Digital Innovation Hubs Federation
For Large Scale adoption of
digital technologies by European SMEs

Open call 2 Application Experiment Guide for Applicants

September 2020

Closing date for the 2nd Open Call: 15.12.2020, 5 pm (Brussels Time)

Important: DigiFed offers 3 opens calls, the third one will open in March 2021

Short Description
The Guide for Applicants contains the basic information needed to guide you in preparing a proposal for submission to the DigiFed Open Calls. It gives an introduction on how to structure your proposal. It also describes how the proposal should be submitted, and the criteria on which it will be evaluated.

Version	Date	Author	Organization
1st Draft (v01)	28.08.2020	Omar Veledar, Margherita Volpe	AVL + ZAB
2nd Draft (v02)	16.09.2020	Isabelle Dor, Margherita Volpe	CEA + ZAB
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List of abbreviations

AE	*Application Experiment*
CPS	*Cyber-Physical System*
FSTP	*Financial Support to Third Party, also called Cascade Funding*
I4MS	*ICT innovation for Manufacturing SMEs (**https://i4ms.eu/**)*
IP	*Intellectual Property*
SAE	*Smart Anything Everywhere initiative (**https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/**)*

1.General information

The Application Experiment (AE) **Guide for Applicants** contains the basic information needed to guide you in preparing a proposal for submission to the DigiFed AE Open Calls. It gives an introduction on how to structure your proposal. It also describes how to submit the proposal and the evaluation criteria.

Please note:

Every selected applicant will be required to sign a Standard Agreement, a model example of which can be found at the **https://digifed.org/explore/** website.

> This Guide for Applicants does not supersede the rules and conditions laid out, in particular, in Council and Parliament decisions relevant to the H2020 framework programme.

DigiFed consortium

The DigiFed consortium brings together the following members:

- CEA Leti, France
- AVL List GmbH, Austria
- Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME), Hungary
- Blumorpho, France
- Digital Catapult, UK

- Ikerlan, Spain
- Minalogic, France
- STMicrolectronics, France & Italy
- Steinbeis-Europa-Zentrum, Germany
- University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Zabala Innovation Consulting, Belgium

2. Scope of the AE Call

Open call Scope **here**

Open call for Application Experiment #2
Call deadline: 15th December 2020, 5:00pm (Brussels Time)

DigiFed - Digitising Europe's industry together

Are you a European start-up, SME or Mid-cap?
Are you ready to digitalize your products, reach new markets and expand your market share?
DigiFed can support your development of smart products!

Open call for Application Experiment (AE): DigiFed offers grants of up to **€ 55k** as well as technical and business support for the development of smart applications in Europe.

IF YOU ARE:

✓ Developing innovative smart solutions worthy of market leaders.
✓ Bridging the physical and virtual worlds with advanced technologies and industrialized solutions.
✓ Interested in using premium resources and competencies to speed up solutions development.
✓ Wishing to access a unique European ecosystem composed of leading industrial companies, world-class research organizations, innovation accelerators and private investors.

DIGIFED OFFERS YOU:

✓ Access to industrial platforms in the domain of embedded and cyber-physical systems (CPS).
✓ Product support aimed at bringing your innovations to target markets.
✓ **Up to € 55k in funding – representing 70% of your project's declared budget.**
✓ Added value to your product, through high-level technical expertise pooled by European research centres.
✓ Innovation management support focusing on sustainable business development – to help your innovation get to the market via DigiFed and the Smart Anything Everywhere ecosystem.
✓ Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) services to identify technical partners, commercial opportunities in Europe and receive tailored help, webinars and boot camps through the DigiFed project.

DIGIFED IS OPEN TO PROPOSALS INCLUDING, BUT NOT LIMITED TO, THE FOLLOWING FIELDS:

- CPS / Embedded systems
- Smart applications
- Artificial Intelligence
- Connectivity/IoT
- Additive manufacturing
- Application-specific semiconductor technologies
- Heterogeneous integration and smart miniaturized systems
- Micro and nano bio-systems
- The energy efficiency of systems

Proposals shall be pan-European (EU member states or H2020 associated countries), encouraging cross-border collaboration:

✓ With partners/technologies facilitated by the DigiFed team
✓ With either a technology supplier or a customer (SME/RTO/Midcap/LE in Europe) of your choice.

If you have a promising innovative idea, we will help you to bring it to the market – **do not miss this opportunity and apply to the open call to realize your innovative solution!** Register at our portal and contact one of our networking/DIH partners who will assist you in proposal development. We will also match you with an appropriate advanced or industrial platform that best suits your needs!

Call deadline: 15th December 2020, 5:00pm (CET)	Web page (full call text/proposal guidelines/standard agreement): www.digifed.org
Call acceptance: 10th February 2021	For further information please contact:
Call identifier: DigiFed02 call (OC2_AE2)	info@digifed.org
Proposal language: English	

Important DigiFed process guidance, rules, offered technologies and platforms can be found at www.digifed.org and in our Guide for Applicants.

Open call for Application Experiment #2
Call deadline: 15th December 2020, 5:00pm (Brussels Time)

THROUGH OPEN CALLS, DIGIFED PROVIDES:
- ✓ a unique marketplace organized as a one-stop-shop with access to leading-edge industrial platforms and several advanced technologies
- ✓ support through expertise, know-how, coaching, design support and tech transfer from our partners or DIH services.

DIGIFED WELCOMES PROPOSALS ADDRESSING ANY SMART APPLICATION DOMAIN TARGETING:
- ✓ CPS Software-intensive project: Building a system solution using existing programmable CPS software core platforms. The expected outcome of this kind of experiment is a SW prototype demonstrator running on a pre-identified platform (e.g. from DigiFed partner or external stakeholders).
- ✓ System integration project: Building a system solution using existing SW and HW components. This kind of AE requires access to a broad range of competencies (product technical experts, design kits, API, etc.). The expected outcome of this kind of experiment is an integrated system prototype demonstrator.

DIGIFED OFFERS SEVERAL LEADING-EDGE TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATION MANAGEMENT EXPERTISES:

TECHNOLOGY
- *AVL (Austria): Integrated and Open Development Platform.*
- *Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Hungary): LEDSBESMART platform and Versatile Reliability Tester*
- *CEA (France): Access to SECURE infrastructure for trusted IoT platform, establishing an environment to isolate trusted code executed or data manipulation by an IoT platform from an untrusted world*
- *Digital Catapult (UK): Access Future Network Lab supports, including a variety of IoT network technologies under one roof including LoRaWAN, SigFox, NB-IoT and LTE-M as well as 5G2*
- *Ikerlan (Spain): Ikerlan Konnekt solutions (industrial cybersecurity, dependable embedded systems, I&C technologies, HW & communication systems)*
- *Ljubljana University (Slovenia): Cloud DevOp; Electrical switch with Ethereum support; Designing effective digital solutions with stakeholders; IoT solutions design & prototyping; Big Data Analytics tool*
- *STMicroelectronics (France): STM32 CMU enabling innovation for Smart industry, smart city, smart things*
- *STMicroelectronics (Italy): Physical digital transformation support with hardware & software tools for fast prototyping.*

INNOVATION MANAGEMENT
- *Blumorpho (France): Support in go to market strategy & innovation management; access to further funding and relevant training to attract private investors.*
- *Digital Catapult (UK): Innovation support (technical, business, open innovation) and training events.*
- *Ljubljana University (Slovenia): Designing effective digital solutions with stakeholders (SEROI+ methodology)*
- *Minalogic (France): Five levels of services on (I) Strategy positioning, (II) R&D innovation process, (III) Business development, (IV) Finance access and (V) Skills and training capacity building.*
- *Steinbeis-Europe-Zentrum (Germany): Development of Innovation strategies, especially in SMEs; Aid for the internationalisation as well as support for EU funding and projects*

Application Experiments can run from **9 to 12 months** but must be completed by **12.31.2022**. The expected outcome of our Application Experiments is a demonstrator prototype with a high technology readiness level (TRL). The prototype may also be used as a first-generation product.

DigiFed targets 'small' companies (start-ups, small/medium enterprises and midcaps), including organisations with both, low and high digital maturity.

Interested start-ups, SMEs and mid-Caps from EU member states and H2020 associated countries are encouraged to review the offered platforms, technologies and testbeds at www.digifed.org and contact our project members to gather further details. Additionally, several boot camps are offered by the DIHs in order to support the applicants. Regarding the UK companies' status, more news will come soon.

DigiFed contributes to the European Commission Initiative to help digitize European Industry, the Smart Anything Everywhere Initiative (https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/).

3. Rules and conditions

To avoid conflicts of interest, applications involving or coming from persons or organizations who are partners in the DigiFed consortium or who are formally linked to partners of the DigiFed consortium will not be accepted. For the purposes of this call for proposals, "organizations formally linked to the partners of the DigiFed consortium" are understood according to the definition of affiliated entities and third parties with a legal link to a beneficiary described within the H2020 Annotated Model Grant Agreement – Art. 14 — Implementation of Action Tasks by Linked Third parties (available at:
 https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/amga/h2020-amga_en.pdf).

3.1 Eligible countries

Legal entities established in the following countries are eligible to receive funding through this Open Call:

- Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their overseas territories
- The H2020 Associated Countries
- <u>UK companies</u> remain eligible for grants and procurement procedures as if the UK was a member state for the entirety of the Horizon 2020 framework programme and previous framework programmes. This also applies for to financial support to third parties according to Article 204 FR (cascading grants), and applies for the duration of H2020 projects.

The EU Associated Countries participate in Horizon 2020 under the same conditions as the EU Member States, as explained at **http://iprhelpdesk.eu/node/2552**.

A list with all eligible Associated Countries can be found here:
https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf

Legal entities established in any other country or region cannot receive funding in this open call.

3.2 Targeted companies

DigiFed is targeting the following types of companies from the eligible countries mentioned above:

- Startups
- Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises[1]
- Midcaps[2]

A legal entity will be considered **an SME** if it complies with the European Commission's definition. The main factors defining an enterprise as an SME are (i) staff headcount and (ii) either turnover or balance sheet total, as specified in the table below:

Table 1: SME definition

Company category	Staff headcount	Turnover	or	Balance sheet total
Medium-sized	< 250	≤ € 50 m		≤ € 43 m
Small	< 50	≤ € 10 m		≤ € 10 m
Micro	< 10	≤ € 2 m		≤ € 2 m

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[1] http://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition_en
[2] Following the H2020 Work Programme 2016-2017, "Access to Risk Finance" definition, midcaps are companies with 250 to 3000 employees

Further requirements on the European Commission's SME definition can be found at:
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/business-friendly-environment/sme-definition/

A legal entity will be considered **a mid-cap** (250-3,000 employees) if it complies with the European Commission's and the European Investment Bank definition at: **https://www.eib.org/en/about/priorities/sme/index.htm *EU recommendation 2003/361/EC.**

Any applicant commits itself:

1) to have at the moment of the submission of the application, or at the latest by the kick-off of the AE activities (corresponding to the entry into force of the Standard Agreement), the necessary stable and sufficient resources to implement the DigiFed AE,

2) to guarantee that its organisation is not in any situation, which would exclude them from receiving financial support (including pending financial procedures concerning frauds or inappropriate management or undue previous appropriation of funds from other funding programmes),

3) not to cumulate the DigiFed funding with other forms of financial support for the same work (i.e. exclusion of double funding case)

3.3 Ethical issues

DigiFed complies with the European policies regarding data protection and privacy and respects fundamental ethical issues particularly those outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity".

Each AE is responsible to respect European policies regarding data protection and privacy in particular to be GDPR compliant.

All data that are involved (collected, generated, stored) into an Application Experiment or that are processed in an AE must be GDPR compliant and therefore completely anonymized beforehand.

For more information on ethical issues, please consult the documentation provided by the European Commission:
http://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/doc/call/h2020/h2020-msca-itn-2015/1620147-h2020_-_guidance_ethics_self_assess_en.pdf.

All applicants have to confirm that if their proposal does or does not have ethical issues by selecting the relevant check-boxes in the proposal template. If you suspect that you have to answer "Yes" to any of the questions in the template, please contact a Digifed Partner for guidance on the issue.

The DigiFed consortium may check during the evaluation of a proposal if this declaration is in line with the contents of the proposal itself and reserves the right to contact the companies for clarification and eventually take necessary steps depending on the ethical issues.

3.4 Financial Support to Third parties' rules

As per European Commission's rules, companies have the possibility to participate in different open calls during DigiFed's entire duration. In that case, the maximum possible financial support per DigiFed Third Party is limited to **100 000 €.** Financial support to third party is called cascade funding.

As per European Commission's rules, financial support will not be awarded to individual legal entities that have already received more than 100 000 € via open calls (Financial support to Third parties = FSTP = Cascade funding) from H2020 I4MS (**https://i4ms.eu/**) and/or SAE (**https://smartanythingeverywhere.eu/**) projects.

DigiFed will receive assistance from the European Commission to cross-check if an organization that has been shortlisted for getting funding under the third open call of DigiFed has already received funding via an open call from any H2020 I4MS and SAE project and to ensure that no funding is allocated to an Application Experiment in case an entity exceeds the above threshold (including any DigiFed potential funding).

The limited amount does not include any EC contribution that your organization receives or has received via an EU-funded project (within FP7 or H2020) as a fully associated beneficiary. Participation as a beneficiary does not affect the participation in DigiFed open calls.

As per European Commission's rules, financial support will not be awarded for work that was previously or is currently funded under any other (Regional, National or EU) programme.

3.5 Funding of proposals

The funding of proposals will follow the Financial Support to Third Party rules detailed in the previous section (§3.4).

The **maximum funding** per Application Experiment per Third party – under the condition that the above-mentioned limits to FSTP do not apply - is **55 k€** for each Third party for one Application Experiment, at a funding rate of **70%** of the budget. This refers to the base configuration; more details are available in section §3.6.

If the above-mentioned limits do apply to the applying company, the maximum funding is dependent on the sum of the already received funding via open calls from any H2020 I4MS and SAE project of the involved third party.

Each **application experiment budget** will include justifications of cost and resources. The total European Commission available funding per Application Experiment will represent 70% of the total cost involved by the selected company(-ies).

The amount of financial support will be calculated on the basis of the estimated costs. Each AE will include an implementation plan including milestones and deliverables, and a cost estimate justifying the costs and resources in relation to the implementation plan. The industrial third party will be funded 70% of their respective cost. The selected company will receive pre-financing of up to **50%** of their respective total funding amount. The remaining payments (50%) will be made at the end of the AE upon successful completion of milestones and/or deliverables.

The **AE budget** must follow H2020 rules, among them:

- It must respect the limit of **15%** for specific subcontracting tasks that neither the DigiFed partners nor the Third Party can carry out
- The Third Party shall not make a profit from the EC funding
- The funding rate is **70%** of the budget.

It is strongly recommended that travel costs for dissemination in the "*other direct costs"* budget are included in the budget.

Please consider that all budgeted costs must comply with the applicable national law on taxes, labor and social security and must be in compliance with the rules and conditions laid out in Council and Parliament decisions relevant to the H2020 framework programme, in particular - but not exclusively - "REGULATION (EU) No 1290/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013"

Provisions for possible future losses or charges, exchange losses, costs related to return on capital, costs reimbursed in respect of another Union action or programme, debt and debt service charges and excessive or reckless expenditure are **ineligible costs** and **cannot be included** into the budget.

The expected duration of an Application Experiment is **9 to a maximum of 12 months.**

> Regardless of the planned duration of the Application Experiment, it must be finished by the end of the DigiFed project (31.12.2022), including any possible delays.

3.6 Partners in Application Experiment

DigiFed partners support selected third parties in different ways and roles. In general, a successful Application Experiment is built on a collaboration of the following parties depending on the AE type (see §3.9):

Single AE	Twin AE
BASE CONFIGURATION • One Third party (= the applying company) • DigiFed Competence partner • Cascade funding partner (CEA) • 55 k€ max of cascade funding for the applying company ADDITIONAL POSSIBILITIES • For two Third parties to build one single proposal in joint collaboration and get 55 k€ max of cascade funding to be shared by the two applying companies. • To get support for 2 DigiFed Technologies (from 2 DigiFed partners)	BASE CONFIGURATION • Two Third parties (= the applying company(ies)) • DigiFed Monitoring partner • Cascade funding partner (CEA) • Each applying company receives a max of 55 k€ of cascade funding each

For SINGLE AE with two third parties, one of the third party will have to be designated as the coordinator of the project at application phase. Its duties are i) to ensure that the proposal is in line with the companies' expectations and targets, ii) to make sure that both the administrative declarations and the ethical issues section (§4) of the proposal are fully completed on behalf of the two third parties, iii) to be the privileged contact with DigiFed monitoring partner.

For Twin AE, one of the third parties applying will have to be designated as the coordinator of the project at application phase. Its duties are i) to ensure that the proposal is in line with the companies' expectations and targets, ii) to make sure that both the administrative declarations and the ethical issues section (§4) of the proposal are fully completed on behalf of the two third parties, iii) to be the privileged contact with DigiFed monitoring partner.

DigiFed partners support and serve as points of contact for the third party(ies) during the creation of the proposal until the closure of the call.

DigiFed competence partners will support and serve as a single point of contact for the third party(ies) during the execution of the selected single AEs. They will relay the AE status to the cascade funding partner and the validation of the defined milestones.

Digifed monitoring partner will ensure the project follows its work plan as a single point of contact for the third party(ies) during the execution of the selected twin AEs. They will relay the AE status to the cascade funding partner and the validation of the defined milestones.

DigiFed cascade funding partner (CEA) is in charge of the cascade funding (FSTP) payment to the third party(ies) following the payment schedule described in the standard contract and the validation of the milestones and associated deliverables by the competence or monitoring partners, depending on the AE type.

3.7 Available technologies and DIH services

At application and implementation stage, DigiFed offers access to the following <u>advanced technologies and industrial platforms</u> which, **in case of Single AE only,** will constitute concrete part of the applicants' project itself:

- *AVL (Austria):* Integrated and Open Development Platform.
- *Budapest University of Technology and Economics (Hungary):* LEDSBESMART platform and Versatile Reliability Tester
- *CEA (France):* Access to SECURE infrastructure for trusted IoT platform, establishing an environment to isolate trusted code executed or data manipulation by an IoT platform from an untrusted world
- *Digital Catapult (UK):* Access Future Network Lab supports, including a variety of IoT network technologies under one roof including LoRaWAN, SigFox, NB-IoT and LTE-M as well as 5G2
- *Ikerlan (Spain):* Ikerlan Konnekt solutions (industrial cybersecurity, dependable embedded systems, I&C technologies, HW & communication systems)
- *Ljubljana University (Slovenia):* Cloud DevOp; Electrical switch with Ethereum support; Designing effective digital solutions with stakeholders; IoT solutions design & prototyping; Big Data Analytics tool
- *STMicroelectronics (France):* STM32 PU & STM32 CMU enabling innovation applications for Smart industry, smart city, smart home and smart things
- *STMicroelectronics (Italy):* Physical digital transformation support with hardware & software tools for fast prototyping.

<u>DigiFed technology services offer</u> is dedicated only to the SINGLE AE proposal applicants. SINGLE AE proposal must be built involving one of the above described technology services and in close cooperation with the corresponding DigiFed partner.

In addition, during the implementation of the selected proposals, DigiFed will also offer the following <u>innovation management services</u>:

- *Blumorpho (France): Support in go to market strategy & innovation management; access to further funding and relevant training to attract private investors.*
- *Digital Catapult (UK): Innovation support (technical, business, open innovation) and training events.*
- *Ljubljana University (Slovenia): Designing effective digital solutions with stakeholders (SEROI+ methodology)*
- *Minalogic (France): Five levels of services on (I) Strategy positioning, (II) R&D innovation process, (III) Business development, (IV) Finance access and (V) Skills and training capacity building.*
- *Steinbeis-Europe-Zentrum (Germany): Development of Innovation strategies, especially in SMEs; Aid for the internationalisation as well as support for EU funding and projects*

Innovation management supporting services is part of the support provided to any selected AE project, both SINGLE and TWIN ones. The innovation management partner is proposed, at the implementation stage, by the DigiFed consortium to answer at best the needs and expectations of the successfully selected AE projects.
For more information about these offers, their technical capabilities, please consult the website (**https://digifed.org/explore/**) or contact the relevant partner(s) – with the help of our helpdesk at **info@digifed.org**.

3.8 Kinds of Application experiment

DigiFed supports the following two kinds of application experiment:

- **CPS software-intensive project**: building a system solution using existing programmable CPS software core platforms provided by DigiFed partner or external companies and complementary advanced software technologies. The cascade funding provided by DigiFed will cover the development by the SMEs and the service. While the expertise provided by DigiFed partner is already covered by the project budget. The

outcome of this kind of experiment will be a software prototype/demonstrator running on a pre-identified platform (e.g. from DigiFed partner or an external company).

- **System integration project**: building a system solution using existing software and hardware components. This kind of AE will require enablement for access to a broad range of competencies (product technical experts, design kits, API, etc.). Funding will cover the development costs related to the hardware-software integration. The outcome of this kind of experiment will be an integrated system prototype /demonstrator.

3.9 Application experiment type: single AE # twin AE

Two types of application experiments are supported by DigiFed in this open call:

- **SINGLE AE**:

Base configuration
  - o a single AE involves one European company that brings an idea of innovation, a clear market vision, looking for technical support to validate the concept. The maximum cascade funding grant available for the company is 55 k€.
  - o One DigiFed technical partner brings technical expertise to the European company. The technical partner is selected by the company because of its technology service offer (*see chapter 3.7 Available technologies and DIH services above*).
  - o This partnership **must be cross-border** and thus implies that the company and the DigiFed partner are from different countries.
  - o One DigiFed innovation partner is associated, bringing its expertise on innovation management and business. The innovation management partner is proposed by the DigiFed consortium, after successful selection, to fit at best the company needs in the scope of the AE.
  - o Together with CEA as the cascade funding partner, they will constitute a dedicated consortium, committed together through the signed standard and specific AE agreement, if selected. The European company will then be funded through the cascade funding, based on the work plan and payment schedule conditions defined in the standard and specific AE agreement.

Additional possibilities
  - o Two Third parties can build one single proposal in joint collaboration under the following conditions:
    - ▪ The proposal will get **55 k€ max of cascade funding** that has to be shared by the two applying companies.
    - ▪ **cross-border** implies that at least the leading company is from a different country than the DigiFed partner
  - o The applying company can get two DigiFed technology support, from two DigiFed partners under the following conditions:
    - ▪ The applying company will get 55 k€ max of cascade funding.
    - ▪ **Cross-border** implies that the applying company is (at least) from a different country than the leading DigiFed technology partner.
- **TWIN AE**:
  - o a Twin AE involves two European companies **from different countries** (cross-border condition) that are associated to build together a proposal and to manage it to its realization, if selected. The maximum cascade funding grant available will be **55 k€ for each company.**
  - o Company #1 brings an idea of innovation, a clear market vision and needs complementary expertise to validate the concept.
  - o Company #2 brings the complementary expertise to realize the prototype.
  - o One DigiFed innovation partner is associated, bringing its expertise on innovation and business. The innovation management partner is proposed by the DigiFed consortium upon successful selection of the applicant, to fit at best the company needs in the scope of the AE.
  - o One DigiFed partner is associated to monitor the good realization of the project, based on the defined work plan.

      o   Together with CEA as the cascade funding partner, they will constitute a dedicated consortium, committed together through the signed standard and specific AE agreement, if selected. . Both European companies will receive cascade funding based on the work plan and payment schedule conditions defined in the standard and specific AE agreement.

3.10 Technical areas

DigiFed welcomes proposals including, but not limited to, the following fields:
    cyber-physical & embedded System / Smart application: software complexity, artificial intelligence, connectivity, application-specific semiconductor technologies, heterogeneous integration and smart miniaturized systems, additive manufacturing, micro and nano bio-systems, energy efficiency of systems.

DigiFed will support companies with low Digital maturity to enter start digital innovation pathway. DigiFed will also support companies with the existing digital background to address new digital challenges (e.g. Cybersecurity, AI, etc.)

4. Proposal creation and submission

4.1 Registration on the submission portal

Applicants are encouraged to register in the DigiFed proposal submission portal as early as possible: **https://digifed.org/open-calls/**

This way, DigiFed consortium is aware of the interest of a company in the open call and can support the applicants even if they have not yet contacted a DigiFed partner.

4.2 One stage submission

Proposals for a DigiFed Application Experiment are submitted in a single stage, by submitting a complete proposal through our submission portal. A complete proposal is constituted of two documents:

- Proposal description report: technical description oriented: small document (20 pages maximum) written in English and submitted under pdf format.
- A recorded pitch, business oriented: 5 min recorded video in English.

4.3 Proposal description language and length

The proposal description has to follow the structure of the proposal template provided in Annexe 1 of this document. The template can be downloaded from the open call website as a Microsoft-Word file: **https://digifed.org/open-calls/**

The proposal has to be written in English. Proposals submitted in any other language will not be evaluated. The proposal has to be submitted in a pdf format.

The proposal **should not exceed 20 pages in length** (recommended Arial or Times New Roman font, minimum font 11), not including the title page, the administrative declarations and section 4. (Ethical Issues) of the proposal. Applicants are free to provide limited additional information such as letters of support or additional data or references in the Appendix that does not count to this page count. It is recommended that applicants include in their proposals also innovation management/business development actions to be subsequently implemented.

4.4 Recorded pitch language and length

The recorded pitch has to follow the guidelines as listed in Annexe 2 of this document. More information is provided during bootcamps and webinars. The webinar will be available online and recorded pitch guidelines can be downloaded from the open call website at **https://digifed.org/open-calls/**

The recorded pitch must be in English. Pitch submitted in any other language will not be evaluated.

4.4 Support during the creation of the proposal

Applicants are **strongly encouraged to contact one of the DigiFed partners** in order to get more information on the technologies available, the Innovation management services and advice on how to create a successful proposal prior to submitting.

In particular, **Single AE applicant need to contact the technology provider in advance** (recommended minimum 2 weeks before the submission) to clarify the potential cooperation, involvement, role and feasibility of their proposed solution.

DigiFed partners are pleased to help applicants with registration, submitting proposals and finding the partner (DigiFed partner for single AE or an external company for Twins AE) that best suit their needs, establish and facilitate contact between third parties and the relevant DigiFed consortium members – and to make sure that the proposal complies to all rules in the open call.

If contacted in time, they can give feedback on certain aspects of a proposal to enable possible improvements to a proposal before it is submitted.

Applicants can get actively engaged and contact DigiFed through:

- The helpdesk: **info@digifed.org**
- Direct contact with DigiFed partners
- Participation in Webinar and on-line version
- Participation in Bootcamps
- DigiFed Digital Innovation Hubs events.

Experience indicates that proposals with active engagement before submission (early enough to leave time for exchanges) are more likely to succeed.

4.5 Submission of proposals

Proposals in DigiFed are submitted through our dedicated proposal submission portal.

Only proposals submitted through this portal before the closure of the call will be evaluated after its closure. Proposals must be received by the closing time and date of the call (**09/06/2020 Tuesday at 5:00 pm Brussels Time**). Late proposals or proposals submitted to any other address or by any other means will not be evaluated.

If one of the documents is missing (pdf file or video), the proposal will be considered as incomplete and therefore will not be evaluated.

If you discover an error in your proposal you can at any time - provided the call deadline has not passed - submit a new version of your proposal in our portal. Only the last version received before the call deadline will be considered in the evaluation.

All proposals will be evaluated as submitted; after the close of a call, no additions or changes to received proposals will be taken into account.

> **Do not wait until the last minute to submit the final version of your proposal. A complete proposal includes the proposal description (pdf document) and the recorded pitch. Failure of your proposal to arrive on time for any reason, including communication delays, is not acceptable as a delay circumstance. The time of receipt of your submission as recorded by the portal system will be definitive.**

4.6 Acknowledgement of receipt

The submission of a proposal will be confirmed by the proposal submission system through an automated email.

The acknowledgement of receipt will be emailed to you by DigiFed project (see Annexe 4 of this document).

The sending of an acknowledgement of receipt does not imply that your proposal has been accepted as eligible for evaluation.

5. Proposal evaluation and selection

5.1 Admissibility and eligibility check

A proposal is eligible if it complies to the following requirements

1. The proposal description is written in English and the recorded pitch is in English.
2. The submitted documents are readable (not corrupted), fully completed and using the templates and requests, for both the proposal description and recorded pitch.
3. It was submitted by a legal entity established in one of the countries mentioned in section 3.1 Eligible countries
4. It confirms that the "Standard Agreement" on the website has been read and is intended to be signed if the proposal will be selected
5. Its content corresponds to the call topic description (in scope/out of scope)
6. The proposal is cross-border and the company(ies) are from Eligible countries (see §3.1)
7. The company(ies) are Start-up, SME or mid-cap (see definition in §3.2))

A proposal will only be deemed "out of scope" in clear-cut cases when there is no obvious link between the proposal and the scope of the call. If the proposal is partially within the scope of the call, it will be evaluated in any case.

If any of the above criteria do not apply to a proposal, the applicant will be informed about it and the proposal will not be furthered into the evaluation process. In any other case, the proposal will be evaluated as described in the following sections 5.2 and 5.3 of this document.

5.2 Proposal evaluation overview

DigiFed project will evaluate proposals received in the open calls in the light of the criteria that govern the European Commission's original evaluation and selection of their projects. All evaluations are carried out in the light of the same basic principles:

- **Excellence**: The proposals selected for funding must demonstrate a high quality in the context of the topics and criteria set out in the call
- **Transparency**: Funding decisions are based on clearly described rules and procedures, and all applicants will receive adequate feedback on the outcome of the evaluation of their proposals
- **Independence**: Evaluators assess proposals on a personal basis. Evaluators represent neither their employer nor their country.
- **Impartiality**: All proposals submitted to a call are treated equally. They are evaluated impartially on their merits, irrespective of their origin or the identity of the applicants[3].
- **Objectivity**: Evaluators assess each proposal as submitted[4] not on its potential if certain changes were to be made.
- **Accuracy**: Evaluators make their judgment against the official evaluation criteria of the call or topic the proposal addresses, and nothing else.
- **Consistency**: Evaluators apply the same standard of judgment to all proposals.
- **Confidentiality**: All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence

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[3] In the frame of any restrictions provided for in the call
[4] This includes the input made during phone interview for the business case evaluation as described below

The evaluation of Application Experiment proposals is based on scores given according to four criteria:

Criteria	Associated documents
Excellence	These 3 criteria will be evaluated through the proposal description (pdf document)
Impact	
Implementation Quality	
Business Case	These criteria will be evaluated through the recorded pitch

The evaluation criteria and the scoring system are described in detail in the next section of this document. The evaluation process in DigiFed follows the three basic steps:

- Three external experts will evaluate all the proposals with regards to the criteria of *Excellence*, *Impact* and *Quality*.
- A business case evaluation will be done through a 5 min recorded pitch posted by the applicant, following requirement provided online, through webinars and bootcamps set-up by DigiFed DIH partners.
- DigiFed evaluation committee will perform a global evaluation of the proposals based on the results of both the technical and business case evaluation, in regards to the criteria of Excellence, Impact and Quality

The external experts are individuals from different sectors: science, industry or academic and with experience in the field of innovation. These experts are internationally recognised authorities in the relevant specialist area and are independent of any member of the consortium and any proposer. They will also sign a non-disclosure form with DigiFed to ensure the confidentiality of the proposals.

Each of the three steps, described above will assign a score to each proposal in the following way:

- Each external expert will assign a score between 0 and 5 to each of the criteria mentioned above. The assigned scores of the experts will be averaged for each criterion to get one single score for each criterion.
- The business case evaluation will assign a score from 0 to 5 to the criteria mentioned above
- DigiFed evaluation committee will assign a score between 0 and 5 to each of the criteria mentioned above.

During DigiFed evaluation & selection meeting, each proposal will be discussed and a consensus formed on the scoring. To achieve a single score for each of the criteria of *Excellence*, *Impact* and *Quality, the scores by IEC and the score of the external experts (which has been combined into a single score for each criterion as described above) will be averaged.*

A total score of a proposal is reached by calculation the sum of all individual scores of the evaluated criteria of a proposal. Each criterion is equally weighted. Therefore, the overall maximum score for an experiment proposal is 20.

For a proposal to be considered for funding, each individual score must meet a minimum threshold, which is 3 out of 5 points. The total sum of the individual scores must reach the minimum threshold of 13 points.

5.3 Evaluation criteria and score

The evaluation of Application Experiment proposals will be based on scores given according to four basic criteria: *Excellence*, *Impact*, *Quality* and the *business case* of the AE.

The **Excellence** is evaluated according to the following criteria:
- How well does the proposed solution address the digitalization challenge as detailed in the open call text?
- Are the proposed objectives clear and **pertinent?**

- How well does the proposed solution integrate the required functionalities?
- How intuitive is the technology for the end-users? How easy can the technology be integrated into the environment? How robust is the technology?
- Does it solve specific technological challenges (mobility, communication, etc.)?
- How well does the proposed work integrate the DigiFed platform (for SINGLE AE)?
- To what extent is the proposed work ambitious, has innovation potential, and is beyond the state of the art (e.g. ground-breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches)?
- Is the concept sound and shows a clear plan for the development of a working solution?

The **Impact** is evaluated according to the following criteria:
- **Does the proposal enhance innovation capacity and the integration of** new knowledge of the companies?
- **Are the proposed measures** to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), to communicate the project, and to manage research data where relevant effective?
- Are any other **environmental and socially important impacts**, not already covered, relevant?

The **Quality** and the efficiency of the implementation will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
- How effectively will the Application Experiment be managed? Is the proposed work plan coherent and effective?
- Are tasks, deliverables, deadlines well defined and adapted to the goals of the proposals?
- Is the allocation of tasks and dedicated resources (e.g. human capital, equipment, person-hours, etc.) appropriate and necessary to perform the scope of the proposal and achieve its objectives?
- Are the costs clearly defined and aligned with the required efforts?
- Have crucial risk (technological and other) to the success of the Application Experiment been identified and how effectively will those be managed.
- Does the third party possess the technical skills and abilities necessary to perform the scope of the proposal?

The **Business case evaluation** of the proposal will be performed through a recorded pitch prepared by the company following given recommendations and describing
- **Market attractiveness** taking into account the market size, growth potential – potential market capture for the company (SOM)
- **Differentiation** (UVP) highlight your unique value proposition – the unique selling point, compared to the competition
- **The business model / go to market explaining** what is the market access for the company, what is the plan to address the first customers, what is the plan for the future business development
- **Quality of the team** describing how the team is qualified for the execution of the business plan.
- **Strategic fit for the company** explaining what is the strategic coherence of the project for the company.

The scores used during the evaluation process indicate the following with respect to the criterion under examination:
- 0 – Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- 1 – Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- 2 – Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
- 3 – Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- 4 – Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- 5 – Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

5.4 AE selection

The outcome of the evaluation will be a ranked list of all proposals, ordered in descending order by the total score obtained by the proposal.

The final distribution will depend on the received proposals and the DigiFed consortium keeps the right to modify this distribution. Hence, the priority will be given to the best proposals in the areas of CPS and embedded systems.

Depending on the available budget for funding, the available resources for the technological offer of the DigiFed consortium members, the number of eligible and fundable proposals in the call, the appropriate number of proposals - based on this ranked list - will be selected for funding. Whilst normally the highest-ranked proposals will be selected for funding, there might be objective reasons (as mentioned above) for objecting to a specific third party. In this case, the choice may pass to the next-ranked proposal.

The selected proposals will be reported the DigiFed project officer of the European Commission for a final granting decision.

5.5 Feedback to applicants

After the evaluation of the proposals, all applicants will be informed if their application experiment was accepted or not. The first call notifications are planned to be released on 10 February 2021.

In case a proposal is selected, the applicant will receive a short summary of the evaluation outcome along with further information about the upcoming steps. In case a proposal is not granted, they will receive a full evaluation report, including an extended summary with the main remarks of the evaluation to allow the improvement of the proposal for future submissions. In any case, it is allowed to resubmit proposals to DigiFed's further open calls.

6. Additional information

6.1 Call Helpdesk

For further information on the call, contact our helpdesk:

Email: **info@digifed.org**

6.2 Individual Property Rights

All partners involved in a funded and implemented Application Experiment will sign a standard agreement before the Application Experiment starts. All information of whatever nature and in whatever form or mode of communication, which is disclosed by a Party to any other during the implementation of the Application Experiment and which has been explicitly marked as "confidential" at the time of disclosure, or when disclosed orally, has been identified as confidential at the time of disclosure and has been confirmed and designated in writing within fifteen (15) calendar days from oral disclosure, is "Confidential Information" and shall not be disclosed to any other third party.

Ownership of the developed product of an Application Experiment will remain with the third party. In case any IP is transferred or developed during the implementation of the Application Experiment, a bilateral contract between the involved parties will be concluded to define the exploitation rules.

For all questions on intellectual property rights please see the standard agreement which is available on the website.

7. Checklist for a successful proposal

Please consider this checklist as a helpful tool to maximize the chances of your proposal to be successful:

DESIGN PHASE

1. **Attentively define the scope and approach of your proposal**, in particular:
   a) Read in detail the call for AE and the associated conditions. Define the **project scope** and match it with the topics of DigiFed call for proposal.
   b) Check your **eligibility** as an applicant considering both your location and whether or not your company falls within the definition of start-up, SME, Mid-cap,
   c) Define whether your proposal is going to be a **TWIN or a SINGLE** proposal:
      ☐ In case of TWIN: contact a partner SME or Mid-cap organization (not involved in the DigiFed consortium) from a different country with respect to your location
      ☐ In case of SINGLE: contact with due advance (min 3 weeks) a technical partner of DigiFed and define in detail the type of cooperation foreseen (cross-border requirement to be respected also in this case)
2. **Register in our portal** and **contact a DigiFed Partner for support.** Past experience indicates that proposals with engagement before submission are more likely to succeed. Each applicant should:
      ☐ contact a networking partner as soon as possible for guidance and
      ☐ register in our portal.

DEVELOPMENT PHASE

3. **Feasibility recurrent checks**: periodically control that your planned work fits within the call for proposals. In particular, at a middle mature stage, check that your proposal does indeed address the topic in this open call and that you satisfy the formal participation requirements (eligible country, written in English)
4. **Did you maximize your chances?** The DigiFed consortium members can give valuable feedback during the creation of your proposal that can significantly increase the quality of a proposal. For SINGLE AE proposal, prior contact with the DigiFed competence partner can ensure the feasibility of the proposal and that the technology service targeted is the most appropriate one to answer the goal of the proposal, that the company expectations are compatible with the allocated time and resources and that their role is clearly explained in the proposal.
5. **Budgetary limits:** Check that you comply with the budgetary limits, that you have envisaged admissible cost categories and that you comply with the funding rate foreseen.

FINALIZATION AND SUBMISSION PHASE

6. **Completeness check:** Check that your proposal is complete and addresses all mandatory questions. Does your proposal answer all requests/comments? Proposals should be precise, concise and should answer to requested questions. Omitting requested information will almost certainly lead to lower scores in the evaluation.
7. **Readability and correctness:** Check that your proposal printable and all information (especially in charts, figures etc.) is readable. **Have you used the current template?** All proposals have to be based on the current proposal template available on DigiFed's website.
8. **Timely submission: Have you submitted your proposal before the deadline?** It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. **The deadline is December 15th, 2020 at 5 p.m. Brussels time**

For further details and links to the relevant section of the application documents please find following reported a recap table.

CONTACT US	TOPIC	ELIGIBILITY	SUBMISSION
Contact a DigiFed partner	**Check that the proposal fits DigiFed**	**Check that the proposal is eligible**	**Submit your proposal in the portal**
Check that you address **DigiFed scope** *(see details on Chapter 2)*	CPS and embedded system	EU members states, **associated countries** and UK	**Register on line**
Select the appropriate AE: **SINGLE or TWIN** *(see details on Chapter 3.9)*	DigiFed scope: AE's expected outcome is a demonstrator prototype with	Only **Start-up, SME, Mid-cap can receive cascade funding**	Check that all mandatory elements are filled out

		a high technology readiness level (TRL)	*(see details on Chapter 3.2)*	
SINGLE AE: select the right **DigiFed partner** (technology service) and check the project feasibility	SINGLE AE: select the right technology service	Cross-border proposal (two partners from different European countries (*see Chapter 3.9*)	Two documents to submit 1. **Proposal form** 2. **Recorded pitch** (*see Annex 1 - pdf file*)
TWIN AE: get support to find the right match for your project	Register to DigiFed bootcamps and webinars, agenda	Written in English, using the proposal templates and video request, respecting - the page limit for the pdf document - the time limit for the video	
Improve the chance of success of your proposal (improve the Quality, Impact, Excellence, avoid non-feasibility rejection) (*see Chapter 3.9*)	More information on the **online webinars**		Submit your proposal (2 docs) ways before the deadline on **December 15, 2020 at 17h CET**
	Read in detail the present Guide for Applicants and the **FAQs**	**Max cascade funding of 55 k€** per applicant (*see Chapter 3.6*)	Check that the documents are readable (not-corrupted)
		Proposed work cannot be already funded	
		Comply with **DigiFed ethical issue policy** (*see Chapter 3.3*)	

NB: green bold words contains direct links to the referred pages/information/template

ANNEX 1: Recorded pitch content
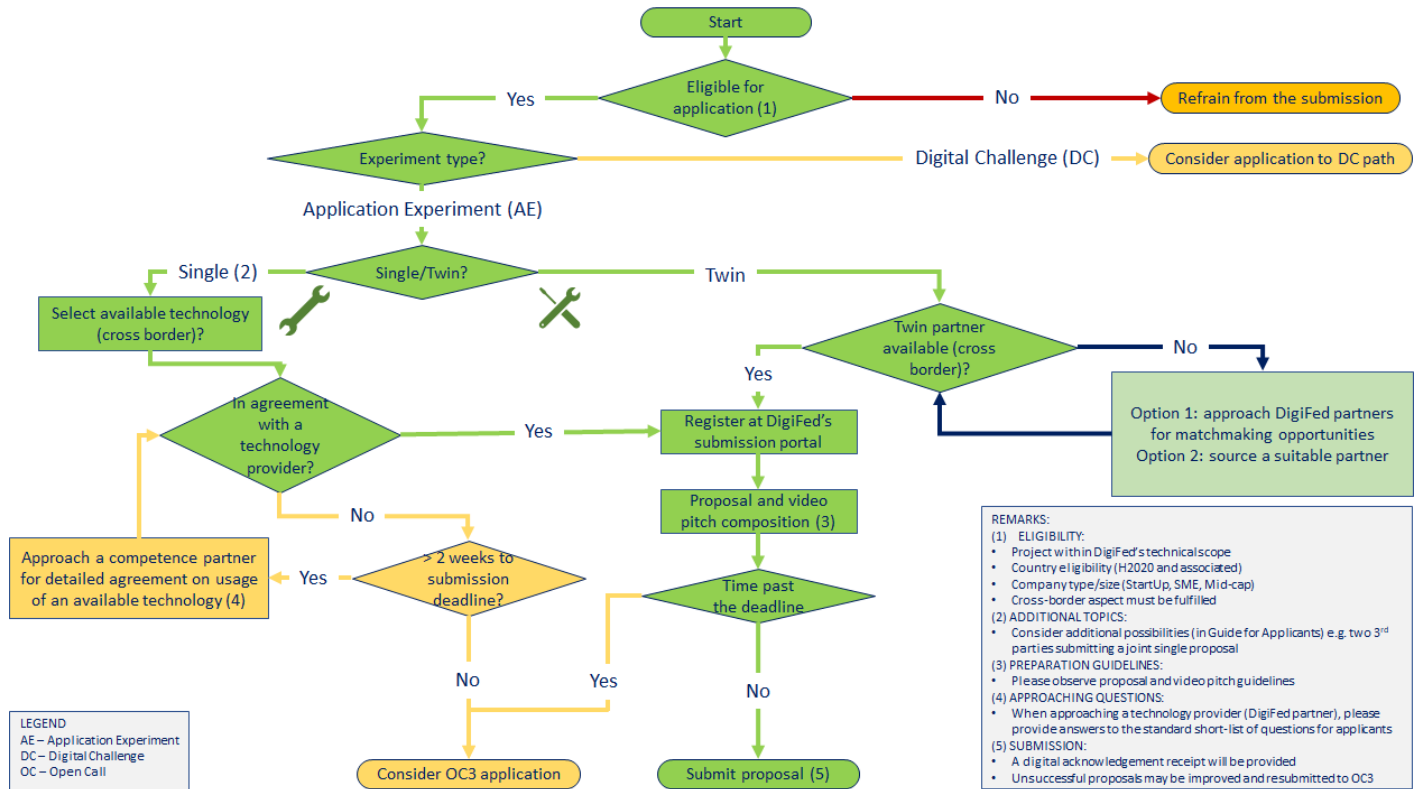
Content of the 5 min pitch in English

- Company profile, products and targeted market
- Introduction of the management team
- Selected technology building block and targeted use case
- Definition of the product to be developed
- Expected differentiation – competitive advantage
- Business model – market size and expected growth for the company – go to market strategy
- Targeted customers and go to market strategy
- Expected level of demonstration at the end of the project – potential customer demonstration

Requirements

- Slide deck mandatory / or video editing
- Information needed must be explicitly stated in the slides
- Pitch must be recorded by the applicant: no synthetic voice, or voice actors
- Must last at least 4 minutes and the maximum 6 minutes

Please note that only the videos will be used to assess the business part of each application, make sure all the information needed and stated in the content section above is mentioned in the video.

ANNEX 2: Application flow chart

ANNEX 3: Acknowledgement of receipt

Dear xxx,

Thank you for submitting your proposal for consideration as Application Experiment in the H2020 project DigiFed.

The evaluation will take place in the next few weeks. You will be notified as soon as possible after this whether or not your proposal has been successful.

DigiFed consortium as a whole would like to thank you for your interest in our activities.

Yours sincerely,