

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020



## EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

For the provision of consultancy services for a Cost Benefit Analysis and an Application to be submitted to DG Connect for the E-DIH Programme which is part of the Digital Europe Programme.

*EOI PUBLISHING DATE – 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020*  
*SUBMISSION DEADLINE – 20<sup>th</sup> August 2020*

## **About us**

MDIA is the primary Authority responsible for promoting all governmental policies that promote Malta as the centre for excellence for technological innovation, while setting and enforcing standards that ensure compliance with any other international obligations. The Authority seeks to protect and support all users and also encourages all types of innovations, by allowing for maximum flexibility when it comes to the certification of Innovative Technology Arrangements.

The full objectives of MDIA are listed publicly at <https://mdia.gov.mt/about/> and extracted for the purpose of this EOI at ANNEXE A as they appeared online on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 (12:03HRS)

## **Rationale of this EOI**

The Malta Digital Innovation Authority is seeking Expression of Interest for a Cost Benefit Analysis and an Application to be submitted to DG Connect for the E-DIH Programme which is part of the Digital Europe Programme. An integral part of this work will include the demand of the local industry for High Performance Computing Infrastructure.

The European Commission has proposed the creation of the first-ever Digital Europe Program which will invest €9.2 billion to align the next long-term EU budget 2021-2027 with increasing digital challenges. Grant opportunities will focus on improved hub facilities and employment of personnel. This will allow EDIHs to deliver services that stimulate a broad uptake of Artificial Intelligence, HPC and Cybersecurity, in both industries (in particular SMEs and midcaps) and public sector organisations. The selection of EDIHs (European Digital Innovation HUB (as defined by EU Commission) in DEP will follow a two-step process:

- Member States will designate potential hubs
- The Commission will launch a restricted call for proposals that these hubs need to apply for.

For Malta to remain competitive internationally, all economic sectors must be able to reap the benefits of digital transformation. Building on a European network of Digital Innovation Hubs, the Maltese Government aims to help companies improve their processes, products and services through the use of digital technologies and it intends to address a clear lacuna in its digital infrastructure related to High Performance Computing through the E-DIH Programme.

Following a process of information gathering, MDIA is now at a phase where it knows exactly what it needs to deliver and is therefore seeking the assistance of a Consulting Firm to aid it in its efforts, to develop a High-Performance Computing Facility that is estimated to cost around 6 million Euros. MDIA will be applying for half of this allocation through the E-DIH Programme estimated at roughly 3 million euros.

MDIA wishes to adopt the one-time service (through this EOI document) of a service provider who can diligently and accurately provide MDIA a structured approach, according to the document published by the EU Commission to manage the writing of the requested proposal according to the specified requirements set by the Directorate-General For Communications Networks, Content And Technology from the European Commission (listed on <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/draft-document-dihs-digital-europe-programme-call-feedback> [current version as at publication date of this EOI is 05-05-2020]).

**Expectations of the end product and key technical requirements of this EOI:**

MDIA has been instructed to take care of establishing a Digital Innovation Hub in accordance with the requirements set up through EU Commission. The methodology for application to be submitted as part of this EOI must be 100% in line with the draft document issued by the EU Commission (listed on <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/draft-document-dihs-digital-europe-programme-call-feedback> [current version as at publication date of this EOI is 05-05-2020][see [requirement 11](#) below]).

The proposal should describe:

- The geographical scope, sector(s) and application areas targeted, the technologies covered, etc, and how this responds to demand of SMEs and/or the public sector.
- How the EDIH will be set up and/or operated, and how it will build on ongoing activities and existing infrastructures, if appropriate. Explain the different activities to be carried out as a European Digital Innovation Hub. Explain your links with the local Enterprise Europe Network node, with the National Contact Point for R&I in your country, and if applicable with relevant sector specific networks and co-location nodes funded by the European Institute of Innovation & Technology.
- A price list for the services provided, representing the "value" of their services. In the absence of market prices, this price list may be calculated on the efforts and investments and an according quantity structure. The price list would apply to all customers, but SMEs and public sector organisations would be able to use the services free of charge up to the upper limit of 200.000€ of the GBER Art 28 (4) 19. For highly individualised offers or solutions that directly support the SME's business model, SMEs would have to pay a fee at market prices as well.
- How the proposal relates to other parts of the Digital Europe Programme, e.g. participation to "train the trainer" events to get trained by the competence / excellence centres of HPC, AI and cybersecurity or other capacities built up in the context of Digital Europe Programme; Planned collaboration mechanisms with other European Digital Innovation Hubs and a description of the specific services and competences offered to other hubs (not necessarily funded by Digital Europe Programme) in the EU and under what conditions.
- How the proposal is in line with main EU policy objectives, such as a Europe fit for the digital age, the European Green Deal, etc. If appropriate, the proposal should support national and/or regional policy objectives, relevant smart specialisation strategies, etc.
- Any regional, national or international activities which will be linked with the project, especially where the outputs from these will feed into the project.
- How the proposal triggers co-investments by Member States, regional authorities, and industry. Please note that EU investments in European Digital Innovation Hubs are dependent on the availability of an equal investment by Member States.

- How your proposal would support SMEs and public administrations in overcoming financial obstacles.
- Define your targets for the following KPIs:
  - Number of businesses and public sector entities which have used the European Digital Innovation Hubs' services, by user category (businesses of different sizes, public sector entities, etc.), sector, location and type of support received. The types of services covered by this indicator are:
    - Information services (e.g. participation to events)
    - "Test before invest" activities allowing beneficiaries to test technologies;
    - Access to finance;
    - Training activities;
    - Networking activities;
- For "test before invest" services, further breakdowns for technology tested (AI, HPC or cybersecurity or other digital technologies), including whether Digital Europe capacities (HPC, AI, Cybersecurity, Advanced digital skills, Digital Service Infrastructure...) were used.<sup>1</sup>

The end product which is to be generated from this EOI should be in line and compliant with the requirements written in draft working document for European Digital Innovation Hubs in Digital Europe Programme (listed on <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/draft-document-dihs-digital-europe-programme-call-feedback> [current version as at publication date of this EOI is 05-05-2020]). Apart from this, the proposal should also be compliant with the draft Digital Europe programme (listed on <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/europe-investing-digital-digital-europe-programme>).

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from draft working document *European Digital Innovation Hubs in Digital Europe Programme* (pgs 29-30)

**The service provider of such assessment must be able to, as a minimum, comply with the following:**

1. The bidder should have experience in submitting similar applications for projects organised by the EU Commission of a scale that are considered equivalent.
2. Provide examples of past experience in the provision of similar EU proposals.
3. The bidder should have knowledge of the technology (HPC) the eDIH will be dealing with, so as to write a proposal fit for purpose.
4. Keep up a continuous or periodical dialogue with members of MDIA for the scope of providing the expected results.
5. Complete and finalise the proposal within the expectation of the EU Commission within two (2) months from the signing and acceptance date this EOI.
6. The goal is to submit the eDIH a first draft of the proposal to the EU Commission by the the **23 October 2020 and the final Draft by the 30 October 2020**
7. Advice over possible membership in the EUROHPC Joint Undertaking by October 15.
8. Projected timelines of meetings and proposal drafting.
9. Provide as part of the response to this EOI a clear document as to how the bidder shall work to achieve the minimum results expected and documented in this EOI.
10. The methodology that the bidder is planning to use must be fully documented in detail that is satisfactory to MDIA.
11. Write a proposal that is complaint with the draft document for 'Digital Europe Programme' and 'European Digital Innovation Hubs in Digital Europe Programme'.
12. The bidder should use the draft documents issued by the EU Commission as their guidelines to write this proposal. The proposal must be a 100% complaint with these documents. The URL to the documents have been listed above. The bidder is obliged to ask / verify with MDIA the correctness of the version of the documents before work commences.

### **Expected Fee Structure Requirements**

MDIA requires that the fee for such a service and production of the proposal to the EU Commission regarding eDIH, will be a holistic one based on a one-time fee that is all inclusive of whatever the service provider deems necessary to achieve the expected outcomes listed in this EOI.

*Time and material (T&M) quotations will not be accepted.*

**Disclaimer:** *All bidders and prospective bidders are hereby being notified that MDIA reserves the right to not procure any of the submitted bids or proposals to this EOI and/or to re-issue this EOI with revised specifications. The primary scope of this EOI is to evaluate the interest and cost related to the production and work required to meet and exceed the documented minimum requirements in this document and upon such response, consider procuring such a service.*

## **ANNEX A**

*OBJECTIVES OF MDIA. Extracted on 6<sup>th</sup> August 2020 at 12:03HRS from source: <https://mdia.gov.mt/about/>*

### **1: The Authority shall endeavour to achieve the following main objectives and policies.**

- to promote governmental policies that favour the deployment, within the public administration, of innovative technology arrangements, by the Government where necessary or appropriate
- to foster, promote and facilitate the advancement and utilisation of innovative technology arrangements and their design and uses
- to promote education on ethical standards and legitimate exploitation of innovative technology arrangements
- to safeguard, maintain and protect the reputation of Malta in the use of innovative technology arrangements
- to protect users of innovative technology arrangements, including consumers and the general public and to ensure standards are set that meet their legitimate expectations and protect them against misuse
- to harmonise practices and to facilitate the adoption of standards, on innovative technology arrangements in Malta, to be in line with international norms, standards, rules and/or laws particularly those of the European Union
- to assist the competent Data Protection Authorities in safeguarding the data protection rights of data subjects and assist other competent authorities in the protection of vulnerable persons and the promotion of fair competition and consumer choice
- to promote, and if required enforce, ethical and legitimate criteria in the design and use of innovative technology arrangements and any application, software or derivative product from it or intrinsically part of or connected to it as well as to ensure quality of services and security therein
- to support the prevention of money laundering, terrorist financing and the commission of any other crime in or through the use of innovative technology arrangements, through collaborations with other regulatory bodies and competent authorities with the same responsibility of preventing money laundering and the financing of terrorism and crime in general
- to promote transparency and auditability in the use of innovative technology arrangements, and any application, software, or derivative product from it or intrinsically part of or connected to it
- to promote ease of accessibility to the facilities provided by publicly available innovative technology arrangements and the recognition and implementation of the right of exit, withdrawal or termination of participation from any arrangement in the use of innovative technology arrangements
- to promote legal certainty in the application of laws, in a national and cross-border context, and the development of appropriate legal principles for the effective application of law to innovative technology arrangements

**2: The Authority shall endeavour to promote the development of innovative technology in as wide a manner and for as many uses as possible, so as to achieve its benefits in as many economic and social sectors as possible, including, but not limited to, in financial services, health and education, voluntary organisations, public administration and transport.**

**3: The Authority shall also encourage the development of regulatory processes in relation to innovative technology arrangements to support all national competent authorities regulating different sectors to better administer the laws entrusted to their administration for the public benefit.**