

Additional information about the Data sharing applications call for funding

Please note that these instructions for applicants have been updated on 9 March 2023. These instructions will replace those announced earlier.

1 Sitra's funding/aid to the project

The funding granted by Sitra can cover up to 70 per cent of the costs and expenses incurred in developing a working prototype, experiment or concept. The minimum level of self-financing by the implementing party is 30 per cent.

The maximum amount of funding is either EUR 50,000 or EUR 150,000 per applicant consortium, depending on the data sharing capabilities of the companies of the applicant consortium taking part in the pilot and the objectives of the pilot project. The amount will be disbursed among the members of the applicant consortium.

The consortiums selected will also receive support and guidance from Sitra and non-Sitra industry experts in three workshops during the working period. The maximum value of the support and guidance is EUR 7,500 per applicant consortium.

The call for applications is open both to consortiums that are well advanced in data sharing and those just starting out in data sharing.

The larger amount of funding will be available to pilots with established use cases (higher maturity). The lower amount of funding will be available to experiments or pilots with less established use cases (lower maturity).

Applicant consortiums with a minimum of two and maximum of seven members are expected to take part in the pilot project call.

Sitra will fund each member of the consortium separately and make a decision on each member separately. A separate funding agreement will be concluded with each member of the consortium.

Each member of an applicant consortium must be a legal entity.

If the applicant consortium includes members who are not applying for funding from Sitra and do not need the expert services provided by Sitra, the value of the expert services will be shared among the consortium members who receive the funding from Sitra.

Consortium members who do not apply for funding from Sitra and also do not benefit from Sitra's expert services do not need to fill in the de minimis aid declaration.

Those members of the consortium not applying for funding from Sitra must, however, sign a cooperation agreement with Sitra, the content of which is similar to a financing agreement, except for the conditions regarding financing.

Applicants may submit several project proposals in the call for funding applications.

Pilots awarded EUR 50,000 in funding may apply for additional funding of EUR 100,000 if the project maturity level rises. In this case and they could receive a total up to EUR 150,000 of funding from Sitra.

Applicants who have received EUR 50,000 of funding will not have priority over new applicants. Applications for EUR 100,000 additional funding must follow the same application deadline as mentioned above. Examples of a possible co-funding calculation:

- Total expenses EUR 71,429 - Sitra's contribution EUR 50,000. The remaining EUR 21,429 will be paid by the members of the applicant consortium.
- Expenses EUR 214,285 - Sitra's contribution EUR 150,000. The remaining EUR 64,285 will be paid by the members of the applicant consortium.

The funding awarded on the basis of the call for funding applications and a positive decision on funding can only be used to cover project expenses specified in the follow-up and expense appendix to Sitra's funding project. Sitra will not reimburse the applicant for application expenses or any other funding-related expenses.

2 Schedule

The call for funding applications runs continuously from September 2022 to September 2023. The submission date for the funding applications has been changed and from 28 November 2022 onwards, it will be on a continuous basis. This means that instead of the previously announced three application rounds, applicants can submit their proposals at any time up to 29 September 2023, 16.00 (EEST).

The applications will be processed on a first come, first served basis. The applicant consortiums of the chosen pilot projects will be contacted within 20 working days of submission at the latest.

The pilot projects should be completed within 6 to 9 months of signing the agreement (by 30 April 2024 at the latest).

3 Companies engaged in economic activities and other parties

If the project will be realised by an undertaking or other entity engaged in an economic activity, the funding will be awarded as de minimis aid. The aid will be awarded in compliance with the Commission Regulation (EU) No 1407/2013 of 18 December 2013 on the application of Articles 107 and 108 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union to de minimis aid. (Published in Official Journal of the European Union no L 352, 24 December 2013).

Businesses are entities engaged in economic activity, regardless of its legal status and the way in which it is financed. All activities in which goods or services are offered on certain markets are considered to be economic activities. Non-profit entities can offer goods and services on the market, are subject to state aid rules.

Each member of the applicant consortium engaged in economic activities must be eligible to receive de minimis aid at least to the amount of the funding applied for in the project plan of the applicant consortium allocated to each member, in addition to which to the amount of service it receives from Sitra as advisory work. The value of the advisory work carried out as de minimis aid for the benefit of the applicant consortium will not exceed EUR 7,500 and it will be disbursed equally between the members of the applicant consortium.

Each member of the applicant consortium engaged in economic activity shall submit a de minimis notification to Sitra, and the value of de minimis aid received by the applicant during the current and two preceding tax years must not exceed EUR 200,000, including the benefit applied for. The de minimis notification to be submitted to Sitra shall indicate the amounts of de minimis aid received during the current and two preceding tax years.

If a member of the applicant consortium taking part in the call for funding has received de minimis aid at an amount that does not allow for additional aid during the current and two preceding tax years, Sitra may reject the funding application of the applicant consortium.

4 Rights to results

The results of the pilot project will be reported to Sitra. Sitra and the Finnish Gaia-X network will use the results in their own work and communications.

The consortium holds or it undertakes to acquire the intellectual property rights required for implementing the project.

The members of the applicant consortium shall retain ownership of the results of the pilot project. The members of the applicant consortium shall grant Sitra free, unlimited and royalty-free rights to use the deliverable results in order to allow Sitra to disseminate and redistribute the deliverable results of the project without business secrets.

The terms and conditions of funding will specify the publication of the results and rights of access to them in more detail.

5 Application process

The application process involves four stages:

1. In the first stage, the applicant consortiums will complete the [application form](#), to which they attach a free-form project plan (max. 2 pages), a [budget for the pilot project](#) and [de minimis aid declarations](#). Once the application form is submitted, it will be evaluated and Sitra will then announce within 20 working days at the latest whether the applicant consortium has been chosen for follow-up consultations.

The application form shall indicate the following:

- Contact details
- Business value and market potential
- Members of the applicant consortium

- Project plan, indicating the work flow, objectives, resources, organisation, timeline, outputs and their delivery and interim goals that make it possible to review the progress of the pilot
- Budget and funding plan
- Risks
- Project continuation
- De Minimis Aid Declarations

The applicant consortium is liable for the accuracy of the information provided to Sitra and their non-infringement of the rights of any third parties.

2. In the second stage, the selected applicant consortiums will be invited to present their project proposals in 15 minutes and prepare for a 15-minute talk on the details of the proposed pilot and the eligibility of the implementing applicant consortium.

3. In the third stage, Sitra will evaluate the application form and select the projects to be funded based on the joint discussion. If necessary, the shortlisted applicant consortium(s) chosen for will prepare a more detailed project plan, which will form the basis for funding decisions and funding agreements between Sitra and the members of the applicant consortium.

4. The fourth stage involves preparing the funding agreements between Sitra and the applicant.

Sitra will fund each member of the applicant consortium separately and will conclude a separate agreement with each one.

Sitra will evaluate the project applications based on the evaluation criteria and thereby decides which projects to fund. Sitra may also request the opinions of external experts to support its evaluation, but such inputs are not binding on Sitra.

Required forms

[Application form](#) (Webropol)

[Cost reporting template](#) (Excel)

[De minimis aid declaration](#) (Excel)

6 Evaluation and approval of applications

In evaluating project proposals, particular attention will be paid to the fulfilment of the following criteria:

1. Project-specific review
 - a. The pilot project studies the business benefits of data sharing and the applicant consortium implementing it involves companies that use data in their business.
 - b. The pilot project shares data between companies across corporate boundaries.
 - c. The pilot plan is feasible and the participating companies and parties have the skills required by the pilot and credible prior experience or track record of similar projects.

2. Strategic review
 - a. The pilot project will implement the principles of the fair data economy, where possible.
 - b. The size of the target market is internationally significant.
 - c. The applicant consortium involves at least one Finnish company with a market advantage or other credible opportunities for succeeding in the market concerned.

3. Impact on the development of Gaia-X
 - a. The implementation and objectives of the pilot project comply with the Gaia-X principles (see Strategy of Finland's Gaia-X network).
 - b. The pilot project will test or explore the potential for Gaia-X compatibility.
 - c. The use cases of the project will be realised so that they are realistically scalable and could also work elsewhere in Europe.

The project to be funded must address at least two of the following principles, which are also at the core of the Gaia-X model:

- **Decentralised solutions:** build to support independent data structures
- **Standardisation:** jointly agreed data structure and naming
- **Interoperability:** can connect, access, and exchange data between different dataspace
- **Discoverability:** ensure that the data can be found in and between data spaces
- **Accessibility:** automated access management and open for all to join
- **Common rules and shared principles:** clear, fair and transparent rules and governance for all participants
- **Traceability:** all transactions are recorded and logged
- **Business value:** unlock, create and capture the new business value at the ecosystem level
- **European data protection legislation:** meet or exceed the regulatory requirements
- **Usability:** simple, easy and user friendly
- **Automated regulation:** the software code is readable by machine to comply automatically
- **Compliance as code:** the software code prevents the user from deviating from an otherwise agreed code

Based on the project plan, Sitra will make an overall evaluation of whether to award Sitra's financial aid to the projects based on the project plan, the application criteria and the proposed budget. Granting funding requires that the recipient of the aid approves the terms and conditions of Sitra's project funding and a funding agreement has been made. When granting funding, Sitra is obliged to ensure compliance with the EU regulations on state aid.

Sitra may propose the development of some project proposals or the merging of two or more project proposals. All of the members of the applicant consortium must sign a funding agreement with Sitra in order to receive funding. In granting funding, Sitra will comply with the EU regulations on state aid.

Sitra reserves the right to not to select any application.

7 This is not a purchase of a service or other procurement.

Sitra will act as a funder of the recipients selected following the call for funding applications in accordance with the terms and conditions of the positive funding decision, and therefore project proposals that would result in Sitra purchasing or otherwise procuring services from the applicants will be rejected.

8 Publicity of documents

In accordance with the Act on the Openness of Government Activities (621/1999), Sitra is entitled to provide information about documents associated with the call for funding, the funding applicant, the amount of funding and the funded project, excluding information to be kept secret on the basis of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities, if a request for information or other enquiry is submitted to Sitra on account of the Act on the Openness of Government Activities.

9 Processing of personal data

Those taking part in the call for funding applications are responsible for ensuring that they are entitled to provide Sitra with personal data concerning the contact persons and other personal data specified in the call for funding applications for the purpose of implementing the project and that the data is correct.

The personal data provided in the call for funding applications will be used for contacts regarding any follow-up co-operation. The personal data collected in the call for funding will be processed in accordance with [Sitra's privacy policy](#). Moreover, the above-mentioned personal data of the contact persons for the organisations chosen as recipients of funding will be processed for preparing and processing the funding agreement.

10 Other terms and conditions

Sitra reserves the right to make minor modifications and clarifications to the terms and conditions of the call for funding applications. The changes will be published on the call for funding applications website. Participants in the call for funding should therefore monitor the website in order to note any changes.

Sitra reserves the right to suspend the call for funding applications if the circumstances or conditions prevailing at the time of commencing the call for funding have changed to such an extent that Sitra considers that implementing the call for funding applications is no longer appropriate or feasible.

Sitra reserves the right to exclude from the call for funding a company that violates the terms and conditions of the call for funding or valid legislation or the company is otherwise considered to be ineligible for taking part in the call for funding applications or, later, while the project is underway, in a project launched based on it. For example, a company that is subject to a sanction or restriction imposed by the EU or UN shall be considered ineligible.

In the event of this, the exclusion will be communicated by e-mail to the company's contact person.

In the event of any conflict between these terms and conditions of application and other documents/publications related to the application, these terms and conditions will prevail.