LLM-BRIDGE - Acceleration Programme - 1st Call

Frequently Asked Questions

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1. Summary

This document gathers the questions raised during the webinar about the LLM-BRIDGE Acceleration Programme. The questions relate to programme setup, startup selection, confidentiality, budget aspects, and the application process. All references can be found in the official Call document. The document is available for download on the LLM-BRIDGE website, at the Open Call page.

In case you require any further clarification, do not hesitate to contact the team at contact@llm-bridge.eu.

2. Frequently Asked Questions

2.1. Programme Overview

1. What is the LLM-BRIDGE Acceleration Programme?

The LLM BRIDGE Acceleration Programme is a 14-week support programme for market-ready European startups and scale-ups developing solutions based on generative AI, large language models, natural language processing or related language technologies (Section 1, p. 4). It is designed to help participating companies accelerate growth and prepare for their next investment round.

2. Who is the programme designed for?

The programme is intended for European companies (legally established in an EU Member State) developing solutions powered by Generative AI and Language Technologies, at TRL 8-9 with a validated deployed in real-market conditions, demonstrated commercial traction and product-fit signals, and preparing for or actively pursuing Series A round with ambitions to scale across Europe (Section1, p.4; Section 6.2, p. 8)(Section 1, p. 4).

3. What benefits will participating companies receive?

The 14-week programme (delivered fully online) includes (Section 5.2, p. 6):

- Onboarding & diagnostic: company diagnostic, baseline KPI setting, personalised roadmap, HPC onboarding
- Business optimisation: go-to-market strategy, pricing & commercialisation, sales playbook, partnership development, leadership coaching, ecosystem navigation
- Technical acceleration: European HPC compute access, EU language datasets, model fine-tuning & benchmarking, multilingual scaling
- Regulatory compliance: EU digital regulations for GenAI/NLP startups, Responsible AI framework, EU AI policy landscape navigation
- Investment readiness: fundability gap analysis, investor narrative & pitch deck, financial model, data room blueprint, public funding options review (EBN), pitching workshop
- Summit preparation: final pitch rehearsal, investor brief, matchmaking logistics, Demo Day preparation

4. How does the Acceleration Programme differ from the other LLM-BRIDGE programmes?

The Acceleration Programme is intended for market-ready companies with proven technology and early commercial traction, ready to scale but lacking structured access to investment-readiness support, advanced infrastructure, and European investor networks (Section 2, p. 4). Other LLM-BRIDGE programmes support companies at earlier stages of development, including pre-seed and seed-stage ventures.

2.2. Eligibility

5. What are the eligibility requirements?

Applicants must be legally established in an EU Member State (Section 3.3, p. 5) and develop a product or service based on generative AI, LLMs, NLP or related language technologies (Section 6.2, p. 8). They must have a validated MVP, credible product-market fit evidence, sufficient commercial traction to pursue Series A round, and a team with complementary technical and business expertise (Section 6.2, p. 8).

6. What company and technology maturity is required?

Applicants should have a market-tested product that is already being used by customers. The programme is aimed at companies at least at TRL 8-9, rather than companies that are still developing an initial prototype or testing their first concept (Section 6.2, p.8).

7. How does LLM-BRIDGE assess product-market fit?

Product-market fit should be demonstrated through evidence such as recurring paying customers, growing revenue, repeat usage, commercial deployments or comparable market validation. One or two early pilots may not, on their own, provide sufficient evidence of product-market fit.

Product-market fit is assessed through the eligibility check and evaluation criteria (Section 6.2, p. 8; Section 6.3, p. 8). For the eligibility check, applicants must have validated MVP deployed in real-market conditions, demonstrated commercial tractions, evident PMF singals, and TRL 8-9. Evaluators look at whether the MVP is demonstrated in real-market conditions and whether traction signals are credible. A score of 4-5 requires active commercial use or paying customers with strong, documented PMF evidence. Applicants must submit market validation data and commercial traction evidence (customer reference, revenue data, growth metrics, or equivalent).

8. Which technologies and business sectors are eligible?

Companies must be active in the generative AI, LLMs, NLP or language technologies ecosystem across different sectors (Section 6.2, p. 8). Strategic alignment with LLM-BRIDGE rewards multilingual AI, language technologies, or GenAI applications in EU-relevant sectors (e.g., healthcare, legal, public sector), and a bonus of up to +2 points is given for use of European AI infrastructure (e.g., EuroHPC, LUMI), open-source EU models, or EU-curated language datasets (Section 6.3, p. 8). The call does not restrict eligibility to specific sectors beyond the GenAI/language technologies requirement, and the key consideration is the importance of the eligible AI technology to the company's product or service.

9. Is previous external funding required, or can bootstrapped companies apply?

Previous external funding is not an absolute requirement. Bootstrapped companies may apply if they can demonstrate strong commercial traction, a validated product and sufficient readiness to scale (Section 6.2, p. 8). Previous funding may support an application, but it is not the only way to demonstrate maturity.

10. Can young companies or companies with small teams apply?

Yes, provided they meet the eligibility criteria. Neither the company's age nor the number of employees is, by itself, a barrier. The evaluation will focus on product maturity, market traction, the team's expertise and the company's ability to commit sufficient time and resources to the programme (Section 2, p. 4).

11. Can a company apply to more than one LLM-BRIDGE programme?

A company may apply to more than one programme if it is uncertain which one best matches its maturity. However, a company would not normally participate in two programmes simultaneously.

2.3. Application and Selection

12. How and when can companies apply?

Applications must be submitted through the application page at llm-bridge.eu/programmes. The deadline for the first Acceleration Programme call is 18 November 2026 at 17:00 CET (Section 10, p. 12).

13. What information must applicants provide?

Applicants must complete and submit the online application form before the deadline (17:00 CET, November 18th, 2026), including (Section 6.1, p. 7):

- Company overview: legal entity, founding date, team composition, location
- Product/technology description: TRL evidence, MVP deployment context, market validation data
- Commercial traction evidence: customer references, revenue data, growth metrics, or equivalent
- Investment history and Series A readiness roadmap
- Team CVs demonstrating technical GenAI/Language Technologies expertise and business capability
- Declaration of eligibility and consent to data processing (included in the online form)

14. How many companies will be selected, and are there country quotas?

The programme aims to select 15 companies for each cohort (Section 1, p. 4). Selection is merit-based, and the companies with the strongest applications will be chosen. No country quotas exist.

15. How will applications be evaluated and scored?

Eligible applications will be evaluated by independent experts against five criteria (Section 6.3, p. 8):

- Technical and market readiness: maximum 5 points, with a minimum threshold of 3.
- Scalability and growth potential: maximum 10 points, with a minimum threshold of 6.
- Business-model stability and investment potential: maximum 10 points, with a minimum threshold of 6.

- Expertise and complementarity of the team: maximum 5 points, with a minimum threshold of 3.
- Capacity to use the programme's resources: maximum 5 points, with a minimum threshold of 3.

The maximum score is 35 points, and applicants must meet the threshold for every criterion. European Stack and Digital Sovereignty considerations may be used as a non-scored tie-breaker between applications receiving equal scores (Section 6.3, p. 8).

16. When will applicants be notified of the results?

The consortium will notify the results within 4 weeks of the completion of the panel ranking (Section 6.3, p. 9) and, which is expected to be in December 2026 (Section 6.5, p. 9). Depending on the evaluation process, some notifications may be issued in early January 2027. Applicants should monitor the email address provided in their application. Each applicant receives an Evaluation Summary Report with individual scores and consensus assessment. Selected companies are invited to onboarding; unsuccessful applicants receive formal feedback and may re-apply in the second cohort open call (Section 6.3, p. 9).

2.4. Programme Delivery

17. When does the programme take place, and is it online or in person?

The first cohort is expected to begin on 7 January 2027 and run for approximately 14 weeks, ending in April 2027 (Section 10, p. 12). The core programme will be delivered online (Section 3.3, p. 5). An in-person concluding activity is planned in connection with the Wolves Summit in April 2027, subject to final confirmation (Section 3.3, p. 5).

18. How much time should participants dedicate to the programme?

The workload will vary between modules, but participants should expect to dedicate several hours per week. As a general guide, companies should plan for at least half a day per week and potentially more during intensive parts of the programme. As a general overview (Section 4, p. 5), participants must:

- Actively participate in all programme phases, workshops, and peer-to-peer sessions
- Make at least one founding team member available for scheduled one-on-one mentoring sessions throughout the 14 weeks
- Complete required deliverables on time (diagnostic tools, KPI dashboards, financial models, investor-grade data room)
- Attend the Investor Roundtable Summit in person (tentatively Wolves Summit, April 2027)

19. Who from the company should participate?

A founder, senior manager or other member of the leadership team should remain actively involved throughout the programme (Section 4, p. 5). Additional team members, such as product, technical, commercial or finance leads, may attend workshops and mentoring sessions relevant to their responsibilities.

20. What activities, mentoring and technical resources are included?

The programme is expected to include (Section 3.1, p. 5; Section 5.2, p.6):

- Company onboarding and diagnostic assessment.

- Business optimisation and an OKR-based growth plan.
- Identification of the main barriers to growth.
- Technical acceleration and access to relevant computing resources and language datasets.
- Regulatory and compliance workshops.
- Investment-readiness assessment and fundraising preparation.
- Investor narrative and pitch-deck development.
- One-to-one mentoring.
- Preparation for investor meetings and the concluding summit.

The exact support provided to each company may be adjusted according to its needs.

2.5. Funding Prizes and Confidentiality

21. Is participation free, does LLM-BRIDGE take equity, and is direct funding provided?

Yes, participation is free. The programme is services-based, all support is delivered in-kind by consortium partners providing services, mentoring and access to resources (Section 1, p. 4). No direct financial support will be transferred to participating companies and the call does not constitute FSTP (Section 5.1, p. 6). Participation does not, by itself, guarantee investment or external funding and participants should also budget for travel to the in-person Investor Roundtable Summit.

22. What prizes and investor-access opportunities are available?

Three companies from each cohort are expected to be selected as prize winners (Section 5.3, p. 7). The prizes presented during the information session include:

- Access to 28DIGITAL's 12-month Access to Finance programme, including tailored fundraising advisory and investor-support services.
- ADRA membership, access to the ADRA Convergence Summit and investor network, and bespoke sponsorship support.

Participants will also benefit from networking with mentors, consortium partners, other cohort companies and potential investors during the programme.

Note: Non-compliance with participation obligations may result in removal from the programme and ineligibility for the Acceleration Prize. (Section 4, p. 6)

23. Does participation guarantee investment or fundraising?

No. Investor outreach, list building, and fundraising execution are not included in the programme (Section 5.2, p. 7). Participation provides preparation, advisory support and opportunities to meet investors, but it does not guarantee that a company will secure investment (Section 5.2, p. 6). The amount raised, valuation, equity offered and timing of any investment will depend on the individual company and negotiations with investors.

24. How will confidential business and technical information be protected?

All submitted information and documentation is considered confidential and may not be disclosed to third parties without the applicant's prior written consent from the applicant (Section 8.4, p. 11). All evaluators sign a Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality before accessing proposals (Section 6.3, p. 9), and access is strictly limited to authorised LLM-BRIDGE consortium members, the European Commission, and independent evaluators bound by confidentiality agreements (Section 8.2, p. 11). Personal data is processed under GDPR solely for evaluation, contracting, implementation, and reporting purposes, retained only as long as contractual and audit obligations require (Section 8.2, p. 11). Ownership of results and methodologies developed by participating companies remains with those companies; the consortium may only use anonymised or aggregated programme data for reporting and dissemination. 28DIGITAL acts as Data Controller (Section 8.5, p. 11).

A programme-wide requirement for every partner, expert and participating company to sign a separate NDA is not foreseen. Applicants should identify particularly sensitive information before sharing it and discuss suitable arrangements with the programme team. During the programme, consortium partners, mentors and experts are expected to treat confidential company information appropriately. Participants can decide how much information they share in group workshops, while particularly sensitive matters can be discussed during one-to-one sessions.