

PARTNER SEARCH FORM for Digital Europe Programme (DEP)

- I offer my expertise to participate as a Partner in a DEP Project
 I am planning to coordinate a Project and I am looking for Project Partners

TOPICS OF INTEREST

- TOPIC IDs:
 - DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-09-COMPETITIONS
 - DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-09-LEAGUE-OF-ACADEMIES
 - DIGITAL-2026-AI-09-GENAI-PA
 - DIGITAL-2026-AI-09-VIRTUAL-TESTBEDS-STEP-Virtual worlds test beds
- TOPIC Deadline: 03 March 2026 17:00:00 Brussels time
- Deadline for the expressions of interest: 31.01.2026

PARTNER INFORMATION

- **Description of the Legal Entity:**
 - Higher Education
 - Research Institution
 - Public Administration
 - Industry / SME
 - NGO
 - Other:

Please specify:

The Innovation Fund of the Republic of Serbia is a national public institution dedicated to supporting innovation development in Serbia. It provides a comprehensive portfolio of support programs targeting startups (SMEs), investors, and scientific research organizations. As the key state institution responsible for fostering innovation, the Fund manages funding aimed at stimulating innovative activities.

Operating under the supervision of the Government of the Republic of Serbia and the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation, the Innovation Fund seeks to strengthen the links between science, technology and the economy. Its mission is to promote the development of innovative entrepreneurship through the following activities:

- Supporting innovative entrepreneurship, particularly in the early stages of development;
- Facilitating collaboration between scientific research organizations and private companies to support the the development and commercialization of innovations;
- Enabling the market entry of new products, technologies, and services;

- Establishing long-term institutional support for innovative entrepreneurship in cooperation with international financial institutions, organizations, donors, and the private sector.

Since the beginning of its operational activities in 2011, the European Union`s support to the Innovation Fund has played a crucial role in strengthening innovation financing in Serbia and enhancing cooperation between the research and private sectors.

The Fund cooperates closely with international financial institutions and donors in providing financing for innovation development. Funding decisions are made on a competitive basis by an independent Investment Committee, following professional peer review and technical evaluation procedures.

The Innovation Fund has served a catalytic function in the ecosystem, generating bottom-up demand for innovation financing. IF activities laid the founding pillars for the entrepreneurial community, which now boasts regular events, competitions, and multiple funding windows and efforts to link research institutions to private sector partners.

The IF has positioned itself to leverage the EU accession funds and prepare Serbia to benefit from future structural funds for enterprise development by developing implementation procedures for effective operations.

- **Description and expertise of the team:**

The Innovation Fund is structured as a multidisciplinary organization with demonstrated capacity to design, manage and implement innovation support instruments at national and international level. The team combines complementary expertise in innovation programme management, financial management, legal affairs, policy development, and project evaluation.

Key areas of expertise include:

Innovation and technology commercialisation

- Design, implementation and administration of grant schemes and early stage funding instruments targeting research, development and innovation activities.
- Provision of structure support to startups and small and medium sized enterprises(SMEs) to facilitate the commercialisation and market uptake of R&D results.

Research and Scientific Strategy

- Strategic alignment of academic research activities with national economic development priorities and smart specialisation objectives.
- Establishment and maintenance of strong linkages with national, regional and international research and innovation ecosystems.

Policy and Institutional Framework Development

- Demonstrated leadership in the development implementation and monitoring of innovation policies and institutional frameworks.
- Active contribution to the alignment of Serbia`s innovation ecosystem with European Union policy frameworks and relevant global innovation agendas.

- **Potential role in the project:**
 - Technology provider
 - Data provider
 - Research
 - Training
 - Dissemination
 - Other:

Please specify:

DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-09-COMPETITIONS

DIGITAL-2026-SKILLS-09-LEAGUE-OF-ACADEMIES

Taking into account the Innovation Fund's extensive expertise in the design, management, and implementation of innovation support instruments, we can provide substantial contributions in the area of defining calls for proposals, procedures, organizational arrangements, and visibility measures.

Capacity development can be addressed through the design and deployment of targeted training and support programs, tailored to the needs of different stakeholder groups. These programs can further enhance technical, organizational, and strategic competences, ensuring effective uptake and implementation of innovative solutions.

As an organization actively involved in the development of policy and institutional frameworks, we are well positioned to contribute at the governance level, including coordination mechanisms, strategic insights into beneficiaries' needs, and the facilitation of networking and stakeholder engagement activities.

DIGITAL-2026-AI-09-GENAI-PA

Innovation Fund can focus on fostering structured knowledge sharing and collaboration among relevant stakeholders, with particular emphasis on emerging initiatives such as GenAI4EU and related European policy and innovation frameworks.

We can support community building by establishing and nurturing thematic networks that bring together beneficiaries, experts, policymakers, and innovation actors. These communities further can serve as platforms for continuous dialogue, cooperation, and co-creation.

In parallel, the IF can promote peer-to-peer knowledge sharing and experience exchange, enabling participants to learn from best practices, practical use cases, and lessons learned across regions and sectors. This will can be achieved through workshops, mentoring schemes, thematic sessions, and collaborative learning formats.

All activities that Innovation Fund can implement can further contribute to strengthening the innovation ecosystem, increasing awareness and understanding of AI-driven solutions, and enhancing the capacity of stakeholders to actively participate in and benefit from European innovation initiatives.

DIGITAL-2026-AI-09-VIRTUAL-TESTBEDS-STEP-Virtual worlds test beds

As an organization closely connected to innovation ecosystem actors and in continuous communication with companies developing innovative solutions, we can contribute by coordinating communication among project participants and facilitating collaboration across the ecosystem. Our

role can potentially include supporting dissemination activities, stakeholder engagement, and effective knowledge exchange to enhance project visibility, alignment, and impact.

▪ **Other areas of interest for collaboration:**

The Innovation Fund aims to build a network of reliable project partners with whom it can establish long-term, high-quality cooperation and knowledge sharing. Through this collaboration, the Fund seeks to jointly develop initiatives, foster effective networking, and strengthen cooperation among all actors of the innovation ecosystem of which it is an integral part

▪ **Already experience in EU funded projects as a:**

- Coordinator: YES X NO
- Partner: X YES NO

▪ **Project experience and track record:**

So far Fund participate in couple Horizon calls as a partner. These calls are still in process of evaluation.

The organization contributes to the implementation of IPA-funded programmes, supports Serbia's preparation for EU Structural and Cohesion Funds, and strengthens the capacity of the national innovation ecosystem. Its activities promote integration into the European Research Area (ERA) through transparent, EU-compatible procedures and strong alignment with EU innovation policies.

The organization provides grant schemes for startups, SMEs, and research organizations, supporting technology transfer and the commercialisation of innovative solutions. Its activities include AI-focused co-investment programmes (Katalitik), the development of the venture capital ecosystem through Serbia Ventures, Innovation Vouchers, and acceleration programmes, as well as the management of the official register of innovation companies.

Preview of different financial instruments and support implemented by Innovation Fund through years can be found below:

Program name	Number of applicants	Supported project	Total value of projects (in €)	Approved funds (in €)
Mini Grants Program	2.258	307	35.027.089	25.169.214
Matching Grants Program	700	92	42.606.057	26.968.389

Collaborative Grant Scheme Program	445	77	33.558.279	22.626.237
Innovation Voucher	1.518	1.253	9.402.200	6.284.390
Technology Transfer Program	133	80	1.619.461	1.619.461
Proof of Concept	521	93	1.752.077	1.752.077
Covid-19	229	12	525.023	444.363
Smart Start	786	137	6.592.586	5.989.306
Katapult	543	80	35.717.466	13.049.828
Serbia Ventures Program	5	2	26.000.000	10.000.000
Regional Startup Center Capacity Building	23	23	980.307	980.307
GovTech Program	47	19	1.691.769	1.135.132
Serbia Ventures AI Program	3	1	25.000.000	5.000.000
TOTAL	7.211	2.176	220.472.314	121.018.704

CONTACT DETAILS

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