AI Challenge 2024

EIT AI Community Competition

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1. Call summary

Call for proposals main features	
Dates	• *Call opening for challenge owners:* 30 April 2024 • *Call closing for challenge owners:* 31 July 2024, 23:59 CEST. • *Eligibility and admissibility check (12 challenges will be selected):* 5 July 2024 • *Call opening for solution providers:* 5 July 2024 • *Call closing:* 30 August 2024, 23:59 CEST • *Online workshop challenger:* 7 May 14:00 CEST, 4 June 11:00 CEST • *September - October: bilateral meeting and pitch preparation* • *Virtual pitch session:* 30 October 2024 *Communication of results: A jury deliberation meeting will take place directly after the pitch session. Right after the jury decision is made, the results will be announced publicly during the event.*
Cost	• Internal KIC partners - Free • External entities - 5.000€ • Future partners – cost paid for entering the challenge will be waived from the membership fee Reach out to the organisers for more information.
Awards	1st prize 20.000€, 2nd prize 15.000€ and 3rd prize 10.000€ The three winning startups also receive participation at Slush in Helsinki on 20-21 November 2024
List of documents to be submitted	Application form available on the submission platform https://ai.eitcommunity.eu

Evaluation criteria	*Evaluation criteria assessed by the independent experts*:
	• Excellence, novelty and innovation • Impact and financial sustainability • Quality and efficiency of the implementation, including sound financial management • Strategic fit • Implementation ability & scale-up potential

2. General conditions

EIT AI Community strives to help implement AI solutions in Europe. This will put Europe at the centre of a global revolution and boost innovation in Europe by connecting people with skills, technologies with markets, and innovators with investors. Technological progress is now exponential and the industrial, social and competitive landscape is changing faster than ever. We aim not only to adapt to this revolution but to lead it. To do so, we must overcome value network fragmentation and unite stakeholders. We need to use our knowledge and strengths better to create value and deploy agile mechanisms to accelerate and steer innovation, shaping the future role of AI in our society.

In this context, the scouting and branding activities of Business Creation operations will be leveraged by continuing the AI Challenge competitions with a variety of themes in different European locations.

The EIT AI Challenge 2024 intends to attract spin-offs, early-stage and mature startups. It is an instrument for the EIT AI Community to stimulate their ecosystem to scout and screen the most innovative solution providers. This is a continuation of the AI Challenge activities in 2022 and 2023 and will further position the EIT AI Community as a key innovation support agent in Europe. Financial support to third parties is planned, out of the participation cost of the AI Challenge owners, available for financial prizes for the winners, who are selected by a jury of experts. Proper use of financial support to third parties will be monitored by the EIT AI Community Team, making sure the awards are used for the implementation of solutions.

3. Call specific conditions

3.1 Call thematic and expected results

Purpose

EIT AI Community organises the AI Challenge 2024 for the main topics:

Data spaces for cities, health, manufacturing, 5G technologies, AI for drones, synthetic data and data anonymisation, generative AI solutions, process optimisation, and logistics. This is not an exhaustive list and other topics also can be applied. This will be a startup competition for spin-offs, startups and scaleups from all sectors participating in the EIT AI Community Project.

Topic description

AI Challenge 2024 seeks applicants from all over Europe with Challenges in Data spaces for cities, AI health & manufacturing technologies, AI For food processing or farming, 5G technologies, AI for drones, synthetic data and data anonymisation. In particular, submissions need to fit one of the focuses mentioned above as well as the following technology domains: Simulation & Advanced Engineering Tools, Industrial VR/AR, Industrial Robotics, Logistics Tech, Additive Manufacturing (3D printing), Predictive Maintenance, Advanced Sensors, Advanced Detection (IR/Noise/etc.), Industrial Cybersecurity, Connectivity and IoT Infrastructure, Data analytics/AI, Digital Twins, and Ecological and Social Sustainability.

Applicants profile startups

The applicants have to meet the following requirements:

If a legal entity for the application for solutions submitted is not already established:

- An entrepreneurial team, with a minimum of two members, is eligible to take part in the competition
- Team members must be residents of Europe
- The business development plans for the legal entity must be established
- The application package should include a completed application form, pitch deck and logo

If a legal entity for the application submitted has already been established:

- Company must be incorporated in Europe (eligible EU Countries)
- For foreign startups (Outside EU Countries), this should have happened at least six months before the submission deadline for startups
- Applicants have to prove revenue traction (existing reference customers)
- The business development plans (incl. financial aspects) shall be disclosed
- The application package should include a completed application form, pitch deck and logo

3.2   Cost for challenge owners

KIC partners: Free participation

External entities of the KIC Ecosystem: 5.000 €
If the challenge owner becomes a member of the EIT Communities, the fee can also be waived or counted as a discount on the first membership fee.
Exclusion: EIT Urban Mobility potential partners will not be asked for entrance fees.

Internal KIC partners can use this as a Business Creation service opportunity, as stated in the service provided for membership fees in their respective KICs. Please clarify the existing service before applying to the EIT AI Community.

For external Entities: the cost of the AI Challenge participation can count as partial payment towards membership in the ecosystem of the EIT KIC of their choosing (Based on the participating KICs in this programme)

The corresponding costs can be deducted from your membership fee upon submission of the necessary documentation and successful evaluation of the proposed activities, resulting in a reduced financial commitment. This allows external entities to actively participate in events, workshops, conferences or other activities of interest while benefiting from the financial flexibility provided by our ecosystem.

3.3   Budget and funding

The total maximum EIT funding allocated to this call is 45.000 EUR.

Applicants also compete for dedicated "growth packages" of the KIC'S dedicated support services in coaching, mentoring and IP management. The competition aims to find and scale up the best solutions for sustainable, resilient and socially impactful AI.

In addition to the "growth package" prize, the top three winners (ranked 1 to 3) will receive a financial prize. The minimum prize fund is as follows (funded by the Challenge owners or Sponsors):

- First prize: €20,000

- Second prize: €15,000

- Third prize: €10,000

The prize money will be paid to the selected applicants after the award ceremony, provided all the requested documents have been submitted (see paragraphs 3.3 and 5.5).

3.3 Monitoring and control related to the EIT AI Community financial prize

Control/compliance before paying out the financial prize: The winning companies must provide their banking and fiscal documentation before the EIT AI Community awards the prize money. They also have to disclose if there are any pending issues with government authorities or agencies in accordance with EU funding rules and Horizon Europe legislation. The prize winners must sign a "declaration of honour" (see also point 6.8), which is annexed to these guidelines, as well as sign the LOI of the EIT AI Community. If an issue is identified, the EIT AI Community reserves the right to withdraw the award of the AI Challenge.

3.4 Reporting

Prize winners must report two (2) months after the final receipt of support from the EIT AI Community. This report must confirm that they received the "growth package" prize and a summary of the planned POC or that it is just in progress.

4. Proposal preparation and submission

All applications must be submitted in English using the application forms linked on the competition website (https://ai.eitcommunity.eu/ai-challenge/) and sent to ai@eitcommunity.eu.

The official language of the competition is English (i.e., all submission material must be submitted in English, and the applicants must pitch in English if they are selected for participation in the final event).

Challenge owners: The following documentation must be submitted by the challenge owner application through the submission tool **no later than the call deadline of 31 June 2024, 23:59 CEST:**

- Application form ([https://ai.eitcommunity.eu/services/ai-challenge-2024)](https://ai.eitcommunity.eu/services/ai-challenge-2024)
- Company Pitch Deck - can also be added over the online form or sent to ai@eitmanufacturing.eu
- AI Maturity test report to ensure the data delivery that the company will be able to provide

Solution providers: The following documentation must be submitted by the solution providers for the second stage application through the submission tool after it opens **on 5 July** and **no later than the call deadline of 30 August 2024, 23:59 CEST:**

- Application form (yet to be opened) ([https://ai.eitcommunity.eu/services/ai-challenge-2024)](https://ai.eitcommunity.eu/services/ai-challenge-2024)
- Company Pitch Deck - can also be added over the online form or sent to ai@eitmanufacturing.eu

NB: Only applications submitted through the online form before the deadline will be accepted and considered. The organisers reserve the right to extend the submission deadline; any extension of the deadline will be communicated to the public on the competition website.

Any documentation missing or incomplete may be considered a reason for rejection.

Call contact points

All applicants may contact the EIT AI Community at ai@eitcommunity.eu to ask questions and clarify any points on general/technical procedures and call content.

5. Proposal evaluation and selection process

5.1 Eligibility and admissibility check of challenges

Given the competitive nature of this year's challenge and our commitment to **fostering** high-quality innovation, please be advised that an **evaluation** will be conducted to select the most promising challenges for **the competition**. Due to the limited slots available, only 12 challenges will be accepted into the AI Challenge 2024.

Our evaluation committee, comprising experts in artificial intelligence, technology and innovation, will review each proposal meticulously. The evaluation will focus on criteria such as the proposal's innovation, feasibility, potential impact and alignment with the AI Challenge 2024 objectives.

We understand the effort and dedication that go into each proposal and we assure all participants that every submission will receive the attention and consideration it deserves. The selected challenges will be announced publicly and all participants will be notified of the results directly.

A proposal will be admissible if it shows:

Completeness	The proposal is completed and submitted on time via the submission tool in English with all its mandatory sections and compulsory documents included (application form and pitch)

A proposal will be eligible if it shows:

Applicant profile	The applicant's profile is in line with the requirements presented under point 3.1 "Applicants profile"

Applications containing one or more ineligible elements will receive an official communication from EIT AI Community about the outcome of the eligibility check and explaining why the proposal failed to comply to the criteria.

The applicant deemed ineligible and who disputes the ineligibility decision, may appeal. This appeal must be made within five calendar days from the official EIT AI Community

notification of the ineligibility (see paragraph 5.4 and the document Appeal procedure linked to the call).

5.2 Eligibility and admissibility check of solutions

A proposal will be admissible if it shows:

Completeness	The proposal is completed and submitted on time via the submission tool in English with all its mandatory sections and compulsory documents included (application form and pitch)

A proposal will be eligible if it shows:

Applicant profile	The applicant's profile is in line with the requirements presented under point 3.1 "Applicants profile"

Applications containing one or more ineligible elements will receive an official communication from EIT AI Community about the outcome of eligibility check and explaining why the proposal failed to meet the criteria.

The applicant deemed ineligible who disputes the ineligibility decision, may appeal. This appeal must be made within five calendar days from the official EIT AI Community notification of ineligibility (see paragraph 5.4 and the document Appeal procedure linked to the call).

5.3   Evaluation of proposals

The evaluation of proposals and fit with the defined challenges will be conducted in two steps.

1st phase – Evaluation of challenges

Applicants' applications will first be reviewed online by a panel composed by three members of the EIT AI Community who will evaluate with same weighting of scores.

Each evaluator will have to score each application based on four standardised criteria:

External evaluators will assess each evaluation criteria will be assessed according to the following scores on a scale **from 1 to 5**

Score		Description
1	*Extremely poor or none*	The information provided is considered irrelevant or inadequate compared to the specific call provisions
2	*Bad*	The information provided lacks relevant quality and contains significant weaknesses, compared to the specific call provisions
3	*Average*	The overall information provided is adequate, however, some aspects are unclearly or insufficiently detailed, compared to the specific call provisions
4	*Good*	The information provided is adequate with sufficiently outlined details, compared to the specific call provisions
5	*Excellent*	The information provided is outstanding in its details, clarity and coherence, compared to the specific call provisions

The criteria levels are then summed together to come up with a final score.

Thresholds apply to individual criteria and to the total score. The maximum score for a proposal is 20. The default threshold for individual criteria is 3 and the default overall threshold is 12.

Evaluation criteria	Excellence	Impact	Implementation	Strategic fit	TOTAL
	The application presents an innovative solution with potential of the product or service to improve	The application is addressed to specific target group/s and/or market sector/s and the solution demonstrates a competitive advantage over existing offers in the market	The team/founders have the expertise and entrepreneurial drive.	The application contributes to the competition areas.	20

Score	Up to 5	Up to 5	Up to 5	Up to 5	

The evaluators will evaluate each proposal and produce an Individual Evaluation Report (IER). The Submission Management System "Submittable" will create an average score per application based on the individual scorings. Once all evaluations have been completed, the system creates a ranking listing all evaluation results in the order, from maximum score to minimum score.

Top ranked applications will qualify to the 2nd phase – live pitch

All the other applicants can still have their challenges solved but will not be eligible to participate in the competition for the awards

2nd phase – Live pitching

Applicants' applications will first be reviewed online by a panel composed by five evaluators with same weighting of scores in line with the first evaluation:

- Three members from EIT AI Community (3/5)
- Two external evaluators (2/5)

The format of the live pitch will be a four minutes presentation by the applicants and 4 minutes questions from the jury panel. The final ranking of the successful applicants will be agreed by the jury members in a consensus meeting, which will be held right after the end of the pitching session.

The pitch will happen on 30 October 2024. The agenda for this in-person event will be announced on the competition website (https://ai.eitcommunity.eu/services/ai-challenge-2024). It is the participants' responsibility to keep track of announcements and information on the website. All pre-selected finalists will also receive an email with the detailed timing of the final pitching competition sessions prior to the event.

5.3   Communication of results

- Phase 1 results will be communicated to the email of the applicant representative registered at the submission platform (Note: Please, check your junk folder). Results will be communicated with a rejection letter to non-

qualified applicants or an invitation letter to phase 2 of the evaluation process. Results will include the evaluations.

- In phase 2, a jury deliberation meeting will take place directly after the pitch session. Right after the jury decision is taken, the results will be announced publicly during the event. Individual scores and comments made by evaluators will remain confidential.

5.4   Procedure for complaints and appeal

The applicant (the representative of the legal entity or the team) of a rejected application who disagrees with the decision may request an evaluation review.
Only procedural aspects of an evaluation may be subject of a request for an evaluation review, for example process errors or technical problems. The evaluation of the merits of a proposal shall not be the subject of an evaluation review. In this case, the applicant will have five calendar days after receipt of the final evaluation results to submit an appeal to the evaluation team (see document Appeal procedure)

5.5 Selected applicants and follow-up

The selected applicants will receive the following awards:

- All selected pitch applicants will receive the "growth packages" of dedicated support services for months provided by the team and based on the company's individual needs.
- All selected pitch applicants will enjoy visibility and international publicity through EIT AI Communities communication channels.
- The top three selected applicants will receive a lump sum prize.

Selected applicants will have to diligently collaborate with the following steps that will be taken after closing the competition:

- Signature of the financial prize agreement and other necessary arrangements (for example for the pitch presentation)
- Delivery of "growth package" support services
- Signature on Support Review Form (SRF)Execution and monitoring of the (SRF) commitment

6. Other terms and conditions

6.1 Communication, dissemination, visibility of funding

Prize winners must promote the prize and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner. Communication activities related to the prize (including media interviews, press statements, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), must acknowledge EU support and display the EIT AI Community logo (emblem) and text. The emblem must remain distinct and separate and cannot be modified by adding other visual marks, brands or text. Apart from the emblem, no other visual identity or logo may be used to highlight the EIT AI Community support. When displayed in association with other logos (e.g. of winners or sponsors), the emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos.

For the purposes of these obligations, the winners may use the emblem without first obtaining approval from EIT AI Community. This does not, however, give them the right to exclusive use. Moreover, they may not appropriate the emblem or any similar trademark or logo, either by registration or by any other means. Any communication or dissemination activity related to the prize must use factually accurate information.

The EIT AI Community may use, for their communication and publicising activities, information relating to the prize, as well as photos or audio-visual material that they receive from the applicants (including in electronic form) and photos and videos taken either in preparation for the award ceremony or during the award ceremony. The EIT AI Community will publish the name of both the finalist/s and the selected applicants, their origin, the amount of the prize and its nature and purpose.

6.2 IPRs

Participants retain full and exclusive ownership of their prior information and intellectual property rights. By submitting their application, participants affirm that they hold ownership or have legally secured the right to use all elements of the innovative product or service. Participants agree that the EIT AI Community and/or any assignee will be held harmless from any third-party allegations or claims of intellectual property rights infringement by the product or service of participants.

Participants shall have the right to further develop, use and license their intellectual property rights for creating, making, marketing and distributing products, services and technology.

Participants agree to respect the IPR Rules (Article 16) of the Model Grant Agreement.

6.3 Right to activate audits

EIT AI Community retains the right to activate an audit on AI Challenge prize winners, in case of alerts and/or to confirm governance and proper usage of the financial prize.

EIT AI Community keeps the right to request any data related to the AI Challenge Competition for 5 years after completion to ensure transparency and allow monitoring from EIT.

6.4 Withdrawal of the prize — Recovery of undue amounts

EIT AI Community may withdraw the prize after its award and recover all payments made if it finds out that:

- false information, fraud or corruption was used to obtain it
- the prize winners were not eligible or should have been excluded or – the prize winners are in serious breach of their obligations under these Guidelines

6.5 Data protection

EIT AI Challenge ensures that any processing of personal data shall be performed in accordance with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016, on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data, and in accordance with Directive 95/46/EC (General Data Protection Regulation). As a data subject, you have the right to access, the right to rectification, the right to erasure, the right to restrict processing, the right to data portability, the right to object and the right not to be subject to a decision-based solely on automated processing. If you have a question about personal data processing or want to exercise your data subject rights, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at dpo@eitmanufacturing.eu. In the case of complaints, you can address them to the French regulator CNIL.

The personal data collected will be used solely to process and assess the applications and manage, complete, organise, disseminate information, and publicise the AI Challenge 2024. The data controller is the EIT AI Community and/or its subsidiaries.

Personal data shall be deleted five years after the announcement of the competition winners.

Participants have the possibility to indicate that the EIT AI Community may grant access to parts of their submission to trusted investors and partners.

The application submission and evaluation process will be done via Submittable (http://www.submittable.com), an online submission management tool by Submittable Holdings, Inc.

YOUR CONSENT TO THE USE OF SUBMITTABLE AS SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION TOOL: By submitting your application within this challenge you implicitly state your consent to the Terms and Conditions as well as the Privacy policy of Submittable, available under http://www.submittable.com/terms and http://www.submittable.com/privacy

YOUR CONSENT TO THE USE OF PERSONAL DATA: By submitting your application within this competition you consent that EIT AI Community will collect, transfer, process, store and delete your data in accordance with the aforementioned conditions.

6.6 Acceptance of the Guidelines

By submitting the application form, the participant agrees to these Guidelines and respective Annexes, which form part of the submission. Participants agree that they have no legal entitlement to a prize.

EIT AI Community reserves the right to make reasonable amendments to these Guidelines. Amendments and additions to these Guidelines shall be valid only if communicated in writing or otherwise made available to the participants.

EIT AI Community also reserves the right to cancel or declare the Competition unsuccessful provided all applicants are informed and sufficient justification is given (for example no applications received, or all applications do not pass the default thresholds).

6.7   Confidentiality

EIT AI Community undertakes to use any Confidential Information shared by the applicants solely for the purposes of the Call for Proposals. Confidential information shall mean data and/or information that is proprietary to, or possessed by, the applicants and not generally known to the public or that has not yet been revealed, whether in tangible or intangible form, whenever and however disclosed and might also be included in the application form. Confidential information must be expressly labelled as such on the application form.

Applicants agree that EIT AI Community and its subsidiaries can disseminate, publish and use non-confidential information regarding the call to promote EIT AI Community's activities or establish reports or other necessary documents for EIT.

The applicants agree that data and information in the application form that are not labelled as confidential may be disclosed in connection with the activities of the EIT AI Community.

Considering the confidential nature of the data and information referred to above, EIT AI Community also undertakes to (i) not disclose them in any way and in any form, without prior written authorisation of the company concerned and (ii) not to use them for purposes other than those strictly necessary for participation in the Learning Factories Competition.

Confidential Information may be shared among the EIT AI Community and its subsidiaries (e.g. CLCs) solely for the purposes of the AI Challenge Activity. EIT AI Community undertakes to impose this confidentiality obligation on its employees and the employees of its subsidiaries and its collaborators, as well as on Rapporteurs and independent experts and all subjects who, by virtue of participating in the call for proposal as members of the Selection Committees or Jury, will take knowledge of or may have access to such confidential data and information.

6.8 Exclusion Criteria

Applicants will be excluded from participating in the call if they are in any of the situations of exclusion defined in Article 136 of the EU Financial Regulation[1]. Applicants shall sign a Declaration of Honour to confirm that they respect the above-mentioned criteria at the application stage. Successful Applicants may be requested to provide relevant recent documentation substantiating the Declaration of Honour. Failure to provide adequate documentation may result in the exclusion of the applicants concerned.

6.9 Applicable law

The present guidelines are governed by the applicable European Union laws (i.e. the EIT Regulation, the EU Financial Regulation and the Horizon Europe Regulation) and are complemented, where necessary, by the law of France. The applicants agree to observe the obligations set forth in the (Model) Grant Agreement8 signed between the EIT and EIT AI Community, particularly Articles 12 (conflict of interest), 13 (confidentiality and security), 14 (ethics), 17.2 (visibility), 18 (specific rules for carrying out action), 19 (information) and 20 (record-keeping). These obligations will also be mentioned in the contracts to be signed if the application is successful.

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[1] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32018R1046&rid=6#d1e13757-1-1