

Champions for the Digital Decade Financial Support to Third Parties

Guidelines for applicants

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Introduction

This document aims to assist applicants submitting proposals for the Financial Support to Third Parties call under the Champions for Digital Decade project. It contains information on eligibility criteria, evaluation procedure, submission requirements and timeline for the call.

Key Figures

Total funding	Up to 180,000 EUR
Funding per National Coalition	New National Coalition: 60,000 EUR Existing National Coalition: 45,000 EUR
Number of projects to be funded	Up to 4 NCs
Target applicants	New and established National Coalitions for Digital Skills and Jobs
When	Deadline: 31 August 2025
Start of the project	October 2025
End of the project	February 2027



Context of the call

Europe faces a critical shortage of digital skills, which poses a challenge to the adoption of emerging technologies and the competitiveness of the internal market. To address this, the Digital Decade Policy Programme has set targets for 2030, including ensuring that 80% of adults have at least basic digital skills, reaching 20 million ICT professionals, and promoting gender inclusion in the tech sector. These efforts are complemented by the Union of Skills objectives, which aim to deliver higher levels of both basic and advanced digital skills and to provide individuals with continuous opportunities to update and acquire new skills.

Supporting these goals, the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP) serves as a central hub for digital skills-related information, training, and funding across Europe. National Coalitions (NCs) play a key role in this ecosystem by connecting individuals and businesses to relevant digital initiatives through their national websites, which are linked to the DSJP for sharing best practices, funding opportunities, and stakeholder engagement.

The Champions for the Digital Decade (C4DD) project, launched in March 2025 under the Digital Europe Programme, aims to strengthen national digital skills ecosystems. The project supports the continuity and technical upgrades of existing NC websites, while facilitating the formation of National Coalitions in Member States where none exist and connecting them to DSJP. Enhancing the visibility and accessibility of national digital skills initiatives at the European level is a key objective, ensuring that information about training, jobs, and opportunities reaches a wider audience. C4DD builds on earlier initiatives supported through the CEF-TC-2019 and 2020 calls and is implemented by a consortium of 17 partners from across the EU.

To further extend its impact, C4DD is launching a Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) mechanism to fund NCs outside the consortium in establishing or upgrading their websites and integrating them with DSJP. This initiative fosters collaboration, knowledge sharing, and inclusion, directly contributing to the goals of the Digital Europe Programme and strengthening Europe's digital resilience and competitiveness.



Scope

The FSTP mechanism will provide targeted financial assistance to National Coalitions—both newly formed and existing—to support the implementation of activities outlined in this call. National Coalitions are multistakeholder partnerships that bring together a diverse range of actors—including ICT and ICT-intensive companies, training providers, education and employment ministries, public and private employment services, and civil society organisations—with the aim of developing concrete measures to deliver digital skills at every level of society within their countries.

For new National Coalitions, this includes their establishment and the development of national websites that are seamlessly integrated with the Core Platform and interoperable with national, regional, and local stakeholders. For existing National Coalitions with websites already funded under the CEF-TC 2019–2020 calls, FSTP will support the upgrading and maintenance of digital infrastructure, enhancement of data exchange capabilities, and improved usability and accessibility to foster greater stakeholder engagement and content dissemination.

The allocation of FSTP will be based on the scope and scale of activities to be performed by each NC. This mechanism will play a crucial role in strengthening the overall network of NCs, fostering collaboration and ensuring effective skills development across all participating countries.

Outcomes and deliverables

The outcomes of this FSTP call will vary depending on the status of the National Coalition applicants. The main distinction lies in Activity 1, as newly established NCs or those without a national website will be required to develop a new national website and connect it to the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (DSJP). Existing NCs with operational websites will receive funding for the technical maintenance, upgrading, and security updates of their platforms. All National Coalition applicants must implement the activities outlined in Activity 2 and Activity 3 to ensure a cohesive and comprehensive approach to digital skills development across Europe.

In **Activity 1:** Web Development, new National Coalitions must develop a national website/database that will serve as a structured and coherent web antenna to the DSJP, providing content and data on digital skills and jobs in the official language(s) of their country. These websites must include interoperable links to the Core Platform, ensuring alignment with technical specifications. For NCs with existing national websites, the focus will be on upgrading, maintenance, and implementing security updates, ensuring continued functionality and reliability.

Activity 2: Services, Content, and Community-Related Activities will require all NCs to develop and manage relevant digital skills content on their national websites. This includes presenting information about the National Coalition and its members, as well as curating and displaying relevant EU initiatives,



funding opportunities, events, and training resources from the Core Platform. Each NC will implement an interoperable repository of good practices connected to the Core Platform and a repository of resources on digital skills, including strategies, training materials, case studies, and non-proprietary MOOCs. They will also highlight advanced digital skills training opportunities, ensuring accessibility across various learning formats and educational providers.

To further support digital skills promotion, NCs will present funding opportunities at national and EU levels, publish relevant events in an online calendar, and produce news and skills intelligence reports to inform stakeholders about digital skills needs in their country. Additionally, they will organise webinars, online events, and peer-to-peer learning exchanges, contributing to the knowledge-sharing and community-building efforts of DSJP. Communication, promotion, and community management activities will also be a key focus, ensuring the visibility and engagement of stakeholders through press releases, newsletters, social media, and digital outreach strategies.

Activity 3: Post-Editing and Localisation of Content will ensure that all National Coalitions translate and localise relevant content between English and their official language(s), making information accessible to national audiences while also sharing valuable national insights with the wider European digital skills community. This includes translating and reviewing EU policy information, skills intelligence, best practices, funding and training opportunities, news, and events. To facilitate efficient translation, NCs will have access to the European Commission's translation system (eTranslation), with the responsibility of reviewing and refining machine-generated translations before publication results.

Concrete actions

More concretely the objectives stated above will be addressed via a number of concrete actions. National Coalitions websites are a gateway to variety of opportunities to empower citizens and organisation into their digital transition by offering relevant training opportunities, news, events, expert articles, etc to support skilling and upskilling. In particular, with regard to the outputs published on the National Coalitions websites, every National Coalition will meet the following KPIs:

- Launch a national website and connect it to the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform (for newly established National Coalitions).
- Presentation of the National Coalition and its members/activities in 4 categories
- Overview of relevant national and regional strategies with description
- Overview of EU initiatives and programmes in digital skills and jobs, relevant news and events
- Presentation of 20 good practices from the national/regional/local level, with in depth
- Presentation of 3 good practices
- Presentation of 8 good practices from the Core Platform published on the national website
- Presentation of 10 resources on digital skills



- Presentation of 50 training opportunities targeting different groups of end-users
- Presentation of 10 national and international financing opportunities in the field of digital skills
- Publication of at least 20 relevant events in the calendar
- Publication of at least 3 original news/announcements per month
- Publication of at least 3 news/announcements per month transferred from the Core Platform
- Publication and distribution of 2 original press releases per year
- Organisation of at least 2 events, reaching on average 50 participants per event

Each National Coalition will use the e-Translation tool on the Core Platform to translate content from their national website and publish it on the Core Platform.

Each National Coalition must contribute at least 45 content items to the Core Platform.

Additionally, each National Coalition must pull and translate at least 120 content items from the Core Platform to publish on their national website.



Rules and Conditions

Eligibility criteria

Eligible Candidates

The recipients of this FSTP are National Coalitions for digital skills and jobs. National Coalitions are multi-stakeholder partnerships that bring together a wide range of stakeholders with the common goal of promoting digital literacy at all levels of society. These coalitions bring together ICT and ICT-intensive companies, training providers, ministries of education and labour, public and private employment services, and civil society organizations. Their joint efforts focus on developing national digital skills strategies and action plans, expanding industry-led training programs, certifying digital skills, improving school and university curricula, and raising awareness of digital skills and ICT careers. Special emphasis is placed on attracting young people and women into digital careers.

The Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) will be provided to either:

- National Coalition coordinators, or
- Members of a National Coalition who have received official authorization from their Coalition's coordinator to receive and use the funding exclusively for National Coalition activities.

For newly established National Coalitions, the organisation claiming to be the coordinator must provide support letters from key national-level stakeholders to confirm their coordinating role and legitimacy.

To be eligible to apply, National Coalitions must include with their application documented evidence of support from key national stakeholders. These stakeholders can include government bodies, national-level ICT authorities, ICT and ICT-intensive companies, training providers, ministries of education and labour, public and private employment services, and civil society organizations. The supporting evidence must acknowledge the coalition's contribution towards achieving the Digital Decade targets.

Eligible Countries

The C4DD FSTP mechanism is open to National Coalitions established in EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs), as well as in non- EU countries such as listed EEA countries and those <u>associated with the Digital Europe Programme</u>. This includes those funded under the CEF-TC calls of 2019 and 2020, namely Italy, Cyprus, Poland, Sweden, Ireland, Belgium, Austria, Croatia, and Hungary as well as newly established National Coalitions in France, Netherlands and Finland.

National Coalitions that are members of the **C4DD consortium are not eligible to apply for this call**. These include coalitions from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Luxembourg, Germany, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Denmark, and Lithuania.



Relevant dates

Opening: June 2025

Deadline for submissions: 31 August 2025

Financial Support

C4DD will only provide financial support to entities (registered in the eligible countries) for the successful projects submitted under this open call.

The total budget available for this call is 180,000 EUR.

- Maximum grant per recipient National Coalition with established website: 60,000 EUR
- Maximum grant per new recipient National Coalition without an established website: 75,000 EUR

The Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) under the C4DD project offers differentiated funding amounts based on whether the applicant is a newly established or existing National Coalition (NC). The funding is structured to support specific activities aimed at developing or enhancing national websites and promoting digital skills initiatives. The breakdown is as follows:

For New National Coalitions:

- Activity 1: Development of a new website 30,000 EUR
- Activity 2: Stakeholder engagement and integration with the DSJP 37,000 EUR
- Activity 3: Post-editing and localisation 8,000 EUR

For Existing National Coalitions:

- Activity 1: Technical upgrade and maintenance of the existing website 15,000 EUR
- Activity 2: Services, Content, and Community-Related Activities 37,000 EUR
- Activity 3: Post-editing and localisation 8,000 EUR

Evaluation procedure

<u>Formal eligibility check:</u> EUN as the coordinator of the C4DD will evaluate applicants against the minimum eligibility criteria. Applicants who are not in compliance with the above eligibility criteria will be subject to rejection at this stage.



Quality of the proposal

Four representatives of C4DD consortium partners will evaluate each application. The evaluators will assess three areas ("evaluation criteria"). Each area will be scored on a scale of 0-5. Applicants must score at least 3 points for each evaluation criteria in order to be selected.

0	Proposal fails to address the criteria
1	The topic is inadequately addressed, or there are serious weaknesses.
2	The proposal broadly addresses the criteria but there are serious weaknesses
3	The proposal addresses the criteria well, but a number of shortcomings are present
4	The proposal addresses the criteria well with few shortcomings
5	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criteria

After evaluation by the selection panel, applications will be ranked, and the highest scorers will be eligible for funding.

- The maximum total score is 20 points
- A minimum of 9/15 will be necessary to pass.

<u>Selection</u>: The evaluation scores by each team will be reviewed by the full project partnership where the selection criteria are applied (see the above section, "<u>Selection criteria</u>"), and the final decision is taken. This decision is then formally ratified by the project General Assembly to decide on the winners, who will then be invited to draw up a contract with the coordinator of the C4DD project.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result. Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

Exclusion criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participation if they:

• Are in bankruptcy, in liquidation, in legal proceedings, cessation of activity y or other similar situations according to their national law and regulation.



- Have been sentenced for corruption, fraud, or participated in a criminal organisation or any other illicit activities.
- Are under administrative sanctions.
- Have made false statements or concealed information for this call.
- Show significant deficiencies in complying with the main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement or grant decision.
- Are guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of Regulation No 2988/95
- that do not show in their application documented evidence of support from key national stakeholders



Submission requirements

Overall process

The submission will be done through an <u>EU survey form</u>. Only applications received directly through this form will be considered eligible.

Please make sure to read the <u>entire application form</u> carefully in advance, as the system does not allow you to save your progress and return later. The form must be completed and submitted in one session.

Required documents for application submission

Before applying for this call, please ensure that you have gathered all necessary documents in advance, as you will be required to upload them during the application process. These include:

- An official authorisation letter from the National Coalition coordinator (if you are not the coordinator yourself).
- 2. **Up to 4 letters of support** from relevant organisations confirming their intention to participate in and support your National Coalition's activities.
- 3. **A budget estimation**, detailing the estimated cost <u>per planned activity</u> along with a brief justification for each item.

The application form

Introduction

Champions for the Digital Decade is funded under the Digital Europe Programme (DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06 – Advanced Digital Skills). This call for proposals, launched under the C4DD project, provides targeted Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)- specifically National Coalitions—to strengthen their impact within Europe's digital skills ecosystem.

Funding will support the creation, improvement, and maintenance of national websites connected to the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform. These websites should offer high-quality, up-to-date information on training, funding opportunities, best practices, and events, while improving accessibility for individuals and organisations seeking digital upskilling.



	Support is available for both newly established NCs—to help build their digital presence—and existing NCs—to upgrade infrastructure, enhance interoperability, and deepen engagement with national stakeholders. Through this call, the C4DD project aims to foster collaboration, boost visibility, and accelerate digital skills development across all Member States.
Contact details	
Name of the National Coalition	(open ended question)
Name of the organisation applying for the FSTP	(open ended question)
Are you the coordinator of the National Coalition?	o Yes o No
Can you prove you have authorisation from the coordinator of the National Coalition to apply for this call?	o Yes
Please upload here the authorisation	Select files to upload (only files of the type pdf., doc., docx., odt., txt., rtf., are allowed.
Country	EU Member StateNon- EU country
EU Member State	 Cyprus Italy France Netherlands Sweden Finland Croatia



	o Belgium
	o Poland
	o Hungary
	o Austria
	o Ireland
Non-EU country	Open ended question
Full name of designated point of	Open ended question
contact	
Email address of designated point of contact	Open ended question
Overview of the National Coalition	
Do you represent an already	o Yes
established National Coalition	o No
Please provide a brief	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
description of the National	
Coalition you are representing in	
this call. Include the date of	
establishment, the coordinating	
organisation, and a list of the	
members or key stakeholders	
involved in the National	
Coalition	
If you are establishing a new	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
National Coalition, please	
provide a plan detailing how	
you will form the Coalition. Your response should include	
the proposed structure, key	
steps, timeline, and target	
stakeholders.	



Please upload up to four letters of support from relevant national organisations confirming their intention to participate to your National Coalition's activities	Select files to upload (only files of the type pdf., doc., docx., odt., txt., rtf., are allowed.
Relevance and Alignment	
1. How does your National Coalition project align with the objectives and activities outlined in this call? Please describe the specific goals of your project and the concrete steps you will take to achieve them.	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
2. How does your National Coalition project complement existing national and European digital skills policies, strategies, or initiatives? Indicate how your proposal builds on or contributes to current efforts in the digital skills domain.	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
Planning and Implementation	
3. Does your National Coalition project include clear objectives, a defined timeline, and a realistic implementation plan? Please provide an overview of your project structure and key milestones.	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
4. What experience and resources does your organisation have to	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum



successfully implement the proposed activities?	
Highlight relevant expertise,	
prior experience, and available	
infrastructure.	
Please upload your budget	Select files to upload (only files of the type pdf., doc., docx.,
estimation document here,	odt., txt., rtf., are allowed.
detailing the estimated cost per	
planned activity	
Impact and Contribution to Digi	tal Skills Development
5. How will your National	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
Coalition project contribute to	
closing digital skills gaps at the	
national level?	
Describe the expected	
outcomes and how they will be	
measured.	
6. How will you engage key	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
stakeholders (i.e., industry,	
academia, public authorities) in	
your project?	
Explain your strategy for	
collaboration and community	
involvement.	
Sustainability and Scalability	
7. What measures will you take	Open ended question. 2000 characters minimum
to ensure the long-term impact	
and potential replication of your	
National Coalition project at	
regional or national levels?	
Include any plans for	
knowledge sharing, best	
practices, or expansion.	
Disclaimer	



This call is part of the Champions for the Digital Decade – C4DD project under EC grant agreement 101195051. 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 European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HADEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) is NOT an EU action; the beneficiaries provide the financial support in their own name and under their own responsibility. The beneficiaries' own responsibility also includes the preparation and drafting of the content and conditions of the respective cascade calls. The publication of cascade calls in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal is made solely for information purposes with the aim to facilitate increased visibility of the cascade calls to the general public. The publication of cascade calls in the EU Funding & Tenders Portal publication shall not be construed as direct or indirect approval of the content and conditions of the cascade calls by the relevant EU funding authorities or as any form of waiver from the aforementioned responsibility.

In line with the above, when promoting the EU action the financial support must therefore NOT be presented as directly provided by the EU. The recipients (third parties) are NOT party to the Grant Agreement. The beneficiaries remain responsible towards the granting authority for the proper use of the funding by the recipients

Privacy statement

The personal data processing activity involved in this call for proposals relates to the selection of organisations to be funded through the FSTP (Financial Support to Third Parties) mechanism, as part of the Champions for the Digital Decade (C4DD) project. The C4DD project is funded by DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06- Advanced Digital Skills under the Digital Europe Programme from 01 March 2025 to 28 February

I accept the disclaimer on protection of my personal data



2027. European Schoolnet (EUN) is the coordinator of the project.

Any personal data collected under this call by EUN, acting as the data controller, will be used solely for the purpose of evaluating the applications submitted by applicant organizations and for contacting their representatives to inform them of the results of their application.

The personal data includes the name, and email address of the representatives of the applicant organizations.

The legal basis for processing personal data is Article 6(1)(f) of the EU General Data Protection Regulation, which permits processing when it is necessary for the purposes of the legitimate interests pursued by the controller to carry out the evaluation and selection of suitable organisations to be granted FSTP funding, as part of the controller's obligations towards the European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA) the granting authority in the C4DD project.

Access to personal data collected by EUN under this call will be made available to the C4DD consortium members and the EC (G2 DG CONNECT & HADEA).

EU Survey, a third-party service provider (data processor) is used to launch and organize the call. For



further information, please refer to the privacy statement of 'EUSurvey'.

The personal data collected hereunder will be kept for a maximum period of 5 years after the project end date (28 February 2027) to comply with the EC reporting and auditing requirements. After this period, such data will be deleted permanently and securely from the databases of EUN and all designated data recipients.

If you wish to receive further information about this personal data processing activity or exercise any of your data protection rights, including the right to access, the right to erasure, the right to restrict processing and the right to rectification, please contact the EUN Data Protection Officer at privacy@eun.org. If you wish to complain about the way in which personal data has been processed under this call, you may contact the Belgian Data Protection Authority at: Rue de la Presse 35, B-1000 Brussels.

Language

Applicants must submit their proposals in English. Submissions sone in any other language will not be eligible and will not be evaluated. The grant management process will be conducted in English.

Application reception

Submissions will be done only via the eu survey platform, and it will be the unique entry point for all application submissions. Applications submitted by any other means will not be considered nor evaluated. Only the documentation in the right format included in the submission will be considered by evaluators. A full list of applicants will be drafted containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity (which will be also shared with the European Commission for transparency). The application



reception will close on [DATE AND TIME]. The deadline for submission is as stated in this Guidelines for Applicants document. Please note that the system time depends on the user's configured time zone and may or may not coincide with the correct time (this depends on the user, not the platform for submission).

Data Protection

The personal data processing activity involved in this call for proposals relates to the selection of organisations to be funded through the FSTP (Financial Support to Third Parties) mechanism, as part of the Champions for the Digital Decade (C4DD) project. The C4DD project is funded by DIGITAL-2024-ADVANCED-DIGITAL-06- Advanced Digital Skills under the Digital Europe Programme from 01 March 2025 to 28 February 2027. European Schoolnet (EUN) is the coordinator of the project.

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Contact information

Any questions regarding the call can be directed to the C4DD coordinator: C4DD@eun,org. Requests will receive a response within 2 working days of their submission. While all possible efforts will be made to respond in a timely manner, the applicants should plan their submissions, accordingly, allowing enough time before the deadline (i.e., at least 2 working days prior) if they expect an answer. Lack of the receipt of an answer to an enquiry shall not constitute grounds for extension or re-evaluation of a submission.

In addition to the support channels above, there is a collection of Frequently Asked Questions. This will be continuously updated from the questions received through the support channels. Please note that any email received outside the designated support channel will not be taken into account. It is imperative that all requests or inquiries related to the submission system or the call itself are directed through the official support channels.

In case of technical questions concerning the submission platform eu-survey (operated by EC) please reach out to: <u>EUSurvey - Support</u>



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- youtube.com/europeanschoolnet

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