

CEF TELECOM – 2020-1 CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

European Platform for Digital Skills and Jobs – 11 June 2020 version

Commonly used abbreviations in this FAQ

AI	Artificial Intelligence
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1. What is the difference between this call and the 2019-2 European Platform for Digital Skills and Jobs call?

The 2019-2 call had the objective to reduce the digital skills gap in the Member States, whereas the 2020-1 call will focus on supporting learning opportunities for advanced digital skills through the design and delivery of master programmes in the field of Artificial Intelligence.

2. What is the start date of delivery of the master programme?

As mentioned in section 2.1 of the call text, applicants should consider delivering the master programme in the academic year 2021-2022. If the applicants want to deliver it in the academic year 2022-2023, this should be duly justified in the proposal by explaining the benefit of delaying the delivery and describing the activities that will be carried out in the meantime.

3. How can we demonstrate that we are a Master degree-awarding university?

For the purpose of this call, your university will have to be listed in the Erasmus Charter Holders list:

https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/sites/eacea-site/files/accredited_heis_within_the_erasmus_programme_09_01_2020.xlsx

4. How can we demonstrate that our company qualifies as an SME?

For the purpose of this call, your company will be qualified as a SME if it provides with the proposal the status assessment report generated via the wizard available on the European Commission DG Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs web page which confirms that the company qualifies as a SME:

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/tools-databases/SME-Wizard/smeg.do:SME_SESSION_ID=qV72qFyNxhhKmYIGhEA5EG0HmclRjtvf3hx5nduaQgHKJwY7shmp!1433221709?execution=e1s1

5. How can we demonstrate that we are an excellence centre in AI?

For the purpose of this call, there is a [self-declaration](#) to be filled in and signed by the authorised representative of your organisation, which must be submitted together with the application. The template is available on the [call web page](#). By signing the self-declaration, your authorised representative is accountable for its attestation.

6. As a university, if we charge fees to the master students to enrol in the programme, do we have to declare these fees at the end of the action?

The grant may not produce a profit for the beneficiary. "Profit" is defined as a surplus of the amount determined in accordance with Articles II.25.1 and II.25.2 plus the total receipts of the action over the total eligible costs of the action.

Where the final amount of the grant determined in accordance with Articles II.25.1 and II.25.2 would result in a profit for the beneficiaries, the profit shall be deducted in proportion to the final rate of reimbursement of the actual eligible costs of the action approved by the Agency for the categories of costs referred to in Article 3 of the Grant Agreement. This final rate shall be calculated on the basis of the final amount of the grant in the form referred to in Article 3 of the Grant Agreement.

For further information, please refer to Article II.25.3 Reduction due to the no-profit rule of the Model Grant Agreement, published on the call web page.

7. What is an AI excellence centre and how can we prove that we are one?

For the purpose of this call, in order to prove your organisation is an AI excellence centre, it must fulfil three criteria cumulatively:

- filed patent applications to protect AI innovations in the period 2009-2020;
- had Artificial Intelligence related papers accepted in top Artificial Intelligence conferences in the period 2009-2020;
- participated in EU funded projects (H2020, etc.) in the period 2009-2020.

These criteria are specified in the template of the self-declaration, which each excellence/research centre must provide and duly sign. The template of the self-declaration is available on the [call web](#) page and must not be modified.

8. Can an eHealth public agency be considered as a relevant stakeholder as per objective 2 of the call text? Can such a stakeholder be considered an eligible applicant?

In line with section 6.1 Eligible applicants of the of call text objective 2, the participation of institutions/organisations with relevant sector specific expertise is encouraged.

9. Is the use of AI in cultural heritage an eligible subject for the Digital Skills call?

The use of AI in cultural heritage is an eligible subject under Objective 2, provided the proposal puts forward a master course focusing on the use of AI in this specific sector.

10. Can the developed master programme be delivered exclusively online rather than on campus?

According to section 2.1 Priority outcomes of the call text, the learning content of the master programme must include hands-on training, challenge-based learning in cooperation with the industry and excellence research partners (e.g. access to testing facilities and laboratories, etc.).

11. If a university is also an excellence centre in AI, how should it participate in the consortium?

It is the responsibility of the university to decide if it wishes to apply **either** as an excellence centre **or** as a university. Please be reminded that the eligibility criteria specified under section 6.1 of the call text must to be fulfilled.

12. The total budget of the call €6,5 million will cover projects from two objectives. How many proposals maximum per objective will be awarded? Or will there be only one proposal per objective awarded?

It is expected that the highest ranked proposals submitted under each of the two objectives will be considered to be awarded CEF funding within the availability of the €6.5 million budget. The proposed activities and tasks should be aligned with the objectives described in section 2.1 "Priority outcomes" of the call for proposals. Subsequently the estimated budget of the proposed action should be proportionate to the scope of the activities and tasks defined.

13. Can one organisation be part of a consortium (different roles: leader, participant etc.) for proposals for both objectives?

Yes this is possible, one organisation can participate in two consortia for the two objectives with different roles. However, the organisation needs to justify in the proposals that it has sufficient resources to participate in two projects at the same time.

14. Are the tax fees for a master program in Artificial Intelligence eligible costs under this call?

If by tax fees you mean charging fees to the master students to enrol in the programme, then please refer to question 6 above.

15. The master programmes are offered and taught to students in all universities participating in the action. Does this mean that each university partner needs to offer and teach the full Master Programme at its university?

Yes, each university as a partner of the consortium must offer the full programme in its catalogue, delivery modes are decided and proposed by the applicants, taking into account how to maximise the quality of learning and allow mobility of students and/or teaching staff.

16. Is it acceptable that the universities participating in the action design a programme jointly, but each module is delivered by the most experienced university partner of the given subject?

The master programme needs to be designed jointly as required by the call. Alternative delivery modes can be developed and proposed by the applicants, subject to each university offering the full programme, taking into account how to maximise the quality of learning and ensure the relevance of learning content (e.g. for the labour market needs).

17. Does each university partner need to offer the Master Programme in the same academic year, hence in parallel?

Yes, the master programme must be offered/delivered in parallel in the same academic year.

18. Is it correct that it is not expected that each university awards a degree even if each of them needs to offer and teach the full master programme?

Each student enrolled and following the master programme qualifies to be awarded a degree upon successful completion of the master programme. It is up to the consortium and participating universities to decide and propose how degrees will be awarded (e.g. individual degrees, double degrees or joint degrees).

19. If the master programme is delivered by all participating academic partners in parallel, is it acceptable that the master courses are delivered in the language of

the Member State of the participating academic partners and/or English only, despite that they have to be available online in different EU languages?

The call does not require that the master programme be delivered in a specific EU language. The delivery modes of the master programme, including the language(s) in which it will be delivered are decided and proposed by the applicants, taking into account how to maximise the quality of learning and allow mobility of students and/or teaching staff.

20. The educational material should be available on line and should be developed in EU languages. Should it be translated to all these languages? Automatic translation is far suboptimal. What about translating it only in languages having big international audience: (e.g., English, Spanish, French, Portuguese) or big European audience (e.g., German, Italian, Dutch, Polish). Would that be unacceptable?

The call requires (section 2.1) that the consortium develop an online version of **modules/a course(s)** forming part of the master programme and **make them accessible for free in all EU languages in the Digital Skills and Jobs Core Service Platform**. In order to make **the online content of modules/a course(s) available in all EU official languages**, the **use of the Automated Translation Building Block is encouraged**. For example, the recording of an online course could be made available with subtitles in all EU languages, subtitles being translated via the Automated Translation Building Block. In cases where the translation of subtitles is not of high quality, manual proofreading of text may be considered.

21. Is it possible to invite academic institutions to participate as third parties to the coordinator, in addition to the three universities required to be partners and to offer the master programme?

Section 6.1 of the call text allows that applicants designate affiliated entities within the meaning of Article 187 of the Financial Regulation, for the purpose of supporting the implementation of the action submitted for funding. Such affiliated entities must comply with the eligibility criteria for applicants. Please refer to the general FAQs for further details on the affiliated entities (Q1.10 and others). You may also refer to questions related to subcontracting from the same general FAQs.

22. Can the excellence center, which is required to be member of the consortium, develop few master programme courses to be integrated into the master program and possibly offer them as well without awarding a master degree, e.g., provide practical training or master thesis support to students enrolled?

Yes, it can. Please refer to answers provided to questions to Q.15-18 above.

23. Are the main means for achieving the objectives of this call multilingual AI educational material development and free online delivery, rather than student mobility?

The objectives of this call are to increase the offer of highly specialised courses in AI delivered by universities in partnership with relevant actors and to provide access to part(s) of them to everyone via the Digital Skills and Jobs Platform, rather than student mobility.

24. What is the expected CEF contribution of the proposals addressing each of the 2 objectives of the call?

As indicated under Q.12 above, the budget of a proposed action, and consequently the CEF funding requested, should be commensurate with the objectives of the proposal. In order to address the aims of either of the 2 call objectives, proposals requesting a CEF contribution

of the order of €2-2.5M are expected. However, this does not preclude the submission of proposals requesting other amounts.

25. *If a university participates as an excellence/research centre, can this institution also award a degree? In case this is not possible, can it autonomously decide to award the degree without asking for the related contribution?*

Whether a university participating as an excellence/research centre can award a degree, is a question for the competent national authorities. However, in order to be eligible under this call, the university and/or excellence/research centre have to be in the position to award the degree.

26. *Is it possible to include costs for certification by a European/international certification body?*

If by certification you mean the award of the degree, then such a cost is eligible under this call.