

X2.0 OC#5

# Guide for Applicants

Data & A.I.

Closing date for proposals:  
04 March 2024 at 17:00 CET



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## Terms and Definitions

This section describes the relevant terms that are used in the open call documentation. Unless otherwise stated, the definition of a term is the one stated in this section.

*Table 1 Terms and Definition*

| Term                                   | Definition   |
|--|--|
| X2.0 Consortium / Consortium           | Group of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible for implementing the X2.0 project as defined in the Grant Agreement number No101073781.  |
| Applicant                              | Company that intends to submit or has submitted a proposal to the funding program.   |
| Beneficiary                            | Company that has submitted a proposal to the funding program that has been accepted for funding and has signed or is in the process of signing a sub-grant agreement.  |
| External Evaluator                     | An expert that has been invited by X2.0 Consortium to assist in the evaluation of the proposal submitted to the funding program. Experts cannot have conflicts of interest and are bounded by their own confidentiality agreement. |
| Open Call / OC                         | Application process and timeline during which the applicants submit an application to be selected to the program   |
| Impact Builder                         | Company or Individual who due to their expertise engages in the X2.0 program as a Service Provider   |
| Proposal phase                         | Period when applicants can submit proposals to the open call. Each open call has a fixed deadline that is automatically enforced.  |
| Evaluation phase                       | Period when the consortium evaluates and ranks the applications. At the end of the phase, all proposals are notified of the results of the evaluation.   |
| Contract preparation and signing phase | Period when the selected proposals and the consortium complete the administrative procedures to sign the sub-grant agreement and prepare administrative documents.   |
| Implementation phase / Growth Program  | Timeline of 5-6 months during which the growth program is delivered and the services by the impact builders are utilized.  |

# 1. Introduction

This document provides a full set of information regarding the 5th open call for proposals for [X2.0 - Driving DeepTech Growth](#) Data & A.I cohort. In addition to these guidelines, the applicants are invited to get acquainted with the following annexes at proposal stage:

- **Annex 1 - Proposal form** - an online application form, available at F6S platform ([F6S apply page link](#))
- **Annex 2 - Applicant Declaration of Honor** (for individuals), which requires consent in the application form that all conditions of the open call are accepted by the representative.

# 2. About the Project

[X2.0 - Driving Deep Tech Growth](#) is an EU-funded deeptech growth program that seeks to ensure the scaling up of EU deeptech startups by providing custom, industry-focused, 5 months growth programs that will act as a catalyst in delivering market-ready applications and technology solutions in 5 key impact areas: Manufacturing & Circular Economy, AgriTech, HealthTech & BioTech, Smart Cities and Sustainability, and Data & A.I.

The X2.0 is a sustainable legacy project of X-Europe and aims to leverage its predecessors' established ecosystem, network, proven innovation action/Startup Europe methodology, and learnings, to generate a next-gen coordination action mechanism.

X2.0 main objectives are to:

- To upskill and upscale deeptech startups
- Connect and nurture EU deeptech ecosystems
- Reinforce the European Innovation Council offer

During its timeframe, X2.0 will distribute €1.5M via innovation vouchers to the third parties (startups, SMEs and scaleups) to access the services provided according to their individual needs by the industry impact builders.

This document provides the relevant information regarding the fifth open call for proposals for the X2.0 project, also referred to as X2.0 – Open Call #5- Data & A.I.. The budget available for this Open Call is €300,000 which will be used for innovation vouchers.

**The call is open for submission from 05 January 2024 to 04 March 2024, 17:00 CET.**



## 3.OC#5 Data & A.I. Information

X2.0 Open Call 5 is seeking Deeptech startups on the edge of the Latest Tech Frontiers in Data and AI domains.

The focus of the program are startups, scaleups and SMEs, operating in the deeptech domain (innovations with significant scientific advances or high-tech innovations coming from the Digital Agenda technologies, with a particular focus on A.I. and its adjacent technologies

Join our dynamic and online accelerator programme tailored for startups pushing the boundaries of technology in AI and Big Data, focusing on cutting-edge areas including, but not limited to Generative Models, Quantum Computing in AI, Explainable AI (XAI), Machine Learning, Distributed and Federated Learning, Reinforcement Learning, Edge Computing, Natural Language Processing (NLP) and Language technologies, Computer vision and IoT Integration.

We are interested in supporting teams and their potential to leverage these Big Data & AI transformative technologies across domains and maturities. If your innovative solution aligns with the program's focus but is not explicitly listed in sub-domains, do not shy away from applying. We are a curious bunch!

Seize the opportunity to be part of our vibrant community driving innovation in the tech landscape. Apply now and embark on a journey of discovery and growth!

### 3.1 Benefits to the Startups:

**The X2.0 program brings the following benefits to the selected beneficiaries:**

- 30,000€ in Innovation Vouchers to be used in for growth services, mentorship and event attendance
- Access and collaboration with industry impact builders
- Matchmaking with EU corporations
- Assistance with private fundraising
- Custom EU funding and public procurement ecosystem
- Jobs promotion
- General promotion

Selected beneficiaries will embark on a 5-month custom deeptech program, leveraging the most needed services that will ensure growth, impact and cross border connections. In particular, validated industry experts (impact builders) will be matched with the startups to provide a longer and more impactful mentorship based on the needs assessment performed by the projects Venture Capital and Innovation Experts partners (ICT Hub and Zabalá).

X2.0 has categorized the most typical needs that a deeptech startup might need. Leveraging this Innovation Matrix methodology (see table below), the established on-demand and custom services may arrive from the 6 categories. The subcategories listed below each pillar are the examples of the individual needs/services that may be tackled. Additional needs/services may be considered, as long as they fit under the 6 categories.

Table 2 Innovation Matrix covering service categories

| Financing / Investment seeking  | Technical / deeptech aspects  | Biz dev. & scaling up  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1on1 mentorship w/ investor</li> <li>• Consultancy Services for proposal writing, innovation structuring, investment readiness, consortium building</li> <li>• Investment readiness trainings, &amp; coaching</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1on1 Mentorship w/ tech expert from the relevant deeptech field</li> <li>• Access to DIHs, R&amp;D centers, test laboratories and promo in their regions</li> <li>• Tech consulting</li> <li>• Knowledge and innovation transfer</li> <li>• Infrastructure and Software</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1on1 mentorship w/ business expert</li> <li>• Acceleration/incubation program</li> <li>• Group training on specific topics (tech transfer, Scaling up processes, Sales, Data Legislation...)</li> </ul> |
| Promotion & Communication   | Internationalization / Soft-landing   | Commercialization & Legal aspects  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1on1 mentorship w/ Digital Marketing Expert</li> <li>• Growth Hacking Training</li> <li>• Paid Promotional Campaigns</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1on1 mentorship w/internationalization expert</li> <li>• Soft-landing missions or boot camps</li> <li>• Support on finding local partners</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1on1 mentorship w/Lawyer or commercialization expert</li> <li>• Certification consultancy</li> <li>• Patent consultancy</li> <li>• Training on Market, IPR, Tech surveillance</li> </ul>                |

X2.0 is establishing a validated base of European impact builders which will also be available on the website. This database will be baseline for establishing the relationship between impact builders and startups.

At the beginning of the Growth program, impact builders (mentors) will work with startups to set Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) specific to each individual startup during the program's duration.

Setting KPIs involves assessing and prioritizing the startup's needs and establishing expectations from the program based on the startup's development / scale up stage. After setting KPIs, mentorship activities will focus on helping startups maximize the value offered by the program and achieve notable progress.

A mentor is someone with practical experience in one of the 6 categories from the Innovation Matrix, willing to build partnerships and connections, who understand the technology in terms of

business and development and have capacities to guide in the process of scaling up. Mentors will help overcome serious bottlenecks in one of the 6 categories from the Innovation Matrix identified through a needs assessment.

Also, during the application process, startups can propose a known impact builder with who they want to work with (and spend their innovation voucher on), however this engagement will need to be approved by the X2.0 Consortium during the needs assessment period which takes place after the selection of startups.

30,000 EUR per startup in Innovation Vouchers will be made available to use for acquiring the services and mentorship provided by the industry impact builders.

*Table 3 Innovation Vouchers*

| Innovation Voucher                           | Amount             | Aspects covered  |
|--|--------------------|--|
| Travel Voucher                               | 5,000 EUR          | Cost of Transport, accommodation for Events (min 2 events attended)  |
| Growth services coming Innovation Hub Matrix | Max 20,000 EUR     | Minimum of 2 Services acquired from the 6 categories of the Innovation Matrix  |
| 1-on-1 specific mentorship                   | At least 5,000 EUR | 1-on-1 Mentoring Sessions and Services delivered by the expert from domains covered by the 6 categories of the Innovation Matrix |

### 3.2 Open Call Webinar

Open call Webinar will be organised to support applicants during the application period. Please register for this webinar to hear directly from the consortium running this program and to ask questions.

Open Call Webinar – 06 February 2024 10:00 am CET – <https://www.f6s.com/x2.0-oc5-info-webinar-big-data-a/about>

### 3.3 Origin of the funds

Selected applicants will sign a dedicated sub-grant funding agreement with the X2.0 consortium. The funds attached to the Sub-grant funding agreement that the startups will be signing when accepted comes directly from the funds of the European project X2.0 and therefore remain property of the EU until the payment of the balance, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in X2.0 via European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101073781.



## 4. Eligibility Criteria

The following eligibility criteria, related to the applicants, funding, and proposals apply.

### 4.1 Applicant's eligibility

All applicants must meet the requirements described in this section to be eligible for the X2.0 – Open Call # Data & A.I.

- Submissions will ONLY be accepted through the F6S platform and respective page dedicated to the X2.0 – Open Call #5 [F6S application page](#).
- Fit within the target audience as indicated in section 4
- To be based in an eligible Horizon Europe country as indicated in section 4.

The application and all requested documents are provided only in English.

### 4.2 Types of applicants

The accepted applicants are individual legally established entities under the category of start-ups in the form of SMEs or small mid-cups.

A **SME** will be considered as such if accomplishing with the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. As a summary, it consists of enterprises that employ fewer than 250 persons and have either an annual turnover not exceeding EUR 50 million, or an annual balance sheet total not exceeding EUR 43 million.

**Small mid-cap** means an enterprise employing up to 499 employees.

**The following additional conditions apply:**

- The participating organisations should not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
- The organisations or individuals applying should not have convictions for fraudulent behavior, other financial irregularities, and unethical or illegal business practices.
- The participants must have a 9-number Personal Identification Code (PIC) - Register [here](#) if you don't have one.
- Please be aware that Startups can apply to sister projects of X2.0 (SynergistEIC or Ventures Thrive) as long as their cumulated amount received/granted is not above 60,000 EUR.

**Note:** Third parties receiving Financial Support from X2.0 through the open call will not become part to the X2.0 Grant Agreement. The X2.0 Grant Agreement will not need to be amended to include the selected beneficiaries.

#### 4.2.1 Eligible Countries

Single legal entities established in any of the following countries are eligible to participate in the X2.0 – Open Call #4:

- The Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions.
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to the Member States.
- Horizon Europe associated countries (those that have signed an agreement with the EU as identified in Article 7 of the Horizon Europe Regulation): according to the updated list published by the EC.

#### 4.2.2 Conflict of Interest

Applications will not be accepted from entities who are partners (beneficiaries) or linked-third parties in the X2.0 consortium or who are formally linked in any way to the partners/ linked-third parties of the consortium. This excludes, for example, entities that have already engaged with and/or contributed to the project through specific activities/ initiatives (e.g., Impact Builders (Service Providers) etc.) who remain independent from the project. Any individual/ entity with a previous link to an X2.0 beneficiary (e.g., spin-off), will not be accepted, unless a minimum of 2 years (as of the 5 Jan. 2023) has passed since the termination of the link.

Applicants must not have any current and/or potential conflict of interest with the X2.0 – Open Call #5 selection process and during the whole program. Applicants must formally and immediately notify the X2.0 coordinator (via [info@x2-0.eu](mailto:info@x2-0.eu)) of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective evaluation and implementation of the project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). If a conflict of interest is discovered and confirmed at the time of the evaluation process, the proposal will be considered as non-eligible and will not be evaluated.

### 4.3 Proposal Submissions

The X2.0 – Open Call #5 is a competitive funding program. Only one proposal per applicant (legal entity) can be submitted to this open call. In the event of multiple submissions by an applicant, only the last proposal received (timestamp of the system) will enter the evaluation process (and regardless of the track to which a proposal is being submitted to). Any other submitted proposals involving the same applicant will be declared non-eligible and will not be evaluated in any case.

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted. After the call closure, no additions, or changes to received proposals will be considered. **The deadline for this call is 04 March 2024 at 17:00 CET.**

## 5. Open Call: submission, selection, and negotiation process

### 5.1 Proposal preparation and submission

#### 5.1.1 Proposal Preparation

**Application form** will be divided in different sections: 1) Basic Information, 2) Company business, market and growth strategy, 3) Technical aspect, 4) Team capacities, 5) Program fit, 6) Traction and EU funding experience, 7) Impact, 8) Pitch deck, 9) Ethics and Data Requirements Consent, 10) Declaration of Honor Consent.

Applicants must consider the following steps when preparing their proposal:

- For the proposal preparation, applicants are required to apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception).
- Applicants that do not accept the terms and conditions, consent to the Declaration of Honor and the Data and Ethics practices will not be eligible.
- Be specific and concise. Questions in the online form have character limitations.
- It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including communications delays, automatically leads to rejection of the submission. The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.
- The failure to submit a proposal on time, for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.
- Additional material, which has not been specifically requested in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation of the proposals. Data not included in the proposal will not be considered.
- X2.0 offers a dedicated support channel available for proposers at [info@x2-0.eu](mailto:info@x2-0.eu) or via the F6S Application Page discussion board. Requests or inquiries about the submission system or the call itself, received AFTER the closure time of the call will neither be considered nor answered.
- If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and if the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the X2.0 team to re-submit the proposal (for this purpose please contact [info@x2-0.eu](mailto:info@x2-0.eu)).

### 5.1.2 Means of submission

The X2.0 page on the [F6S platform](#) will be the entry point for the submission of all proposals to the X2.0 open calls. Any proposal submitted through other channels will be automatically rejected.

Any documentation that is required and requested by the X2.0 consortium should be submitted via a dedicated channel that will be indicated by the consortium during the execution of the sub-granted projects.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **04 March 2024, 17:00 CET** (Brussels time). The deadline of the open call will not be extended unless a major problem with the F6S platform makes the system unavailable.

A full list of applicants will be prepared containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will be also shared with EC for transparency.

## 5.2 Language

English is the official language for the X2.0 open calls. Submissions done in any language other than English will not be eligible or evaluated. English is the only official language during the whole implementation of the X2.0 program. This means that any requested submission of documentation and deliverables will be done in English to be eligible.

## 5.3 Documentation Formats

Any documentation requested in any of the phases of the open call and projects' implementation must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing.

## 5.4 Data Protection

To process and evaluate applications, X2.0 will need to collect personal and industrial data. F6S Network Limited (F6S) will manage the data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure coverage. It should be noted that X2.0 requests the minimum information needed to deliver the evaluation procedures or the implementation of the funding program. Please refer to <https://www.f6s.com/terms> to check F6S platform data privacy policy and security measures.

## 5.5 Proposal Evaluation and Selection

### 5.5.1 Step 1: Eligibility verification

An initial eligibility verification will be done by the X2.0 consortium to filter out and discard non-eligible proposals. Proposals must meet ALL the following eligibility criteria, which will check the rules as expressed in section 4.

Proposals marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria) will get a rejection letter with a justification. No additional feedback on the process will be given.

### 5.5.2 Step 1: Internal Evaluation and Shortlisting for External Evaluators

Eligible proposals will move to the Step 1 evaluation performed by X2.0 consortium to filter the best and most suitable proposals.

This will be a simple evaluation where each section will be scored from 1 to 5 (See Table 3 for detail). The best 30 proposals in the ranking reaching the threshold in each section (3 out of 5) will be selected for the Step 2 evaluation.

**The evaluated sections will be:**

- Section 3: Company business, market and growth strategy
- Section 4: Technical aspect
- Section 5: Team capacities
- Section 6: Program fit and Motivation
- Section 7: Impact

It is estimated that 3 times the number of proposals to be selected will pass to the Step 2 evaluation.

Proposals under the Top30 position will get a rejection letter with a notification of not passing Step 1. No additional feedback on the process will be given.

### 5.5.3 Step 2: External Remote Evaluation

Proposals ranked In the Top30 in Step 1 will move on to the external evaluation phase. The external evaluation will be done remotely by expert evaluators.

The evaluators will be selected from a pool of experts that will be established through a call for expressions of interest. The call will invite experts to provide their expertise in the domains of Data & A.I, professional and/or academic experience, as well as experience in evaluations.

At least two external evaluators will evaluate each proposal and will be distributed considering their domains of expertise and, whenever possible, country of origin.

The proposals will be scored based on the criteria below (Table 4).

*Table 4 X2.0 - Open Call #5 evaluation criteria*

| Evaluation Criteria (EC) | Description |
|--------------------------|-------------|
|--------------------------|-------------|

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>EC1.<br/>Economic and business potential<br/>(25%)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Robustness of the business model and strategy for commercialisation and scale.</li> <li>● Potential of the envisaged growth, sustainability, and revenue.</li> </ul>  |
| <p>EC2.<br/>Excellence<br/>(30%)</p>                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Technical/scientific robustness and innovativeness of the deep tech solution with which you are applying to the program</li> <li>● Uniqueness of the solution/product/service</li> <li>● Quality of the team and balance of gender and skills</li> </ul>  |
| <p>EC3. Impact<br/>(30%)</p>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Technological impact - ability to implement advanced technologies, advance the state of the art and transfer knowledge to the community;</li> <li>● Socio-economic impact - environmental, sustainability, management skills, SME organisational culture, human centric organisation, incorporation of user-centric technology development while encouraging inclusiveness, and incorporation of European social and ethical values and contribution to Sustainable Development Goals.</li> </ul> |
| <p>EC4. Special focus (10%)</p>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Special focus will be given to startups that have Seal of Excellence, are coming from Widening Countries or that have female entrepreneurs / founded or co-founded by women, holding a top management position (chief executive officer (CEO), chief technology officer (CTO), chief scientific officer (CSO), or equivalent).</li> </ul>   |
| <p>EC5.<br/>Motivation<br/>(5%)</p>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Interest in the X2.0 program and level of need for the services to support the company to grow/develop/scale</li> </ul>   |

Each criterion will be scored between 1 and 5. Half point scores are not given. For each criterion under examination, score values will indicate the following rationale:

*Table 5.0 - Open Call #5 scoring rationale*

| Score    | Rationale   |
|----------|---|
| 1 / POOR | The sub-project proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be judged due to incomplete or missing information.                   |
| 2 / FAIR | The sub-project proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.   |
| 3 / GOOD | The sub-project proposal addresses the criterion well, but several shortcomings are present and minor weaknesses would need correcting. |

|               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 4 / VERY GOOD | The sub-project proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present and specific improvements are possible. |
| 5 / EXCELLENT | The sub-project proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.                                 |

The final score (including for each criterion) is the average of the two evaluations provided by the external evaluators. The threshold for each criterion is three (3), therefore the overall score threshold is 15. This indicates that if a proposal scores less than 3 in any criterion or an overall score less than 15, the proposal is automatically rejected. Any proposal scoring less than 3 on any criterion will automatically be disqualified. The total maximum score is 25.

Each evaluator will record his/her individual assessment of each proposal using an Individual Evaluation Report (IER).

#### 5.5.4 Step 3: Ranking of proposals

At the end of the remote external evaluation process, the scores of the two evaluators will be considered to calculate the average scores. All proposals will be ranked in lists. The criteria for the ranking of the proposals will be following the rules:

- **Rule 1:** Proposals will be ranked based on their overall score (sum of scores for criteria 1 to 5).
- **Rule 2:** After applying Rule 1 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on EC4.

#### 5.5.5 Step 4: Consensus meeting and Final Selection

The top-ranked proposals (10 proposals per OC) will be presented and approved in a Consensus meeting inviting the evaluators and the X2.0 partners. If there is a major deviation between evaluators or major objection by any participant in the meeting for a justified reason, this will be discussed to have consensus and approve the list of selected applicants.

The selected beneficiaries will be invited to sign a subgrantee agreement. Proposals that do not make the cut but have been evaluated by the external evaluators will be notified and provided with an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).

### 5.6 Redress process

Within three (3) working days of receiving (1) a rejection letter informing the proposal as non-eligible or not passing the Step 1 evaluation (2) an ESR ranking the proposal below the selection borderline, an applicant may submit a request for redress if they believe the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated that may affect the final decision on whether to enter

the program. In such a case, an internal review committee from X2.0 will examine the applicant's request for redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants.

**Requests for redress must:**

- Be related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- Clearly describe the complaint.
- Received within the time limit (three (3) working days) from the reception of the rejection letter.

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

**Please note:**

- This procedure is concerned only with the general evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not question the scientific or technical judgment of the evaluators.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.

The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.

All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to the X2.0 team at: [info@x2-0.eu](mailto:info@x2-0.eu)

In the case where a proposal under the redress process is re-evaluated and the new evaluation score is higher, it will be compared with the proposal that has entered the funding program with the lowest ranking (in the corresponding track). The comparison will use the ranking rules as detailed in Step 4 (section 5.5.5). In case the proposal under the redress process ranks higher, then both proposals will be invited to enter the funding program.

## 5.7 Sub-project negotiation and onboarding

At the end of the evaluation phase, 10 proposals from all the proposals will be selected. The other proposals that were invited to the Step 2 evaluation will remain in a reserve list in case a selected proposal fails to sign the sub-grant agreement.



### 5.7.1 Preparation and Signature of the Agreement

After the evaluation phase is concluded and the proposals are selected, the X2.0 consortium will start the contract preparation phase in collaboration with the representatives of the beneficiaries that have been awarded.

Contract preparation will run through an administrative and financial check. Depending on the contract preparation of each sub-project, a phone call or teleconference may be required and organised to clarify any pending questions.

The objective of the contract preparation is to fulfill the legal requirements between the X2.0 consortium and each beneficiary of the open call.

The following actions must be carried out in order to enter into the Sub-Grant Agreement:

Status information of the beneficiaries:

- **SME Declaration Form, which evaluates the status of the SMEs.**
- **SMEs/start-ups.** If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the Funding and Tenders Portal, the PIC number has to be provided. An SME checklist form will be required to prove the status as an SME if the applicant has not been fully validated as an SME on the Portal.
- **Legal existence and country of establishment.** Company Register, Official Journal and so forth, showing the name of the organization, the legal address and registration number and, if applicable, a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
- **Bank account information:** The account to which the funds will be transferred will be indicated via form signed by the SME and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the SME.
- **Sub-grant agreement template,** which provides a template of the sub-grant agreement that the successful applicants will be requested to signed.

### 5.7.2 Step 2: Contract signature

At the end of the contract preparation and negotiation phase, the sub-grant agreement will be signed between the X2.0 consortium represented by its coordinator (F6S) and the Beneficiary.

The request of the above listed documentation by the X2.0 consortium will be sent to the sub-project representatives, including deadlines by which information and documentation should be sent. In general, the sub-project negotiation should be concluded within 2 weeks. An additional week may be provided by the X2.0 coordinator in case of a relevant reasoning. In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the proposal is automatically rejected and the next proposal in the reserve list is invited to initiate the contract preparation.

## 6. Implementation and reporting

After the finalization and signing of the sub-grant agreement, the awarded sub-projects will be included in the need assessment process after which they will move into the implementation phase / growth program. The growth program will run for 5 months and consists of three phases, where each phase is followed by reporting requirements.

Growth program of the X2.0 cohort 5 will last 5-6 months and will start on **01 April 2024 and finish on 30 September 2024**. The timeline split by phases is presented below:

*Table 6 program timeline*

| Phases  | Duration    | Associated Reports  |
|---------|-------------|---|
| Phase 1 | Month 1     | Work Plan + KPI establishment   |
| Phase 2 | Months 2 -3 | Travel Report(s)<br>Mentorship Report(s)<br>Report(s) from Service deliveries from the 6 innovation matrix categories   |
| Phase 3 | Months 4-5  | Travel Report(s)<br>Mentorship Report(s)<br>Report(s) from Service deliveries from the 6 innovation matrix categories<br>Satisfaction Surveys & Impact Assessment |

By entering the X2.0 Open Call, applicants agree to comply with the program outline and deliver the results expected in each phase.

### Phase 1

| Description  | Expected outcome and report   | Funding  |
|--|---|--|
| Within this stage, individual growth programs are planned and detailed between each applicant and Impact builder. X2.0 partners will oversee this. | The applicant will together with Impact builder produce a report which will be a plan of the services to be delivered and indicating their goals and outcomes | 30% of allocated total innovation voucher budget will be released to the startup 2 weeks after signing the sub-grantee agreement |

### Phase 2

| Description | Expected outcome and report | Funding |
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------|
|-------------|-----------------------------|---------|

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <p>Within this stage, the sub-projects embark on the service delivery, event attendance, and their developments to realize the defined work plan from Phase 1.</p> | <p>1<sup>st</sup> phase report(s) by the impact builders, summarizing the progress, KPIs and outcomes achieved, the problems encountered, the potential deviations, the lessons learned and a budgetary-related subsection.</p> | <p>40% of allocated total innovation voucher budget will be released to the startup after the 1st report(s) is sent and approved by the X2.0 partners.</p> |
|--|---|--|

### Phase 3

| Description   | Expected outcome and report  | Funding   |
|---|--|---|
| <p>This phase is the continuation of Phase 2 and focus finalization of the service deliveries and event attendance.</p> | <p>2<sup>nd</sup> phase report(s) by the impact builders, summarizing the progress, KPIs and outcomes achieved, the problems encountered, the potential deviations, the lessons learned and a budgetary-related subsection. This document also reports evaluation of the engaged impact builders</p> | <p>The remaining funds will be transferred 2 weeks after project completion / approved final report(s).</p> |

Each sub-project will go through 2 reviews, each one highlighting the end of a phase. The reviews will be organized by the X2.0 consortium. The applicant should deliver at least 1 week in advance the reports so that the reviewers will be able to read them. The tentative timeline of phases and reviews may be subject to changes in accordance with service delivery plan and the reviewers' availability.

If required, and for any stage, a meeting may be scheduled to further assess the progress of the sub-projects and clarify any doubts on the deliverables provided. The payment associated with each phase will be disbursed once the respective deliverables have received positive assessment (up to 21 calendar days after the report has been approved).

## 7. Responsibilities of beneficiaries

### 7.1 Conflict of Interest

The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the sub-project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must formally notify the X2.0 consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The X2.0 coordinator will verify if the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specific deadline. If the sub-contract consortium member breaches any of its obligations, the sub-contract may be automatically terminated. Moreover, costs may be rejected.

## 7.2 Data protection and confidentiality

During implementation of the sub-project and for four years after the end of the sub-project, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at sub-contract signing time ('confidential information').

If a beneficiary requests it, the EC and the X2.0 consortium may agree to keep selected information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial four years. This will be explicitly stated in the sub-contract.

If information has been identified as confidential during the sub-project implementation or only verbally, it will be confidential only if this is accepted by the X2.0 coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the verbal disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the agreement. The sub-project consortium may disclose confidential information to the X2.0 consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bounded by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

## 7.3 Promoting the action and give visibility to the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the sub-project, the X2.0 project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC.

Unless the EC or the X2.0 coordinator agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible (requiring a valid justification), any promotion activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity (including at a conference or seminar) or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the sub-grant must:

- display the EU emblem.
- display the X2.0 logo.
- Include the following text:

For communication activities: "The [sub-project acronym] has indirectly received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation action program, via the X2.0 Open Call #5 issued and executed under the X2.0 project (grant agreement No101073781)".

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions

which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the beneficiary is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page

Any publicity made by the beneficiary regarding the sub-project, in whatever form and or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or the X2.0 project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the X2.0 consortium shall be authorized to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information regarding the beneficiary:

- The name of the beneficiary.
- Contact address of the beneficiary.
- The general purpose of the sub-project.
- The amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the sub-project; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution received.
- The geographic location of the activities carried out.
- The list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground.
- The details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the sub-project, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication.
- The publishable reports submitted to the X2.0 consortium.
- Any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and X2.0 in the framework of the sub-project.

The beneficiary shall ensure that all necessary authorizations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and X2.0 does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a suitably justified request by the sub-project coordinator on behalf of any sub-project member, the X2.0 consortium, if permission is granted by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

## 7.4 Financial audits and controls

The EC will monitor that X2.0 consortium and the open call beneficiaries comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 of the X2.0 GA and may take any action foreseen by the GA in case of non-compliance of the beneficiary concerned. Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the X2.0 project and up to 5 (five) years after the end of the X2.0 project, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such

audits may cover financial, systemic, and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The beneficiary shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorized by it, with a view of verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise and complete.

The beneficiary shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the project. These shall be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

To carry out these audits, the beneficiary shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorized by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the sub-project applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the sub-project. They shall ensure that the information is readily available during the audit and, if so requested, that data be handed over in an appropriate form.

Based on the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorized representative to the beneficiary concerned, which may provide observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The EC may decide not to consider observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the beneficiary within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

Based on the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures that it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the EC to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

## 7.5 Sub-project communication

The sub-project official representative should:

- Onboard on the X2.0 Slack Channel with at least one representative
- Provide any notice in writing to the X2.0 Coordinator.

- Notify immediately of any change of persons or contact details to the X2.0 coordinator. The address list shall be accessible to all concerned.

## 8. Contact Information

The X2.0 consortium will provide information to the applicants exclusively via [F6S application page](#) so that all information (questions and answers) will be accessible to all potential applicants.

No binding information will be provided via any other means (e.g., telephone or email).

- More info at: [Project website](#)
- Apply via: [F6S application page](#)
- F6S support team (for platform issues during the application): [info@x2-0.eu](mailto:info@x2-0.eu)
- Other support: [info@x2-0.eu](mailto:info@x2-0.eu)

## 9. Annex 1: Application Form Template

### **SECTION: X2.0 Cohort 5 Application Form**

This is the STARTUP application form of X2.0 Cohort 5: Data & A.I. . All X2.0 services are free of charge thanks to the Horizon Europe program.

Other info:

+INFO: [www.x2-0.eu](http://www.x2-0.eu)

Make sure to be concise in your application - this is your time to tell us why we should select you!

### **SECTION: Basic Information**

1. Company name:
2. Main contact person Name and Last Name (C- Level Representative)
3. Contact email:
4. Phone number:
5. Gender:
  - a. Male
  - b. Female

- c. Other
  - d. Prefer not to say
6. In which country is your start-up based?
7. How did you hear about this program?
- Referral (Please specify Person or Organization)
  - News and Media (Please specify media source.)
  - Events (Please specify.)
  - Social Media (Please specify Person or Organization)
  - F6S
  - ICT Hub
  - Zabala
  - Other (Please specify Person & Organization)
8. What is your company registration or VAT number?
9. Please provide your 9-digit Participant Identification Code (PIC). *(If you have not done it, please register via a super quick registration process here - <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/how-to-participate/participant-register>)*
10. Incorporation year:
11. Have you or are you planning to apply to the open calls organized by X2.0 sister project? (SynergistEIC or Ventures Thrive)
- a. Yes
  - b. No

**SECTION: Company business, market and growth strategy**

12. Please describe the product/service/solution with which you are applying to this program in a concise and straightforward manner from the business perspective. *(In case you have multiple solutions, please focus on one)*
13. Please describe its unique selling point
14. Please describe your target audience and ideal customer profile
15. Who are your competitors and how do you stand out from them?
16. In which of the following categories would you classify your SME?
- Pre-MVP and MVP
  - Product Market Fit
  - Scaling in products and markets
17. Business Model Type
- B2B
  - B2C





- B2C2B
- B2G
- C2C

18. Please briefly describe your business model:

19. Last VC Funding round or any other financing initiative type:

- We are bootstrapped
- Public Funding & Grants
- Angel
- Pre-Seed
- Series A
- Series B-C

20. What is your company's 5-year plan? (Please provide a year-by-year growth strategy / your product/service expansion plan, revenue projection, anticipated market share growth (clients or markets entered), and KPIs you will be tracking to measure your progress yearly.)

21. Please name any supporting organizations with whom you have been involved with. Such as local or international Accelerators and Incubators, Public or Private entities, Events organizers, etc.

### **SECTION: Technical aspect**

22. Please describe your solution from a technical/scientific perspective. Make sure to indicate what deeptech technologies do you leverage *and* describe the innovation and maturity of the solution (*MVP, prototype, validated in operational environment, pre-commercial, already selling, etc.*).

23. Is the company's technology patent protected/copyrighted? (Please be precise and indicate if the patent is in progress, if that is the case. If you do not have an IP, patent, or other types of protection, please elaborate on the reason and/or your strategic decision for this.)

### **SECTION: Team capacities**

24. Describe your core's team background and expertise (Hints: Please address each member of the core team's role, involvement in the company, and previous experience)

25. What is the current number of team members and/or employees?

26. Are you looking to expand your team over the next few months?

- Yes
- No



27. Please specify the name and position of the other team member that will join the X2.0 program

28. Are there women in leadership positions in your team? Describe.

**SECTION: Program fit and Motivation**

29. How is your solution contributing to the topic of the Data & A.I. Open Call?

30. What type of X2.0 offered services will help you overcome your challenges?

- Financing / Investment seeking
- Deeptech / scientific needs
- Biz dev. & scaling up
- Promotion & Communication
- Internationalization / Soft-landing
- Commercialization & Legal needs
- Event Attendance
- Corporate Matchmaking
- Private Fundraising
- Access to Public Funding
- Talent Matchmaking
- Visibility and Promotion

31. Given your previous answer, please elaborate in more detail how X2.0 can help your company with your growth/development/scaling?

32. Do you have an impact builder (Service provider) in mind that you want to work with and with whom you want to use the voucher with?

- Yes
- No

33. Please provide the website of this Impact Builder (or LinkedIn if it is a person)

34. Please provide the email address of this Impact Builder.

35. Have you also applied to be an Impact Builder?

**SECTION: Impact**

**Description text:** *Explain how your (responsible) technology benefits both people and planet and consider the following socioeconomic factors: education, finance, and environment. If your technology is addressing any of the Sustainable Development Goals, please describe. Make sure to quantify impact in your response, for example, projected reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. We're looking for State of the Art innovations with high impact potential, please describe in detail if that's you.*

36. Explain the Technological impact of your solution (ability to implement advanced technologies, advance the state of the art and transfer knowledge to the community, implementation of user-centric technology development)
37. Explain the Socio-economic impact of your solution (environmental, sustainability, management skills, SME organizational culture, human centric organization, while encouraging inclusiveness, and incorporation of European social and ethical values and contribution to Sustainable Development Goals) *Please note that X2.0 is especially interested in companies who have a positive impact in these areas.*

**SECTION: Traction and EU funding experience**

38. Have you received support from EIC, H2020, Horizon Europe or other EU funded programs?  
*If yes, please list the names of the programs.*
39. Are you an EIC Seal of Excellence (SoE) holder?

**SECTION: Attachment of the pitch deck**

**SECTION: Ethics and Data Requirements –**

40. F6S may share the submitted data with X2.0 consortium subject and external evaluators.
- I agree

**SECTION: Declaration of Honor**

Declaration of Honor – If accepted, I commit to participate in the full program. Includes participation in service provision, mentoring sessions, events, and responsive reporting to the X2.0 consortium.

- Yes

## 10. Annex 2 – Declaration of Honor on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest

By agreeing to this Declaration of Honor in the application form, I declare that all provided information below is true and legally binding both for me and for the company/ organization that I legally represent:

**I declare that the mentioned company/ organization is not in one of the following situations:**

- . Is bankrupt or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations.
- . It or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been convicted of an offense concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata.
- . Has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organizations.
- . Is not in compliance with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed, to be proved by the deliverance of official documents issued by the local authorities, according to the local applicable rules.
- . It or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests.
- . Is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresenting the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in a grant award procedure or another procurement procedure or failing to supply this information or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under contracts or grants covered by the Union's budget.

**I declare that the natural persons with power of representation, decision-making or control over the above-mentioned company/ organization are not in the situations referred to in (a) to (f) above.**

**I declare that:**

- . Neither any person nor I that I know is subject to an X2.0 project conflict of interest.
- . Neither any person or I that I know participates, controls, submits, or is associated in any way with more than one proposal.
- . I have not made false declarations in supplying the information required by participation in the open calls of the X2.0 project or do not fail to supply this information.



- . I am not in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in the above mentioned points (a) to (f).
- . I am aware and fully accept all X2.0 conditions and rules as expressed in the open call documents

**I certify that the company/ organization that I represent:**

- a. Is committed to participate in the above mentioned project.
- a. Has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout its participation in the above-mentioned project and to provide any counterpart funding necessary.
- b. Has or will have the necessary resources as and when needed to carry out its involvement in the above-mentioned project.

