AI Innovation Package

Policy brief

Weblink	https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/factpages/ai-innovation-package
Relevance	☐ National policy X EU policy ☐ other: _____
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Short summary of the policy

The AI innovation package, launched by the European Commission, aims to bolster the development and adoption of trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the EU. This package supports AI start-ups and SMEs by facilitating access to supercomputing resources, providing financial aid, and creating a supportive ecosystem for innovation. Key initiatives already established are e.g. the AI Office, the launch of the Alliance for Language Technologies European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (ALT-EDIC) and include the ongoing support of the development of Generative AI (GenAI) models.

The package aligns with the EU's broader objectives of fostering AI that respects European values and regulations, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring safety and ethical standards in AI applications.

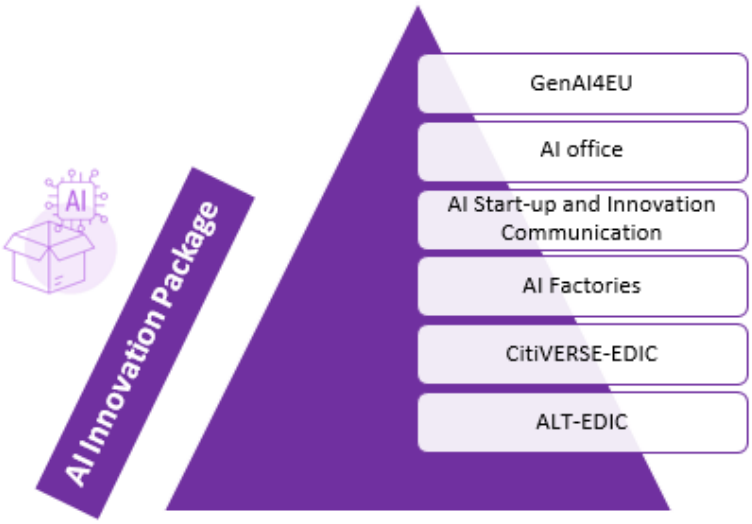

Figure 1: Measures included in the AI Innovation Package | Source: EC Web

Main objectives of the policy

The AI innovation package includes a broad range of measures to support AI startups and innovation:

- **Support AI startups and SMEs**: Provide access to financial resources, supercomputers, and innovation support services.
- **Promote Trustworthy AI:** Ensure AI development aligns with EU values, safety, and ethical standards.
- **Establish AI Governance Structures**: Set up an AI Office to coordinate AI policy and enforce upcoming AI regulations. The AI Office is established within the Commission. Its tasks are supporting the AI Act and enforcing general purpose AI rules – see structure of the AI office.
- **Enhance AI Talent Pool**: Implement training and education programmes to skill and reskill the AI workforce.
- **Foster Public and Private Investment**: Encourage investments in AI through venture capital, equity support, and public-private partnerships.
- **Develop AI Applications**: Focus on creating AI applications in various sectors, including healthcare, manufacturing, and public services.

Context and relation to DIGITAL EUROPE

AI is one of the main Specific Objectives (SOs) in DEP. The AI innovation package provides a basis for DEP funded activities. By respecting the AI innovation package objectives, it is ensured that AI development and deployment are in line with European standards while fostering a competitive and innovative digital ecosystem.

What parts of the Policy are directly related to specific objectives (SO) in DEP

SO1: High Performance Computing (HPC) aims to build up and strengthen the EU's high-performance computing and data processing capacities. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **Access to Supercomputers**: The AI innovation package facilitates access to AI-dedicated supercomputers, allowing startups and SMEs to develop, test, and validate AI models using advanced HPC resources
- **Financial Support for HPC**: The AI innovation package includes financial support through programs such as Horizon Europe and Digital Europe, specifically targeted at generative AI and HPC projects.

DEP calls that offer supercomputing access for AI research and development align with the AI innovation package's goal to support AI startups.

SO2: Artificial Intelligence (AI) focuses on the widespread adoption of AI across the EU, ensuring it benefits the economy and society. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **One-Stop Shop for AI Startups**: Establishment of support services for AI startups and SMEs, including algorithm development, testing, and validation environments.
- **EU AI Startup and Innovation Communication**: Outlining key activities and financial support for generative AI, encouraging investment in AI startups and scale-ups.
- **GenAI4EU Initiative**: Supporting novel AI use cases and applications across various industrial ecosystems and public sectors.

DEP calls related to the creation and enhancement of data infrastructures and European data spaces, crucial for AI model training and deployment, are linked to the AI innovation package. DEP also funds many activities supporting the AI Act (see WP 2023-24).

SO3: Cybersecurity funds activities to improve cybersecurity capabilities and ensure the protection of the EU's digital economy and society. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **AI and Cybersecurity Integration**: While not explicitly focused on cybersecurity, the secure development and deployment of AI models, as promoted by the AI Innovation Package, are critical to ensuring robust cybersecurity frameworks.
- **Trustworthy AI Development**: Emphasizing the development of AI that aligns with EU values of safety, ethics, and trust, indirectly supporting the objectives of cybersecurity

SO4: Advanced Digital Skills focuses on the development of advanced digital skills to address the shortage of trained professionals in AI, cybersecurity, HPC, and other digital technologies. The EC supports the design and implementation of higher education programmes (BA/MA) and other education/training programmes in in key digital areas, defined in the Work Programmes. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **Skilling and Reskilling Initiatives**: The AI innovation package includes measures to enhance the EU's AI talent pool through education, training, skilling, and reskilling activities.
- **Educational Programmes**: Financial support from Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe Programme for educational initiatives focused on AI and digital technologies

DEP initiatives providing funding for AI education and training support the policy's objective to enhance the AI talent pool.

SO5: Deployment and Best Use of Digital Capacities and Interoperability promotes the best use of digital technologies and ensures interoperability across the EU, enhancing public administration and its services and supporting the uptake of digital technologies by SMEs. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **CitiVERSE EDIC**: The creation of the CitiVERSE European Digital Infrastructure Consortium to enhance local digital twins for smart community applications, optimizing public service processes like traffic management.
- **Public Sector AI Applications**: Encouraging AI applications in public services to improve efficiency and effectiveness, aligned with the 'GenAI4EU' initiative.
- **SMEs**: The AI innovation package provides SMEs with access to advanced AI and HPC resources, facilitating the use of interoperable data through Common European Data Spaces, and offering comprehensive support via European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs). These measures help SMEs enhance their digital capabilities, foster innovation, and improve their competitiveness through financial aid, technical assistance, and collaborative opportunities

Funding calls focusing on the digital transformation of public services and AI application deployment align with the package's goals.

SO6: Semiconductors is deeply interconnected with the AI innovation Package as AI progress relies on European-made, high-performance, energy-efficient semiconductors. Strengthening the EU's semiconductor capabilities ensures AI sovereignty, security, and competitiveness in the global digital landscape.

Examples where Semiconductors and the AI innovation package are related:

- **AI Factories** – These rely on **high-performance computing (HPC)** and require **advanced AI chips** to develop next-generation AI models. Semiconductor companies must consider how to optimize processors for supercomputing and AI workloads.
- **GenAI4EU** – AI applications across industries (robotics, biotech, climate tech, etc.) demand **energy-efficient, high-speed AI chips**. Semiconductor innovations must support these sectors with tailored solutions.

- **ALT-EDIC (Alliance for Language Technologies)** – AI-driven language models need **optimized hardware** to handle multilingual data processing. This requires specialized **AI accelerators and NLP-optimized chips**.
- **CitiVERSE-EDIC** – Smart cities use AI-powered digital twins. Digital twins in CitiVERSE-EDIC use data from thousands of sensors and IoT devices across a city. These sensors rely on AI-enabled semiconductors to analyze and transmit data efficiently.
- **AI Office & Regulation** – The AI Innovation Package promotes trustworthy and ethical AI, meaning semiconductor development must align with EU AI governance and regulatory standards.

DEP applicants should align their proposals with these initiatives to demonstrate relevance and potential impact, thereby increasing their chances of securing DEP funding. Please refer to the European Commission's AI innovation package and the associated resources for more detailed information.

Which activities in the current DEP Work Programme contribute to meeting the objectives of the policy

WP 2025-2027: Generative AI and other AI applications

- Update of GenAI applications in key sectors, incl. integration of GenAI in Testing and Experimentation Facilities (TEFs) and public administrations.
- Virtual Worlds: support testing, experimentation and integration of Virtual Worlds technologies in specific sectors.
- AI in Health: deployment of cutting-edge multimodal AI-based solutions in medical imaging
- AI Skills Academy: empowers students as well as the work force with necessary skills for dealing with AI models and applications in their fields.

Please match any specific activity mentioned in the policy with concrete call topics from the current/upcoming DEP Work Programme

The AI Innovation Package introduces several initiatives that align with specific call topics in the Digital Europe Programme (DEP) Work Programmes. SO2 under DEP is the main specific objective with budget supporting activities that link to the AI innovation package.

Funded projects related to AI can be found on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal
EDICs addressing AI tools and solutions are the ALT-EDIC and the CitiVERSE EDIC.

Events

For finding related events, please check out the following online calenders: Shaping Europe's digital future, HADEA