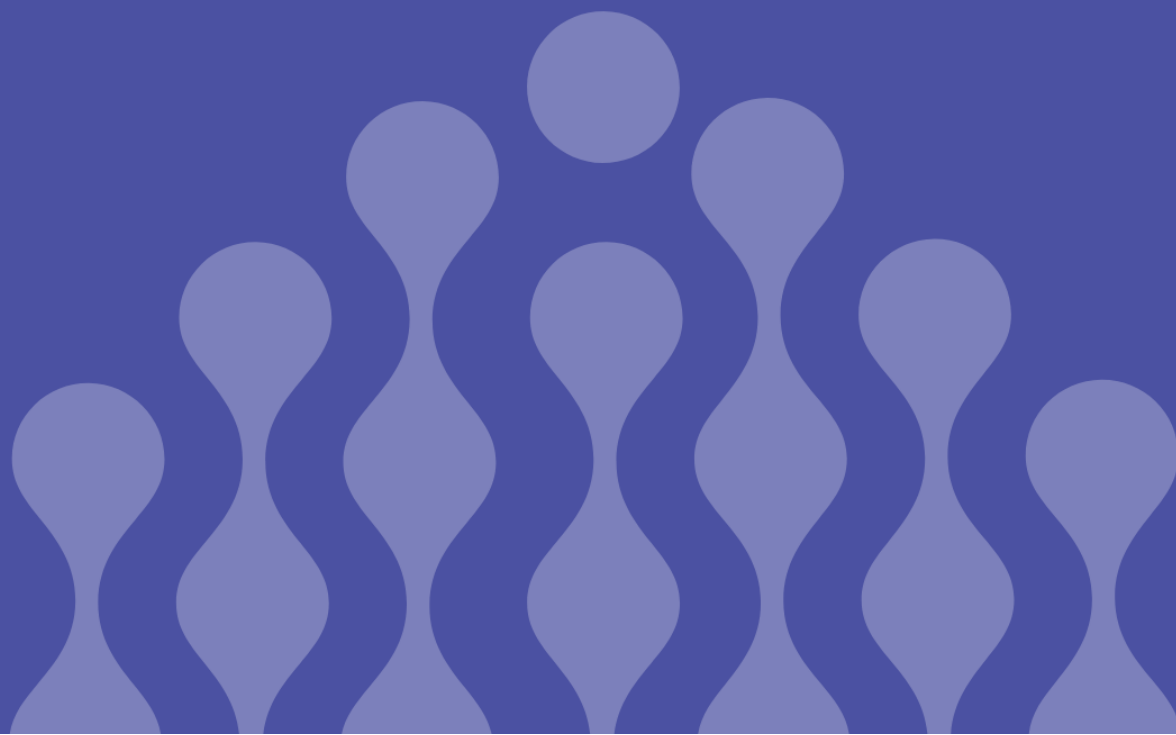




ATTRACT

European Digital Innovation Hub for Artificial
Intelligence and High-Performance Computing



ATTRACT – PRE-ACCELERATION PROGRAMME

Application and participation rules

This Regulation establish the rules for applying to and participating in the ATTRACT – Acceleration Programme.

Preamble

The ATTRACT – Acceleration Programme is organized as part of the ATTRACT European Innovation Hub for Artificial Intelligence and High-Performance Computing. This project has received funding from the digital European Programme under the Grant Agreement 101083770 and from the Recovery and Resilience Plan (PRR) within the scope of the European Union (UE), framed in the Next Generation EU, for the period of 2021-2026, within project ATTRACT, with reference 774.

The project mission “(...) is to promote and support experimentation, testing, development and adoption of solutions using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and High-Performance Computing (HPC), address the related training needs, and boost the innovation ecosystem around those fields, aiming at significant improvements in the performance of SMEs and Public Administration (PA) and at sizeable sales volumes of AI and HPC-based solutions in the international market.”

Instituto Pedro Nunes (IPN) is one of the 25 project partners and is responsible for the organization of this acceleration programme, as leader of Work Package 4 - Support to startups and search for investments, Task 4.3 – Support to startups, that *“(...) aims to support launching and accelerating new entrepreneurial projects and companies seeking to leverage solutions based on AI or HPC – either from the early stage to the scalability of adoption. More specifically, this task will focus on supporting pre-acceleration and acceleration programmes for start-ups, including the improvement of the investment readiness of the projects, understanding the factors of adoption and implementation, search for investment and fundraising, strategic technological and market partnerships for research, development and innovation activities.”* The other project partners involved in this task are: DTx, INESC TEC, INL, INOVA+, IPB, ISEP and UNINOVA.

The participation in this programme involves submitting an application, which includes the presentation of the business idea, that will be evaluated by a jury of IPN's choice.

Article 1. Objective

The ATTRACT Acceleration Programme is an intensive training, focused on growth strategies, market expansion, and other critical aspects of scaling a business based on AI/HPC technology. The objective is to help founders to validate their business ideas, the technical solutions, accelerate and support the company growth.

In specific, participants in the acceleration programme will benefit from an intensive programme in the following areas:

- Entrepreneurial skills: workshops and sharing of experiences with our entrepreneurial community, to develop essential entrepreneurial skills, such as networking, communication and pitching;
- AI/HPC Product Development: dedicated guidance from the industry and the academia to develop prototypes, minimum viable products (MVPs);
- Business Development for AI/HPC: workshops and support in areas like business models, clients and sales, AI ethics, regulatory framework and IP protection;
- Mentorship: participant teams are paired with experienced mentors and experts who provide guidance, feedback, and connections;
- Networking: opportunity to connect with other founders, investors, relevant stakeholders, potential clients and partners, expanding their professional network;
- Access to Funding Opportunities: access to dedicated information about private investment, and public funding by connecting startups with potential investors or venture capitalists, along with the presentation regarding other public funding mechanisms;
- Demo Day: the acceleration programme culminates in a demo day - a pitch event where startups showcase their progress with an audience of potential investors, partners and relevant stakeholders.

Article 2. Participants

1. Participants have to be legal companies, incorporated in Portugal, using AI and/or HPC in their technological solutions, to address a market need.
2. At least a team of two founders, and/or staff members up to a maximum of five, representing the company, have to fully attend the in-presence acceleration programme, in the identified venue.

3. The team's business has to be between 3 and 5, in the scale of the Innovation Readiness Level (IRL) (cf. IRL table in annex)

Article 3. Participation conditions

1. The application and participation in the ATTRACT Acceleration Programme are completely free of charge. The commercial value of the programme is 3.000€ (three thousand euros, VAT included) per selected team. This amount will be invoiced with a 100% (one hundred per cent) discount to each company; the amount of the discount should be considered to the *de minimis* threshold.
2. Participation requires filling in an application form, which can be accessed online on the ATTRACT project website.
3. The deadline for submitting the application is **September 16, 2024** by 23h:59m GMT, valid with the timestamp of the registered submission form.
4. The application can be completed in Portuguese or in English.
5. Applications will only be accepted if they are submitted online, on the appropriate form, filled in with valid and truthful information, in all the mandatory fields, by the deadline.
6. All the information about ATTRACT Acceleration Programme is available on the project website at <https://attract.inesctec.pt/> including the schedule, duration, venue, contents and activities of the programme, application form, and regulation.

Article 4. Evaluation criteria for applications

To evaluate the applications, the following 5 (five) evaluation criteria are defined, which are worth a total of 100 points.

- **Value proposition:** identification of the problem to be solved, the solution - product/service to be developed, the benefits it generates, elements of characterization and differentiation and other relevant elements. Maximum score: 30 points.
- **Innovation:** identification of the innovation, how and which AI and/or HPC technologies are incorporated into the product/service, presentation of the main

characteristics, potential and/or applicability of this technology to solve problems or constitute a solution that can be marketed. Maximum score: 20 points.

- **Business model:** presentation of how the product/service will be sold, market sector and location, type of clients and main competition. Maximum score: 20 points.
- **Intellectual Property (IP):** identification of the Intellectual Property rights relating to the main assets involved in the product/service and presentation of the respective protection strategy. Maximum score: 10 points.
- **Team:** professional, entrepreneurial and/or research experience of the candidate or the team; complementarity of the team members' skills; existence of mentors or *advisors* with whom they already collaborate, as well as any partnerships or awards. Maximum score: 20 points.

Article 6. Jury

1. Applications will be assessed by an appropriate jury, made up of members with renowned competence in the areas of technology-based entrepreneurship, AI/HPC, and innovation. This ensures impartiality, quality and transparency in the process of selecting the proposed business ideas.
2. The jury is composed by three members, from the ATTRACT partnership: an IPN representative, a DSPA representative and an INESC TEC representative.
3. The jury will evaluate the applications according to the process and criteria described in these regulations.
4. The organisation of the acceleration programme, as well as the respective jury, guarantee the total confidentiality of the business ideas submitted.
5. The jury's decision is sovereign and cannot be appealed.
6. No member of the jury may participate in this acceleration programme.

Article 7. Selection process

1. After submitting the application to the ATTRACT Acceleration Programme, the jury will select up to 10 (ten) best applications, according to the evaluation criteria.
2. Accepted and rejected applications will receive notification of the jury decision by email.

3. After selection, the selected applicants will be notified via email, with the relevant information on the operationalization of participation in the programme, and have to confirm their attendance, also by email.

Article 8. Additional information

1. All accepted candidates, external trainers and mentors will agree to enter into a written confidentiality agreement with the IPN prior to the start of the activities of the acceleration programme, which aims to safeguard the integrity of the information of all those involved in the programme. Failure to accept this requirement will result in automatic exclusion from the programme.
2. It is also mandatory to respond to periodic surveys on participation in the programme and its impact, during and after its conclusion, whether these are carried out by the IPN or by third parties previously referred by the IPN.
3. All initiatives to encourage the development of business ideas will only be undertaken with the prior authorization of the respective promoter(s).

Article 10. Data protection

1. All personal data provided by data subjects in the acceleration programme shall be processed exclusively for the purpose of their management by the IPN, as the entity responsible for processing and with the express consent of the respective data subjects (hereinafter "Data Subjects"), to be provided on a specific and individual form, under the terms and for the purposes of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and of the Portuguese legislation in force.
2. The IPN may be contacted with any questions relating to the processing of data carried out in this context, and for these purposes, at: rgpd-ipn@ipn.pt.
3. The personal data of the Data Subjects will be kept for the period of time necessary to manage the ATTRACT project, except in cases where another period is required by the applicable legislation.
4. The Data Subjects may, at any time, withdraw their consent to the processing of their personal data, in accordance with the applicable legislation, without

prejudice to the processing carried out on the basis of the consent previously given being considered valid. Withdrawing consent means that IPN cannot process your personal data for the purposes you have consented to, and as such may result in you being unable to continue attending the program.

5. IPN guarantees Data Subjects the exercise of their rights in relation to their data, such as the right of access, rectification, erasure, opposition, limitation of processing and portability, in accordance with the applicable legislation.
6. IPN implements all necessary and appropriate security measures to protect the personal data of Data Subjects, both when the data is processed directly by IPN and when the data is processed by entities subcontracted by IPN.
7. IPN may process the personal data collected in this context directly and/or through subcontractors for this purpose, and appropriate contracts will be concluded with such subcontractors, under the terms and with the content provided for by the applicable legislation.
8. Data subjects may make a complaint to the National Data Protection Commission if they consider that IPN has failed to comply with the legal provisions on data protection.

Approved by the partnership on 15/07/2024

ANNEX

Level	Innovation Readiness Level – IRL	Definition
1	Inventor or team with a dream	Lowest level of readiness where the intention surfaces to translate an idea, and a technology, into a business venture.
2	Paper studies produced	Once the basic ideas have been formulated, they are put down on paper in studies and analyses on the business opportunity.
3	Experimental evidence of business opportunity	Active research and development are initiated, including analytical / laboratory studies to validate predictions regarding the market, the competition and the technology.
4	Capability to work limited-scope programs with project teams	Basic technological and business components are developed to establish that they will work together; an initial business plan is available.
5	Capability to support project engineering development and design (no product, no revenues)	The basic technological and business components are integrated with reasonably realistic supporting elements. The business plan is credible, but still needs to be validated against the final product characteristics
6	Capability to support development and design with a market-driven business team (product, no revenues)	A representative prototype system is tested in a relevant environment. The business team is still incomplete and the venture not yet ready for commercialisation. A full business plan including market, operational, technological and financial aspects is available
7	Capability to support limited production; full business team in place (product and limited revenues)	The business can run on a limited scale. The full team is in place.
8	Capability to transition to full production and distribution (product and revenues)	The technology has been proven to work and the venture structure has proven to be able to support growing market shares.
9	Fully articulated business with appropriate infrastructure and staffing (growing market share)	The offering incorporating the new technology has been used in operational conditions and the business is running with a growing market share.

*Adapted from <https://www.esabic.no/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/a.-Innovation-Readiness-Level.pdf>