

Contracting authority: Enabel

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS [Not-For-Profit & Public Sector]

### **“Scaling Digital and Green Innovations in Africa”**

#### Guidelines for the Digital and Green Innovation Joint Action

BEL23005

Deadline for submitting the concept notes of the grant application (1<sup>st</sup> round): 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024, 1:00 pm (Brussels' time)

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# 1 Enabel

**This Call for Proposals is organised by Enabel, the development agency of Belgium's federal government, through its innovation hub, Wehubit.**

## 1.1 ENABEL – BELGIAN DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Enabel is the development agency of the Belgian Federal Government. It is responsible for implementing the policy priorities of the Belgian governmental cooperation. Moreover, Enabel enhances its added value through carrying out assignments for other entities (e.g. the European Union, other EU Member States, global funds, Regional Governments and more). In doing so, Enabel aims at promoting sustainable international development.

As the world is facing huge challenges in realising the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, Enabel wants to contribute with its experience and expertise in five specific domains, one of them being Climate Change and the Environment. Enabel has twenty years of experience integrating environmental issues into its actions and ten years of experience providing solutions to deal with the effects of climate change.

Enabel has defined **5 areas of intervention under the global challenge Climate Change and the Environment** : Resilient cities and territories; Sustainable water management; Forests and nature areas ; Green energy; and Sustainable food systems.

## 1.2 WEHUBIT

Wehubit is **Enabel's innovation hub**. Between 2018 and 2023, in its first phase, Wehubit identified Digital Social Innovations (DSIs) and supported their scaling through 6 dedicated Calls for Proposals in diverse sectors. It has, in total, supported 27 partner projects implemented by over 50 partner organisations in 14 countries in Africa and the Middle East using both Belgian and European funding.

Based on the achievement and relevance of the first, a second programme was established for 2024-2026, to continue identifying and supporting the scaling of social innovations, digital or not, in the non-profit and public sector.

The programme still aims to boost (digital) social innovation as a vehicle for accelerating inclusive and sustainable development, reducing inequalities and empowering people in Belgium's partner countries and beyond. It does so by providing both **financial support in the form of grants** as well as **topic-specific capacity building** to partner organisations, **stimulating learning and facilitating collaboration and exchanges**.

# 2. The Digital and Green Innovation Joint Action

## 2.1 ORIGINS AND OBJECTIVES

**The Digital and Green Innovation (DGI) Joint Action is a 24 month action funded by the European Union, Germany, Belgium, Estonia and France.** These member states also provide expertise and contributions through their development agencies (i.e. Enabel, GIZ, ESTDEV, AFD & Expertise France).

The DGI Action aims at operationalising the **advancement of the twin transition to a green and digital economy, with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and innovation**. It will foster digital solutions that tackle environmental challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss, while



contributing to circular and resilient local economies. Supporting innovation via direct financial support and entrepreneurial advisory services will be accompanied by policy and financial advisory support.

The DGI Action will have a **global scope**, covering Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central Asia, and Asia-Pacific.

The Initiative is composed of only one Specific Objective, and 6 outputs. Outputs 1 to 4 are related to support to innovation and entrepreneurship per region, while Outputs 5 and 6 are thematic.

The **Specific Objective** of this action is to **Strengthen digital green entrepreneurship & innovation across partner countries and regions**.

The Outputs contributing to the above Specific Objective are:

- **Output 1 (Africa):** Entrepreneurship support for digital and green innovation in the acceleration phase in Africa.
- **Output 2 (Africa):** (Pre)-Incubation and pre-acceleration support in Africa
- **Output 3 (Latin America and the Caribbean):** Capacity-building on earth observation in Latin America and the Caribbean
- **Output 4 (Asia Pacific):** Entrepreneurship support for digital and green innovation in the acceleration phase in Asia Pacific
- **Output 5: Policy dialogues and partnerships**
- **Output 6: Finance brokerage**

This Call for Proposals is organised by Enabel and is part of the first Output - Entrepreneurship support for digital and green innovation in the acceleration phase in Africa. More information on the Call's rationale and envisaged contribution to the overall objective of the DGI Action can be found in the next chapter.

## 2.2 RATIONALE OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

As mentioned above, the Digital and Green Innovation (DGI) Joint Action first output is to provide entrepreneurship support for digital and green innovation in the acceleration phase in Africa.

Enabel and its partners believe that digital solutions can deliver a substantial net positive impact on environment and climate. They can also contribute to a just transition of economies around the globe and provide entrepreneurship and employment opportunities.

However, investment in green digital solutions in Africa is insufficient. Besides the financial investment, there is also a need to **strengthen the development, optimal scaling and long-term integration of grassroots innovation in partner countries and regions**. This needs to be strongly supported by public and private sector capacity-building to ensure a long-term and deep-rooted societal impact.

According to Enabel, development, optimal scaling and long-term integration of grassroots innovations can only be achieved if the system(s) in which these innovations are implemented is considered. In that regard, it is necessary to use a **multistakeholder approach** to ensure a meaningful contribution towards a just digital and green transition.

Admittedly, private sector actors are more than often spearheading these digital ecosystems in Africa, accelerated by a growing interest in Africa's tech scene, regulatory support from local governments and corresponding (international) investments. Nonetheless, using a multistakeholder approach towards innovation and digital transformation is pivotal in ensuring that the developments are beneficial to the society as a whole and sustained in time. In this sense, governmental institutions and other "not-for-profit" actors such as social entrepreneurs, academia, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), also deserve their place in the digital ecosystems.



As a result, Enabel will valorise its expertise and experience in the support to scaling innovation in the public and not-for-profit sector. It will do so in synergy with other partners' activities to identify and support digital and green innovations in Africa: GIZ, AFD and ESTDEV.

## 3 The Call for Proposals in a nutshell

### 3.1 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The **general objective** of this Call for Proposals is to increase the use of and access to digital solutions, as a vehicle to tackle environmental challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss, while contributing to inclusive and sustainable development in the partner countries of the Belgian development cooperation.

The **specific objective** of the Call for Proposals is to identify and to support the scaling of Digital and Green Innovations (DGI) that are relevant for the country portfolio objectives of Enabel and the European Union in the respective Africa partner countries of the Belgian development cooperation.

This Call for Proposals **will identify and support Digital and Green Innovations that are ready to or transitioning to scale.**

DGIs are defined as solutions that leverage digital tools and/or technologies to contribute positively to at least one of the following environmental objectives: climate adaptation, resilience, mitigation, protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, sustainable use and protection of water and maritime resources, environment and water resources, pollution prevention and reduction, resource efficiency and systemic shifts like the circular economy.

Digital tools and technologies are not seen as an objective but a way to tackle societal challenges and achieve sustainable social and economic impact, within planetary boundaries.

(Co)applicants and associates will find more information of the scaling digital innovation frameworks in *5. Scaling Digital and Green Innovations* and on the thematic scope of this Call for Proposals in *5.2.2. Thematic scope*.

### 3.2 GENERAL TARGET AND MODALITIES

**The Call focuses on providing grants and capacity building/learning opportunities to public institutions (national and/or regional), academia, CSOs, NGOs and other 'not-for-profit' actors (such as social enterprises or not-for-profit business associations).**

This Call for proposals organises the **competitive selection process, which will proceed in 2 rounds**. After the second round only 4 or 5 of the received applications will be awarded with a grant to support the sustainable scaling of their proposed Digital and Green Innovations.

The programme will select these innovative solutions on the basis of their alignment with the present Guidelines.

The signature of the Grant Agreements will depend on the signature of the Digital and Green Innovation Action Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement by the European Union and the contracting agencies.

### 3.3 VALUE OF THE FUNDS EARMARKED BY THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The total indicative sum available for Enabel's Call for Proposals is 750.000 EUR. The contracting authority reserves the right to not award all of the available funds.

#### Grants value



Any grant application under this Call for Proposals must fall between the following minimum and maximum amounts:

- **Minimum amount: 100.000,00 EUR**
- **Maximum amount: 150.000,00 EUR**

The programme will finance 90% of eligible expenditures presented in the final financial report of the innovative solution submitted. The contracting-beneficiary shall bear the remaining 10%.

During execution, Enabel reserves the right to modify the minimum and maximum amounts applicable to the requests and to award additional amounts to the beneficiaries having been awarded grants within the framework of this Call for proposals.

## 4 Scaling Digital and Green Innovations

In this chapter, we provide potentially interested (co-)applicants and associates with Enabel interpretation of the **key concepts that constitute the foundation of this Call for Proposals: Digitalisation, Innovation and Scaling.**

### 4.1 DIGITALISATION

Over the past five years, digitalisation has increasingly embedded itself in every aspect of our lives. Apart from the ‘foreseeable’ technological advancements, the COVID-19 crisis –although tragic in health, social and economic terms – proved to be a catalyst for innovation and the digital transformation of societies around the globe.

As such, a paradigm shift between the second half of the 2010s and today seems appropriate for the international development/partnerships sector. A shift that takes us away from seeing digital innovation solely as a way to leverage development to interpreting digital innovation as a **crucial component to ensure appropriate development in a digitalised world.** In other words, digital innovation (and not just digitalisation) is the driving force of long-term inclusive and sustainable development.

Despite remaining digital gaps, the past 5 years have seen a significant increase in the number of internet users in Sub-Saharan Africa, reaching 30% of the total population through double-digit percentage point growth since 2018. It goes without saying that internet access creates opportunities for digital innovation and provides a wealth of socio-economic and social opportunities.

Indeed, increasingly **integrating the online world also comes with several risks** (and accompanying opportunities) for individuals, organisations, governments and societies. Challenges related to digital (gender) gaps – in terms of skills, inclusion, accessibility - , energy consumption/climate change, cybersecurity, fake news, appropriate legal frameworks, interoperability and data privacy concerns are growing in parallel.

Digital technologies cause 3-4% of carbon emissions, use 7-9% of global electricity supply and generate ever-increasing amounts of e-waste. As the world becomes more digital, this poses a risk for the climate if not managed properly by recognising and fostering more sustainable use of digital tools and services. On the other hand, digitalisation is an integral component of 1) climate change adaptation, as it can e.g. help identify potential vulnerabilities to extreme weather events, and 2) climate change mitigation, as digital solutions are projected to reduce global emissions by as much as 20%. Digital solutions are also key to the circular economy transition, including solutions for tracking of materials and products, sharing of goods and services, precision-farming, skills development, etc.



Consequently, there is a need for a global framework that promotes the synergy of green transition and digital transformation that ensures inclusive sustainable development, while addressing the challenges of climate change and digitalisation in a mutually reinforcing way.

## 4.2 INNOVATION

Although diverse and heterogenous in nature, innovation can be described as ‘a new solution – identified as products, services and/or processes - with the transformative ability to accelerate impact’, aligning closely with the definition of the International Development Innovation Alliance (IDIA).

To verify whether a solution qualifies as an innovation, Enabel adheres to the following three criteria:

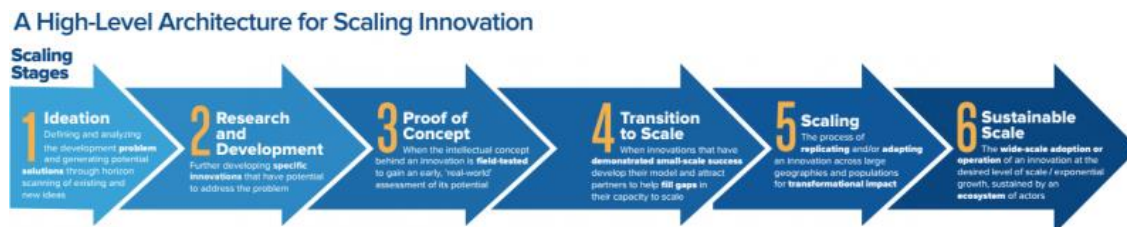
1. The solution must be **new or novel in the specific context**, and at least ‘new’ or ‘novel’ to the intended end-users;
2. The solution must **aim at transformative impact (beyond mere improvements or efficiency gains)**; Enabel will look for those innovative solutions that are replicable and scalable.
3. **The solution is still to be developed, tested, adapted, adopted or scaled, hence the solution has not yet reached its optimal sustainable scale** (explained in paragraph 4.3). For this Call for Proposals, Enabel will focus on innovations that already have been tested and reached a minimal evidence base (minimally passed phase 3)

Above all, Enabel perceives innovation not merely as an outcome but as a process. Innovation involves experimentation, learning, and the generation of new knowledge and insights from the idea stage up to achieving meaningful impact. Throughout the implementation phase of this Call for Proposals, Enabel will position itself as a trusted partner in projects’ innovation efforts, aiming to minimise the concurring risks and maximise the chances of achieving scalable, innovative impact.

## 4.3 SUPPORTING THE INNOVATION PROCESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SCALING

This Call for Proposals will specifically aim to support the further development and scaling of existing Digital and Green Innovations (DGIs). While there are different ways to visualise a maturity process of innovation, Enabel suggests using the framework co-developed by IDIA and OECD, referring to a 6-stage scaling and innovation process.

In this visualisation, the different scaling stages of an innovation process are presented in a linear way. In reality, we observe that the process is iterative and less strict or even organised. As innovations move along the scaling stages, they become more ‘mature’ and more knowledge is gained about their effectiveness and potential impact.



In a simplified version, these scaling stages can be categorised as:

- **Early-Stage Innovation** (Problem Specification, Ideation, and Research & Development): In the initial phase, the innovation journey begins with identifying a problem, sparking creative ideation, and conducting rigorous research and development. This phase establishes the foundation for potential solutions, fostering a deep understanding of the problem context and potential avenues for change. It is marked by the exploration of novel ideas and the formulation of initial concepts, laying the groundwork for future development;
- **Testing and Iterating** (Developing a Proof of Concept and Testing): As the innovation progresses, it enters a dynamic phase of testing and iteration. A proof of concept is developed to





validate the feasibility and functionality of the idea. Testing exposes the innovation to real-world conditions, facilitating the collection of valuable user feedback;

- **Transitioning to Scale and Scaling** (Increasing Impact of Small-Scale Successful Innovations): Successful innovations emerging from the testing phase embark on a journey toward broader impact. Transitioning to scale involves strategically planning how to extend the reach and effectiveness of the innovation. Scaling entails deliberate efforts to replicate successful outcomes across larger contexts, amplifying benefits and addressing scalability challenges. Sustainable scaling requires a holistic approach that considers factors such as resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, and adaptability to diverse environments.

## 5 Admissibility criteria

There are three categories of admissibility criteria, which concern, respectively:

### The actors:

- the applicant, i.e. the entity submitting the application (5.1.1);
- its co-applicant(s), where applicable. Unless otherwise stipulated, the applicant and co-applicant(s) will hereinafter be jointly referred to as the 'applicants' (5.1.2);
- associates (5.1.3);
- contractors (5.1.4).

### The actions:

- actions eligible for grants (5.2), including definition and duration; thematic scope; type of action; transversal themes and key principles; geographic scope; visibility; financial support to third parties; and number of applications and Grants Agreements par applicant and co-applicant

### The costs:

- the types of costs that may be included in the calculation of the grant amount (5.3).

## 5.1 ELIGIBILITY OF APPLICANTS (& CO-APPLICANT(S))

### 5.1.1 Applicant

To be eligible for grants, the applicant must satisfy the following conditions:

- be a legal person; and
- be a public actor<sup>1</sup> **or** be a private non-profit actor; and
- be directly responsible for the preparation and management of the action with the co-applicant(s) and not be acting as an intermediary; and
- have already managed a grant (of public funds) amounting to 40% of the amount applied for. A certificate of satisfactory performance<sup>2</sup> signed by the donor is mandatory and constitutes proof thereof; and
- have at one's disposal financial statements certified by an independent body (audit or statutory commissioner). Those statements must not be older than 2 years.

<sup>1</sup> a 100% public entity, with no private capital. **This does NOT apply to Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. Only private non-profit actors can apply in these three countries.**

<sup>2</sup> For the contracts that have not been closed yet a letter of the donor will be accepted.



The applicant may act on its own or with one or more co-applicants.

The potential applicant cannot participate in Calls for Proposals nor be the beneficiary of grants if they are in one of the exclusion situations described in Annex VII of the model grant agreement provided in Annex F of these guidelines.

In the Grant applications (Annexes A.1 & A.2 – Grant application files of the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> round), the applicant must declare that neither itself nor its co-applicant(s) fall under any of these grounds of exclusion (Applicant's declaration) and that they will be willing and able to provide the supporting documents when requested (depending in the specific cases & contexts: taxes, social obligations, criminal records etc.).

If the grant is awarded to it, the **applicant** becomes the contracting-**beneficiary** identified in Annex F of these guidelines (Grant Agreement). The contracting-beneficiary is the main point of contact for the contracting authority. It shall represent any other beneficiary co-applicants and act in their name. It shall design and coordinate the action implementation.

### 5.1.2 Co-applicant(s)

The co-applicant(s) shall participate in the implementation of the action, and the costs that they incur shall be eligible in the same way as those incurred by the applicant.

The co-applicant(s) must satisfy the eligibility criteria which apply to the applicant itself, except that:

- they do not need to prove that they have already managed a grant amounting to 40% of the amount applied for;

The co-applicant(s) must sign the 'Mandate statement' in Annex A.2 – Grant application file of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

If the grants are awarded to them, any co-applicants will become the beneficiaries of the action, with the Contracting-Beneficiary.

Co-applicants cannot be added or removed in-between the 2 Rounds.

### 5.1.3 Associates

Other organisations may be associated with the action. Associates actively participate in the action, however unlike co-applicants, costs incurred by associates are not eligible, and associates cannot be eligible for grants. These associates do not need to satisfy the eligibility criteria mentioned in point 5.1. The associates must be mentioned in Annex A.2 - Grant Application file of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, entitled 'Associates of the applicant participating in the action'.

Including a private sector actor as an associate will be considered as an asset. However, they may not be eligible under the project as service, goods or works providers.

### 5.1.4 Contractors

Contracting-beneficiaries may award contracts to contractors. Contractors shall be subject to public procurement rules (if Contracting Beneficiary is public) or the rules set forth in Annex VIII of the Grant Agreement template (if Contracting Beneficiary is private). Associates cannot at the same time be contractors (services, works, equipment) for the project.

## 5.2 ELIGIBILITY OF ACTIONS: FOR WHAT ACTIONS CAN AN APPLICATION BE SUBMITTED?

### 5.2.1 Definition and duration

The actions to be funded under this Call for Proposals must have **the form of a project**. For the purposes of this Call for Proposals, a project should be understood as a coherent set of qualitative activities designed to achieve specific measurable results and objectives within a limited timeframe.

The term of the action **may not be less than 12 months, or exceed 14 months**.



### 5.2.2 Thematic scope

This Call aims to **identify and to support the scaling of Digital and Green Innovations (DGIs) in Africa, i.e. solutions that leverage digital tools and/or technologies to contribute positively to at least one of the following environmental objectives:** climate adaptation, resilience, mitigation, protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems, sustainable use and protection of water and maritime resources, environment and water resources, pollution prevention and reduction, resource efficiency and systemic shifts like the circular economy.

The topics listed above are multiple and various, and they include digital-for-green solutions (ex. Digital technologies for climate adaptation) as well as greening-digital solutions (ex. Recycling e-waste). However, the Call for Proposals will pay specific attention to those DGIs that are aligned with 1) the thematic priorities defined by Enabel and its implementing partners under DGI Joint Action 2) the thematic scope of Enabel Country Portfolios.

- 1) The **thematic priorities** of Enabel and its partners are the following :
  - **Climate-Smart agriculture and sustainable food systems**
  - **Resilient cities and sustainable urban planning**
  - **Water management/floods prevention**
  - **Circular economy and e-waste management**
  - **Sustainable, affordable and clean energy**
  
- 2) Wehubit is willing to ensure the coherence of the supported DGIs with Enabel country portfolios in order to allow for a better integration within existing activities and processes and to open opportunities for further scaling.

The country portfolios of Enabel are different from country to country and not all of them focus on the same sectors or perspectives relating to Climate and Environment. During the selection process it will be important to demonstrate how your project can be an added value in relation to the Climate & Environment portfolio of the respective country. Enabel Country Portfolios priorities can be found in Annex J – *Enabel Country Portfolios*.

### 5.2.3 Type of action

#### Scaling

The Call for Proposals specifically aims to identify innovations which have a proof of concept, are transitioning to scale or are already in the phase of scaling. In other words, to qualify for submission, **proposed solutions must have already passed the early stages of ideation, prototyping, testing.**

**Wehubit grants support scaling in terms of expansion. Expansion can be understood as geographical scope (implementation in new areas), users/beneficiaries (more or different users/beneficiaries), and/or services (development of what the innovation entails and offers).**

#### Types of action

Shall not be eligible, actions consisting solely or principally of:

- sponsoring the participation of individuals in workshops, seminars, conferences and conventions;
- financing individual scholarships for studies or training;
- financing the digital transformation of the (co-)applicant(s).

By way of **example**, we list the types of activities that are eligible, provided that it contributes to the achievement of the result(s) and the specific objective of the action:



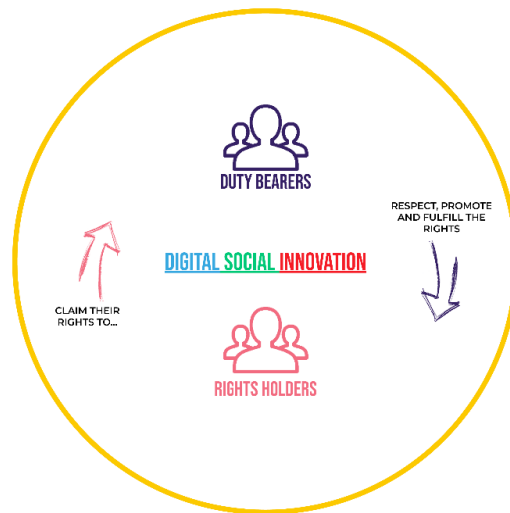
- **Implementation of digital solutions:** geolocation technology, databases, big data, virtual reality, blockchain, gamification, social networks, etc.
- **Capacity sharing:** strengthening staff skills in the action’s technological and digital domain.
- **Product development:** adaptation of digital products in view of a development on a larger scale or towards more/other target groups.
- **Quality:** implementation of quality improvement and control systems.
- **Digital skills:** improving people’s skills in using or recycling digital tools and technologies.
- **Data systems:** using digital technology to improve the collection, management and use of data.

### 5.2.4 Transversal themes and key principles

The transversal themes and key principles for the Calls for Proposals are inspired by what has priorly been identified by Enabel’s Wehubit programme as baseline frameworks to ensure that projects conduct their work in a safe, inclusive and sustainable manner.

First of all, we consider the **human rights-based approach (HRBA)** as fundamental to our action, in the sense that it ensures supported initiatives are aiming at an inclusive, equitable and human-driven societies.

When receiving a proposal, we appraise to what extent the proposed solution will empower rights holders to claim their rights, improve the enforcement of rights, improve the dynamics between right holders and duty bearers, their respective capacities to exercise their roles and to what extent the project takes into account vulnerable groups.



We also stress the importance of applying a **do no harm approach**, where careful consideration is taken in reducing particular inequalities while ensuring no new inequalities are created.

Moreover, Enabel pays specific attention to the **digital gender divide**, which refers to the disparity in access to and usage of digital technologies, such as the internet and digital devices, between men and women. This gap could be the result of various factors, including limited access to technology, lower digital literacy among women, and cultural or societal norms that discourage or restrict women's engagement with digital tools and online platforms.

Enabel also adheres to the [nine principles for digital development](#). These provide guidelines for designing and implementing digital solutions in development projects and will also serve as key elements which will be assessed in the applicants’ submissions for the Call for Proposals.

These principles aim to enhance the effectiveness and ethical use of digital technologies in development efforts. They are also, in our view, important to develop sustainable scaling pathways.



### 5.2.5 Geographic scope

DGIs should be implemented in **one or more partner country of the Belgian Development Cooperation in Africa**: Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, DRC, Guinea-Conakry, Mali, Mozambique, Morocco, Niger, Rwanda, Uganda, Senegal and Tanzania.

This Call for Proposals appreciates DGIs that have multi-country/regional scope.

For the sake of coherence and longer-term sustainability of the supported DSIs, the Call for proposals will target and prioritise countries that are common to other EU partners implementing activities in Africa : Uganda and Rwanda.

### 5.2.6 Visibility

Applicants must take all measures necessary to ensure the visibility of the financing by the European Union, through Enabel and its Wehubit programme. Applicants are expected to apply the visibility guidelines of the Digital and Green Innovation Joint Action. A budget line of min. 1.000 EUR will be included for producing good quality pictures and testimonies. A communication toolkit will be provided to the grantees, including the communications requirements.

### 5.2.7 Financial support to third parties

Applicants **may not** offer to support third parties financially (sub-grants).

### 5.2.8 Number of applications and Grant Agreements per applicant and co-applicant

The applicant **and/or** co-applicant **may not**

- Submit more than one application for this Call for Proposals.
- Be awarded more than one Grant Agreement under this Call for Proposals.

The applicant may not be at the same time a co-applicant in another application.

## 5.3 ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS: WHAT COSTS MAY BE INCLUDED?

Only 'eligible costs' may be covered by grants. The types of eligible and ineligible costs are indicated below. The budget is both an estimate of costs and an overall cap on 'eligible costs'.

The reimbursement of eligible costs may be based on one of the following formats, or any combination of these:

- **The operational costs**: necessary and indispensable costs for achieving the objectives and results of the action, including the cost for achieving verifiable deliverables;
- **The management costs**: separate costs related to management, supervision, coordination, monitoring, control, evaluation and financial audit which specifically originate in the implementation of the action or the justification of the Grant;
- **The structure costs**: costs related to the achievement of the social purpose of the beneficiary, which even though they are influenced by the implementation of the action cannot be separated or charged to the budget of this action.

To be eligible for the Call for proposals, the costs must comply with the conditions provided for in Article 4 of the Grant Agreement template (see Annex F of these guidelines).

Structure costs amount to maximum 7% of operational costs. The actual rate applicable for structure costs will be calculated a priori by Enabel based on the analysis of the balance sheet of the contracting beneficiary. Enabel may also use an outside agency to estimate the actual structure costs rate of an organization.



Once accepted, the structure costs are lump sums and do not need to be justified. Structure costs are paid during execution of the grant on the basis of operational costs really incurred, considered eligible and approved by Enabel.

### **Contingency reserve**

The budget may include a contingency reserve up to a maximum of 5% of the estimated eligible direct costs. It may only be used with **prior written authorisation** of Enabel.

### **Contributions in kind**

'Contributions in kind' means goods or services provided free of charge by a third party to the beneficiary-contractor. Since contributions in kind do not involve any expenditure on the part of the beneficiary-contractor, they are not eligible costs.

### **Ineligible costs**

The following costs **are not eligible**:

- 1° Accounting entries not leading to payments;
- 2° Provisions for liabilities and charges, losses, debts or possible future debts;
- 3° Debts and debit interests;
- 4° Bad loans/ doubtful debts;
- 5° Currency exchange losses;
- 6° Loans to third parties;
- 7° Guarantees and bonds;
- 8° Costs already financed by another grant;
- 9° Invoices made out by other organisations for goods and services already subsidised;
- 10° Subcontracting by means of service or consultancy contracts to personnel members, Board members or General Assembly members of the organisation subsidised;
- 11° Any sub-letting to oneself;
- 12° Purchases of land or buildings;
- 13° Compensation for damage falling under the civil liability of the organisation;
- 14° Employment termination compensation for the term of notice not performed;
- 15° Purchase of alcoholic beverages, tobacco and derived products thereof;
- 16° Grants to sub-beneficiaries.
- 17° Salary bonuses<sup>3</sup>

## **6 Presentation of Grant application and rules to be followed**

This is a restricted Call for proposals composed of two rounds:

- 1<sup>st</sup> round – concept notes
- 2<sup>nd</sup> round – full proposals

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<sup>3</sup> The concept of bonus must be understood as the payment of a "bonus" triggered by the participation of a staff member in the action financed by Enabel or linked in any way to the performance of the person in the implementation of action. A bonus does not constitute an eligible cost. However, there are payments which could be called 'bonuses' and which could still be considered part of the normal salary package and therefore eligible (i.e. variable parts of the salary). These bonuses must be paid independently of the staff member's participation in the action financed by Enabel.



The concept notes (1<sup>st</sup> round) must be submitted in accordance with the instructions given hereunder and on the online webform.

To be sure that the process is completed, the applicant must check whether the confirmation e-mail is received.

Applications submitted through other means (for example by letter, fax or e-mail) or sent to other addresses will be rejected.

**Applicants shall submit their application in French or English.**

They must ensure that their Grant application is complete. **Incomplete applications will be rejected.**

**Handwritten applications **will not be accepted.****

The signature of the Grant Agreements will depend on the signature of the Digital and Green Innovation Action Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement by the European Union and the contracting agencies.

## **6.1 GRANT APPLICATION – CONCEPT NOTE (1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND)**

### **Content**

**To be complete, the Concept note must contain the following elements:**

1. All fields of the online form must be completed (access through the secure [www.wehubit.be](http://www.wehubit.be) website).
2. Annex A.1 – Grant application file (1<sup>st</sup> round).
3. The statutes or articles of association **of the applicant and any co-applicants.**
4. Financial statements certified by an independent body (audit or statutory commissioner). Those statements may not be older than 2 years. Public entities and co-applicants are not required to submit an external audit report.
5. The legal entity file (see Annex D of these guidelines) duly completed and signed by **each of the applicants** (i.e. the applicant and each of the co-applicants).
6. The documents substantiating that the **applicant** has already managed public funds and successfully implemented grants for at least 40% of the amount applied for. Examples of proof are:
  - Close-out letter: Certificate of good execution provided by a financing donor (with amount mentioned).
  - Approval of a final report provided by a financing donor together with the initial contract.

**An initial grant contract is insufficient to proof its good execution.**

In the 1<sup>st</sup> round, applicants need only provide an estimate of the amount of the contribution requested from the contracting authority. Only applicants invited to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round (Proposal) will have to submit a detailed budget.

The elements defined in the 1<sup>st</sup> round may not be changed by the applicant in the 2<sup>nd</sup> round. The contribution requested through this Call for proposals may not differ more than 15% from the initial estimate<sup>4</sup>.

Any errors or major inconsistencies concerning points mentioned in the instructions on the Grant application (1<sup>st</sup> round) may result in the application's rejection

The contracting authority reserves the right to request clarification where the information provided does not enable it to carry out an objective evaluation.

### **Submission date**

**The deadline for submitting the Grant application (1<sup>st</sup> round) is 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024 at 13:00 (Brussels time)** as substantiated by the website server. All applications submitted after the deadline date and time will be automatically rejected. Applications should be submitted through this

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<sup>4</sup> In case the amount applied for in the Grant application (2<sup>nd</sup> round) exceeds the estimated amount of the Grant application (1<sup>st</sup> round), the certificate of satisfactory performance demanded in chapter 5.1. must still amount to at least 40% of the amount applied for.





link: **SUBMIT**. Concept notes sent by other means (for example by fax or e-mail) or sent to other addresses will be rejected.

## 6.2 GRANT APPLICATION - PROPOSAL (2ND ROUND)

### Shortlist

The applicants who are selected for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round will be informed by email (see calendar) and will be invited to fill in the more **detailed grant application** file of the 2<sup>nd</sup> round, **which must be submitted before the deadline of 28<sup>th</sup> October at 13:00 (Brussels time).**

### Grant application 2<sup>nd</sup> round

The communication (e-mail) will include a link to the online application tool.

**To be complete, the Grant application (2<sup>nd</sup> round) must contain the following elements:**

1. Annex A.2 – Grant application file (2<sup>nd</sup> round)
2. Detailed budget of the action (Annex B)
3. The logical framework of the action (Annex C)
4. The indicative action plan for implementation of the project <sup>5</sup>

Applicants must carefully observe the supplementary proposal format (Annex A.2) and complete the paragraphs and pages in order.

The contribution of this programme may not differ more than 15% from the initial estimate and the minimum and maximum amounts, as indicated in section 1.3 of these guidelines, must be observed. <sup>6</sup>

Applicants must submit their Grant application (2<sup>nd</sup> round) in the same language as in the 1<sup>st</sup> round.

Applicants must fill out their application as carefully and clearly as possible in order to facilitate its evaluation.

Co-applicants cannot be added or removed in-between the 2 Rounds.

Any error or major inconsistency in the application (inconsistency of amounts included in the budget calculation sheets, for example) may result in the immediate rejection of the application.

Clarifications will only be requested where the information provided is not clear and therefore prevents the contracting authority from carrying out an objective evaluation.

Handwritten applications will not be accepted.

It is noteworthy that only the elements listed above will be evaluated. It is therefore very important that these documents contain ALL the relevant information regarding the action.

## 6.3 QUESTIONS/ANSWERS (1ST AND 2ND ROUND)

First of all we invite you to have a look at the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on our website: <https://www.wehubit.be/en/contact-us>.

If you don't find the information you are looking for on our website and in the guidelines, then, for each round of the procedure, applicants may **send their questions by e-mail, at the latest 21 days before the application submission deadline**, to the address(es) set out below, making sure that they clearly indicate the Call for Proposals reference (BEL23005):

E-mail address: [wehubit@enabel.be](mailto:wehubit@enabel.be)

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<sup>5</sup> Follow the instructions in point 2.8. Indicative action plan for implementing the action in Annex A.2.

<sup>6</sup> In case the amount applied for in the final application exceeds the estimated value of the Grant application (1<sup>st</sup> round), the certificate of satisfactory performance demanded in chapter 5.1 must still amount to at least 40% of the amount applied for.





The contracting authority will not be obliged to provide clarification on questions received after this date.

Questions will be answered at the latest 11 days before the application submission deadline of the 1<sup>st</sup> round.

In order to ensure the equal treatment of applicants, the contracting authority cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility of applicants, an action or specific activities.

Only answers to questions and other important information not included in guidelines or FAQ will be published in due course on the website [www.wehubit.be](http://www.wehubit.be). As such, regular consultation of this website is recommended in order to be informed of the questions and answers published.

## 7 Evaluation and selection of applications

Applications will be examined and evaluated by the contracting authority with the help, where applicable, of external evaluators. All actions submitted by the applicants will be evaluated according to the stages and criteria described below.

If the examination of the application shows that the proposed action does not satisfy the eligibility criteria described in point 5.1 to 5.1, the application will be rejected on this sole basis.

### 7.1 OPENING, ADMINISTRATIVE/ELIGIBILITY CHECKS AND EVALUATION OF THE CONCEPT NOTES (1ST ROUND)

The following elements will be examined:

#### Opening

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline date is not observed, the application will be automatically rejected.

#### Administrative and eligibility checks

- The Grant application must satisfy all the criteria specified in points 1 to 10 of the verification and evaluation grid provided in Annex G.
- If any of the information is missing or incorrect, the application may be rejected on this sole basis and it will not be evaluated.

#### Evaluation

Concept notes satisfying the conditions of the first administrative and eligibility check will be evaluated for the relevance and design of the proposed action. The applicants will also be checked for having stable and sufficient sources of financing to maintain their activity for the duration of the proposed action and, if necessary, to participate in its financing.

**The evaluation criteria are divided in sections and sub-sections.**

In Section 1 – Pitch Digital Innovation - a score between 1 and 5 is given for each question as follows: 1 = very inadequate, 2 = inadequate, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent.

**The Concept Note (1<sup>st</sup> round) will firstly be evaluated on three open questions of Section 1 (paragraph 2.2 of Annex A1). Only concept notes which have obtained a minimum score of 3 out of 5 on these three questions will be considered for further evaluation.**

In Section 2, 3 and 4 a score between 1 and 3 is given for each question as follow : 1 = inadequate, 2 = average, 3 = good.



All concept notes, which are considered for further evaluation, will be given an overall mark out of 57 in accordance with the breakdown specified in the evaluation grid given in Annex G.

At the end of the evaluation, a list will be drawn up, ranking the proposals according to their overall score. Only applications who have reached an overall score of minimum 35 will be considered.

The number of concept notes will be reduced, taking into account their rank on the list, to the number of concept notes for which the total cumulative amount of contributions requested is equal to 300% of the budget available for this Call for Proposals.

After evaluation of the applications, the contracting authority will notify whether their application has been evaluated and the results of this evaluation.

Applicants whose application has been preselected in the 1<sup>st</sup> round will be notified of their reference number and invited to submit a Proposal for the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

## 7.2 GRANT APPLICATION – FULL PROPOSAL EVALUATION (2ND ROUND)

**Firstly, the following points will be evaluated:**

- Compliance with the submission deadline. If the deadline date is not observed, the proposal will be automatically rejected.
- The grant application form (full proposal) and its annexes fulfil all specific criteria given under points 1 to 7 of the grant application file verification and evaluation grid given in Annex H.
- If any of the information is missing or incorrect, the application may be rejected on this **sole** basis and it will not be evaluated.

**The evaluation criteria are divided in sections and sub-sections.** Each sub-section will be given a score between 1 and 5 as follows: 1 = very inadequate, 2 = inadequate, 3 = average, 4 = good, 5 = excellent.

**The applicants in the second round will be evaluated based on the detailed full proposal.**

The quality of the applications, including the proposed budget and the capacity of the applicants, will be given a score out of 100 on the basis of evaluation criteria 8 to 27 of the verification and evaluation grid (Annex H).

The evaluation criteria aim to ensure that the applicants:

- have stable and sufficient sources of financing to maintain their activity for the duration of the proposed action and, if necessary, to participate in its financing;
- have the management capacity and professional skills and qualifications required to successfully carry out the proposed action.

The evaluation criteria also help evaluate the quality of the proposals against the objectives and priorities set, and to award grants to actions that maximise the overall effectiveness of the Call for Proposals. They help in selecting proposals which assure the contracting authority that its objectives and priorities will be observed. They concern the relevance of the action and its consistency with the Call for Proposal's objectives, its quality, its intended effect, the sustainability of the action and its cost-effectiveness.

### Provisional selection

After evaluation, a table will be drawn up, containing all the applications ranked according to their score and subject to the funds available. A reserve list will additionally be drawn up following the same criteria, to be used if more funds become available during the validity period of this list. If the allocated budget, indicated for the Call, cannot be used due to insufficient quality or number of proposals received, the Contracting Authority reserves the right to reallocate the remaining funds to future calls.

Only applications who have reached an overall score of minimum 60 will be considered.

Supporting documents relating to the grounds for exclusion will be requested from applicants appearing in the provisional allocation table. If unable to provide these documents within 15 days, the corresponding proposals will not be accepted. In this case, applicants may be picked up from the reserve list at a later date, and will equally be requested to present these supporting documents in order to be officially selected.



## 8 Notification of the contracting authority's decision

### 8.1 CONTENT OF THE DECISION

The applicant **will be notified in writing of the decision** taken by the contracting authority concerning its application and, in case of rejection, the grounds for this negative decision.

If an applicant feels that it has been adversely affected by an error or mistake allegedly committed in an award procedure, or believes that the procedure has been vitiated by an instance of maladministration, it may file a complaint with the contracting authority.

In this case, the complaint will be sent to the person who made the disputed decision, who will endeavour to deal with the complaint and give a reply within 15 working days. Alternatively or in case the reply is deemed unsatisfactory by the applicant, the latter may contact the competent Operations officer at the head office, via the [complaints@enabel.be](mailto:complaints@enabel.be).

See <https://www.enabel.be/content/complaints-form>

Complaints relating to issues of integrity (fraud, corruption, etc.) must be sent to the Integrity desk through the [www.enabelintegrity.be](http://www.enabelintegrity.be) website.

The purpose of the complaint cannot be to request a second evaluation of the Proposals without any other grounds than that the applicant disagrees with the award decision.

### 8.2 INDICATIVE CALENDAR

	Date*	Hour*
<b>Deadline for clarification requests to the contracting authority</b>	12 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	13:00
<b>Last date on which clarifications are given by the contracting authority</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> August 2024	-
<b>Deadline for submitting Grant applications – concept notes (1<sup>st</sup> round)</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> September 2024	13:00
<b>Notification of results of the Grant application – concept notes (1<sup>st</sup> round)</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024	-
<b>Invitation for the second round – Proposals (2<sup>nd</sup> round)</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024	-
<b>Request certificates and supporting documents relating to the grounds for exclusion (see 5.1 )</b>	23 <sup>rd</sup> September 2024	
<b>Deadline for submitting Grant applications – Proposals (2<sup>nd</sup> round)</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	13:00
<b>Receipt of certificates and supporting documents relating to the grounds for exclusion</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	-
<b>Notification of results of the Grant application - Proposals (2<sup>nd</sup> round)</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> November 2024	-
<b>Signature of the Agreement</b>	December 2024	-

\* **Provisional date.** All times are in the local time of the contracting authority.

This indicative calendar may be updated by the contracting authority during the procedure. In such case, the updated calendar will be published on the [www.wehubit.be](http://www.wehubit.be) website.



## 9 Implementation conditions following the grant award decision of the contracting authority

Following the grant award decision, **contracting beneficiaries will be offered an agreement based on the contracting authority's Grant Agreement template (Annex F of these guidelines)**. By signing the proposal (Annexes A.1 and A.2 of these guidelines), applicants accept the contractual conditions of the Grant Agreement template, should the grants be awarded to them.

### 9.1 IMPLEMENTATION CONTRACTS

Where the implementation of an action requires (public) procurement by the contracting beneficiary, contracts must be awarded in accordance with:

- Annex VIII of the Grant Agreement template (for private sector applicants), or;
- Belgian or partner country public procurement law or own regulation (for public sector applicants).

It is not permitted to subcontract all of an action by means of a contract for private contracting beneficiaries. In addition, the budget of each contract financed by means of the grant granted may only correspond to a limited part of the total amount of the grant.

### 9.2 SEPARATE BANK ACCOUNT

In case a grant award, **the contracting beneficiary shall open a separate bank account (or a separate sub-account allowing for the identification of the funds received)**. This account will be in euros, if this is possible in the country.

This account or sub-account must allow to:

- Identify the funds transferred by Enabel;
- Identify and follow up the operations performed with third parties;
- Distinguish between the operations performed under this agreement and other operations.

The financial identification form (Annex VI of the Grant Agreement) relating to this separate bank account, certified by the bank<sup>7</sup>, will be sent by the contracting beneficiary to Enabel at the same time as the signed copies of the Grant Agreement after it has been notified of the award decision.

The account will be closed once any reimbursements owed to Enabel have been made (and after settling the final amount of the funds used).

### 9.3 PROCESSING OF PERSONAL DATA.

Enabel undertakes to treat the personal data communicated in response to this call for proposals with the greatest care, in accordance with the legislation on the protection of personal data (the General Data Protection Regulation, GDPR). In cases where the Belgian law of July 30, 2018 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data contains more stringent requirements, the adjudicator will act in accordance with this legislation.

More specifically, when you participate in a Call for Proposals within the framework of the allocation of grants by Enabel, we collect the details of the contact persons ("authorized representative") of the entity submitting the grant application, such as the name, first name, professional telephone number, professional e-mail address, professional function and name of the organization represented. In some cases, we must also collect the extract from the criminal record (or equivalent) of the leader of the

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<sup>7</sup> This bank must be situated in the country where the applicant is established



organization applying for the grant.

We process this information because we have a legal obligation to collect this information in the context of the administration and award of our grants.

For more information on this subject, please consult Enabel's privacy statement at the following link: <https://www.enabel.be/fr/content/title-1> "

## **9.4 TRANSPARENCY**

For the sake of transparency, Enabel undertakes to publish an annual list of contracting-beneficiaries. By signing the Grant Agreement, the contracting-beneficiary declares that he agrees with the publication of the title of the contract, the nature and object of the contract, its name and location, and the amount of the contract.



## List of Annexes

### **DOCUMENTS TO BE COMPLETED**

ANNEX A.1: GRANT APPLICATION : CONCEPT NOTE – 1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND

ANNEX A.2: GRANT APPLICATION FILE : PROPOSAL – 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND

ANNEX B: BUDGET – 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND

ANNEX C: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK – 2<sup>ND</sup> ROUND

ANNEX D: LEGAL ENTITY FORM – 1<sup>ST</sup> ROUND

ANNEX E: FINANCIAL IDENTIFICATION FORM (TO BE PROVIDED UPON SIGNING OF THE AGREEMENT)

### **INFORMATION DOCUMENTS**

ANNEX F: GRANT AGREEMENT TEMPLATE

ANNEX G: ROUND 1 GRANT APPLICATION FILE (CONCEPT NOTE) VERIFICATION AND EVALUATION GRID

ANNEX H: ROUND 2 GRANT APPLICATION FILE (PROPOSAL) VERIFICATION AND EVALUATION GRID

ANNEX I: FACTSHEET

ANNEX J : ENABEL COUNTRY PORTFOLIOS