

# Info Session - LLM-BRIDGE

## Venture Incubation Programme

### Open Call for Incubators - 1<sup>st</sup> Call



February 25th, 2026

*The LLM-BRIDGE project is co-funded by the European Union's Digital Europe Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101226136.*



# LLM Booster for Regional Innovation and Digital Growth in Europe

The LLM Booster for Regional Innovation and Digital Growth in Europe project (LLM-BRIDGE) supports startups and scaleups in the fast-growing domain of Large Language Models.

LLM-BRIDGE aims to **strengthen national GenAI ecosystems** by equipping startups, scaleups, incubators and investors with the support needed to **build and deploy LLM-driven products**.

## 10 partners

Duration  
Sept 2025 – August 2028



•LLM-BRIDGE has received funding from the European Union's Digital Europe Programme under Grant Agreement No. 101226136. The project started on 1 September 2025, for a duration of three years.



# European LLMs for Digital Sovereignty

The LLM-BRIDGE project aims to connect **research, innovation, and market deployment** by linking:

## Technical excellence

i.e. HPC resources, data spaces, and benchmark infrastructures

## Entrepreneurial capacity-building

i.e. venture incubation and acceleration programmes

# LLM-BRIDGE's programmes for support

Stay tuned for more  
information on FSTP calls



## Venture Incubation Programme

Start-ups and Incubators

·3 cohorts- 1<sup>st</sup> Open call – Open for Incubators (deadline 23<sup>rd</sup> March) – Opening for start-ups end of March

## Acceleration Programme

Start-ups aiming at Series A funding

·2 cohorts – 1<sup>st</sup> Open call opening June 2026

## Entrepreneurial Education

Pre-seed and seed start-ups

· 4 cohorts – 1<sup>st</sup> Open call opening Sept 2026

# KEY NUMBER AT A GLANCE

## Funding overview and programme scale



**€60,000**



### Max Funding

Maximum funding available per programme implementation

**100%**



### Funding

No minimum partner co-funding requirement of total activity budget

**€180,000**



### Total Budget

Total budget allocation for VIP 2026 ( 3 programmes)

**12 weeks**



### Duration

Online programme format: workshops, lectures, mentoring online + 2-day bootcamp

# FUNDING DESCRIPTION



# 100%



## Funding

The funding is provided to enable the incubator to design and implement the 12-week incubation cycle supporting early-stage ventures in Generative AI (GenAI) and Large Language Models (LLMs).

The funding will be used to cover mentoring, training, coordination, reporting, and the organisation of on-boarding, interim reviews, and Demo Day activities, following the framework set out in this call document and its Annexes.

The requested funding may cover 100% of the total activity budget.

Financial support is granted as a **fixed-amount contribution tied to verified milestones and deliverables**. The incubator will need to sign a Third-Party Agreement defining objectives, activities, budget ceiling, and reporting requirements.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: There is a flat rate of 7% of Indirect costs calculated on the eligible direct costs (Personnel costs, Sub-contracting costs, Purchase costs, Other cost categories)**

**Except volunteer's costs, subcontracting costs, financial support to third parties and exempted specific cost categories, if any.**



## Submission, evaluation process & funding details

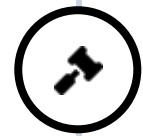


### Submission Deadline

**23 March 2026**

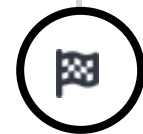
17:00 CET (Brussels Time)

**HARD DEADLINE**



### Evaluation Process

- 1 First Gate – Experts Review**  
Criteria: Excellence, Impact, Implementation
- 2 Second Gate – Review Gate**  
Consensus meeting to integrate assessments.
- 3 Third Gate – Management Committee Gate**  
Strategy, EU and RIS & Portfolio Balance

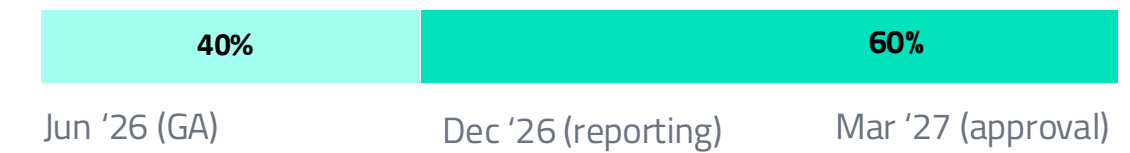


### Results & Start

Results approx. mid – April/May ▪ Appeal Window end April/May ▪ Activities start June



### Prefinancing



### Submission

<https://share.hsforms.com/1M9e8MG94To6Yey0kPWhNOAf4os>

English Language

Valid PIC (non mandatory)

### Questions?

Reach out to the team for clarification before the deadline.

[llm-bridge@28digital.eu](mailto:llm-bridge@28digital.eu)



12-week journey from prototype to market (MVP)



## Online Training & Mentoring

WEEKS 2-11

Startup and entrepreneurship modules and dedicated mentoring sessions to shape the value proposition, achieve market and investment traction.

Mentoring

Workshops



## Timing

Delivery between **June to September 2026**



## Cohort Size

Expected **30 startup** per programme edition implementation.



## Prize Payment

✓ Managed by 28DIGITAL team and the LLM-BRIDGE Consortium



Support in reaching out to teams



## Bootcamp & Demo Day

WEEKS 1 & 12

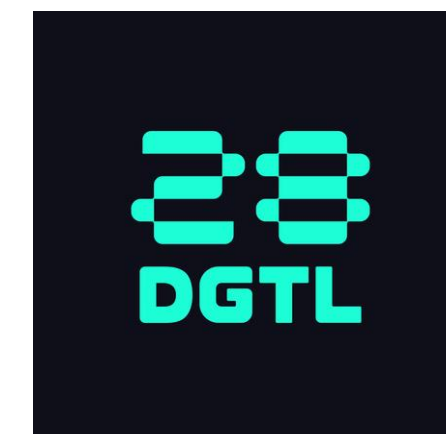
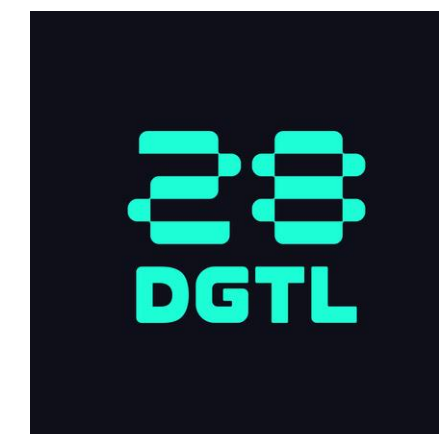
Programme kick-off at bootcamp, end with Pitch Day

- The program consists of group workshops, consultations with external experts, regular work with assigned mentors and work of startups on their solutions and business models.
- The topics of the individual program week examples (non-exhaustive list):
  - Customer segmentation and validation
  - Business model and business model validation
  - Bootcamp
  - Presentations of projects and teams
  - Sources of funding for start-ups
  - Developing the entrepreneurial team
  - Communication and Pitching
  - Marketing
  - Sales
  - The next steps (incorporation, follow on investors, access to public and other sources of funding etc)
  - Building sales competencies

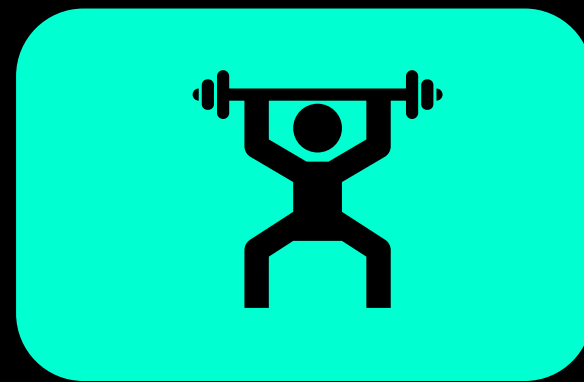
**Demo Day:** Pitching style event where teams have the chance to validate their business solution by presenting it in front of early-stage tech investors, potential clients, and experts from the tech community.

# Venture Incubation Program – for Startups

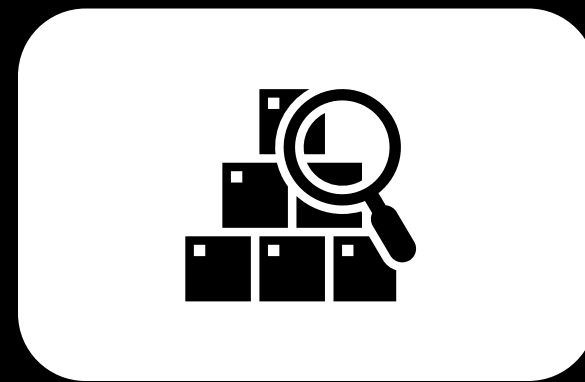
- In cooperation with local or regional incubators
- From **prototype to investment** in less than a year
- Hone your entrepreneurial skills
- Create your **MVP**
- Establish your deep tech venture
- Get financial support of up to **€ 25,000**
- Get business development help from top international experts
- Find a first investor
- Join Europe's leading innovation ecosystem



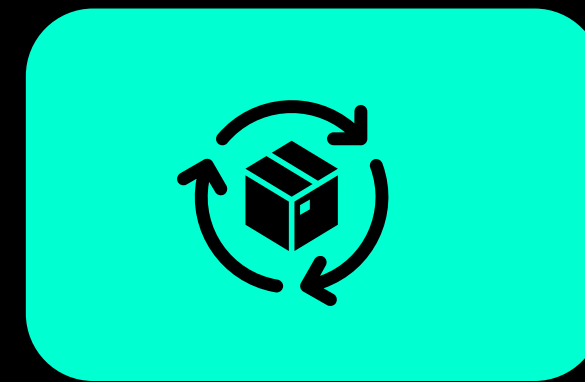
# OUR EXPECTATIONS FOR STARTUPS



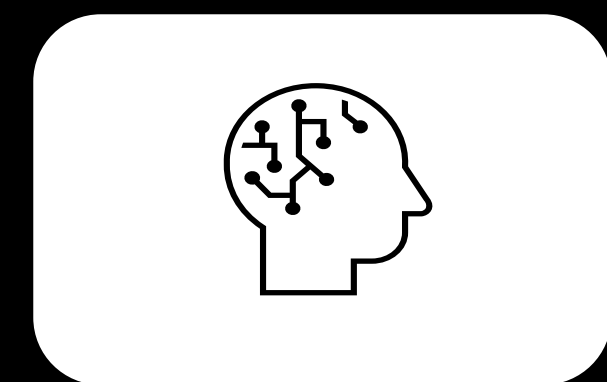
Active participation



MVP validation



Market testing



GenAI focus

DELIVERABLES!





# HOW TO APPLY

A clear 2.5-step guide to submitting your VIP 2026 proposal:  
from documents to digital submission.



# Create Your Proposal

Populate the online form and attach all required annexes. Your proposal must demonstrate a comprehensive plan for the 12-week online programme.

### Submission Checklist

- Complete Online Form Fields
- Activity Summary
- Define Budget



### Activity Purpose

crisp, in the style of an elevator pitch (max 500 characters)



### Workplan

Define workplan, including key milestones (max 3000 characters)



### Innovation Activity Specifics

Detail your proposal

# INNOVATION ACTIVITY SPECIFICS

*Describe the concrete activities, expertise, and approach your organisation brings to support early-stage GenAI startups*

*Provide evidence of past performance, such as number of startups supported, incorporation, MVP development, funding raised, or market entry.*

*Describe the networks and access your organisation provides to supported startups, including mentors, investors, industry partners, and ecosystem actors, and explain how startups access these in practice.*

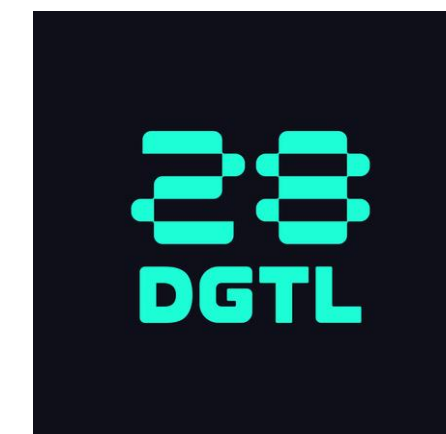
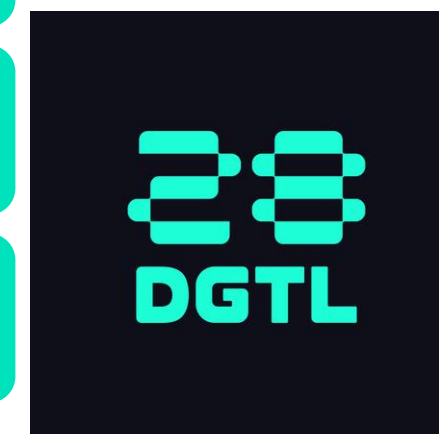
*Provide concrete examples demonstrating flexibility and responsiveness to change.*

*Please describe the monitoring and reporting processes your organisation will use to track startup progress and programme performance during the Venture Incubation Programme.*

*Explain what is monitored, how often progress is reviewed, and how results are reported.*

*Explain how the proposed budget is structured and how it ensures cost-effective delivery and value for money for the Venture Incubation Programme.*

*Describe how resources are allocated and why the budget is appropriate for the proposed activities.*



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**THANK YOU**

