Initial call for expression of interest in EDICs

Introduction

European Digital Infrastructure Consortia (EDIC) is a new mechanism which can be used to implement Multi-Country Projects ([1]). It will become available to Member States in January 2023, after the entry into force of the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 (DDPP) ([2]). EDICs provide a specific set of features, including swift set-up by several Member States (while keeping open access for others to join throughout the duration of the EDIC), legal personality or the possibility to combine different sources of funding. Such mix of features aims to facilitate infrastructure deployment and ensure its long-term sustainability. As a mechanism, an EDIC would implement a concrete Multi-Country Project. EDIC is not a funding programme.

The concept of EDIC has been inspired by the successful ERIC instrument - the European Research Infrastructure Consortium - targeted however at projects beyond the area of research.

EDICs will be legal entities set up by individual implementing decisions of the Commission upon a request of a group of Member States. They will have at least three Member States as members and their internal structure will be defined in the EDIC statutes by members. EDICs will be liable for their own debts.

Member States will have a strong position in EDIC's governance, thus giving them the opportunity to lead Multi-Country Projects that are of particular importance to them. Only the Member States who provide financial or non-financial contributions in form of in-kind contributions will have voting rights. Other Member States may join an EDIC as observers. Third countries, international organisations and other public or private entities can become EDIC members, but they may not be able to outvote the Member States.

EDICs must remain open for participation of new Member States, subject to rules provided for in the Statutes. Commitments of the members and grants from EU instruments are expected to be the main sources of EDIC financing. EDICs will be able to apply for funding from the directly managed EU programmes (e.g., Digital Europe, Connecting Europe Facility, or Horizon Europe), Recovery and Resilience Facility and also from funds under shared management.

([1]) MCPs are large scale projects for the EU digital transformation, supporting the achievement of the Digital Decade objectives and targets. Through MCPs, Member States can pool resources and cooperate closely to build strategic digital capacities that they would struggle to deliver on their own.

([2]) See Articles 10-21 of the Digital Decade Policy Programme draft Decision

Objective of the call:

This initial call has the objective of gathering initial information from Member States and to facilitate coordination. It is <u>not</u> a formal application for setting up an EDIC or any kind of commitment on the side of Member States. It will indicate to the Commission, acting as the MCP Accelerator in accordance with the DDPP, in which way it can best focus its support to the Member States.

EDICs will implement some of the Multi-Country Projects outlined in the non-exhaustive list of areas of activity for MCPs already provided in the Annex to the DDPP Decision (see Annex), or new MCPs that could be set up at the later stage. With this initial call for expression of interest we wish to collect Member States' ideas on possible projects to be implemented by an EDIC.

Who can respond?

This call is open to all EU Member States.

How to respond?

The Member States are invited to provide information outlined in points 1. - 6. below, for each of the projects proposed to be implemented by an EDIC. We would expect a submission of up to five pages per project. The submissions should be sent by Member States' representatives in the Digital Decade Board, via email to the functional mailbox CNECT-D1@ec.europa.eu.

Information to be provided by the Member States in response to this call:

    1. <u>Brief description of the project</u>

Please provide a description of the proposed project, not longer than 2-3 pages. Please outline the objectives of the project, the targets to reach, the possible timing and the project duration, the resources required for the implementation of the project and a first estimation of how the project would be funded.

    2. <u>Link to the Areas of Activity for MCPs from the DDPP Annex (if applicable)</u>

The Annex to the Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 outlines the initial non-exhaustive list of areas of activity for Multi-Country Projects (see the Annex of this document). Please explain whether and how your proposed project is linked to any of the areas in this list ([3]).

    3. <u>Interest to provide financial support to the project</u>

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[3] The list of areas of activity in the DDPP Annex is conceived as non-exhaustive. This call is not limited to proposals for projects to be implemented by an EDIC linked to existing areas of activity for MCPs listed in the DDP Annex. It is advisable to consult DDPP Article 10 explaining the purpose of Multi-Country Projects.

Please indicate whether and in which volume you are interested to provide financial support to the project.

4. <u>Interest to provide non-financial (in kind) support for the project</u>

Please indicate whether and in which way you are interested to provide non-financial (in kind) support to the project.

5. <u>Project contact point</u>

Please indicate a project contact point and the leading authority / institution. This contact point is there to facilitate cooperation among Member States and the Commission, with the aim of developing the necessary documentation for a potential application for this specific EDIC as described in Article 14 of the DDPP.

6. <u>Agreement to share the information in your submission with the Digital Decade Board</u>

Please confirm whether you agree to share the information in your submission with members of the Digital Decade Board.

Desired outcome of the call:

Any idea or suggestion made by a Member State in this call does not bind that Member State. The outcome of the call will therefore be an indicative, non-binding list of potential EDIC candidates. The list will be shared with the Digital Decade Board and can serve as a source of inspiration for the Member States when considering actions towards achieving the DDPP objectives and targets, and when drafting the national roadmaps. The list will display what Member States' interests are and with whom they could possibly engage in one or more of the potential EDICs listed.

The outcome of this call will be presented and discussed at a Digital Decade Board meeting envisaged at the beginning of March. It should help Member States to focus coordination and effectively develop the actual application for an EDIC on the list, following the process outlined in the DDPP Decision and further detailed in the User Guide attached to this call.

Deadline of the call: Tuesday 07/02/2023

Attached documentation:

- Digital Decade Policy Programme – the text following lawyers linguist review. It is expected that this text will be adopted by co-legislators without modifications.
- EDIC User Guide – practical guidelines on European Digital Infrastructure Consortia

Contact point for further questions:

CNECT-D1@ec.europa.eu

The questions will be responded electronically, all replies will be shared with all Member States representatives in the Digital Decade Board.

Annex: List of areas of activity for MCPs (as per Annex of the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 Decision)

Annex: List of areas of activity for Multi-Country Projects

Non-exhaustive areas of activity:

(a) European common data infrastructure and services;

(b) Endowing the Union with the next generation of low-power trusted processors;

(c) Developing the pan-European deployment of 5G corridors;

(d) Acquiring supercomputers and quantum computers, connected with the European high performance computing (EuroHPC);

(e) Developing and deploying an ultra-secure quantum and space-based communication infrastructures;

(f) Deploying a network of security operations centres;

(g) Connected public administration;

(h) European blockchain services infrastructure;

(i) European digital innovation hubs (EDIHs);

(j) High-tech partnerships for digital skills through the 'Pact for Skills' initiative, launched by the Commission communication of 1 July 2020 entitled the 'European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience';

(k) Skills and training in cybersecurity;

(l) Other projects which meet all the requirements set out in Article 11 and which become necessary to the achievement of the general objectives of the Digital Decade Policy Programme 2030 over time due to emerging social, economic or environmental Developments.