AI INNOVATION PACKAGE

Policy briefing

Weblink	https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/factpages/ai-innovation-package
Relevance	☐ National policy X EU policy ☐ other: _____
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Short summary of the policy

The AI innovation package, launched by the European Commission, aims to bolster the development and adoption of trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the EU. This package supports AI start-ups and SMEs by facilitating access to supercomputing resources, providing financial aid, and creating a supportive ecosystem for innovation. Key initiatives already established are e.g. the AI Office, the launch of the Alliance for Language Technologies European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (ALT-EDIC) and the CitiVERSE-EDIC include the ongoing support of the development of Generative AI (GenAI) models.

The package aligns with the EU's broader objectives of fostering AI that respects European values and regulations, enhancing competitiveness, and ensuring safety and ethical standards in AI applications.

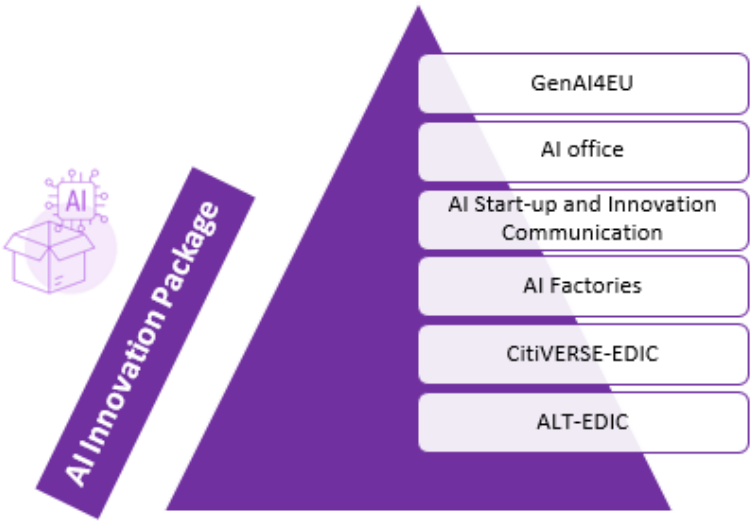

Figure 1: Measures included in the AI Innovation Package | Source: EC Web

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Main objectives of the policy

The AI innovation package includes a broad range of measures to support AI startups and innovation:

- **Support AI startups and SMEs**: Provide access to financial resources, supercomputers, and innovation support services.
- **Promote Trustworthy AI:** Ensure AI development aligns with EU values, safety, and ethical standards.
- **Establish AI Governance Structures**: Set up an AI Office to coordinate AI policy and enforce upcoming AI regulations. The AI Office is established within the Commission. Its tasks are supporting the AI Act and enforcing general purpose AI rules – see structure of the AI office.
- **Enhance AI Talent Pool**: Implement training and education programmes to skill and reskill the AI workforce.
- **Foster Public and Private Investment**: Encourage investments in AI through venture capital, equity support, and public-private partnerships.
- **Develop AI Applications**: Focus on creating AI applications in various sectors, including healthcare, manufacturing, and public services.

Context and relation to the Digital Europe Programme (DEP)

AI is one of the main Specific Objectives (SOs) in DEP. The AI innovation package provides a basis for DEP funded activities. By respecting the AI innovation package objectives, it is ensured that AI development and deployment are in line with European standards while fostering a competitive and innovative digital ecosystem.

Parts of the policy directly related to specific objectives (SO) in DEP

SO1: High Performance Computing (HPC) aims to build up and strengthen the EU's high-performance computing and data processing capacities. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **Access to Supercomputers**: The AI innovation package sets measures to facilitate access to AI-dedicated supercomputers, allowing startups and SMEs to develop, test, and validate AI models using advanced HPC resources
- **Financial Support for HPC**: The AI innovation package includes financial support through programs such as HEU and DEP, specifically targeted at generative AI and HPC projects.

SO2: AI Continent focuses on the widespread adoption of AI across the EU, ensuring it benefits the economy and society. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **One-Stop Shop for AI Startups**: Establishment of support services for AI startups and SMEs, including algorithm development, testing, and validation environments (links to TEFs, EDIHs)
- **EU AI Startup and Innovation Communication**: Outlining key activities and financial support for generative AI, encouraging investment in AI startups and scale-ups.
- **GenAI4EU Initiative**: Supporting novel AI use cases and applications across various industrial ecosystems and public sectors.

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SO3: Cybersecurity funds activities to improve cybersecurity capabilities and ensure the protection of the EU's digital economy and society. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **AI and Cybersecurity Integration**: While not explicitly focused on cybersecurity, the secure development and deployment are major objectives.
- **Trustworthy AI Development** Emphasizing the development of AI that aligns with EU values of safety, ethics, and trust, indirectly supporting the objectives of cybersecurity

SO4: Advanced Digital Skills focuses on the development of advanced digital skills to address the shortage of trained professionals in key digital technologies. Activities link to:

- **Skilling and Reskilling Initiatives**: The AI innovation package includes measures to enhance the EU's AI talent pool through education, training, skilling/reskilling activities.
- **Educational Programmes**: This is the direct Link to financial support from Horizon Europe and the Digital Europe

SO5: Accelerationg the best use of Digital Technologies supports the uptake of digital technologies/services by public administrations and SMEs. Relevant parts of the AI innovation package:

- **EDICs**: support to large scale euroean digital infrastructures (Multi Country projects)
- **Public Sector AI Applications**: Encouraging AI applications in public services to improve efficiency and effectiveness, aligned with the 'GenAI4EU' initiative.
- **SMEs**: Privileged access to advanced AI and HPC resources should be given to a broader community, including SMEs. Additionally, initiatives like European Data Spaces and European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) are measures to help SMEs enhance their digital capabilities, foster innovation and improve their competitiveness.

SO6: Semiconductors is deeply interconnected with the AI innovation Package as AI progress relies on European-made, high-performance, energy-efficient semiconductors. Examples where Semiconductors and the AI innovation package are related:

- **AI Factories** – These rely on **high-performance computing (HPC)** and require **advanced AI chips** to develop next-generation AI models. Semiconductor companies must consider how to optimize processors for supercomputing and AI workloads.
- **GenAI4EU** – AI applications across industries (robotics, biotech, climate tech, etc.) demand **energy-efficient, high-speed AI chips**. Semiconductor innovations must support these sectors with tailored solutions.
- **ALT-EDIC (Alliance for Language Technologies)** – AI-driven language models need **optimized hardware** to handle multilingual data processing. This requires specialized **AI accelerators and NLP-optimized chips**.
- **CitiVERSE-EDIC** – Smart cities use AI-powered digital twins. Digital twins in CitiVERSE-EDIC use data from thousands of sensors and IoT devices across a city. These sensors rely on AI-enabled semiconductors to analyze and transmit data efficiently.
- **AI Office & Regulation** – The AI Innovation Package promotes trustworthy and ethical AI, meaning semiconductor development must align with EU AI governance and regulatory standards.

Please refer to the European Commission's AI innovation package and the associated resources for more detailed information.

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Activities in the DEP Work Programme 2025-27 contributing to the objectives of the policy

DEP Call Topic	DEP Call	Reason
Data Space for Manufacturing	2	Provides access to data for SMEs in the manufacturing sector.
Virtual worlds test beds	2	Supports the validation and deployment of virtual-world technologies in real-world environments . These technologies inherently rely on AI components (e.g., for simulation, digital twins).
Consolidation of the Network of EDIHs with reinforced AI focus	2	Strengthens EDIHs with AI specialisation, building the EU's AI innovation ecosystem.
Apply AI: GenAI for the public administrations	2	The CSA links to the AI office
Digital solutions for regulatory compliance through data	3	Supports data-driven regulatory tools enabling trustworthy AI deployment
Apply AI: Piloting AI-based image screening in medical centres	3	Demonstrates practical deployment of AI in health-care, a key objective of the AI Innovation Package.
Testing genAI4EU application at scale and under realworld condition	4	Integration of GenAI into sectorial testing and experimentation facilities (updgrading the four existing TEFs)
Virtual Human Twins and Artificial Intelligence in health: uptake incubator	4	The action supports the wider deployment of VHTs and related AI solutions, and their validation and uptake in clinical settings.

Related policies and further information

Several EU policy and legislative initiatives (in place or forthcoming) are linked with the AI Innovation Package:

- AI Continent Action Plan
- GenAI4EU Initiative
- Union of Skills
- InvestAI
- Apply AI Strategy
- Data Union Strategy
- Startup and Scale Up Strategy
- Cloud and AI Development Act
- AI in Science Strategy

For finding related events, please check out the following online calendars: Shaping Europe's digital future, HADEA

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