READY2SCALE

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Open Call
Guide for Applicants

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1. Introduction

The Guide for Applicants of the Ready2Scale Open Call aims to describe the overall acceleration and financial support scheme, presenting the detailed process of the application submission, evaluation, expected activities and outcomes for the applicants.

Further details and templates on the next selection process will be provided during different stages and in the project website "https://ready2scale.eu"

2. Glossary of terms

- **Acceleration Program** is a 6 months long program that provides intensive and time-limited business support for cohorts of startups, aiming to get them ready for investment more quickly than traditional incubators.
- **Deep-tech startup** is a type of startup focused on developing technology solutions that tackle significant scientific or engineering challenges.
- **Digital startup** is an innovative high-tech company that seize the opportunities offered by the web and the digital transition to create new business models or renew existing ones.
- **Future Founders Club (FFC)** is an initiative aimed at bringing together startup founders and skilled individuals, offering mutual benefits.
- **Grant** is a lump sum of up to 60,000 EUR in financial support provided to startups accepted into the Acceleration program. It's aimed at expediting the development of their innovative products up to the minimum viable product (MVP) stage, typically at Technology Readiness Level 7 or higher, and initiating their exploration of global markets.
- **Market Discovery Missions** are business excursions planned in specific countries. A total of 4-5 missions will be arranged throughout the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program, with each startup having the flexibility to select which missions to participate in. The choice of destination countries will be determined by the preferences and requirements of the participating startups, aligning with their intended export markets.
- **Minimum Viable Product** (MVP) is a concept that allows SMEs, startups to find out whether the basic model of a product or service with the core functionalities meets user needs. The MVP approach to developing new products is premised on the idea that you first produce a real product — in other words, something that's functional and is not just a technical prototype or an imaginary idea. The goal with an MVP is to have a product in hand that you can then show to customers and users and see what they do with it — a much closer approximation of market reality than asking people what they would do.
- **Pilot** is an initial small-scale implementation of the new product/service in a real-life environment to evaluate feasibility, duration, scalability, and real cost.
- **Ready2Scale Key Mentor** is an expert assigned to a startup in the beginning of the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program, a person who will provide valuable guidance, expertise, and support during the Investment Readiness Program and Ready2Scale Acceleration Program.
- **Ready2Scale Ambassador** is a member of the Ready2Scale Consortium team, who will be assigned to the startup at the start of the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program, and will remain engaged with it throughout the program's duration. Ambassadors' responsibilities include serving as the primary point of contact for any project-related inquiries, handling general communication regarding the program/project, and assisting with mid-term and final reporting, among other tasks.
- **Startup** is a company/project, often tech-enabled, in general combining fast growth, high reliance on innovation of product, processes, and financing, utmost attention to new

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technological developments, and extensive use of innovative business models, and, often, collaborative platforms. This includes social startups that have high potential for innovation and positive impact in the economy and society at large. Their business model combines economic efficiency with societal-centred objectives. This definition is in the [Communication from the European Commission on Europe's next leaders: the Start-up and Scale {SWD(2016) 373 final}](#).

3. About Ready2Scale Project

The Ready2Scale project aims to connect Digital and Deep-Tech (DDT) start-up ecosystems, including those from the [widening countries](#), increasing their engagement with EIC, national & international offerings and enhancing their capabilities to scale-up outside national borders.

Besides various international workshops and seminars that are focused on the deep-tech field ecosystem stakeholders, the Ready2Scale project aims to set up the Ready2Scale Acceleration program, including impact assessment, a monitoring framework, start-up enrolment, assessment and selection, and implementation of the program. The program itself will include investment readiness training, investor and start-up matchmaking, and market discovery missions.

4. Ready2Scale Acceleration Program

The Ready2Scale Acceleration Program is a 6-month long acceleration program that provides a range of training services, as well as financial support of up to 60,000 EUR, to 25 DDT startups with a focus on widening countries. Startups that have been selected to participate in the Acceleration Program, based on selection criteria developed by the project partners, will receive an individual development plan that meets their needs and helps them overcome specific challenges. The Investment Readiness Program will provide know-how on how to become investment-ready and therefore build the fundraising capacity of DDT start-ups. The selected 25 DDT start-ups will also benefit from tailored training on how to get funding through the EIC and other European programs.

OPEN CALL starts as of 15 March 2024 and is divided into 2 cut-offs with deadlines on 15 May 2024, 17:00 CET and 30 November 2024, 17:00 CET

Apply here: https://ready2scale.eu

4.1 Eligibility

The Ready2Scale Acceleration Program is open to European Digital and Deep-Tech (DDT) startups with a [TRL5](#) or higher, offering solutions in climate-neutrality, digital and circular economy, clean industry, and user-centric technology development. In addition, their innovations should contribute to the twin transition, and a special focus will be given to entrepreneurs from [Widening Countries](#).

To be eligible to apply, start-ups must fulfil the following criteria:

- The financing is granted for legal persons only
- The company has at least one full-time employee
- The company is not in a liquidation or bankruptcy process

- The company is based in an EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories or OCTs) or an eligible non-EU country, including Associated Countries
- The solution must have technology maturity level TRL5 or higher

at least one of the following criteria:
- be digital and deep tech start-ups that have received support from the EIC for supporting their scaleup process in Europe
- or digital and deep tech startups not yet supported by the EIC, that have already received private investment or EU funding (e.g., under Horizon Europe or the Digital Europe program)

4.2 Overview

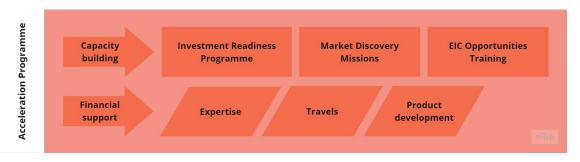The Ready2Scale Acceleration Program comprises two essential components: capacity building and financial support.

Figure 1: Ready2Scale Acceleration Program structure

1. **Capacity building activities** will cover 3 aspects of scaling: investment readiness, expansion to new markets and access to EIC financing.
   - In the framework of **Investment Readiness Program (IRP)** each start-up will participate in 1:1 mentoring sessions and group investment readiness training where investors and expert venture builders will share best practices on scaling a deep-tech business. Each start-up will be matched with one mentor based on their expertise in the technology, application, target market and/or business function of interest for the start-up.
   - **Market Discovery Missions (MDM)** to selected countries will be organised (4-5 missions in the scope of the program) and each start-up will have to choose at least one MDM to attend. Each mission will be 4-days long (2-day training on the local business culture and market + 2-days of meetings with different stakeholders). To prepare for the missions, group mentoring will be available to discuss the go-to-market strategy, analyse the competitive landscape of the target market, or to set the export strategy for the chosen market.
   - DDT start-ups – during a **tailored workshop session** – will also be provided with information that includes EIC offerings, national and international funding, and support on what it takes to be funded by the EIC.
2. Following the Open Calls, 15 in the 1st cut-off and minimum 10 DDTs in the 2nd cut-off will be provided with the Grant for the MVP development and initiating their exploration of global markets
   - To receive the **Grant** digital deep tech start-ups will sign the Subgrant Agreement, defining terms and conditions of grants.
   - A lump sum of up to 5,000 EUR to cover expenses associated with travel. This includes costs related to contact initiation, Market Discovery Missions, attendance at Future

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Founders Club events, participation in startup events, and other opportunities aimed at showcasing business solutions on a global scale.
- Designated for expertise, a lump sum of up to 5,000 EUR enables the DDTs to avail of individual consultations addressing specific challenges associated with scaling. This allocated fund facilitates payment for services rendered by a qualified service provider offering the necessary support.
- The lump sum allocated for product development amounts to a maximum of 50,000 EUR, with a detailed list of eligible costs outlined in Annex 1 of the Grant documentation.

4.3 Timeline

The table below explains in detail all the steps for applying to the program from the beginning of submitting the short proposal until signing the contract.

Period	Phase	Dates	Number of participants
9 months	Open Call Promotion starts	15 March - 30 November 2024	60+ startups from EU submit their short proposal and 1 min video
	1st cutoff	**15 May 2024 17:00 CET**	**Only applications submitted before the deadline will be considered for the 1st cutoff**
1 week	Short proposal+video assessment	15 May - 22 May 2024	From all the applicants 30 startups will be selected by Ready2Scale Consortium
1 week	Final proposal submission	22 May - 29 May 2024	30 startups shall submit final proposal
1 week	Final proposal assessment	29 May - 5 June 2024	30 final proposals will be assessed by external experts, 15 startups will receive funding up to 60k EUR
6 months	Ready2Scale Acceleration Program	10 June - 10 December 2024	15 startups from the 1st cutoff
	2nd cutoff	**30. November 2024 17:00 CET**	**No more applications will be accepted**
1 week	Short proposal+video assessment	30 November - 6 December 2024	From all the applicants 25 startups will be selected by Ready2Scale Consortium

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1 week	Final proposal submission	6 December - 12 December 2024	25 startups shall submit final proposal
1 week	Final proposal assessment	12 December - 18 December 2024	25 final proposals will be assessed by external experts, 10 startups will receive funding up to 60k EUR
6 months	Ready2Scale Acceleration Program	6 January - 9 July 2025	10 startups from the 2nd cutoff

5. Getting into the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program

Ready2Scale Acceleration Program has one Open Call which will be launched on the **15th March 2024** and will be open for the digital and deep-tech startups to apply until **30th November 2024**. However, there are **2 cut-offs**: the **first one** is on **15th May 2024** and the **second one** will be on **30 November 2024** (subject to change). Information about the Acceleration program, mentors, investors and various workshops related to the program will be communicated via Ready2Scale partners' social media channels, Ready2Scale website, various relevant events and using the Ready2Scale Community.

Ready2Scale Acceleration Program has a focus on startups from the widening countries, however it should be noted that the startups from other non-widening countries are not excluded from the Call.

The application procedure will have two steps:

1. In the **1st step** each applicant will be asked to submit a **short proposal** including the (1) project goals, (2) team description, (3) solution description, and (4) a **2-minutes video uploaded to the platform** presenting the team and the idea.
2. In the **2nd step** participants will be asked to submit a **full proposal** (1) fill the form with the timeline explanation and action plan for the financial support (Grant justification form). In addition, start-ups that meet threshold (2) will be interviewed by external Evaluators. Interested start-ups shall apply by submitting all listed in point 6.3) documents **in English** through a web form available on the Ready2Scale website.
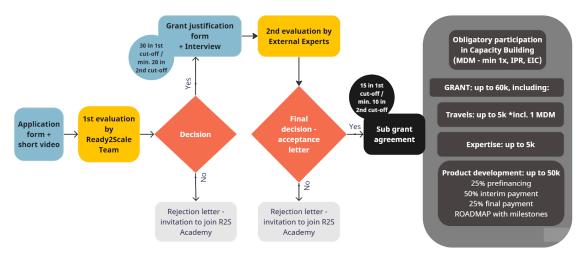

Table2: Open Call structure

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5.1 Short Proposal, Video Pitch-submission and Assessment Process

The pre-selection of the short proposal and video pitch aims to select top 50 startups. The Committee will select successful proposals – 30 in the 1st cutoff and 20 in the 2nd cutoff – according to the selection criteria listed above. The pre-selection of DDTs will be performed by the internal Selection Committee composed of Ready2Scale partners' representatives. A summary of the evaluation outcome will be published at the latest one week after closing the evaluation and will describe all relevant information for the participants.

The short proposal evaluation will start with an eligibility check of the application, that will include the completeness of the submitted applications and preliminary check of profile of the startup.

1. **Short proposal**

In the Short proposal applicants will be expected to provide the following information:

(1) Valid company information: must have a legal name, business address, VAT. Nr, European business IBAN account, company email, phone nr, website etc. (information present/checked). Besides the information stated above, applicant must also meet all of the eligibility criteria listed below:

➔ The financing is granted for legal persons only.
➔ The company has at least one full-time employee.
➔ The company is not in a liquidation or bankruptcy process.
➔ The company is based in an EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories or OCTs) or an eligible non-EU country, including Associated Countries.

(2) Problem description: a brief and clear explanation of the problem that needs to be solved, define the scope and impact of the problem (scores 1-5) *500 characters*

(3) Solution description and match with the problem: a clear and comprehensive overview of how a proposed solution addresses the specific problem, what are the core components, features and functionalities (scores 1-5) *500 characters*

(4) What is the digital/deep-tech technological component and the level of TRL: what kind of digital/deep-tech technology component is used in the solution (scores 1-5) *500 characters*

(5) Solution compliance with the market: current state of the market relevant to the problem, market size, growth trends, and key players (scores 1-5) *500 characters*

(6) Team competency: map out individual strengths and skills of the team, previous experiences (scores 1-5) *1000 characters*

(7) Project feasibility and goals within the budget: define specific, measurable, relevant and time bound goals for the project and a realistic budget distribution *1000 characters*

2. **Video pitch:**
   ● The video pitch will allow applicants to use visual elements such as graphics, charts, images, and video clips to enhance their proposal and help the audience to better understand the solution and envision its real-world application. The video pitch will not be scored, however it is a valuable tool to get a better overview of the startup team, solution description, and English proficiency, as the Ready2Scale Acceleration program will be conducted in English.

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- Applications positively passing the eligibility check done on point (1) - (2) will be forwarded to Ready2Scale Consortium experts, who will assess each criterium from (3) - (8) with scores from 1-5. (1 - Poor; 2 - Below average; 3 - Average; 4 - Above average; 5 - Excellent).
- Based on overall ranking, the 30 best startups from the 1st cut-off and 25 from the 2nd cut-off will pass to the next application stage and will be asked to submit a full proposal document.
- Taking into account the specific focus of the Ready2Scale project, a minimum of 20 out of the 30 startups from the first cut-off and a minimum of 15 out of the 25 startups from the second cut-off selected to proceed to the next round must be from the widening countries.
- In case a startup in the top 30/25 withdraws their proposal, the next one in the ranking list will be selected, however taking into account that at least 20/15 startups are from the widening countries.
- Startups who do not pass to the next stage will receive an email with this information, however they are welcome to participate at the various trainings and seminars organised by the Ready2Scale project.
- Informing startups about their status in the selection process for the next stage will be done via email from the Ready2Scale project representative.

5.2 Full proposal - Submission and Assessment Process

The top 30 startups selected to proceed to the next stage, will receive an email with a full proposal template that they have to fill and submit within 5-working days. A startup that fails to submit their full proposal on time will be automatically excluded from the process. An email stating their withdrawal from the process will be sent out. No additional startups from the list will be included. All startups who do not make it to the top 30 list in the 1st cut off will have the right to apply again in the 2nd round, however they will have to go through the full submission process.

The full proposal template will ensure uniformity and ease of evaluation. The purpose of the full proposal is to understand and assess the solution more thoroughly and understand if the startup has the applicable and functional technology, and the necessary competence.

Full proposals will be assessed by the Selection Committee formed from Ready2Scale consortium representatives, supported by external experts. The selection process is designed to be fair, transparent, and focused on identifying startups that align closely with the objectives of the Ready2Scale project. Full proposals will undergo a comprehensive and fair assessment process that assesses specific criteria explained in detail in the full proposal. The full proposal evaluation will focus on an in-depth validation of projects and financial support budget justification.

In the Full proposal applicants will be expected to provide the following information:

(1) Technology and innovation: uniqueness and novelty of the technology, technical and scientific match, status of IP (patents, trademarks, etc.) (scores 1-5)

(2) MVP: functionality, how well the MVP addresses a specific problem, compliance with relevant regulations and industry standards, development stage of the product/solution. The team should show the capabilities to initiate the product development in-house, having all the needed competences to build the testable solution. (scores 1-5)

(3) Problem-solution match: a clear and comprehensive overview of how a proposed solution addresses the specific problem, what are the core components, features and functionalities (scores 1-5)

(4) Business potential and capabilities: description of the business potential of the developed solution. The business potential must be presented through market size estimations, business model and value proposition, initial financial plans. What is the go-to-market strategy? (scores 1-5)

(5) Scaling potential: the technology, product, or service used during the pilot project should have a clear potential to scale globally. (scores 1-5)

(6) Risk assessment: potential risks or challenges associated with developing the solution further as well as implementation. Strategies for mitigating identified risks. (scores 1-5)

(7) Financing and funding: current financial status, including revenue, expenses, and profitability. History of fundraising, including amount raised and valuation. (scores 1-5)

(8) Team: description of the team's skill sets, technical proficiency, commitment to the program (scores 1-5)

(9) What are you planning to achieve with the Ready2Scale Acceleration program: the goals, objectives, KPIs, milestones when and how will be achieved (scores 1-5)

(10) Budget: break down the budget, taking into account that up to 50,000 EUR can be allocated to product development 5,000 EUR for travelling and 5,000 EUR for experts. The eligible cost categories are listed in point 6.2. (scores 1-5)

NOTE! Startups must precisely plan and detail their finances when proposing their project budget plan in the full proposal document, as the Ready2Scale Consortium requires comprehensive overviews of how the allocated funds will be utilised. Attention to detail and thorough financial planning are imperative to instil confidence and transparency in the allocation of resources for the project.

(11) Additional information (not subject to assessment):

● the countries of interest for Market Discovery Missions

● experts/talents that applicants are lacking internally and who could permanently join them/become a co-founder

The Selection Committee will select 25 successful full proposals - 15 in the 1st cutoff and minimum 10 in the 2nd cutoff. These startups will be invited to sign the Subgrant Agreements defining the rules for participation in the accelerator program.

6. Ready2Scale Acceleration Program

6.1 CAPACITY BUILDING

Ready2Scale Acceleration Program is a 6-month long program designed to support and fast-track the growth of digital and deep-tech startups. The program consists of the following obligatory elements:

(1) Investment Readiness Program
- 3 group seminars on investment readiness trainings,

-   Access to 6 individual meetings for each startup with a matched and assigned Key Mentor pre-identified based on their individual needs and the areas in which the Investment Readiness of each can be improved

(2) Online capacity building trainings organised by Ready2Scale Academy

-   Mandatory list of online training sessions that a startup must participate in during the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program, including EIC opportunities training

(3) x1 Market Discovery Mission

-   Market discovery missions will be organised to selected countries (4-5 missions in total) and each startup will have to choose and attend at least one
-   Each mission will be 4-days long (2-day training on the local business culture and market + 2-days of meetings with different stakeholders)
-   A lump sum of up to 5,000 EUR to cover expenses associated with travel is designated in the Grant
-   Cost of participation in 1 MDM has to be foreseen by the startup in the Grant Justification Form.

(4) Future Founders Club event

-   Each startup will have to choose at least one Future Founders Club event to attend
-   A lump sum of up to 5,000 EUR to cover expenses associated with travel is designated in the travel budget
-   Cost of participation in 1 FFC event has to be foreseen by the startup in the Grant Justification Form

(5) Mentoring sessions

-   There will be an international pool of relevant coaches, advisors and mentors provided by Ready2Scale Acceleration Program available for startups to use for mentoring
-   A minimum of 6 hrs of mentoring must be organised during the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program which will be taken into account in mid-term and final report assessment
-   An initial plan outlining the coaches, advisors, and mentors that the applicant intends to engage must be incorporated as a component of the budget within the full proposal.
-   A lump sum of up to 5,000 EUR to cover the expenses associated with contracting experts is designated in the budget.

6.2 MVP development

For each of the 25 startups awarded with the subgrant and given access to the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program, an individual assessment of their needs will be carried out by the Ready2Scale Consortium. A specific plan will be agreed with every startup based on the business and product development maturity level of the startup, and a Ready2Scale contact person and a Key Mentor will be assigned.

During the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program a startup shall:

-   actively participate in the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program
-   innovate their products up to MVP (TRL +7)
-   have a support on how to become investment ready
-   have support to explore new markets
-   be better prepared to apply to EIC funding
-   participate in at least one Market Discovery Mission

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- participate in at least one Future Founders Club event

6.3 THE GRANT - Contracts & Payments

All 25 startups through-out the Ready2Scale project Acceleration program shall sign the contracts with Civitta. The Subgrant Agreement Template is Annex 1 to this the Open Call Guidance.

The payment will be done in three tranches:

- 1st Payment 10 days after signing the contract by both sides (up to 15,000 euro)
- 2nd Payment 10 days after successfully passing the mid-review and submitting the feedback form, the startup will be notified of their results via email (up to 30,000 euro)
- 3rd Payment 20 days after submitting the final report and feedback form (up to 15,000 euro)

The Ready2Scale Grant eligible costs have been divided into 3 categories, in the table below are those expenses that are considered allowable and can be funded within the Ready2Scale Acceleration Program.

Cost category	Closed list of activities that qualify for financial support	Verification
Travel budget	- aeroplane tickets - accommodations - meals - tickets to participate in events - co-working space - stand rental etc.	- Report stating the objectives and results achieved with the received financial support.

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Expertise budget	External niche expertise services, like: - Analysis of the potential of a particular market - Development of a Localisation Strategy - Intercultural training - Legal advice - Marketing support - Translation services - Match making with potential local partners - Evaluation of core team members and suggestions for expansion & which competences are missing - Validation or the current business plan - Value proposition definition - Customer discovery journey and identification - Strategic partnerships - Industry expertise. Consulting services that are out of the scope of: - mentoring either in the Investment Readiness - program or a mentoring session preceding Market Discovery Missions. The specific portfolio of services will be funded based on the needs of each DDT and will be monitored in terms of achieving specific KPIs.	- Report stating the objectives and results achieved with the received financial support.
Product development budget	- Costs of the pilot project – acquiring software or hardware necessary for product development, installation and implementation - Development costs, including labour costs and sub-contracting costs - Prototyping services – access to research experts, software developers, equipment for development - Raw materials for prototyping and use of prototyping equipment - Online presence – website, pro-active LinkedIn profile maintenance - Costs related to visiting incubator or challenge owner facilities for piloting the product	- Roadmap with listed milestones. Interim and final tranches of financial support will be transferred after proving that the milestones were achieved. - Achievement of declared TRL.

6.4 Startups journey timeline

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		Capacity building (trainings) topics	Investment Readiness Mentoring	MVP Development
Month 1	- Ready2Scale Acceleration program kick-off meeting - Assessment of the needs of the startup - Bi-weekly meetings with Ready2Scale Ambassador	"How to get EIC funded? "	Assignment of a Key Mentor 1:1 session with Key Mentor	- Meetings with the external mentors from the mentor pool - 1st payment of 25% funding received
Month 2	Bi-weekly meetings with Ready2Scale Ambassador	"Investment readiness group training session"	1:1 session with Key Mentor	- Meetings with the external mentors from the mentor pool
Month 3	Bi-weekly meetings with Ready2Scale Ambassador	"Impact mindset"	1:1 session with Key Mentor	- Meetings with the external mentors from the mentor pool
Month 4	Bi-weekly meetings with Ready2Scale Ambassador	"Procurement procedures"	1:1 session with Key Mentor	- Mid-term Report submitted and 2nd payment of 50% received - Meetings with the external mentors from the mentor pool
Month 5	Bi-weekly meetings with Ready2Scale Ambassador	"Go-to-market workshop"	1:1 session with Key Mentor	- Market Discovery Missions - Meetings with the external mentors from the mentor pool
Month 6	Bi-weekly meetings with Ready2Scale Ambassador	"Knowledge and skill sharing training"	1:1 session with Key Mentor	- Market Discovery Missions - Meetings with the external mentors from the mentor pool - Final reporting starts (in order to receive the 3rd payment of 25%)

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6.5 Reporting

Mid-term and **final assessment** of the DDT progress will be conducted to confirm the expected development and achievement of milestones listed in the roadmap. **Underperforming start-ups will be cut-off from the program and the remaining grant tranches will not be awarded.**

All 25 DDT startups will have to submit a **Mid-term Report** in order to receive 2nd tranche of the funding. A Mid-term Report template will be provided by Ready2Scale Acceleration program. The participating startups will have 7 calendar days to submit the formal document and it will be assessed by the Ready2Scale Consortium. The decisions will be made based on the achievements of the milestones and KPIs stated in the full proposal, as well as taking into account the use of the costs, adherence to financial plans, and strategic allocation of resources will be evaluated when disbursing the 2nd payment, emphasising the importance of responsible financial management in achieving successful outcomes. The Ready2Scale Consortium may ask additional questions in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the progress of the project plan and development of a product.

The **Final Assessment** will be submitted in a formal document format, including text, tables, charts, and visuals to enhance readability and understanding. A final report template will be provided by Ready2Scale Acceleration program and the participating startups will have 30 calendar days to submit it. After successful completion of the Ready2Scale Acceleration program and successful approval of the final report, final payment will be made within 14 days.

7. Confidentiality

By virtue of a Subgrant Agreement, the Ready2Scale Consortium may have access to information that is confidential to one another. Confidential information shall be limited to the terms and conditions under the Subgrant Agreement and all information clearly identified as confidential.

A party's confidential information shall not include information that: (a) is or becomes a part of the public domain through no act or omission of the other party; (b) was in the other party's lawful possession prior to the disclosure and had not been obtained by the other party either directly or indirectly from the disclosing party; (c) is lawfully disclosed to the other party by a third party without restriction on the disclosure; or (d) is independently developed by the other party.

The Parties agree to hold each other's confidential information in confidence for a period of three (3) years from the date of disclosure and agree, unless required by law, not to make each other's confidential information available in any form to any third party for any purpose other than the implementation of the Subgrant Agreement.

Each party agrees to take all reasonable steps to ensure that confidential information is not disclosed or distributed by its employees or agents in violation of the terms of the Subgrant Agreement.

A **non-disclosure agreement** (NDA) will be signed by the Ready2Scale Consortium and the Key Mentors, which will prohibit them from disclosing confidential information with a third party. If confidential information is shared, the disclosing party is liable for damages.

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8. Intellectual Property Rights

The Ready2Scale Consortium and Key Mentors are not granted, transferred, or assigned any rights or licences to the intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to, patents, designs, know-how, trademarks, or copyright) of participating startups.

9. Data protection

All startups are required to provide their consent for the processing of submitted data throughout the application phase.

10. Dissemination and information on EU funding

Each startup, onboarded Key Mentor or Community member of the Ready2Scale project shall disseminate information about the participation in the Ready2Scale project.

In case of any dissemination (in any form, including electronic), one shall display the EU emblem according to the EU requirements and shall include the following text in case of dissemination: "Funded by the European Union".

Applicants can use the Ready2Scale logo, but the use of logos belonging to Ready2Scale Consortium partners is not allowed unless otherwise specified and agreed upon.

11. Complaint procedure

In the event of any complaints, applicants are required to follow the specified administrative procedures. Complaints must be submitted via email to info@ready2scale.eu within 5 working days following the receipt of the results. The formal requirements for complaints are as follows:

- Complaints can only be submitted from the same email address that was provided in the application as the point of contact
- The legal entity name of the applicant must be provided and must be identical to the information submitted in the application
- The Ready2Scale project will confirm the receipt of complaints within 2 working days. Subsequently, the complaint will be directed to the relevant contact person within the project partnership, who will evaluate the complaint. You will then be informed of the decision, indicating whether the complaint is deemed justified or not justified, or if further clarification is required
- Complaints will be answered within 15 working days after receipt of the complaints by the contact person in written form. The decision made as part of the complaint procedure is irrevocable and no further complaints can be submitted for the same reason.
- Responses to complaints will be provided within 15 working days from the date of receipt by the designated contact person, conveyed in written form. The decisions resulting from the complaint procedure are final and cannot be contested, with no provision for further complaints on the same grounds.

12. Disclaimer

The present Open Call Guide for Applicants is not a legally binding document, and it serves only information purposes. It provides details of the Ready2Scale Open Call application and participation process with details about the short proposal application, full proposal Ready2Scale Acceleration program and reporting.

The Ready2Scale Consortium does not take responsibility for any mistakes that the misinterpretation, inaccuracies or omissions of the Open Call Guide for Applicants may cause. In case of any inconsistencies within the present document or in relation to any other Open Call information, the Ready2Scale project partners will check all information available and will define the process to be followed, if needed in collaboration with the startups concerned.

The Ready2Scale Consortium cannot be held liable for any damage caused to the Ready2Scale participating startups, subgrant beneficiaries, its affiliates or to third parties as a consequence of submitting application or implementing the proposed actions, including for gross negligence.

The Ready2Scale Consortium cannot be held liable for any damage caused by any of the startups and mentors or third parties involved in the action, as a consequence submitting application or implementing the proposed actions.

The document does not reflect the views of the European Commission and the European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency (EISMEA).

13. Contact

Any inquiries related to the Ready2Scale Open Call should be directed to info@ready2scale.eu.

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