



APPENDIX 4: ACTIVITIES LAUNCHED IN 2024 FOR THE INITIATIVE PART



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1. ACTIVITIES 2024 INITIATIVE PART

This appendix foresees the launch of **five calls** with an estimated EU expenditure of up to **EUR 660 million**:

1. Chips-2024-CDP-1: Design platform;
2. Chips-2024-CPL-5: Additional pilot line(s)
3. Chips-2024-CQC-1: A call for a preparatory action on Quantum chip pilot line
4. Chips-2024-CCC-1: A restricted call for Competence centres.
5. Chips-2024-CCC-2: Support to the European Network of Chips Competence Centres

This appendix will later be amended to launch additional calls and to include the specific conditions for the Design platform and the Competence Centres.

A Call for Pilot Line includes three interrelated calls:

- Call for Expression of Interest for the selection of a Hosting Consortium
- Call for proposals for Set-up, integration and process development, funded under the Horizon Europe Programme
- Call for proposals for the operational activities of the pilot line, funded under the Digital Europe Programme

whereby the same application is submitted to those calls. The evaluation of a CPL will consist of the simultaneous evaluation of the three interrelated calls. A consortium will only be eligible for funding if its proposal for all three calls passes the necessary thresholds.

The amendment describes the details of the call: topic description and the budgets as well as the procedures for evaluation and selection.

The selection of a proposal in a CPL then leads to the signature of a Hosting Agreement, one or more joint procurement agreements (JPAs) and a number of grant agreements. These joint procurements and grants will make use of multi-annual instalments.

1.1 Specific provisions applicable to Calls for pilot lines

The following points on access conditions, Intellectual Property, and co-ownership apply to all Calls for pilot lines. More detailed provisions are stated in the Call for Pilot Line part of this document; in case of conflicts, those provisions prevail over the provisions stated here.

Access conditions for pilot lines

Expressions of Interest submitted to the calls below need to take into account the following access conditions:

- Access to a pilot line needs to be open to a wide range of public and private users across the Union and granted on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis directly proportional to the financial contribution by the Union to the total costs of those activities



- Access needs to be provided on market terms, or on a cost-plus-reasonable-margin basis for large undertakings, while granting preferential access or reduced prices for academic institutions, start-ups and SMEs
- PDKs/ADKs need to be accessible for different categories of users (academia, research, industry etc.) and will be required to be available via the European virtual Design Platform.
- Access conditions for non-EU organisations need to take into account the Union's commitments to international cooperation under its strategic partnerships with like-minded countries.

Intellectual Property

Expressions of Interest submitted to the calls below need to take into account the following provisions on Intellectual Property:

- Intellectual Property provisions must comply with standard Horizon Europe and Digital Europe rules. For instance, IPR transfers to legal entities outside the EU will be subject to approval by the granting authority.
- However, any transfer of IP rights from the hosting consortium to any third parties needs to be tied to either potential investment in Europe or an international agreement.
- Possible conditions for non-exclusive licensing of IP need to be considered.
- Consortia are invited to further reflect on the impact of EU co-ownership on IP policy.

Co-ownership

The ownership share of the Chips Joint Undertaking of the acquired equipment infrastructure in a pilot line is 50%.

1.2 Other general provisions

1. Gender dimension

The integration of the gender dimension (sex and gender analysis) in research and innovation content is not a mandatory requirement. However, activities concerning user interaction or sensing (e.g. of medical devices, consumer goods, cars with automatic driving features, ...) need to include (if relevant) considerations of how the gender dimension affects system design, and hence whether it affects the technical specifications.

2. Financial capacity

In line with the Financial Regulation, coordinators will be invited to complete a self-assessment using an on-line tool.

3. **Consortium agreement:** *Participants are required to conclude a consortium agreement. For the partners of a Participating State that coordinates grants, specific rules may apply regarding the eligibility to national funding.*
4. **Costs for the pilot line** *can be introduced as of the day after the publication date of the Call for Pilot Line.*



- 5. For the purposes of the eligibility conditions, applicants established in Horizon Europe Associated Countries or in other third countries negotiating association to *Horizon Europe* will be treated as entities established in an Associated Country, if the *Horizon Europe* association agreement with the third country concerned applies at the time of signature of the grant agreement.
- 6. Given the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the involvement of Belarus, there is currently no appropriate context allowing the implementation of the actions foreseen in this programme with legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine. Therefore, such legal entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis for justified reasons. This criterion also applies in cases where the action involves financial support given by grant beneficiaries to third parties established in Russia, Belarus or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine (in accordance with Article 204 of the Financial Regulation No 2018/1046).

2. TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE CALLS

2.1. Chips-2024-CDP-1: Design platform

<i>Chips-2024-CDP-1</i>	
Max EU Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Joint procurement• Setup, integration: HORIZON-Chips-2024-RIA-CDP-1• Operational: DIGITAL-Chips-2024-SG-CDP-1	<i>Max. EURO 330 Mio</i> <i>Indicative EURO 187 Mio; Max EURO 200 Mio</i> <i>Indicative EURO 60 Mio; Max EURO 80 Mio</i> <i>Indicative EURO 83 Mio; Max EURO 100 Mio</i>
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Call for Design Platform (CDP)</i>
<i>Eligibility to participate</i>	<i>Article 12.6 DEP</i>
<i>Publication date</i>	<i>08 Jul 2024</i>
<i>Deadline Submission of proposals</i>	<i>17 Sep 2024 at 17:00 Brussels Time</i>

The Design Platform as foreseen in Pillar 1 of the European Chips Act, also referred to as the *Chips for Europe Initiative*, shall consist of a **cloud-based virtual platform** that will enable users, particularly academia, start-ups and SMEs, to design and develop their chips. The platform shall support users along the innovation process, in preparation for industrial deployment.



The Design Platform is inspired by European initiatives such as EUROPRACTICE, while also addressing private entities and leveraging on the scalable computing resources offered by the cloud.

The Design Platform shall serve as a medium through which users can engage in pre-competitive collaborative design activities, either with users in their own organisation or with other European partners.

The main elements of the initiative shall be:

1. Integration of state-of-the-art tools for Very Large-Scale Integration (VLSI) including EDA tools (commercial and open source), process design kits and other virtual assets, alongside computing resources, on one or multiple cloud instances, depending on technical feasibility and practical considerations.
2. Availability of an extensive portfolio of IP blocks, including open-source and other IP generated from Union funded projects.
3. User access to: (i) infrastructures developed under the Chips for Europe Initiative such as pilot lines and (ii) foundry services for prototyping.

The design platform shall:

- be accessible from everywhere in Europe to European public and private stakeholders,
- ensure the highest level of security to safeguard the data of all the parties involved,
- be user-friendly and flexible to adapt to the needs of diverse types of users,
- support pre-competitive collaborations among EU stakeholders, especially on development and validation of new IP and tools, including developing areas such as open-source and quantum technologies,
- integrate training and support services to foster the growth of IC design skills,
- be designed as a self-sustaining initiative to ensure its viability and continuity well beyond the lifetime of this project.

The Design Platform may support innovative design projects from qualified users that meet specific criteria.

The purpose of this call is to select a consortium of European entities that would be responsible for the design, development, operation, and maintenance of the platform, including various related coordination activities, in close collaboration with the Chips Joint Undertaking. Successful applicants shall convincingly demonstrate their competence and capabilities to establish a virtual Design Platform with all the necessary infrastructure, governance, and access facilities targeting the above stated objectives.

The proposed budget may include the procurement of relevant infrastructure by the Chips Joint Undertaking. Further details shall be provided in the upcoming call.



2.2. Chips-2024-CPL-5: Additional pilot line(s)

<i>Chips-2024-CPL-5</i>	
Max EU Expenditure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint procurement • Setup, integration: HORIZON-Chips-2024-RIA-CPL-5 • Operational: DIGITAL-Chips-2024-SG-CPL-5 	<i>Max. EURO 180 Mio</i> <i>Indicative EURO 100 Mio; Max EURO 130 Mio</i> <i>Indicative EURO 70 Mio; Max EURO 100 Mio</i> <i>Indicative EURO 10 Mio; Max EURO 30 Mio</i>
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Call for Pilot line (CPL)</i>
<i>Publication date</i>	<i>08 Jul 2024</i>
<i>Deadline Submission of proposals</i>	<i>17 September 2024 at 17:00 Brussels Time</i>

This call topic follows the four calls on pilot lines in 2023, and is dependent on the outcomes of those calls, i.e. the proposals submitted to those calls. This call topic aims to complement the set of pilot lines obtained in the four previous calls with one or more additional pilot lines, such as for example a photonics pilot line. Complementarity to the four pilot lines would be defined in terms of scope of technologies covered. The possibility of having this call topic is dependent on the budgetary situation, which itself will depend largely on the proposals submitted to the four calls on pilot lines in 2023.

If feasible, the call topic will be further defined after the closure of the four calls on pilot lines. This will lead to an amendment of this Work Programme.



2.3. Chips-2024-CQC-1: Quantum chip technology

<i>Chips-2024-CQC-1</i>	
HORIZON-Chips-2024-RIA-CDP-1	EU Expenditure = <i>Max. EURO 30 Mio</i>
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Call for preparatory action on Quantum chip pilot lines and supporting technology components (CQC)</i>
<i>Publication date</i>	08 Jul 2024
<i>Deadline Submission of proposals</i>	<i>17 September 2024 at 17:00 Brussels Time</i>

Context

This call is part of the Chips for Europe Initiative, focusing on building capacities for the accelerated development of Quantum chips. While the Quantum Flagship is addressing experimental pilot lines for superconducting, photonics, semiconducting, and diamond technology approaches, the objective of this call is to launch preparatory actions for the mature approaches and close to the established microelectronics or photonics manufacturing processes. Preparatory actions (ramp-up) are intended to identify the most mature approaches that can reach high stability (e.g. high yield) of the production. These technologies are pivotal in advancing computing, secure communications, and various other sectors, and require stabilization of their production, integrating advanced Quantum PDKs into the European virtual design platform.

The implementation of the stability pilot lines will occur in two phases. The initial phase (ramp-up), addressing the activities described below, set to launch in 2024 for which the funding proposal is EUR 60 million with 50% from EU funding. This will be followed by a more extensive second phase (full implementation) to be launched in 2025, dedicated to fully stabilizing a broader array of use cases. The implementers of the action should collaborate with the relevant Framework Partnerships QU-PILOT and QU-TEST of the Quantum Flagship for R&D questions and support building-up European competences in this area.

Expected outcomes

- Establishment of new or upgraded pilot lines for quantum chip production, integrating Quantum PDKs
- Integration of quantum chip technologies with existing semiconductor processes.
- Demonstration of scalable, efficient, and stable (e.g. high yield) production capabilities.
- Support to the establishment of Competence clusters

Scope



Preparatory actions for the assessment of the manufacturing readiness level (MRL) of the most mature approaches include:

- Identification and preparation of industrial sites for pilot lines.
- Procurement and setup of advanced equipment for quantum chip manufacturing.
- Process development for high-yield, efficient, and quality production, with a focus on integrating Quantum PDKs
- Extensive testing and data analysis to ensure robustness and stability of production processes, in line with European and national Quantum initiatives

The stability of production will be achieved by identifying the critical-to-quality manufacturing parameters (e.g. high yield) and setting stringent operational requirements and product specifications as well as by maximising the trial run of the pilot lines, closely monitoring operations, quality, and efficiency.

Call setup

Further precisions will be given at a later stage.



2.4. Chips-2024 CCC-1: Competence centres

<i>Chips-2024-CCC-1</i>	
DIGITAL-Chips-2024-SG-CCC-1	EU Expenditure = <i>Max. EURO 116 Mio</i>
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Restricted call</i>
<i>Publication date</i>	<i>08 Jul 2024</i>
<i>Deadline Submission of proposals</i>	<i>17 Sep 2024 at 17:00 Brussels Time</i>

Context

Competence centres in semiconductors (aka “Chips Competence Centres” or “Chips CCs”) will play an essential role in the Chips for Europe Initiative. The centres will provide access to technical expertise and experimentation in the area of semiconductors, helping companies, SMEs in particular, to approach and improve design capabilities and developing skills. Competence centres will provide services to semiconductor stakeholders, especially targeting start-ups and SMEs. Examples include facilitating access to pilot lines and to the European virtual design platform, providing training and skills development, support to finding investors, making use of existing local competencies or reaching out to relevant vertical sectors. The services should be provided on an open, transparent and non-discriminatory basis. Each competence centre should connect and be part of the European network of competence centres in semiconductors and should act as an access point to other nodes of the network.

Expected outcomes

The competence centres shall

- **promote the actions** developed by the Chips JU in the frame of the Chips for Europe Initiative as well as the success stories.
- be a **first entry point for** users (mainly SMEs and startups) and guide users in accessing the other infrastructures set up by the Chips JU under the Initiative: the design platform and the pilot lines.
- be essential in **facilitating skill development activities**.
- support companies in **accessing the Chips Fund**.
- Other activities that can help European organizations (mainly SMEs and startups) to develop their activities in the frame of the Chips initiative and vice versa support the consortia that implement the pilot lines and the design platform to reach out to the larger community of organizations that could profit from those efforts.



Scope

Chips CCs should have a **specialised area of expertise**. Each competence centre decides on its specialisation in a certain technology, domain, or set of activities. It should be reflecting the specialisation of the stakeholders of that area / Participating State and should push innovation in that area within the Union. Examples of areas of expertise are Chips for medical devices, power electronics, cutting-edge semiconductors, heterogeneous integration, packaging, metrology, EDA simulation tools, Chips for automotive, silicon photonics and photonic integrated circuits, quantum Chips, system design, etc.

Chips CCs shall offer several **support activities**. Offering such support activities is common to all Chips CCs, and is a necessary characteristic to belong to the network of competence centres. Support activities can be:

- **Awareness raising, promoting services, promoting success stories:** the services offered by Chips CCs may be new and may not be well recognised in the beginning. Therefore, Chips CCs need to raise awareness about their services, need to promote their services, and may need to develop an outreach program to promote the Chips CC services to potential user companies, esp. smaller enterprises. Chips CCs may need to go to many events in their countries to increase familiarity of their services with their target customers. They may need to target specific vertical sectors. They may need to promote success stories that show how their services benefit their customers. They may need to hire staff with the right soft skills to interact with customers and provide the interface between technical Chips CC staff and customers.
- **Facilitate access to the design platform and to pilot lines** by providing information and support on how to access the platform or the pilot lines when users do not have the knowledge or expertise to do so directly.
- **Support interested users in developing semiconductor solutions (technology transfer)** by supporting technology transfer activities at local/regional/national level and – where needed – at EU level. Research activities as well as operation, administration or procurement of infrastructures are not within the scope of Chips CCs, but competence centres are expected to advise on such activities and support knowledge transfer e.g. from relevant R&I initiatives to the local semiconductor ecosystem. Support could also be in the form of matchmaking between a research organization and a user.
- In addition, Chips CCs could grant facilitated access to experts in such areas as legal compliance and business development. They may offer assistance to SMEs in creating business plans and conducting market studies.



- **Providing (access to) training on skills:** Advanced training on specific design and manufacturing skills and practices is often difficult to access for SMEs and other stakeholders. They need access to education services for development of skills in different disciplines but also for different audiences or levels (e.g. bachelor, masters level), access to top-level teachers, or support for the set-up of a credentials/micro-credentials framework. Chips CCs should support local and national training and skills development in the area of semiconductor technologies through face-to-face as well as online training (e.g. via MOOC platforms). Chips CCs should determine what is needed in their countries, should know the competences of other Chips CCs, and – where needed – provide trainings to other CCs ('train-the-trainer'). Trainings can be provided by CCs themselves, or by third parties hired by the centres. A variety of training models can be used, ranging from alternation model or cluster model, via on-the-job trainings and apprenticeships, to crash courses and mentoring programmes.
- **Participate in the organization of a European Network of Chips Competence Centres (ENCCC) and facilitate the access to this network.** Part of the resources of a Chips CC should be dedicated to building and extending this network, in collaboration with a Coordination and Support Action (see Chips-CCC-2 : Support to the European Network of Chips Competence Centres). Chips CCs should help stakeholders, especially smaller companies such as SMEs and start-ups, to connect to other competence centres within the overall network of competence centres. They should provide stakeholders with information on relevant competences in the network as well as on national and international programs, companies, and research centres in semiconductors. A Chips CC should help a stakeholder to connect to the right competence centres within the overall network of competence centres, if the local/national Chips CC does not have the right competences to support the stakeholder. In return, a Chips CC will support stakeholders from other regions and countries that need its (specialised) expertise through the network of competence centres.
- Chips CC should act as **entry points to other European initiatives**, such as the network of European Digital Innovation Hubs, HPC competence centres, cybersecurity centres, etc. The goal is to ensure that national stakeholders have access to the best available expertise and support in Europe, by matching stakeholders' needs with the available expertise in the network of competence centres. Such expertise may be the specialisation of another competence centre and be accessible through the ENCCC.
- **Promoting the Chips Fund and facilitating access to venture capital:** SMEs and startups are often faced with insufficient financial support and have difficulties to get loans, equity, and/or grants. In particular, startups experience difficulties in managing



resources and investment at the initial stage. Competence centres in semiconductors may support SMEs, startups, and other companies to access the Chips Fund. They may also support companies in finding investors, including venture capital.

- **Awareness raising, promoting services, promoting success stories:** the services offered by Chips CCs may be new and may not be well recognised in the beginning. Therefore, Chips CCs need to raise awareness about their services, need to promote their services, and may need to develop an outreach program to promote the Chips CC services to potential user companies, esp. smaller enterprises. Chips CCs may need to go to many events in their countries to increase familiarity of their services with their target customers. They may need to target specific vertical sectors. They may need to promote success stories that show how their services benefit their customers. They may need to hire staff with the right soft skills to interact with customers and provide the interface between technical Chips CC staff and customers.

Chips CCs should primarily offer services that address the needs from their prime user communities. Nevertheless, Chips CCs should also answer the needs from other organisations, e.g. from other countries, and work in close coordination and collaboration with the rest of the Network to achieve the highest possible impact, ensure the most efficient use of the CCs' resources, and to avoid duplication of efforts among the Chips CCs and with other initiatives, such as the European Digital Innovation Hubs.

Access to the Chips CC

Access to a Chips CC's services shall be open to several users and be granted on an **open, transparent and non-discriminatory basis**.

Services need to be made available for **free or against reduced prices** to SMEs and public sector organisations, and **against market price or actual costs** incurred for larger companies. In the exceptional cases where undertakings have financed at least 10% of the investment costs of a centre, they may be granted preferential access under more favourable conditions.

Moreover, services provided should be accessible in the national languages as well as in English.

The Chips CCs must be established as organisations with appropriate visibility to national, regional and local communities. In general, Chips CCs should employ semiconductor



specialists, primarily with full-time contracts, and with expertise in areas that are most relevant for the national communities and the specialisation of their centres. A Chips CC should have an independent organisational structure and its staff should not work under external supervision.

Consortia for CC

A Chips CC is a **single organisation** or a **coordinated group** of organisations (consortium) with complementary expertise, established with a **non-profit objective**, aiming to promote the use of semiconductor technologies. In the case of a consortium, one organization will be appointed as coordinator. Although there is formally no limit on the number of entities setting up a competence centre, a small number of partners per Chips CC is desirable. There is no obligation for a group of organisations to create a dedicated legal entity. A Chips CC can be built on established entities in the field or can be set up from scratch.

As a matter of example, Research and Technology Organisations (RTOs) and universities could become a national competence centre of a Participating State in semiconductors. Enterprises may also set up a competence centre, or be part of a group establishing a competence centre. However, the centre must have a non-profit objective and services must be offered not-for-profit.

Candidates for competence centres are not limited to those legal entities that are involved in the set-up of pilot lines, the design platform, or are somehow involved in any other way in the Chips for Europe Initiative. Being involved in the setup and/or operation of infrastructures is not a requirement for competence centres. The Participating States have the sole and direct responsibility to propose candidate competence centres.

The Chips for Europe Initiative will support the establishment of competence centres **throughout the Union and Participating States**. The European Network of competence centres in semiconductors may comprise zero, one, or more centres per eligible country (Participating States). Participating States may decide to team up with other countries and support **cross-border competence centres**.

Typical **users** of the services offered by a Chips CC are companies, in particular local/national SMEs and startups, RTOs, and academic institutions at the regional, national and EU level. Public authorities and large enterprises may also use the services of a competence centre, but normally they are not the prime customers.



Size, funding and access to services

The call will be implemented as a single DEP call with restricted access. As a result of the evaluation of the call, selected consortia will be offered to sign a DEP grant.

The Union will make available **up to EUR 1 million per year, per country, for a 4-year period**. There is no differentiation based on country size, i.e. all countries may get the same maximum amount of EU funding per year to support their competence centres. There is also no differentiation based on the number of competence centres that a country wants to support, i.e. the maximum, annual amount of EU funding may be used to support one or more competence centres.

Participating States are expected to **co-finance** their national competence centres together with the Union, i.e. 50% will be funded through EU contributions and 50% through national contributions. Union funding is conditional on the availability of the same (or higher) amount of national contributions. Participating States may provide the same amount of maximum annual, financial contributions as the Union, i.e. EUR 1 million per year. Participating States may also opt to provide a higher amount of annual national contributions (i.e. higher than EUR 1 million per year), but this will not lead to a similar, higher annual Union contribution. Participating States may provide a lower amount of annual national contributions (i.e. lower than EUR 1 million per year), and this will lead to a similar, lower annual Union contribution.

The EU funding for the competence centres will be made available through Digital Europe grants, which allow to fund **specific cost items**:

- Qualified personnel of the competence centre to deliver the services mentioned above to the organisations participating in a CC, including subcontracting for specialists;
- Procurement and/or depreciation costs for equipment and facilities, both hardware and software;
- Travel grants for personnel of the competence centre and local stakeholders to carry out their activities.
- Indirect costs are included as 7% of the direct cost.

Selection process

Candidates to the consortium for a Chips CC must at least fulfil the following criteria:



- Appropriate competences to provide the services outlined above;
- Appropriate management capacity, staff and infrastructure necessary to provide the services outlined above;
- Operational and legal means to apply the administrative, contractual and financial management rules that come with a grant agreement;
- Appropriate financial viability, corresponding to the level of funds they will be called upon to manage.

The Chips JU will launch a **restricted call for proposals** to set up competence centres in semiconductors. The restricted call will be open only to those entities that have been designated by Participating States as candidate centres. To be eligible, a proposal submitted to the restricted call will have to provide proof that the centre has been designated by its Participating State and that it will be co-financed by the Participating State.

In the **evaluation phase**, the Chips Joint Undertaking will evaluate proposals by designated candidate centres. In case a Participating State has designated more candidates than its desired number and size of competence centres, the evaluation will be competitive. Otherwise, the evaluation will be a quality assessment of designated candidates.

Eligible proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria of DEP (see Award criteria) and all those scoring above all thresholds will be ranked. Based on the ranked list, the Chips JU's Public Authorities Board will select proposals for funding. Selected proposals will get a grant from the Chips JU for a duration of 4 years.

Award criteria used for restricted calls

The award criteria used are as follows:

Criterion 1 - Relevance

- Alignment with the objectives and activities as described in the Call document;
- Contribution to long-term policy objectives, relevant policies and strategies, and synergies with activities at European and national level;

Criterion 2 - Implementation

- Maturity of the proposed CC;
- Soundness of the implementation plan and efficient use of resources;



- Capacity of the applicants, and when applicable the consortium as a whole, to carry out the proposed work.

Criterion 3 - Impact

- Extent to which the project will achieve the expected outcomes and deliverables referred to in the call for proposals and, where relevant, the plans to disseminate and communicate project achievements;
- Extent to which the project will strengthen competitiveness and bring important benefits for society;



2.5. Chips-2024-CCC-2: Support to the European Network of Chips Competence Centres

<i>Chips-2024-CCC-2</i>	
DIGITAL-Chips-2024-CSA-CCC-2	EU Expenditure = <i>Max. EURO 4 Mio</i>
<i>Mode</i>	<i>Normal call</i>
<i>Instrument / Type of Action</i>	<i>Coordination and Support Action (DEP)</i>
<i>Publication date</i>	<i>08 Jul 2024</i>
<i>Deadline Submission of proposals</i>	<i>17 Sep 2024 at 17:00 Brussels Time</i>

Expected Outcomes

The European semiconductor ecosystem will be strengthened through an effective network of Chips Competence Centres (Chips CCs) supporting the adoption and use of semiconductor technologies, in particular by SMEs, and taking into account the specific needs of the local, regional and/or national ecosystem(s). The coordinated network will facilitate access to pilot lines and the European virtual design platform and knowledge transfer within the Chips CCs. The Coordination and Support Action will ensure the European network of Chips Competence Centres will be embedded in the European semiconductor ecosystem with strong links to other European initiatives, for example, in the area of training.

Moreover, the action will result in

- Effective coordination and exchange of best practices and information among the network of Chips CCs;
- Facilitated access to services and training offered at national or regional level to interested Chips CCs and other potential users (from industry, academia or public sector);
- Maximised visibility and outreach of Chips CCs, in particular to SMEs and industry;
- Improved coordination and increased availability of training activities on semiconductor technologies across Chips CCs and within the European semiconductor ecosystem;

The main objective of the Coordination and Support Action is to maximize networking between existing European points of semiconductor knowledge and expertise. The tasks and services will provide a single focal point at European level, which will be responsible for the support of the Chips Competence Centres, the exchange of best practices among these centres, facilitating the sharing of knowledge and information, networking and training across competence centres. In order to accomplish these objectives, the selected consortium should also establish effective cooperation with other European initiatives, in particular regarding skills and training in semiconductors.



Scope

Proposals should aim at supporting the networking among the Chips Competence Centres. In particular, it is expected to establish a communication platform, facilitate dialogue, promote the objectives of the Centres, and organize outreach events and workshops. The activities should leverage on synergies and complementarity of the centres.

The Coordination and Support Action should:

- Support the exchange of best practices among Chips CCs;
- Disseminate the activities of the Network. Maximise visibility and outreach of Chips CCs, in particular to SMEs, industry and the public sector;
- Promote the services of the Chips CCs, specifically addressing the needs of SMEs;
- Attract new users and support the engagement of industry and SMEs in the activities of the Chips CCs;
- Educate and assist Chips CCs in technology transfer practices, including IP management, where relevant;
- Define and monitor meaningful qualitative and quantitative KPIs for the European Network of Chips Competence Centres and for the Centres;
- Maintain an overview of specific specialisations and competence of the various Centres;
- Support matchmaking for specific competences;
- Facilitate access to services and training offered at national level to interested Chips CCs and other potential users;
- Support the organisation of community building events for users and Centres sharing similar interests;
- Support the connection of Chips CCs to relevant other initiatives, in particular to initiatives on skills and workforce development;

Act as the first online point of contact for all information related to the Chips Competence Centres;



3. CALL TEXT FOR PILOT LINES

Call text

Chips Joint Undertaking

REF: Chips-CPL-XX

CALL FOR [pilot line]

1 INTRODUCTION – CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Legal framework

The Chips Joint Undertaking (hereinafter “Chips JU”) is established by Council Regulation (EU) 2021/2085 establishing the Joint Undertakings under Horizon Europe¹ (hereinafter “SBA”) and modified by an amendment, Council Regulation (EU) 2023/1782 of 25 July 2023².

The Chips for Europe Initiative is established under Regulation (EU) 2023/1781 of 13 September 2023³ (hereinafter “Chips Act”). One objective of the Chips Act is to ensure the conditions necessary for the competitiveness and innovation capacity of the Union. In this context, the Chips for Europe Initiative (the ‘Initiative’) established by the Chips Act aims to support this objective by bridging the gap between the Union’s advanced research and innovation capabilities and their sustainable industrial exploitation.

The Initiative shall promote capacity building to enable design, production and systems integration in next-generation semiconductor technologies, and should enhance collaboration among key players across the Union, strengthening the Union’s semiconductor supply and value chains, serving key industrial sectors and creating new markets.

¹ OJ L 427, 30.11.2021, p. 17–119.

² OJ L 229, 18.9.2023, p. 55–62.

³ OJ L 229, 18.9.2023, p. 1–53



Pilot lines are one of the components of the Initiative. Concretely, the Initiative will support the enhancement of existing and development of new advanced pilot lines to enable development and deployment of cutting-edge semiconductor technologies and next-generation semiconductor technologies. These pilot lines shall provide for the industry a facility to test, experiment and validate semiconductor technologies and system design concepts.

The above is further defined in Article 3 (“Establishment of the Initiative”), Article 4 (“Objectives of the Initiative”) and Article 5 (“Content of the Initiative”) of the Chips Act. Article 4(2)(b) makes reference to “operational objective 2” which mentions “*enhancing existing and developing new advanced pilot lines across the Union to enable development and deployment of cutting-edge semiconductor technologies and next-generation semiconductor technologies*”. Article 5(b) further specifies the content of this operational objective on pilot lines, namely that “*the Initiative shall, under its operational objective 2:*

- (i) *strengthen capabilities in next-generation chip production technologies and manufacturing equipment, by integrating research and innovation activities and preparing the development of future technology nodes, such as leading-edge nodes, fully depleted silicon on insulator technologies, new semiconductors materials or heterogeneous systems integration and advanced module assembly and packaging for high, medium or low volumes;*
- (ii) *support innovation at a large scale through access to new or existing pilot lines for experimentation, test, process control, final device reliability and validation of new design concepts integrating key functionalities;*
- (iii) *provide support to integrated production facilities and open EU foundries through preferential access to the new pilot lines, as well as ensure access on fair terms to new pilot lines for a wide range of users of the Union’s semiconductor ecosystem”.*

Article 12(1) of the Chips Act entrusts the implementation of the Initiative’s operational objectives 1-4 to the Chips JU. Therefore, operational objective 2 on pilot lines will be implemented by the Chips JU.

1.2 Budget

The Chips JU proceeds to the implementation of pilot lines which will be co-financed by the Union and the participating states. The Chips JU shall be tasked with providing financial



support, through any instrument or procedure provided for in Horizon Europe⁴ (hereinafter “HE”) and the Digital Europe Programme⁵ (hereinafter “DEP”).

In accordance with recital (6) of the SBA Amendment, throughout the lifetime of the Chips Joint Undertaking, up to EUR 2,875 billion shall be dedicated to the Initiative. Of that amount, EUR 1,450 billion shall be for capacity-building activities for operational objectives 1 to 4 and EUR 1,425 billion shall be for research and innovation activities related to operational objectives 1 to 4.

Furthermore, Article 128(4) of the SBA Amendment indicates that the Union’s contribution from DEP may not exceed 50% of the total costs of capacity-building activities.

It must be noted as well that, in accordance with Article 129(4) of the SBA Amendment, the participating states are allowed to report financial contributions made since 8 February 2022 (date of publication of the Chips Act package) if the conditions set out in Article 129(4) SBA are fulfilled. In their applications, applicants need to specify what costs would be within the scope of this Article.

1.3 The overall implementation process

Implementing an advanced pilot line is a complex endeavour requiring a coordinated effort of multiple procurements of equipment and tools, as well as set-up and integration activities related to those equipment and tools to achieve a specific technologically advanced infrastructure that then can be used by industry, both large enterprises, SMEs and startups, as well as academia.

Given the important role that a pilot line has in bridging the gap between the Union’s advanced research and innovation capabilities and their sustainable industrial exploitation, the Chips Joint Undertaking should co-own 50% of the tools and equipment that constitute a pilot line as permitted by Article 3(4) of the SBA and Article 43(5) of the Financial Rules of the Chips JU⁶. This will allow the Chips Joint Undertaking to keep a closer control over such strategic infrastructures, thereby making future reporting exercises towards auditing authorities more transparent and straightforward.

1.3.1 The Hosting Consortium

A consortium needs to include:

- a) at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State; and

⁴ Regulation (EU) 2021/695 of 28 April 2021 establishing Horizon Europe – the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, laying down its rules for participation and dissemination, and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1290/2013 and (EU) No 1291/2013

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/694 of 29 April 2021 establishing the Digital Europe Programme and repealing Decision (EU) 2015/2240

⁶ Chips GB decision 2021.02 (Annex 12) approving the Financial Rules, re-adopting the previously adopted decision ECSEL GB 2020.138 (see [link](#))



- b) at least two other independent legal entities each established in different Participating States⁷.

Furthermore, the consortium (hereinafter ‘Hosting Consortium’), will be composed of one or more Hosting Entities (i.e., entities that are hosting part or all of the equipment and tools of the pilot line – see further below) and possibly other members (members of the consortium that do not host any tools and equipment of the pilot line). One of the consortium members acts as the coordinator; typically, but not necessarily, the coordinator is a Hosting Entity. The coordinator will be mandated by the Hosting Consortium to act on behalf of the other members of the consortium (e.g., to sign the Hosting Agreement – see Annex 2).

The pilot line can be physically located at one or several hosting sites. A hosting site is the physical facility at which a Hosting Entity will host and operate a pilot line and which is established in a Participating State that is a Member State. It must be noted that a pilot line may be distributed across different hosting sites that are located in different Member States.

A consortium including Hosting Entity(ies) will be selected for setting up and running a pilot line. The consortium will have as **main responsibilities**:

- to manage joint procurements, if certain conditions are fulfilled (see under Section 1.3.3.1): this requires having the necessary expertise and the staff to execute joint procurements;
- to install, commission and host the procured equipment and tools on the hosting site(s). Therefore, all hosting sites need to have the proper infrastructure (so-called cleanrooms and other technical facilities) and the proper staff;
- to execute (for pilot lines that are located on different sites, in a coordinated way) the different activities that will lead to a technologically advanced pilot line and to offer all its services (such as access by third parties, etc.) ultimately realising the objectives of the pilot line.

1.3.2 The present Call Document

Taking into account the abovementioned responsibilities of a Hosting Consortium, the present Call Document includes three interrelated calls:

- A **Call for Expression of Interest** (hereinafter “CfEoI”) for the selection of a Hosting Consortium. Provided certain conditions are fulfilled by the Hosting Entity(ies) of the Hosting Consortium (see Section 1.3.3.1 below), this CfEoI will entitle the selected Hosting Entity(ies) to manage the procurement of the tools and equipment of the pilot line to be acquired under a joint procurement agreement (JPA – enclosed as Annex 3).
- A **Call for proposals for the Set-up, integration and process development** grant funded under the Horizon Europe Programme. The type of action is a Research and Innovation Action (RIA).

⁷ It must be noted that entities established in Participating States that are associated countries (i.e., not in a Member State) will only receive funding from the Programme (HE and/or DEP) their countries are associated to.



- A **Call for proposals for the operational activities** of the pilot line, funded under the Digital Europe Programme. The type of action is a Simple Grant.

In practice, this means that an applicant consortium will have to submit one application that will include three interrelated proposals, one for each of the abovementioned calls. Each call will have its specific evaluation criteria, as outlined in Section 5 of the present Call Document. A consortium will only be eligible for funding if its proposal for all three calls passes the necessary thresholds.

All three calls will close on the same date.

Together with the present Call Document, the following documents⁸ are published:

Annex 1	Application form template
Annex 2	Draft Model Hosting Agreement
Annex 3	Draft Model Joint Procurement Agreement
Annex 4	Model Letter of Intent describing the formal commitment of each Participating State (PS) to financially support the pilot line and its participating Consortium members
Annex 5	HE model grant agreement for the R&D activities of the pilot line
Annex 6	DEP model grant agreement for the operational activities of the pilot line

In addition to the above documents which are annexed to the present Call Document, additional documents will be published that are relevant in case of State aid notification. These documents should not be submitted to any of the three calls above. These documents are:

- Funding gap template;
- Notification template, which indicates the information a Member State needs to provide (see Section 1.3.5).

1.3.3 Submission of an application to the present Call Document

Applicants may submit applications to the present Call Document by filling in the **application form (Annex 1 to the present Call Document)**. The application should serve as:

- An expression of interest to be submitted to the Call for Expression of Interest for the selection of a Hosting Consortium for the pilot line;
- A proposal to be submitted to the Call for Proposals for Set-up, integration and process development (Horizon Europe, Research and Innovation Action);

⁸ Some of these documents are drafts. After the opening of the Call, updated drafts may be published on the JU's website. The final content of these drafts may be agreed upon together with the relevant signatories.



- A proposal to be submitted to the Call for Proposals for Operational activities of the pilot line (Digital Europe Programme, Simple Grant).

The expression of interest for the selection of a Hosting Consortium will be evaluated by a group of independent experts⁹ in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in Section 5.

The selected Hosting Consortium may be eligible to receive the following two types of funding as long as its proposals for the three calls pass the necessary thresholds.

1.3.3.1 Funds for Joint Procurements – only for Hosting Entities

Joint procurements are managed by **Joint Procurement Agreements (JPA)**. The JPA is an agreement between the Chips JU and the contracting authority of a Member State in order to set the rules to procure, in accordance with Article 165(2) FR, the tools and equipment from third-party vendors, that will be hosted by the Hosting Entity of that Member State.

It must be noted that there will be one JPA per Hosting Entity. This means that in a consortium with only one Hosting Entity there will only be one JPA while in a consortium with three Hosting Entities there would be one JPA for each Hosting Entity.

Given that in each JPA “*the share pertaining to or managed by the contracting authority of a Member State in the total estimated value of the contract will be equal to or above 50 %*” (Article 165(2) FR), the procedural rules applicable to the contracting authority of that Member State may apply to the joint procurement, provided that those rules may be considered as equivalent to those of the Union.

In this context, Member States have **two possible options** regarding who will act as contracting authority and therefore sign the JPA:

- **Option 1:** the joint procurement is carried out by the Member State in accordance with national procurement rules. In this case, given that the Member State itself will act as contracting authority, the JPA will be signed between the Chips JU and the Member State.
- **Option 2:** the joint procurement is carried out by the Member State, who decides to delegate the procurement process to the Hosting Entity established in that Member State, that will procure in the name and on behalf of the Member State. However, this option is only possible *as long as* the Hosting Entity can be considered a “contracting authority” within the meaning of the Procurement Directive¹⁰. In this case, the JU signs the JPA with the Hosting Entity, acting as contracting authority. The other members of the Hosting

⁹ The group of independent experts that will evaluate the expression of interest for the selection of a Hosting Consortium may be the same group that evaluates the proposals for the Horizon Europe and Digital Europe Programme calls.

¹⁰ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC



Consortium which are not Hosting Entity(ies) (i.e., do not have a hosting site with tools and equipment) may not in any event be signatories to the JPA and may not be involved in the procurement process.

In the abovementioned Model Letter of Intent, the Member State will have to indicate what option it intends to use and thus which entity it proposes as signatory of the JPA. In both cases, 50% of the procured tools and pieces of equipment of the pilot line shall be owned by the Chips JU. Regarding the remaining 50%, the Member State may decide to transfer its share of ownership to the relevant Hosting Entity.

1.3.3.2 Grants under the Horizon Europe and Digital Europe Programmes

As mentioned in Section 1.3.2, the present Call Document includes two calls for proposals for grants:

- **Set-up, integration and process development Grant:** this grant would cover the costs of deploying the infrastructure at a sufficient maturity level and the R&D&I activities required for the development of the process technology. This includes inter alia the cost to define tender specifications (for procurements), to integrate procured tools and equipment with existing facilities, to modify equipment, test, verify and validate the integration of the pilot line, and to develop the PDK/ADK (including its interfacing / deployment in the Design Platform). This grant will be established as a Horizon Europe Grant Agreement and will be evaluated according to Horizon Europe rules (See Section 5).
- **A Grant for the operational activities:** this grant would cover part of the operational activities of the pilot line, i.e., part of the standard operating costs of the pilot line. This grant will be established as a Digital Europe Programme Grant Agreement and will be evaluated according to the Digital Europe Programme rules (See Section 5).

Applicants must justify that no double funding is requested. Funding can only be provided on the condition that the prohibition on double funding is respected.

The proposals submitted to each of these calls and included in the application will be evaluated separately, possibly by the same group of independent experts. The results of these evaluations will be ranked lists.

EU funding rates are up to 50% for grants under the Digital Europe Programme, and up to 100% for grants under Horizon Europe.

1.3.3 The Hosting Agreement

On the basis of the abovementioned ranked lists, the Public Authorities Board (PAB) of the Chips JU will:



- Select the Hosting Consortium that will implement the pilot line;
- Award the grant for ‘Set-up, integration and process development’;
- Award the grant for the ‘Operational activities’.

A proposal needs to have passed the applicable thresholds in all three evaluations to be selected as the Hosting Consortium and to be awarded the above grants.

Subsequently, the coordinator and the Chips JU will sign a ***Hosting Agreement***. The Hosting Agreement is the contract that lays down the rules that shall apply to the Hosting Consortium in the context of the implementation of the pilot line. The Hosting Agreement and the conditions described therein are valid until the end of 2031, and may be renewed subject to additional funding under the next MFF.

However, before the signature of the Hosting Agreement (but after the selection of the Hosting Consortium by the PAB), the Chips JU and the Hosting Consortium may address and finetune certain elements of the application. The final version agreed upon by the Chips JU and the Hosting Consortium will be the “Description of Action” which will be annexed to the Hosting Agreement and to the two Grant Agreements.

1.3.4 Responsibility and liability of the consortium

It must be noted that all members of a Hosting Consortium are jointly responsible for implementing the pilot line in line with the Hosting Agreement. To implement the action properly, they must make appropriate internal arrangements.

1.3.5 State aid

The fulfilment of State aid rules is a responsibility that pertains solely to the Member States. It is therefore their responsibility to assess whether the aid they intend to provide to the pilot line can be considered State aid and therefore potentially require a notification to the European Commission. Each case may be different and present similar but also slightly different characteristics.

2 OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the present Call Document is to select a Hosting Consortium in order to implement the pilot line in line with Section 1.3.

The Pilot Line “**Title of the pilot line**” to be implemented is described below.

A key element of the pilot line is to serve as a bridge from the lab to the fab, by providing industry a facility to test, experiment and validate semiconductor technologies and system design concepts. Such testing and experimentation would allow industry actors to test



technologies for the development of new or improved products and processes. While the pilot lines is not expected to offer fully matured fabrication services, its evolution is crucial in aiding industry to refine and advance its processing techniques and prototype next generation devices.

Furthermore, the pilot line must provide the facility for industry to characterise and evaluate advanced processes and potential outputs stemming from their process technology in collaboration with the Hosting Consortium and in line with the conditions, including those related to access, set out in this Call Document. The Hosting Consortium is required to specify the terms and conditions for any of the foreseen collaborations with industry.

To this end, the Hosting Consortium is required to submit an application with proposals for the three calls that takes into consideration collaboration with industry and other relevant stakeholders established in the Union – and where justified beyond – by credibly addressing several or all of the following elements:

- **Process development:** describe planned collaboration with equipment manufacturers in the development of next-generation equipment related to the process technology being developed on the pilot line.
- **Process technology:** provide a roadmap for the eventual transfer of elements or all of the process technology to industrial partners in their deployment of mass-production facilities.
- **Development:** list potential development, including collaborative development involving the Hosting Consortium, of prototype devices on the pilot line infrastructure. Additionally, include a detailed description of the assistance the Hosting Consortium offers to users of the pilot line.
- **Skills development:** give an overview of the plans for developing technical skills and operational know-how, particularly in relation to process development, process technology, and designing, creating, and refining semiconductor devices, and the anticipated spill-over effect of strengthening the European workforce to the benefit of European industry.
- **Research output:** provide an overview of all the expected research collaborations with industry, other RTOs, and academic institutions, and the foreseen outputs.

2.1 Description of the pilot line

The descriptions of the pilot lines are given in Sections 3.1-3.4 in the Work Programme part above.

3 BUDGET AVAILABLE

The Union financial contribution to the Chips JU for the implementation of the Pilot Line shall cover up to 50 % of the total costs of the pilot line. The remaining total cost of the pilot



line (including VAT if applicable) shall be covered by the members of the Hosting Consortium and/or by the Participating State(s) where the Hosting Consortium members are established.

The total maximum EU budget is as follows:

- Joint procurements of equipment and tools: up to EUR XXX million from the Digital Europe Programme;
- Set-up, integration and process development: up to EUR XXX million from Horizon Europe;
- Operational activities: up to EUR XXX million from the Digital Europe Programme.
- Total pilot line: up to EUR XXX million.

The respective amounts for the pilot lines are given in Sections 3.1-3.4 in the Work Programme part above.

The sum of the EU budgets requested in the proposals for the three parts above (joint procurement, Horizon Europe grant, Digital Europe Programme grant) in an application may not exceed the total maximum EU budget above.

The Executive Director may adapt the amounts for the actions set out in Section 4 based on the amounts requested in the submissions received.

4 CONTENTS OF THE APPLICATION

An application must be submitted using the application form included as Annex 1 to this call. As indicated above, the application should include:

- An expression of interest for the Call for Expression of Interest for the selection of a Hosting Consortium for the pilot line;
- A proposal for the Call for Proposals (CfP) for Set-up, integration and process development (Horizon Europe);
- A proposal for the Call for Proposals (CfP) for Operational activities of the pilot line (Digital Europe Programme).

The application needs to contain the following information, amongst other potential considerations:

- **Detailed description and timeline:** An overview of the pilot line infrastructure, with details on the phased implementation approach of the project in terms of a *technology roadmap*. Furthermore, the proposal shall include a description of the major phases of the pilot line's development highlighting equipment acquisition, procurement timing, process development, integration, testing, validation, operationalisation and the possible development of demonstrators within the context of a work plan. Such a roadmap and work



plan shall mainly include two phases:

- a **development phase**, i.e., the procurement, set-up, engineering and integration efforts and process development required for preparing the pilot line to become fully operational (mostly relevant for the CfP for Set-up, integration and process development); and,
 - an **operational phase**, i.e., the efforts related to the access and service provisioning of the pilot line to the wider community of the pilot line (mostly relevant for the CfP for Operational activities).
- **Collaboration:** Each pilot line shall make an effort to have spill-overs beyond its immediate scope and involve a number of relevant stakeholders from across the Union (mostly relevant for the CfP for Set-up, integration and process development).
 - Collaboration with other pilot lines: by ensuring complementarity and, where possible, identify methods of amalgamation of activities.
 - Collaboration with RTOs and academia: by ensuring research partnerships with relevant research organisations thereby ensuring spill-over effects. Pilot lines should also strive to work with universities and training institutions in skills development.
 - **Management of the distributed elements** of the pilot line (if any): The proposal needs to clearly explain the terms of collaboration between the different members of the consortium and shall provide a credible description of how distributed elements of the pilot line will work in synergy together as one pilot line in an efficient manner that enables European added value (mostly relevant for the CfP for Set-up, integration and process development).
 - **Business model:** A description of the business model related to the functioning (i.e., service provisioning) of the pilot line, once it has been set up. The business model must outline a reasonable breakdown of the expected income via market-oriented access conditions. It should clarify how these revenues will contribute to covering a portion or the entirety of the operational expenses associated with the pilot line (mostly relevant for the CfP for Operational activities).
 - **Access conditions:** Detailed description of the access conditions to be applied by the pilot line, based on the boundary conditions set by the legal acts, the work programme, and the international obligations of the EU (mostly relevant for the CfP for Operational activities). Furthermore, following Article 128(5) SBA Amendment, applicants are reminded of the following guiding principles:
 - **Inclusivity:** access to the facilities, resources, and expertise related to the pilot line should be available to a diverse range of users across the European Union. This inclusivity extends to stakeholders from academia, industry, research institutions, and any other entities that are interested in the pilot line.
 - **Transparency:** Information regarding the criteria, processes, and terms governing access to the pilot line shall be clear and transparent to ensure that potential users



have a comprehensive understanding of the access framework.

- Non-Discrimination: Access shall be granted on a non-discriminatory basis, avoiding preferential treatment of potential users based on their geographic location, affiliation, etc.

Furthermore, the following provisions need to be catered for:

- To further advance the principles outlined above, access to the pilot line by users established in the Union shall be directly proportional to the financial contribution made by the European Union to cover the costs of the proposed project.
 - Recognising the role played by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in driving innovation and economic growth, a Hosting Consortium needs to grant preferential access or reduced prices to SMEs, including startups, as well as to academic institutions. Applicants may establish a differentiated pricing structure specifically tailored to accommodate the financial capacity of SMEs and academic institutes. This approach would facilitate the engagement of SMEs and academic institutions by ensuring that cost barriers do not impede their ability to access the pilot line. Access to the pilot line at preferential conditions for SMEs and academic institutions should be guaranteed until the duration of the Hosting Agreement, possibly after the end of funded activities.
 - Applicants need to anticipate potential situations of excessive demand for access to the pilot line, putting in place mechanisms to ensure fairness, transparency, and equal opportunity for all interested parties. The proposal needs to establish clear procedures for managing and mitigating excessive demand, which may include collaboration with external partners, expansion of capacity where feasible, etc.
 - In accordance with Article 5(b)(iii) Chips Act, the Hosting Consortium needs to provide support to integrated production facilities and open EU foundries through preferential access to the pilot line, as well as ensure access on fair terms for a wide range of users of the Union's semiconductor ecosystem.
 - Access should be foreseen for international research and commercial partners (in line with Recital (18) Chips Act), in particular taking into account Union policies that affect the European semiconductor ecosystem, such as certain Digital Partnerships and Trade and Technology Councils.
 - Access to the pilot line shall also be granted in relation to virtual assets, including but not limited to Process Design Kits (PDKs), Assembly Design Kits (ADKs), and their corresponding documentation, emanating from its development. Applicants need to elaborate on the methods by which such access will be realised and present the degree of openness of the access policy governing the diverse components of the PDK/ADK.
- **Procurement of equipment (CAPEX):** The (rough) costings and technical specifications of each tool and piece of equipment that shall be procured from third-party vendors. It should also be indicated what costs fall within the scope of Article 129(4) of the SBA



Amendment on retroactivity (mostly relevant to the Call for Expression of Interest).

- **Set-up, integration and process development (RDI activities):** A description of the work required for the set-up, integration, and process development, as well as for the testing and validation of the process technology activities including costs until the pilot line is at a sufficient level of maturity such that it can be considered operational. Set-up and integration costs should be related to the corresponding piece of equipment (where relevant). This includes an overview of how the pilot line will be interfaced with the broader community through PDKs/ADKs, technology interfaces etc. The hosting consortium needs to ensure the availability of the PDKs/ADKs in the Design Platform and sufficient integration with relevant EDA tools.
- **Operational activities:** A description of the activities related to the operational phase of the pilot line (i.e., the service provisioning of the pilot line to the wider community), the expected engagement with third parties and an estimate of the costs and possible funding required for the satisfactory operation and use of the common infrastructure. Here, costs may include the expenses related to the operation of the heavy equipment and cleanrooms, i.e., maintenance, energy/electricity, personnel costs for running the pilot line. The proposal needs to contain a business model that considers expected future revenues based on appropriately defined access conditions, explaining how such revenues will cover part or all of the pilot line's operational expenses.
- **Budget:** A detailed line-by-line breakdown of all costs that shall be categorised in three categories: (i) CAPEX; (ii) set-up, integration and process development costs; and (iii) operational costs. The proposal must include a distribution of the budget for the three categories over time, with a planning horizon of at least 5 years.
- **Exploitation plans:** Detailed exploitation plans for the pilot line beyond the period of financial support from the Chips JU (including potential support financed under the next MFF). These plans need to include:
 - A description clearly indicating the sustainability of the pilot line beyond what will be financed in the current MFF.
 - Prospective plans and costs for modification/extension of the pilot line's infrastructure beyond the current MFF, where applicable.
 - Prospective estimates for the costs for its operation / usage by third parties beyond the current MFF.
- **Synergies with the Chips Act:** Clarification of the links to the broader Chips for Europe Initiative activities, such as the Design Platform, Competence Centres, and skills development.



In addition to the above, any application submitted by the hosting consortium should be accompanied by **Letters of Intent** from the relevant public authorities of all Participating States supporting the Hosting Consortium and its application for a pilot line.

Such letters should specify the Participating States' financial commitments for the necessary national co-funding for the acquisition, set-up and integration, and operation of the pilot line. The letters should also define whether, in line with Article 165(2) Financial Regulation, the Member State in which a Hosting Entity is established¹¹ carries out the joint-procurement procedure itself (as contracting authority) or whether it delegates the procedure to the Hosting Entity. The latter case is only possible as long as the Hosting Entity can be considered a contracting authority within the meaning of the Procurement Directive. **The Letters of Intent must also specify clearly that the Member State supports that the Chips JU co-owns 50% of the tools and equipment of the pilot line.**

5 ADMISSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

An application for the call for pilot line is not admissible if it has not been introduced under the 3 calls.

There are no page limits for the application but the consortia are encouraged to limit the narrative part of the application to 200 pages excluding the tables that are expected.

5.1 Admissibility requirements for the Call for Expression of Interest

To be admissible:

- a) An application must be submitted no later than the **17 September 2024 at 17:00:00 Brussels time.**
- b) An application must be submitted electronically (see section "Procedure for the submission"), using the application form in the Annex 1 (Chips JU Application Form)
- c) An application must be submitted as described in Section 11;
- d) The application is written in English.

Failure to comply with those admissibility requirements will lead to the rejection of the application.

Furthermore, the submitted application needs to be accompanied by the requested Letters of Intent from the Participating States supporting the Hosting Consortium.

¹¹ Hosting Entities must be established in Participating States that are Member States



5.2 Admissibility requirements for the Call for Proposals for Set-up, integration and process development

Admissibility conditions for this call follow the standard Horizon Europe admissibility conditions as stated in Annex A and Annex E of the Horizon Europe Work Programme General Annexes¹², with the exception of any page limits. Submission needs to follow the provisions in Section 11.

5.3 Admissibility requirements for the Call for Proposals for Operational activities of the pilot line

Proposals must be submitted before the call deadline **17 September 2024 at 17:00:00 Brussels time**.

Proposals must be complete and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents and follow the Application Form.

At proposal submission, the coordinator will have to confirm that it has the mandate to act for all applicants. Moreover, the coordinator will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

The application must be readable, accessible and printable.

Applicants may be asked at a later stage for further documents (for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc).

6 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

6.1 Eligibility criteria for the Call for Expression of Interest

The call is open to entities or consortia of entities fulfilling cumulatively the following conditions:

- a) The Hosting Consortium shall include the members that will host and operate the pilot line. The members of the consortium shall be from a Participating State to the Chips JU.
- b) A consortium must consist of:
 - (a) at least one independent legal entity established in a Member State; and

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf



- (b) at least two other independent legal entities each established in a different Participating State;
- c) The members of the Hosting Consortium shall be registered as a legal entity in one of the Participating States;
- d) The applicant(s) shall have a legal personality on the date of the deadline for submission of applications and must be able to demonstrate their existence as a legal person.
- e) Applications shall include the provision of appropriate supporting documentation proving for each member of the Hosting Consortium that the commitment of the Participating State(s) where the member(s) of the consortium is/are established will cover the share of the total cost of implementation of the pilot line that is not covered by the Union contribution referred to in Article 128 of the SBA.
- f) Applications shall ensure, in accordance with Article 128(5) of the SBA Amendment, that access to the pilot line *“be open to a wide range of users across the Union and granted on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis directly proportional to the financial contribution by the Union to the total costs of those activities”*.
- g) Applications shall ensure, in accordance with Articles 13(4) and 14(5) of the Chips Act that integrated production facilities and open EU foundries *“have preferential access to the pilot lines [...]. Any such preferential access shall neither exclude nor prevent effective access on fair terms to the pilot lines by other interested undertakings, in particular start-ups and SMEs”*

In its application, the coordinator must be given a mandate to represent the other members of the Hosting Consortium to sign and administrate the Hosting Agreement and the various associated grants.

To assess the applicants' eligibility, the following supporting documents are requested:

- The legal entity identification form¹³ duly completed and signed by the person authorized to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organization(s) to be submitted in original or a PIC number;

The following entities will be considered as non-eligible:

- natural persons;
- entities without legal personality.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/legal_entities/legal_entities_en.cfm



6.2 Eligibility criteria for the Call for Proposals for Set-up, integration and process development

Eligibility criteria for this call follow the standard Horizon Europe eligibility criteria as stated in Annex B of the Horizon Europe Work Programme General Annexes¹⁴.

6.3 Eligibility criteria for the Call for Proposals for Operational activities of the pilot line

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be established in one of the eligible countries, i.e.:
 - o EU Member States (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs))
 - o non- EU countries:
 - EEA countries (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein)
 - countries associated to the Digital Europe Programme or countries which are in ongoing negotiations for an association agreement and where the agreement enters into force before grant signature.

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the Participant Register — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Moreover, participation in any capacity (as beneficiary, affiliated entity, associated partner, subcontractor or recipient of financial support to third parties) is limited to entities established in eligible countries.

7 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

7.1 Exclusion criteria for the Call for Expression of Interest

There are no specific exclusion criteria for the Call for Expression of Interest. However, it must be noted that the exclusion criteria mentioned in sections 7.2 and 7.3 apply for the purpose of the award of the grants. Given that, as mentioned in Section 1.3.2, a consortium will only be eligible for funding if its proposal for all three calls passes the necessary

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf



thresholds, a hosting agreement cannot be concluded with entities which fall in an exclusion situation mentioned in sections 7.2 and/or 7.3.

7.2 Exclusion and selection criteria for the Call for Proposals for Set-up, integration and process development

Criteria related to financial and operational capacity and exclusion are described in Annex C of the Horizon Europe Work Programme General Annexes¹⁵.

7.3 Selection and exclusion criteria for the Call for Proposals for Operational activities of the pilot line

Financial capacity

Applicants must have stable and sufficient resources to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents applicants will be requested to upload in the Participant Register during grant preparation (e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If the JU considers that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, it may require:

- further information
 - prefinancing paid in instalments
 - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees
- or
- propose no prefinancing
 - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

Operational capacity

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/wp-call/2023-2024/wp-13-general-annexes_horizon-2023-2024_en.pdf



Applicants must have the know-how, qualifications and resources to successfully implement the project and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the ‘Implementation’ award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an EU exclusion decision or in one of the following exclusion situations that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate¹⁶:

- 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)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant’s debts)
- 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)
- committed fraud, corruption, 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)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with 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)

¹⁶ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation



- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation 2988/95 (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)
- created under a different jurisdiction 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).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that¹⁷:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

7.4 Rejection from the Call

The Executive Director of the Chips JU shall not conclude a Hosting Agreement with a consortium where any applicants:

- is in an exclusion situation established in accordance with sections 7.2 and/or 7.3;
- has misrepresented the information required as a condition for participating in the procedure or has failed to supply that information.

The same exclusion criteria apply to affiliated entities.

Administrative sanctions (exclusion) may be imposed on applicants, or affiliated entities where applicable, if any of the declarations or information provided as a condition for participating in this procedure prove to be false.

8 EVALUATION CRITERIA

8.1 Evaluation criteria for the Call for Expression of Interest

This Section explains the evaluation criteria for the CfEoI. Eligible applications will be evaluated according to the following evaluation criteria:

1. **Excellence and relevance**
 - *Clarity and pertinence of the pilot line's objectives, and the extent to which the proposed pilot line complies with the general specifications, is ambitious, and goes beyond the state-of-the-art while being relevant for the Initiative*

¹⁷ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation



- and the other components of the Chips Act.*
- *Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions.*
- *Clarity and pertinence of the cooperation between the pilot line and the other actions under the Chips for Europe Initiative.*
- *Clarity and pertinence of access conditions and their practical implementation, including the business plan for covering the operational expenses related to access to the pilot line.*

2. **Impact**

The extent to which the outputs of the project shall contribute at the European and/or international level to:

- *Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions.*
- *Suitability and quality of the measures to maximize expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.*
- *Credibility of the business model justifying the sustainability of operating the pilot line beyond the end of the project.*
- *Significant spill-overs that support the broader European semiconductor ecosystem.*

3. **Quality and efficiency of the implementation**

The following aspects will be considered:

- *Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.*
- *Capacity and role of each participant, and the extent to which the consortium brings together the necessary expertise.*

Experience of the Hosting Entity(ies) in implementing and operating similar systems;

- *Quality and pertinence of experience of the Hosting Entity in installing and operating similar systems.*
- *Extent that provided experience is sufficient for supporting the system described in the general system specifications.*

Quality of the hosting facility's physical infrastructure and;

- *Quality and pertinence of the current and proposed hosting facility's physical capacity and preparedness.*

Quality of service to the users, namely capability to comply with the service level agreement provided among the documents accompanying the selection procedure;

- *Quality and pertinence of service to the users, namely capability to comply with the service level agreement provided in the Hosting application.*
- *Quality of the proposed coordination and/or support measures to ensure requested service level towards pilot line users.*



Total cost of ownership of the pilot line and methodology to calculate it including an accurate estimate and a verification method of the set up and integration costs as well as the operating cost of the pilot line during its lifetime;

- *Clarity and effectiveness of the estimated cost of implementation of the application.*
- *Appropriateness of the methodology to calculate, report, validate and verify the operating costs.*

Criterion	Maximum score	Threshold
Excellence and Relevance	30	15
Impact	30	15
Quality and efficiency of the implementation including the Total Cost of Ownership	40	20
	100	60

Points will be allocated out of a total of 100 based on the table. Applications below these thresholds will be rejected.

6.2 Evaluation criteria for the Call for Proposals for Set-up, integration and process development

Award criteria for Research and Innovation Actions:

1. Excellence

- Clarity and pertinence of the project's objectives, and the extent to which the proposed work is ambitious and goes beyond the state of the art.
- Soundness of the proposed methodology, including the underlying concepts, models, assumptions, inter-disciplinary approaches, appropriate consideration of the gender dimension in research and innovation content, and the quality of open science practices, including sharing and management of research outputs and engagement of citizens, civil society and end-users where appropriate.

2. Impact

- Credibility of the pathways to achieve the expected outcomes and impacts specified in the work programme, and the likely scale and significance of the contributions from the project.
- Suitability and quality of the measures to maximise expected outcomes and impacts, as set out in the dissemination and exploitation plan, including communication activities.



3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation

- Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, assessment of risks, and appropriateness of the effort assigned to work packages, and the resources overall.
- Capacity and role of each participant, and the extent to which the consortium as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.

Scores and weighting

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria. For full applications, each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10. There is no weighting.

Proposals that pass the individual threshold AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding, within the limits of the available call budget. Other proposals will be rejected.

8.3 Evaluation criteria for the Call for Proposals for Operational activities of the pilot line

The award criteria for this call are as follows:

1. Relevance

- Alignment with the objectives and activities as described in section 2
- Contribution to long-term policy objectives, relevant policies and strategies, and synergies with activities at European and national level

2. Implementation

- Maturity of the project
- Soundness of the implementation plan and efficient use of resources
- Capacity of the applicants, and when applicable the consortium as a whole, to carry out the proposed work

3. Impact

- Extent to which the project will achieve the expected outcomes and deliverables referred to in the call for proposals and, where relevant, the plans to disseminate and communicate project achievements
- Extent to which the project will strengthen competitiveness and bring important benefits for society

Evaluation scores will be awarded for the criteria. For full applications, each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10. There is no weighting.



Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

9 OVERVIEW OF THE EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCEDURE

The Chips JU is responsible for the implementation of the evaluations of the received applications. It organises the submission and evaluation procedures and communicates with the applicants.

The following describes this process. It is the same procedure for the Call for Expression of Interest, for the Call for Proposals for Set-up, integration and process development, as well as for the Call for Proposals for Operational activities of the pilot line.

9.1 Evaluation procedure

The submitted applications will be evaluated in a procedure by a panel of seven independent experts. These experts will be appointed by the Chips JU on the basis of the procedure followed under Digital Europe Programme and Horizon Europe. This generic procedure to appoint experts will be as well used for the Call for Expression of Interest. For the applications considered admissible according to Section 5, the Chips JU will assess the eligibility and exclusion criteria according to Sections 6 and 7 above. Only admissible and eligible applications will be evaluated.

- **Individual evaluations:** In the first step, the independent experts that sit on the panel shall carry out individually the evaluation of the applications based on the evaluation criteria described in Section 5 above. They give a score for each criterion, with explanatory comments. These individual reports form the basis of the further evaluation.
- **Consensus meetings:** After carrying out their individual assessment, all the experts that evaluated the applications shall convene in a consensus meeting, to agree on a common position, including comments and scores and prepare a consensus report. The consensus meetings shall be moderated by a Senior Programme Officer of the Chips JU who shall seek consensus, impartially, and ensure that all applications are evaluated fairly, in line with the relevant evaluation criteria.
- **Panel review:** The review panel shall be chaired by the Executive Director of the Chips JU. The panel will review the scores and comments for all applications to check for consistency across the evaluations. If necessary, it will propose a new set of marks or revise comments, and resolve cases where evaluators were unable to agree. The panel will prepare a final evaluation summary report.



9.2 Selection

The Executive Director of the Chips JU will review the results of the evaluation panels and will elaborate final ranking lists for each evaluation, based on the lists proposed by the panels.

This final ranking list shall consist of:

- a main list with the applications to be selected by the experts;
- a reserve list, with applications that have passed the evaluation thresholds.

In addition, the Chips JU will prepare a list with applications that did not pass the evaluation thresholds or were found to be ineligible.

A consortium will only be eligible for funding if its application submitted to all three calls passes the necessary thresholds.

The Executive Director will submit the final ranking lists, together with the Evaluation Summary Reports, to the Public Authorities Board of the Chips JU with a proposal for selection of the application, for approval by the Public Authorities Board.

The Public Authorities Board will make the final selection of a consortium whose proposals were selected from submissions to the Call for Expression of Interest for the selection of a Hosting Consortium, the Call for proposals for the Set-up, integration and process development grant funded under the Horizon Europe Programme, and the Call for proposals for the operational activities of the pilot line, funded under the Digital Europe Programme. This consortium is the selected Hosting Consortium.

The Pilot Line will be implemented by one selected Hosting Consortium or not at all. The proposals submitted by the selected Hosting Consortium to the three calls are therefore selected.

After the decision of the Public Authorities Board, all applicants will be informed in writing by the Chips JU of the outcome of the evaluation in the form of Evaluation Summary Reports (ESR). The Chips JU will also inform about the final selection or rejection of applications.

The Chips JU will invite the coordinator of the selected Hosting Consortium to sign a Hosting Agreement with the Chips JU and to initiate grant agreement preparations. Grant agreements will only be concluded subject to the signature of the Hosting Agreement.

9.3 Communication

The information contained in the present call document provides all the information required to submit an application. Please read it carefully before doing so, paying particular attention to the priorities and objectives of the present call.

All enquiries must be made by e-mail only to: calls@chips-ju.europa.eu



Questions shall be sent to the above address no later than the **8 July 2024 17:00 Brussels time**, defined as “Deadline to submit questions about the Call” in Section 10.

The Chips JU has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date.

Replies will be given/published no later than the “Publication of the last answers to questions” defined in the timeline in Section 10.

To ensure equal treatment of applicants, the Chips JU will not give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, or affiliated entity(ies), an action or specific activities.

No individual replies to questions will be sent but all questions together with the answers and other important notices will be published (FAQ in EN) at regular intervals on the website under the relevant call: <https://www.chips-ju.europa.eu/Pilot-lines/>

The Chips JU may, on its own initiative, inform interested parties of any error, inaccuracy, omission or clerical error in the text of the Call Document on the mentioned website. It is therefore advisable to consult this website regularly in order to be informed of any updates and of the questions and answers published.

No modification to the applications is allowed once the deadline for submission has elapsed. If there is a need to clarify certain aspects or to correct clerical mistakes, the Chips JU may contact the applicant for this purpose during the evaluation process. This is generally done by e-mail. It is entirely the responsibility of applicants to ensure that all contact information provided is accurate and functioning.

In case of any change of contact details, please send an email with the application reference and the new contact details to [insert email address].

In the case of hosting consortia, all communication regarding an application will be done with the coordinator only, unless there are specific reasons to do otherwise, where the consortium coordinator shall be in copy.

Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the selection process. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the reasons for rejection. No information regarding the award procedure will be disclosed until the notification letters have been sent to the relevant applicants.



10 TIMETABLE

The steps and indicative times for the procedure from publication to expected start of the mandate for the selected Hosting Consortium are in the table below:

Selection of Hosting Consortium milestones	Date and time or indicative period
Call Document Publication	
Publication of this Call Document	08-07-2024
Submission of applications	
Calls Deadline	17-09-2024 - 17:00
Application Opening day (open of envelopes with expressions of interest)	
Evaluation	21-25 October 2024
Selection by Public Authorities Board	05-11-2024
Notification of results to applicants	
Signature of the hosting agreement	December 2024
Signature of hosting agreement	May 2025
Signature of grant agreements	

This schedule is common to the three interrelated calls: publication, submission, evaluation and selection dates are the same.

The time table for the conclusion of the grant agreements are same for the HE and DEP calls:

Information on the outcome of the evaluation	Maximum 5 months from the final date for submission
Indicative date for the signing of grant agreements	Maximum 8 months from the final date for submission

11 PROCEDURE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS

11.1 For the Call for Expression of Interest

Applications must be submitted no later than the 17 September 2024 at 17:00 Brussels time. Application forms are available at [\[insert website\]](#).

Applications must be submitted in the correct form, duly completed and dated. They must be submitted in electronic copy on [\[insert website\]](#), and signed by the person authorised to enter into legally binding commitments on behalf of the applicant organisation. The electronic



version must contain the pdf versions of the application presented in paper and other files such as list of equipment (EXCEL spreadsheet), List of costs (EXCEL spreadsheet), etc.

Contact point for any questions¹⁸ is *[insert email]*.

11.2 For the Call HE

Applications submitted to EU funding & tender portal.

11.3 For the Call DEP

Applications submitted to EU funding & tender portal.

11.4 Other submission related comments

All applications will be treated confidentially, as well as any submitted related information, data, and documents. The Chips JU will ensure that the process of handling and evaluating applications is carried out in a confidential manner.

External experts are also bound by an obligation of confidentiality.

Applicants shall avoid taking any actions that could jeopardize confidentiality. They must not attempt to discuss their application with persons they believe may act as expert evaluator for the Chips JU.

Your application shall not contain any information that is ‘EU classified’ under the rules on security of information in the Commission security rules for protecting EU classified information (see also Classification of Information in DEP projects).

The Chips JU will process personal data in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC9.

Once the coordinator (or sole applicant) has submitted an application, an acknowledgement of receipt will be sent by the JU. No other interaction will take place with the Chips JU until the application has been evaluated, unless the Chips JU needs to contact you (usually through the coordinator) to clarify matters such as eligibility or to request additional information.

END OF THE CALL FOR PILOT LINE DOCUMENT

¹⁸ Questions on submission must be sent before the deadline indicated in Section 8.

