DIGITAL-JU-CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: AI chip demonstrators for EU compute infrastructure

Information for applicants

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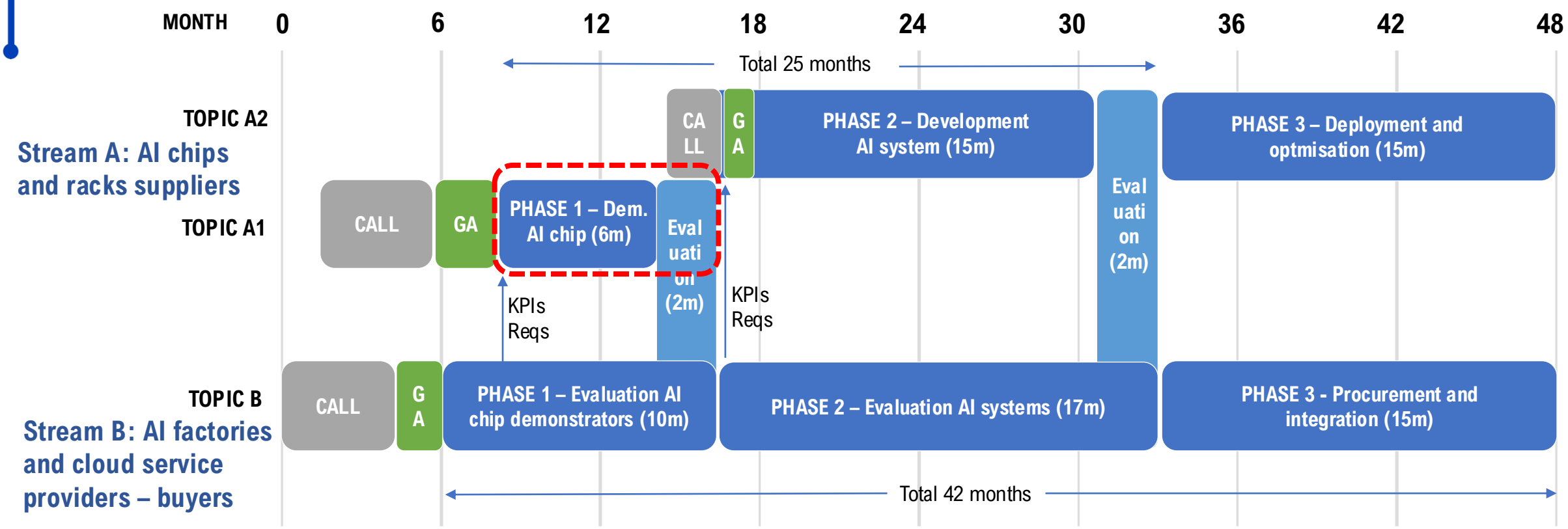
EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

Context: Stream A, Topic A1



Call documents

- Publication on **07 Jul 2026** with full package of call documents at:
  https://www.chips-ju.europa.eu/Open-and-Upcoming-Calls/

- **Work Programme documents** can be already found at:
  https://www.chips-ju.europa.eu/MAWP/

  - Multi-annual Work Programme 2023-2027
  - General Annexes to the Multi-annual Work Programme 2023-2027
  - Appendix 8 to the Work Programme - Chips for Europe initiative (CEI)

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG

Type of Action	Simple Grant
Indicative budget	10 M€
Expected EU contribution per project	The JU estimates that an EU contribution of up to EUR 1 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Mode	Co-funded with the National Funding Authority (NFA) One stage Call with submission of Full Proposal (FPP)
Call launch date	07 Jul 2026
Deadline FPP Phase	23 Sep 2026 at 17:00 Brussels Time

Agenda

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG

- Expected outcome & scope
- Admissibility & eligibility
- Funding
- Award criteria
- Call restrictions

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Expected outcome and scope (1/2)

- **Functional demonstrators** of working AI chip prototypes (PCB-level) designed by EU chip design companies and physically integrated with their system partners.
- **Validation** of AI chip solutions on a **common EU evaluation platform** (provided by the Topic B consortium), delivering comparative evidence on key performance indicators.
- **Demonstrable substantial EU added value** of the AI chip prototypes.
- A shortlist of European AI chip solutions awarded the **AI Compute Excellence label** and qualified to proceed to full rack development under Topic A2.

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Expected outcome and scope (2/2)

- Each proposal must include at least one **EU-established AI chip design company** as beneficiary, responsible for the AI chip design and associated IP. System integrators or OEMs may participate to support demonstrator integration.
- **Required technical maturity at submission:**
  - the AI chip has been **taped out at a commercial foundry**; engineering samples available or expected within the first 3 months after the submission deadline;
  - a **PCB hosting the chip** has been designed and is in production (or expected before the end of the development phase).
- **Duration: 8 months total:** 6 months development (chip, PCB, cooling, interconnect, software stack integration) + 2 months benchmark assessment on the Topic B common evaluation platform.
- **Final deliverable**: technical report covering architecture, energy efficiency, software maturity, origin of the core IP, and a **roadmap to a full AI compute rack at TRL 7**.

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Admissibility & Eligibility (1/2)

- **Admissibility and Eligibility conditions:** Annex 2 “General DIGITAL EUROPE PROGRAMME conditions” to the Multiannual Work Programme 2023-2027 (General Annexes).
- **Page limits (FPP Phase):**
  - **Relevance:** 20 pages
  - **Implementation:** 40 pages
  - **Impact:** 20 pages
- Proposals with more pages are admissible and will be evaluated, but the pages in excess will not be considered for the evaluation.

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Admissibility & Eligibility (2/2)

- **Eligible applicants:** legal entities (public or private) established in eligible countries (EU Member States, EEA countries, countries associated to the Digital Europe Programme).
- **Specific eligibility: mandatory consortium composition:**
  - at least one **EU-established AI chip design company** as beneficiary, holding the IP for the proposed AI chip;
  - the consortium should remain focused and limited in size (system integrators or OEMs may participate as needed).
- The **AI Compute Excellence Label** awarded after benchmark assessment is a **strict eligibility condition** for participating in Topic A2 (rack development).

DIGITAL-JU-CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Funding

- **Indicative budget:** EUR 10 million
- **Expected EU contribution per project:** up to EUR 1 million (submissions requesting different amounts are not precluded).
- **Mode:** Co-funded with the National Funding Authority (NFA). National co-funding from Participating States complements the EU contribution. Where national co-funding is not available, beneficiaries may proceed under EU-only funding and cover the remaining costs from own resources.
- **Reimbursement rates** (% of eligible cost according to DEP):
  - **For-profit organisation (not SME):** 50%
  - **SME (for-profit SME):** 50%
  - **University / Other (not for profit):** 50%

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Award criteria

- **3 award criteria**: (sub-criteria details in the call documents)
  - Criterion 1 – Relevance
  - Criterion 2 – Implementation
  - Criterion 3 – Impact
- **Scores**:

Criteria	Range	Weight (**)	Threshold (*)
Relevance	0-5	1	3
Implementation	0-5	1	3
Impact	0-5	1	3
Total	0-15		10

(*) threshold applies to unweighted score.
(**) the weight is only used to establish the ranking of the proposals.

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Call restrictions

- Call is restricted on the basis of **Article 12(6)** of the Regulation (EU) 2021/6941
- Legal entities established in associated countries and legal entities that are established in the Union but are controlled from third countries may be eligible to participate only if they comply with certain requirements or conditions. Please see Annex IV of Appendix 4 of the Chips JU Work Programme for more information.
- All design and test data, builds, logs and KPI results must be processed and stored in the EU
- Ownership Control Declaration form to be filled in per applicant
  - Template to be download from the call documents

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Application steps

Application Form Part A

- Administrative part + EU budget
- Directly online in the portal

Application Form Part B

- Technical content
- Template to be downloaded and uploaded pdf from/to portal

Mandatory Annexes

- National Budget Table
- Ownership control declaration

Templates available portal/call documents

DIGITAL-JU- CHIPS-2026-AI1-SG: Part B & Mandatory Annexes

Part B and Annexes

In this section you may upload the technical annex of the proposal (in PDF format only) and any other requested attachments.

Part B *		Upload
List of previous projects		Upload
Ownership control declaration		Upload
Other annexes		Upload

Application Form Part B

NOT needed

Consortia Ownership Control Declaration (per applicant – merged pdf if needed)

National budget table

All Annexes are mandatory!!! (All annexes in pdf)

EUROPEAN PARTNERSHIP

Further information

- Chips JU website (https://www.chips-ju.europa.eu/Open-and-Upcoming-Calls/) for further information on the calls.

- Calls@chips-ju.europa.eu for specific questions related to call documents.

- IT Helpdesk for questions regarding submission issues:
  https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/helpdesks/contact-form

- EC online manual:
  https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/om_en.pdf

- For questions about European research, you can contact the Research Enquiry Service via the webform :
  https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/contact-us/research-enquiry-service_en

Thank you for your attention!