



EuroHPC
Joint Undertaking



Q&A

National Competence Centres for High Performance Computing
(DIGITAL-JU-EUROHPC-2025-NCC-01)

DIGITAL-JU-EUROHPC-2025-NCC-01-01 - National Competence Centres for High Performance Computing

Is it possible to submit the required mandate letter at a later date due to delays caused by the summer holiday period in several countries?
At the proposal submission stage, a confirmation letter from the beneficiaries stating that they have the mandate to form a consortium and respond to the call is sufficient. However, the official mandate letter, signed by the relevant national authority, must be submitted before the signature of the Grant Agreement.
Given that the results of the AIF(A) call will only be available at the end of September – coinciding with the deadline of DIGITAL-JU-EUROHPC-2025-NCC-01-01 – how should the consortium address the potential risk of overlapping activities?
The EuroHPC Joint Undertaking acknowledges the timing overlap between the AIFA call results and the call deadline. To accommodate this, the EuroHPC JU will have the possibility to postpone the call deadline, thereby allowing the consortium sufficient time to adjust its proposal in light of the AIFA call outcomes.
Is there any flexibility regarding the requirement for the NCC lead to work full-time on the project?
The tasks involved in leading an NCC, in addition to contributing to the operations and services, are expected to require a full-time occupation given the scope and responsibility of the role. The NCC lead should be identified in the proposal or, if the recruitment of an NCC lead is foreseen, provided in the Description of Action of the Grant Agreement.
Does the restriction that academic institutions may be addressed only to a limited extent ("Academic institutions and stakeholders may be addressed only to a limited extent and most of the resources of the NCC will be dedicated to support local SMEs, industry and public services.") also apply to training activities, where a significant portion of participants are typically from academia, such as students who may become future industry professionals?
Training activities offered by the NCCs mainly address SMEs as well as participants from private entities and non-academic public sector. Although there are no restrictions, NCCs are expected to present ambitious KPIs and an effective monitoring and reporting process through the NCC lead and consortium coordinator, that will clearly demonstrate that the target group is being sufficiently reached.
Does securing a national contribution exceeding €550,000 pose a risk of reducing the corresponding EU contribution, or can partners increase their national co-funding without affecting the EU contribution?
There is no risk of reducing the EU contribution for an NCC if a national contribution exceeds €550,000. The funding mechanism is based on a double ceiling:

The EU contribution is limited at 50% of the eligible costs with a maximum EU contribution of €550,000. Therefore, partners are free to increase their national co-funding beyond €550,000. This will not result in a higher EU contribution.

Does the limit of 20 staff members “at any time” refer to the total number of individuals involved throughout the project, or to the number employed simultaneously? Specifically, is it acceptable to have more than 20 staff over the full duration (e.g. due to turnover), provided that no more than 20 are engaged at the same time?

The limit of 20 staff members refers to the number employed simultaneously at any given time during the project. Therefore, it is acceptable for the total number of individuals involved over the full duration of the project to exceed 20, for example due to staff turnover, as long as no more than 20 are employed concurrently.

What is meant by “Facilitate access to supercomputing and data management for exploring innovation solutions of interest to end users, including SME user industries.”?

“Facilitate access to supercomputing and data management” refers to supporting end users—particularly SMEs and public sector entities—in leveraging high-performance computing (HPC) resources and associated data services to develop innovative solutions.

Regarding data management, this includes guidance on data lifecycle practices, such as data collection, storage, processing, sharing, and archiving; support in using data management tools and platforms that are compatible with HPC environments; assistance with data governance, security, and compliance with relevant regulations (e.g. GDPR); helping users integrate data workflows into HPC-based innovation processes.

The goal is to ensure that end users can effectively manage and utilise data in conjunction with HPC resources to drive innovation

Service desk activities and the management of national resources and peer-review of proposals for access to HPC resources are out of scope under this call.

Are NCCs allowed to offer training on AI topics, provided there is no overlap with activities covered by AIFs/AIFAs?

NCCs that are established in countries that do not have AIF/AIFA may include AI topics in their service catalogues. All other countries should refrain from providing AI related services as these will be covered by the competent AIF/AIFA consortia.

Could you please clarify the role of NCCs in relation to HPC training activities, particularly with respect to the EuroHPC Virtual Training Academy (EVITA)?

Providing HPC training is a core responsibility of each NCC. NCCs are expected to deliver training activities at the national level and in collaboration with other NCCs and relevant

European projects, ensuring broad and effective outreach to target user groups such as SMEs, industry, and public services.

While the EuroHPC Virtual Training Academy (EVITA) plays a key role in developing a standardised training framework and certification schemes, it is **not a training provider itself and does not implement training courses**. Instead, EVITA supports the ecosystem by defining quality standards, curricula, and certification pathways.

Accordingly, **NCCs are expected to adopt and implement** the training framework developed by EVITA in their own training programmes. This ensures consistency, quality, and alignment across the EuroHPC training landscape, while allowing NCCs to tailor content to national and sector-specific needs.

Are there overarching guidelines regarding the types of promotional materials that are considered eligible? For instance, are NCCs permitted to purchase items such as giveaways or branded merchandise?

According to the Annotated Model Grant Agreement promotional items such as goodies or giveaways may be eligible only if they are in line with Article 6 of the Grant agreement and directly linked to the objectives of the action and serve a clear dissemination or communication purpose. This is further clarified in Article 6.2.C.3, which covers communication, dissemination, and visibility costs.

Are NCCs allowed to purchase equipment that is regularly required for conferences or exhibition booths, with the intention of reusing it across multiple events, rather than incurring repeated rental costs?

In line with the Annotated Model Grant Agreement beneficiaries and affiliated entities may charge 'Equipment costs' as depreciation costs. If the beneficiary's usual practice is to consider durable equipment costs (or some of them) as indirect costs, these can NOT be declared as direct costs, but are covered by the flat rate for indirect costs (see *Article 6.2.E*). Any depreciation declared as a direct cost under the action must be a direct cost under the beneficiary's cost accounting practices (see *Article 6.2*). *The costs must comply with the conditions set out in the GA and fulfil the general conditions for actual costs to be eligible (i.e. incurred during the action duration, necessary, linked to the action, recorded in the beneficiary's accounts, etc; see Article 6.1(a)).*

Only the portion of the costs that corresponds to the rate of actual use for the action during the action duration can be taken into account.

Costs for renting or leasing equipment, infrastructure or other assets are also eligible, if they do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment, infrastructure or assets and do not include any financing fees.

Can NCCs allocate personnel costs for the creation of a MOOC from existing training materials (including potential video recording)? This would only cover working hours of internal NCC staff but not invoices to external designers or purchase of additional materials.

The development of MOOCs is not one of the central objectives of the call. All activities, including potential activities related to the production of MOOCs, will be assessed during the evaluation. Therefore, the proposed activity should be clearly detailed and justified within the context of the action to facilitate this assessment.

Could you please clarify the intended meaning of 'full-time' in the context of the NCC? For example, would an NCC Lead employed on an 80% part-time contract due to family-related reasons still be considered acceptable?"

In cases of duly justified circumstances, an exception to the full-time employment requirement may be granted by the granting authority, namely the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking.

Given the increased emphasis on industry users in the current call, are there any new rules or updated guidelines regarding the application of State Aid provisions?

The DIGITAL EUROPE Work Programme 2025-2027 Appendix 6 constitutes non-exhaustive guidance regarding co-financing of DIGITAL funded projects, focusing on key issues to pay attention to, by Member States, when carrying out the State aid assessment of Member States' support for such projects. It is the responsibility of the Member States to design State aid measures which are compatible with Union's State aid rules, including the GBER, when the latter is applicable.

Is quantum computing considered within the scope of the call, and would related activities be deemed eligible for funding?

In principle, quantum-related activities may be considered eligible, provided they are clearly aligned with the overall objectives of the call. The final assessment of their relevance and appropriateness will be assessed during the evaluation. Therefore, it is essential that such activities are well justified and explicitly detailed within the application.

DIGITAL-JU-EUROHPC-2025-NCC-01-02 - Networking and coordination of National HPC Competence Centres

Can the Coordination and Support Action (CSA) support training activities in AI topics, or will such support fall exclusively under the scope of the CSA for the AI Factories (AIFs)?

The CSA is expected to support all training activities that are eligible under the call DIGITAL-JU-EUROHPC-2025-NCC-01. This may include support for AI-related training activities in countries where coordinated or complementary AI-related efforts are needed to ensure national coverage in a EuroHPC Participating State without an AIF or AIFA.

The role of the CSA is also to ensure that the service catalogue of the NCCs do not overlap with the services provided by the AIFs/AIFAs.

Is there budget foreseen in the CSA for the financial support of workshops/events for the NCCs, mentoring & twinning of the NCCs? If yes, which categories can the CSA financially support?

The CSA may financially support workshops, events, mentoring, and twinning activities involving the NCCs, within the scope of the DIGITAL-JU-EUROHPC-2025-NCC-01 call.

The CSA can cover logistical and organisational costs, such as: rental of event venues, catering and hospitality services, technical support for hybrid or online formats, particularly in cases where multiple NCCs are involved, such as jointly organised events, all-hands meetings, or cross-border mentoring and twinning initiatives.

However, travel and accommodation costs for participants must be covered individually by each NCC under their own budget.