to use all elements of the innovative product or service included in their application, or that they will take appropriate measures to secure and protect such rights during the project. Applicants agree to indemnify and hold harmless 28DIGITAL, the EIT, and/or any assignee or affiliate from any third-party allegations or claims of intellectual property rights infringement by the product or service of applicants. Applicants shall have the right to further develop, use and license their intellectual property rights for creating, making, marketing, and distributing products, services, and technology. Applicants agree to respect the IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) Rules (Article 16) of the [Model Grant Agreement](#) and Article 10 of the Financial Support Agreement (Common Subgrant Agreement Model).

7.8 Withdrawal of the funding – Recovery of undue amounts

28DIGITAL may withdraw the funding after its award and recover all payments made in line with the provisions of the Financial Support Agreement (Article 7.4.), including in the following cases:

- In case the applicant committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud.
- In case the applicant committed serious breach of obligations under the Financial Support Agreement or during its award (including non-compliance with the call conditions, submission of false information, failure to provide required information, etc.).
- It is established that the awarded applicants were not eligible or should have been excluded.

7.9 Checks, reviews, audits and investigations

28DIGITAL retains the right to initiate checks, reviews and audit on an applicant that has been awarded funding, in order to verify compliance with the requirements of the call conditions and of the legal and contractual framework referred to above.

28DIGITAL may request any information and data from applicants that have been awarded funding for 5 years after completion for these purposes, as well as in relation to monitoring by the EIT.

In accordance with the Grant Agreement between the EIT and the KIC as well as the Financial Support Agreement, the EIT and/or the Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) and the Court of Auditors may carry out checks, reviews, audits and investigations in relation to the call and the implementation of the projects.

7.10 Communication, Dissemination and Promotion

There is no requirement for a formal dissemination plan for participating startups. However, all teams are required to participate in media and reporting activities related to the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:



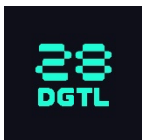
- All teams will be asked to provide, during the Bootcamp, a 500-character description (without spaces) in English. This description may be made available to the media and may be released publicly, either in part or in its entirety.
- All teams may be requested to participate in media interviews related to the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program and when requested by the Venture Incubation Program Committee. Where possible, the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program organisers will provide media coaching and mentoring prior to such engagements.
- All teams may be asked to provide quotes and/or content for press releases related to the 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program, when requested by the Venture Incubation Program Committee.
- Teams must display the 28DIGITAL logo together with the following text on their website (if applicable), in a visible location.
- Relevant communication guidelines will be shared with the teams during the program.
- Participation in media and press opportunities does not require teams to disclose any proprietary or confidential business information. The Venture Incubation Program Committee agrees to provide consultation to any team, upon request, to avoid such disclosures while participating in press-related activities.
- The 28DIGITAL Venture Incubation Program will conduct at least one annual impact survey, which all participants are obliged to complete. The survey may request information including, but not limited to, jobs created, financing raised, revenue generated, and other relevant impact indicators. This reporting obligation will apply for a period of seven (7) years following participation in the program.

28DIGITAL will use the collected information in aggregate form only. Any discrete or individual use of the data will require prior approval from the participant concerned.

Visibility: The European Flag and Funding Statement

Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the partners must inform 28DIGITAL.

Visibility: Unless otherwise agreed with 28DIGITAL, communication activities of the partners related to the Activity (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by 28DIGITAL must acknowledge the EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement (translated into local languages where appropriate). Other allowed layouts/backgrounds can be found in the 28DIGITAL Intranet.



Initiated by the European Institute
of Innovation and Technology (EIT)



The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text. Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EU support. When displayed in association with other logos (e.g. logos of partners), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos. For the purposes of their obligations under this section, the partners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from 28DIGITAL. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means.

Quality of Information: Disclaimer

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

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

“Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or 28DIGITAL. Neither the European Union nor 28DIGITAL can be held responsible for them.”

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

7.11 Applicable law

The present call is governed by the applicable European Union legal framework (i.e. in particular the [EIT Regulation](#)³, the [EU Financial Regulation](#)⁴, the [Horizon Europe Regulation](#)⁵), supplemented if necessary by the national law of Belgium.

The applicants agree to observe the obligations outlined in the related agreements signed between the EIT and 28DIGITAL. Applicants agree to comply with the terms of the Model Prize Agreement between successful applicants and 28DIGITAL, available as an Annex.

³ Regulation (EU) 2021/819

⁴ Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/695



7.12 Settlement of disputes

All disputes arising out of or in connection with this Agreement, which cannot be solved amicably, shall be finally settled before the courts of Brussels.



Annex 1 – Timeline

Timeline:

Action	Date
Submission system opens	9 April 2026
Info session	Info Session: 27 April 2026
Closure of the submission system	9 June 2026 at 17:00 CET
Communication to non-eligible activities	12 June 2026
Invitation of pre-selected startups for interviews & Communication to non-selected activities	22 June 2026
Selection interviews (mandatory for the selected proposals)	24 – 26 June 2026
Feedback to selected/rejected startups	26 June 2026
Standstill period	26 June – 3 July 2026
Program start	6 July 2026