The GR digiGov-innoHUB- project is co-funded by the European Commission under the Digital Europe Programme grant agreement no.101083646 and the Operational Competitiveness Programme 2021-2027

Open Call to SMEs to participate in the GR digiGOV-innoHUB

Call Edition 2.0

October 2023

1. Presentation of the Project

GR digiGOV-innoHUB is a European Digital Innovation Hub (EDIH), member of the EDIH Network, within the Digital Europe Programme. The Hub's consortium, led by GRNET, consists of 16 partners, including the top Academic and Research Institutions that specialize in AI, HPC, blockchain and digital government issues and vibrant professional and scientific networks. All together, they form an experienced team, field-proven in the COVID19 period, in orchestrating the design and development of advanced information systems and infrastructures for the digital transformation of the Greek Public Administration.

The National Infrastructures for Research and Technology (GRNET S.A.) as "the coordinator" along with the 15 "Partners" as specified in the preamble of the Grant Agreement of the Project GR digiGOV-innoHUB, are willing to support Start-ups and SMEs, hereinafter referred to as **"the applicants"** that can offer solutions for government technology (govtech), public sector organisations, funding communities and practitioners, according to the objectives as set out in the GA Agreement of the Project.

The Hub is also supported directly by a broad assortment of key industry actors, regional authorities and civic society organizations that have expressed their willingness to participate. By the end of the Project duration, the Hub will constitute a network of excellence, with presence in almost all Greek regions, providing access for entrepreneurial actors to knowledge, experience and infrastructures. GR digiGOV-innoHUB attempts to become an accelerator that employs state-of-the-art frameworks and methods to develop and implement a new generation of public services.

2. Objectives

GR digiGOV-innoHUB aims to support the development of a new generation of Public services based on advanced digital technologies and open standards, for citizens and businesses; to enrich the ecosystem of Digital Transformation actors; and to facilitate innovation in Public Administration, transforming it into a large innovation buyer and investor. It will act as a virtual GOVtech Lab that can accelerate the development, innovative and cost-effective digital solutions through agile and efficient "borderless" collaborations among the public and private sectors, the civil society and Academia, adopting the European guidelines for technological openness in Public Administration and encouraging the use of EUPL.

The Hub's strategic priority is to support the development of a new generation of public services, by utilising advanced digital technologies (AI, 5G, HPC, IoT, Cloud, Cybersecurity, etc), and mobilising public sector organisations (PSOs) and entrepreneurial actors. To accomplish this, apart from the technological aspect, the Hub will take into consideration relevant policy initiatives such as: (a) the "Adopt-AI" programme to support the public procurement of AI systems, and (b) the "Declaration on European Digital Rights and Principles", which defines a set of principles for a human-centred digital transformation, and acts as a reference framework for people, and a guide for businesses and policy-makers.

The Hub will contribute to the majority of key-enablers for Digital Government Transformation, namely:

- Acceleration of the utilization of AI in the Public Services, within the context and provisions of the EU AI Act and regulatory framework
- Exploitation of open public data supporting the operation of next-generation e-government services.
- Transparency of public services through digital means.
- Privacy and trust of e-government services via the exploration of state-of-the-art cybersecurity schemes on existing and future services.
- Development of digital skills for both public sector actors and SMEs through tailored training courses.
- Specification of next-generation e-government services through workshops, innovation days and other co creation activities.
- Identification of the impact of emerging technologies on public sector performance through experimentation and validation activities.

- Facilitation of digital transformation for the public sector [IV1] and SMEs exploiting CEF building blocks and other DTA tools.

The Hub has the potential to foster further development of the main government portal gov.gr, both through the support of public bodies offering new citizen- or business-oriented services, by improving the delivery of existing services and by taking advantage of the ICT solutions and skills of the local innovation ecosystem. It aims at significantly contributing to the transformation of gov.gr from a portal to an active ecosystem, as envisioned in the roadmap of gov.gr as the next stage of its gradual development.

Additionally, the Hub will have the opportunity to apply contemporary and flexible methods (e.g., agile) in the design and development of ICT, as they are also described in the Digital Transformation Strategy (DTS). The Hub will follow the practice of the so-called "quick wins" that the Ministry of Digital Governance has been focusing on; that is, high impact short-term ICT interventions (3-9 months) that intend to provide a new digital public service in a timely manner through a minimum viable product (MVP) and, when possible, follow a modular development. After a quick service provision that covers the majority of cases, such solutions can then further get developed via more traditional development and procurement methods; Its services will address the inherent digital transformation requirements of proposers on the one hand, however, most of the services are oriented towards the upskilling of public sector entities and personnel.

Moreover, the Hub will offer experimentation facilities for successful applicants and the public sector to test e-government-related technologies and applications, and the feasibility of applying these technologies to their operations before further investing in it.

Overall, The GR digiGOV-innoHUB offers a comprehensive package of services to eligible applicants including technical support and know-how, access to infrastructures, acceleration, test before invest sandbox, business coaching etc.

3. Purpose of the Open Call

The purpose of this Open Call for GR digiGOV-innoHUB is to provide all necessary information and guidance needed in order to solicit eligible applicants involved in *High Performance Computing, Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity and 5G towards Public sector Digital Innovation*, to fill in applications to propose **solutions to the challenges this Call specific edition addresses**.

Depending on their proposal assessment, applicants will be eligible to receive services offered by the GR digiGOV-innoHUB (see Paragraph 14), according to the following scheme:

- **Step 1 : Request For Proposals**
  Submit proposal by 27/11/2023 at 15:00
  All applicants will be checked for meeting the eligibility criteria (paragraph 9)
  Proposals of all eligible applicants will be assessed based on the assessment criteria (paragraph 11).

All applicants will receive the corresponding set of services described in Paragraph 14 as Intro Services.

- **Step 2: Pitching / Presentation of solutions**
  All eligible applicants will be **invited** to the assessment Step 2: Pitching (see paragraph 12) for a short presentation of their solutions and will receive the corresponding set of services described in Paragraph 14 as Basic Services.

- **Step 3: Pre-accelearation / challenge**
  Successful applicants who **pass** the assessment Step 2: Pitching, will receive the set of services corresponding to phase A: pre-acceleration/challenge, described in Paragraph 14.

- **Step 4: Acceleration / pilot implementation**
  The applicants who successfully complete phase A /challenge will continue to phase B: acceleration - pilot implementation and receive the set of services corresponding to this phase (phase B), described in Paragraph 14.

4. The Challenges

This Open call edition 2.0 addresses five (5) challenges.

Applicants may submit a proposal for every challenge, provided they meet the eligibility criteria as described in paragraph 9.

Any supplementary criteria Start-ups and SMEs must meet in order to propose for the specific challenge, are listed as part of the description of the respective Challenge (see Annex).

GRNET has reserved a spot for a startup/SME to independently propose a solution for a public administration challenge, that is not predefined by the GR digiGOV-innoHUB, we call it a "**wildcard"**. In their proposal the applicants must define both the challenge and their solution. GRNET will seek to identify the most appropriate public sector organization to designate as challenge owner, should the wildcard succeed in Step 2 of the evaluation procedure.

5. Public Sector Stakeholders in this call edition

Each Challenge concerns one or more Public Sector stakeholders, be it Ministry Departments, Municipalities, local and regional Authorities. These stakeholders are designated as owners of the Challenges and will be represented on the assessment committee of the related proposed solutions addressing the Challenges.

6. Indicative Plan

Alterations in the Indicative Plan may occur at GRNET S.A.'s absolute discretion and no rights for any Applicant derive from it.

ACTIVITY	DATE
Date announcement of this request for proposal *on* ***https://digigov.innohub.gr/1h-prosklhsh-upobolhs-protaseon-gia-thn-pshfiakh-kainotomia-sto-dhmosio/***	**27/10/2023**
Application opening	**1/11/2023 έως 27/11/2023**
InfoDay meeting for interested applicants	**14/11/2023 at 17:00**
Final date for submitting questions	21/11/2023
Publication of FAQ on ***https://digigov.innohub.gr/1h-prosklhsh-upobolhs-protaseon-gia-thn-pshfiakh-kainotomia-sto-dhmosio/***	23/11/2023
Final Submission date	**27/11/2023 ώρα 15:00**
Eligibility check & Evaluation of proposals	28/11/2023 to 1/12/2023
Notification to selected proposals for presentation (pitches)	1/12/2023
Pre-Acceleration **Pitches by the best applicants per challenge**	**4/12/2023 to 6/12/2023**
Delivery of letters of award or rejection (via email) to selected and rejected Startups	7/12/2023 - 14/12/2023
Acceleration phase / Pilot design and preparation, selection of services per pilot	15/12/2023 - 10/1/2024
Pilot implementation	6 months duration after the contract assignment

Updates of this Open call in terms of new challenges, result in new rounds of submitting solutions/ challenges and consequently assessment and selection.

This process of issuing new editions of the Open Call, is scheduled and executed periodically in specific cut-off dates, see https://digigov.innohub.gr/en/ for details. The closing dates for the submission of new rounds of applications/challenges will be timely indicated by GRNET SA.

7. Submission of proposals

The terms and conditions of participation are specified in this text of the open call for proposals.

A proposal can only be submitted via **https://digigov.innohub.gr/proposal-submissions/** between November 1rst 2023 until November 27th 2023 15:00 pm.

Please submit the application documents in electronic form (pdf, maximum three files, one for each required document) to **https://digigov.innohub.gr/proposal-submissions/**.

Proposals that are received after the above date and time will not be accepted. The applicants will be required to answer several questions concerning the company, the Solution they offer to the Challenge, the approach and the business model.

8. Information Day and communication with candidate applicants

To give applicants a better understanding of the challenges, depending on the interest, GRNET S.A. will organise one information day. This info day will take place on November 14th at 17:00

Applicants are asked to communicate their interest in attending the information day via the website **https://digigov.innohub.gr/en/infodays**.

Any questions related to submission of proposals should be sent to the following e-mail: Challenges@digigov.innohub.gr

9. Eligible Applicants - Grounds for exclusion

9.1. Eligibility Criteria

In order to submit a proposal, the SME about to apply, must meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. Legal Entity form: PC or LLC or SA with headquarters in Greece, or having a subsidiary or a branch in Greece (with a Greek VAT number), if headquarters are not located in Greece.
2. The company employs fewer than 250 employees Full-Time Equivalent during the last year of operation, as recorded through the ERGANI information systems of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs.
3. The annual turnover, as recorded in the financial statements of the previous fiscal year may not exceed the amount of 50 million Euros.

In the event that the application concerns a Greek branch of a foreign company, condition No. 1 should be met for both the branch and the foreign company, while condition 3 should only be met for the Greek branch.

However, some further criteria may apply depending on the challenge. If any, these will be found in the Template of the application documents.

In addition and specifically for startups about to apply, the following conditions shall be met:

- They must have been founded according to the Joint Ministerial Decision No. 85490/10.08.2020 entitled: "Recommendation to the General Secretariat of Research and Technology of the Ministry of Development and Investments, National Register of Young Enterprises. Conditions for registration and criteria for the inclusion of businesses in the above-mentioned Register" (Β΄ 3668), as amended and in force with No. 134622/17.12.2020 (Β΄5587) amendment of the Civil Code.

- The company has not been running for more than 8 years since its establishment, counting from the date the application for registration with the National Startup Registry was submitted.

All Applicants are welcome to apply for one or more of the available challenges as they are described herein. All Applicants that meet the eligibility criteria set out herein will be invited to participate in the assessment process conducted by GRNET S.A.

During the whole period for which the present Call remains open, there will be at least two (2) assessment procedures that will take place per year, according to the challenge definition progress.

Any supplementary criteria you must meet as a Startup/SME in order to propose on the specific challenge are listed as part of the description of the respective challenge in the **Annex.**

9.2. With respect to grounds for exclusion

In order to prove that there are no grounds for exclusion, the applicants who have successfully passed "**Step 1: Proposal assessment"** of paragraph 12, are obliged to submit the following supporting documentation within ten (10) days from the relevant invitation, namely:

a) • **To prove legal representation**, in cases where the eligible applicant is a legal entity and is bound under applicable law to declare its representation and any changes thereto with a competent authority (eg GENERAL COMMERCIAL REGISTRY), it shall present a relevant detailed certificate of representation, issued up to thirty (30) working days prior to such submission to GRNET SA.

• **To prove lawful establishment** and any changes of the legal entity, if the latter results from a certificate of a competent authority (eg general certificate issued by

GENERAL COMMERCIAL REGISTRY), the eligible applicant submits such certificate, issued up to three (3) months prior to submission as well as the codified articles of association.

The lawful establishment of the candidate, all relevant amendments to the articles of association thereof, the natural person (s) who legally binds the company on the date of the tender (legal representative, right of signature, etc.), any third parties to whom a power of attorney has been granted, as well as the term of office of the member and/or members of the governing body/legal representative(s) of the economic operator concerned, should result from the above documents.

b) **Tax clearance certificate** in force at the time of submission [in case where there is no reference to the validity period thereof, it may become accepted if it has been issued up to three (3) months prior to submission],

c) **Social Security clearance certificate** in force at the time of submission [in case where there is no reference to the validity period thereof, it may become accepted if it has been issued up to three (3) months prior to submission],

d) **Extract of the criminal record** issued in the last quarter as from the date of submission, or else Statement under Responsibility of the Legal Representative (accepted if it has been prepared after notification of the invitation to submit supporting documentation).

e) **Declaration** in which the eligible applicant states that the amount of state aid for which they have acquired a legal right to receive aid during the last three financial years (current financial year and the two previous financial years) from the year of application, based on the de minimis regime, doesn't exceed the maximum amount according to the Regulation De minimis 1407/2013 (L352/9/24.12.2013).

Should any of the aforementioned documents or certificates be not issued or where such document or certificate does not cover all cases mentioned above, such document or certificate may be replaced by a **Statement under responsibility** by the Legal Representative (issued after the current Invitation).

Specifically, as regards foreign entities, they shall be exempted from any provisions related exclusively to obligations of domestic nature, which indicatively result from registration with domestic registers (eg G.E.M.I.) and are linked to the ability of issuing one or some of the aforementioned certificates and documents. The observance of the above obligations by foreign economic operators is reviewed by the contracting authorities under the same terms and conditions as domestic economic operators are reviewed vis-vis the existence of grounds of exclusion according to article 73 of Law 4412/2016 (article 57 par. 1-6 of Directive 2014/24 / EU), as in force and in accordance with the respective provisions of the law of the Member State of their establishment.

10. The assessment procedure

The assessment process of all received applications is managed separately for each thematic / challenge participation and follows common procedures.

Once a published submission deadline has expired, GRNET S.A. first assesses the formal aspects of all applications received before the submission deadline as well as compliance with the eligibility criteria.

If non-compliance of a minor nature is ascertained during the assessment process, the applicant may be asked to rectify the noted defect in a no later than a 48-hour deadline. Upon expiry of the deadline, should the Applicant has failed to amend the filled application, or the additional information is found insufficient, the proposal will be dismissed. In such a case, the Applicant will be duly informed, receiving a concise reasoning to this end. In any case of such an application found non-admissible, the Applicant remains eligible to submit a revised proposal on a subsequent call.

The assessment process will take place on a specified date, after the submission deadline has expired.

The **assessment committee** consists of representatives from the GR digiGOV-innoHUB, experts on innovation and entrepreneurship, and the civil servants responsible for the specific challenges (challenge owners), who can consult a team of experts at any time.

The assessment committee reserves the right to ask for any necessary clarification, disambiguation or question regarding the proposal.

GRNET will assess the proposals on the following points:

1. Is the proposal complete and in accordance with the rules and regulations as stated in these guidelines?
2. Does the Applicant, upon inspection by the GRNET, meet the requirements outlined for eligibility as intended in paragraphs 9.1 and 9.2. and any additional requirements included in paragraph 4.
3. Assessment of all proposals based on the assessment criteria by the assessment committee (**Step 1: see paragraphs 11 & 12)**
4. Ranking of all the proposals by the assessment committee
5. Selection of all proposals scored above threshold per Challenge by the assessment committee that will be invited to give a pitch to the assessment committee. **(Step 2: see paragraphs 11 & 12)**
6. Final Assessment of those proposals per Challenge based on the pitches and responses to the questions asked by the assessment committee.

GRNET may request evidence of performance, products or services.

11. Assessment process

Assessment of submitted applications takes place in two steps.

Step 1: Proposal Assessment and scoring

If the Applicant meets all formal and eligibility requirements, regulations and minimum technical requirements in these guidelines, its proposal will be eligible for assessment in Step 1 by the assessment committee.

For Step 1, the following questions will need to be answered by the applicants (*see proposal template*):

Company / Team

1. Explaining in your own way what your company does, what its goals are and how you are planning to accomplish those goals. Include links to a video if available.
2. How many founders are there in the company? How long have they worked together? Are there any additional employees on the teams, if so, how many and in which roles?
3. Please provide short bios of all the founders. Linkedin profiles if available, their roles and links to work you have done before (previous startups and relevant experience)
4. How many team members are able to be present in the HUB for the full programme?
5. What is your current progress or traction? Please include (pilot) customers or users & metrics, revenue and other indicators of progress.
6. Has the company raised external funding? If so, how much and from whom? What are your future plans for fundraising? Do you need funding to continue?
7. What is the sales plan for the next year(s)?

Product / Service

1. What is your vision on the digital governance particular challenge? And describe how your product solves or adds to the solution of this challenge in the short and long terms.
2. **Do you have a prototype / beta version of your product/service mature enough to go through validation for TRL 5 and are you able to present it?**
3. What is your technical roadmap related to the proposal?
4. Did you do customer research and what are the main insights? How large is the market potential? And how large is the potential impact your product may have on the market in the short and long term
5. What is new, exciting or disruptive about what your company does? Does a similar product already exist? What differentiates what you are building from competitors and how will you sustain your advantage?
6. Do you have any novel or protected technology or does it have the potential to be protected?

7. Present your plans for commercial evolving your product and your basic assumptions.
8. Please provide an estimate of the running costs of your solution after the end of the project. Who will maintain the solution? What will the role of the challenge – owner be?

Other

1. If you are / were part of an accelerator / incubator programme please indicate which one.
2. On what subjects do you need (intensive) help & support.

The assessment committee will arrive unanimously at one integral score for Step 1 proposal assessment and ranking per challenge, based on the three **selection criteria** described in Paragraph 12 for Step 1 to review the answers to the above questions.

The max score for Step 1 proposal assessment and ranking is 100, **while the threshold to enter the step 2 of assessment is 60.**

The three aspects will be assessed conjointly, where each criterion has a specific weight. Therefore, the assessment committee will give one final score as integration of these criteria given they are strongly interrelated, is an important part of the assessment.

Step 2: Pitching and scoring

All proposals per challenge scored above threshold in Step 1 will continue to Step 2 for pitching for a maximum of 10 minutes to the assessment committee and answer questions. Key points the applicant will be asked to cover during pitching are the company's vision in tackling the Challenge and to what extent does it contribute to solving it?

Subsequently, the assessment committee will get the opportunity to ask questions for 40 minutes, in which the assessment Committee will conduct an interview about the proposed Solution, the Pitch, the team and the motivation of the Applicant to receive the services offered by the HUB and to implement a pilot for the specific Challenge they address.

In Step 2 of the assessment, a maximum of 100 points can be scored on the presentation. The assessment committee is allowed to give a score in between two scores described in the assessment criteria in paragraph 12. **For this part, a minimum score of 60 is required to continue to the final ranking**.

Furthermore, the assessment committee has the right to change the score on phase 1, based on the outcome of the verification question. The new score of phase 1 will then be added to the score of phase 2. This will create a ranking per challenge and the highest ranked will continue on to the program as described in Paragraph 13.

12. Assessment criteria

Step 1: Proposal assessment and selection criteria

After the eligibility check, the assessment of the proposals will be based on the following criteria:

Criteria	Weighting
Vision and innovation	30%
Impact	35%
Realization and implementation	35%

a) Vision and innovation (Weighting factor 30%, mainly refers to the "product/service" set of questions)

The assessment committee will look at the following aspects of vision and innovation. The more persuasive the vision and innovation, the higher the assessment.

- What is the company vision in tackling the Challenge and to what extent does it contribute to solving it?
- Is (the design of) the concept in the short and long term unique?
- To what extent does the solution already exist?
- Is the technology innovative and can it be used for implementation with respect to the Challenge?
- Will it bring added value over to existing off-the shelve/commercial solutions?

b) Impact (Weighting factor 35%, mainly refers to the "product/service" set of questions)

The assessment committee looks at the positive impact the solution will bring to the challenge. The bigger the expected positive impact, the better the evaluation. Aspects considered include:

- Which possible results will the product or service have in the short and long term?
- How can the currently available prototype or beta be further developed?
- What are the desired positive results and how do you intend to achieve them?
- Why is it likely that your Solution will succeed?

c) Realization and implementation (Weighting factor 35%, mainly refers to the company team" and "other" set of questions)

The assessment committee will look at the following aspects of the realization and implementation of the Solution. The more specific the proposal for realization and implementation and the more confidence this instills, the higher the assessment.

- How feasible is the Solution?

- How easily will the product/service be deployed and implemented?
- Is the timeline realistic and is it financially feasible?
- The use of manpower, scope and task distribution across the applying company;
- How many hours per week is the team available?
- Does your team have all the necessary know-how? What is missing?
- Who maintains the Solution?
- What does this require in terms of cooperation with other departments of the participating Public Administration Organization or external suppliers?
- What will the product or service look like in the short and long term and what are the future prospects if it becomes a success?
- Taking into account broader future implementation, what is the scalability of the offered products and services and how can they be replicated in other Public Administration environments?
- Does the applicant have a clear expectation regarding the owner's role in order to realize its Solution?

Step 2: Pitching assessment and selection criteria:

The assessment committee uses the following reasoning to score the pitching step:

Score 0: the intended project leader inspires no confidence whatsoever. He or she does not understand the challenge and / or the Bid sufficiently and / or did not convince the assessment committee at all that he or she is the right person with the necessary competences to reach a satisfactory result.

Score 20: The intended project leader does not inspire sufficient confidence that he or she has an understanding of the task and was only able to convince the assessment committee on a few points that he or she was the right person able guide the project towards a satisfactory result.

Score 40: Based on the interview / presentation, the assessment committee is not fully convinced the intended project leader is the right person using his or her role to get a satisfactory technological result, but the answers he or she gave were not all unsatisfactory.

Score 60: The intended project leader inspires no more than sufficient confidence. He or she has enough understanding of the challenge solution to gain sufficient confidence that practically, the approach will lead to satisfactory results and / or he or she did not convince the assessment committee to possess the practical competences needed to get a more than satisfactory result.

Score 80: The intended project leader inspires a good amount of confidence. He or she understands the Challenge and proposal well and has displayed the necessary competences to reach a good result. The Applicant exceeds the expectations, but does not excel. This stems from the fact that the Applicant does not display an excellent understanding of the Challenge and / or proposal and / or that the assessment committee is not convinced that

the intended project leader has the necessary competences to reach more than a good result with the approach.

Score 100: The intended project leader inspires a lot of confidence. He or she has an excellent understanding of the challenge and / or proposal, is able to convincingly translating the into a concrete approach in practice and also has, in the view of the assessment committee, proven he or she has all the necessary competences to reach, in practice, an excellent result. The intended project leader exceeds the expectations significantly.

13. Participation to the HUB and Services offered to applicants

Based on the proposal (Step 1), the pitch, and the responses to the questions (after the pitch and during the interview –Step 2) asked by the assessment committee, the assessment committee will do the final ranking of the applicants.

Depending on the performance of the applicants vis-a-vis the assessment procedure, we distinguish the following 3 levels of participation into the HUB and to the corresponding services it offers, as these are indicated in paragraph 14:

1. All candidates submitting a proposal are entitled the **intro HUB services**

2. Successful applicants that pass to assessment Step 2: Pitching, are entitled the **Basic HUB services**

3. The final top ranked applicants/challenge will be entitled for **Phase A HUB services**.

4. The selected applicants will be entitled for **Phase B HUB services** depending on the outputs and the performance level the applicants achieved in using the **Phase A HUB services**.

The same selection process applies for the wildcard proposals but GRNET reserves the right to select only the highest ranked proposal.

All Applicants will be notified in writing about the outcome of the assessment. Each Applicant may require, within 10 calendar days upon receipt of the notification, minutes explaining the reason why the application was not successful.

GRNET S.A. will enter contract negotiations with all successful applicants, taking the comments of the assessment committee into account. GRNET S.A. reserves the right to refrain from signing a contract, should, after three months upon receival of the notification from the Applicant no contract is signed, and this is attributed solely to the Applicant's actions or omissions.

14 Services offered by the GR digiGOV innoHUB

GR digiGOV-innoHUB will offer the following services/support for the applicants:

Intro HUB services

Digital Maturity Assessment etc.

- Digital Maturity Assessment (Service value/applicant €1.200)

Skills

- DigiGov Academy: Access to Open Massive Online Courses MOOCS (service value/applicant: €250)

Networking

- Investment Cycle-Pitching and Networking Events with Equifund/VCs etc. (Service value/Applicant: €1.000)
- Networking activities, workshops, knowledge exchange events (Service value/Applicant: €2.000)

Basic HUB services

all intro HUB services plus:

Digital Maturity Assesment etc.

- Digital Maturity Assessment (Service value/applicant €1.200)
- Project Journey Design & Digital Service Blueprint (**S**ervice value/Applicant:€1.000**)**

Skills

- DigiGov Academy: Access to Open Massive Online Courses MOOCS (service value/applicant: €250)
- miniMBA in Digital Public Services (Service value/applicant: €3.000)

Investment Support

- DigiGOV Agora, virtual marketplace (Service value/Applicant: €500)
- Investment Cycle-Pitching and Networking Events with Equifund/VCs etc. (Service value/Applicant: €1.000)
- Support for submitting to ERDF, Horizon, InvestEU, EIB, etc. (Service value/Applicant: €1.000)

Networking and Internationalisation

- Networking activities, workshops, knowledge exchange events (Service value/Applicant: €2.000)
- Internationalisation, pitching activities (Service value/Applicant: €2.000)

Phase A HUB services: pre-acceleration

all intro and basic HUB services plus:

Test before invest (development)

- MVP Design (Service value/Applicant:€2.000)
- MVP testing (Service value/Applicant: €2.000)
- TRL 5 validation (Service value/Applicant: €7.000)

Access to infrastructures

- Access to Infrastructure (AI/ML Platform, HPC core units, Blockchain, Cloud/VMs/Storage) (Service value/Applicant: €5.920)

Innovation procurement management services

- Legal and practical advice on Innovation Procurement (Service value/Applicant: €1.000)

Phase B HUB services: Acceleration

all intro, basic and phase A HUB services plus:

Test before invest (development)

- TRL 7 development (service value/pilot project: €10.000)
- Design of small and mid-scale pilots (Service value/Applicant: €3000)
- Continuation of Access to Infrastructure (AI/ML Platform, HPC core units, Blockchain,Cloud/VMs/Storage)
- Follow up assessment and Validation per project (Service value/Applicant: €500)

Skills

- Tailor made skills development programs (service value/pilot project: €10.000)

Innovation procurement management services

- Legal and practical advice on Innovation Procurement (Service value/Applicant: €1.000)

Important Notice: *The € figures shown here, correspond to the nominal value of the services offered and by no means can be perceived as financial support to the beneficiaries. However, a Declaration of Honour regarding compliance with the De Minimis requirements will be required by all applicants who will be entitled to the various categories of services provided by the HUB as specified above.*

15 Furthermore, we kindly ask you to pay attention to the following:

All Intellectual Property Rights will be dealt with according to the provisions of Article 16 and Annex 5 “Specific Rules” of the GA.

GRNET S.A. keeps the applicant's information confidential. The applicants may only use the information provided to them by GRNET S.A. in the context of these guidelines for the purpose for which they have been provided.

No expenses incurred in either stage of the application procedure will be reimbursed to the Applicant by GRNET S.A.

This Open Call does not impose any obligation to enter into negotiations with any Applicant.

ANNEX

1. The challenges

Until now, the GR digiGOV-innoHUB project addresses four key challenges identified in the initial round, aiming to enhance digital public services in Greece. These challenges include multi-lingual access to Gov.gr services, streamlining multifaceted administrative procedures with AI, AI-driven solutions to improve efficiency in the Greek justice system, and an AI voice command system to enhance the accessibility of public administration websites. Each challenge is accompanied by a general AI/ML challenge description that outlines the broader goals and objectives.

Since the project is designed to provide a series of services tailored to address these challenges, ensuring efficient and effective implementation of the final solutions to the challenges, these services will be first detailed and then matched to each specific challenge, leveraging advanced AI and ML technologies, infrastructure resources, testing environments, pilot implementations, and evaluation metrics. Through this comprehensive approach, the GR digiGOV-innoHUB project aims to revolutionize public administration and deliver innovative digital solutions to enhance citizen experiences and optimize government processes.

1.1 Multi-Lingual access to Gov.gr Services

Greece is a melting pot of cultures, annually drawing in substantial numbers of tourists, immigrants, and refugees. With the rise in remote work, more people are choosing Greece as their base, creating a rich multicultural landscape. To cater to the diverse linguistic needs of these groups, GR digiGOV-innoHUB introduces a challenge to develop an automated translation mechanism for services listed on Gov.gr, enabling equal access for all users to the digital services provided by the Greek public administration. The expected solution should be adaptable, easily integrated into the existing infrastructure of gov.gr, and capable of making digital public services universally accessible, in line with the EU's accessibility guidelines. Given that the service catalogue on gov.gr is ever-changing, it is crucial that the proposed solution allows dynamic content management in multiple languages.

The translation tool needs to function optimally on the gov.gr portal. It should also be flexible enough to be utilized by individual services such as agencies, other digital service providers, or different central portals.

One key aspect of this challenge is the need to address the unique terminology used by the Greek public administration. Existing translation tools are not specifically trained on this specialized vocabulary. Thus, the solution must incorporate the capacity to be trained or refined using current or past relevant work to enhance its accuracy with Greek administrative terminology.

1.1.1 Techical challenges

The first technical challenge of the DigiGov Lab project focuses on providing **multi-lingual access** to Gov.gr services, ensuring equal accessibility for all citizens, including tourists, refugees, immigrants, and remote workers residing in Greece. To meet this challenge, the solution must be **adaptable and easily integrated** into the Gov.gr platform, aligning with EU guidelines for digital public services. It should cater to the **dynamic nature of the gov.gr service catalog** and enable the management of **multilingual content across various service providers**. Additionally, the solution should encompass the training of existing or new tools to align with the **specific terminology and requirements** of the Greek public administration.

Implementing an automatic translation mechanism would significantly reduce processing time and alleviate the workload for public administration employees. **Accuracy in translation** is vital to avoid misunderstandings, particularly **considering the specialized terminology and formal tone used in official documents**. By leveraging AI-powered translation, the solution empowers citizens to navigate administrative processes independently, fostering equality and enhancing efficiency within the system.

1.1.2 Requirements

The solution that will be developed for the first challenge should incorporate several key ideas to ensure its comprehensiveness, effectiveness, and usefulness. First and foremost, it needs to be user-friendly for both employees and citizens, accommodating a wide range of users. Furthermore, the tool should include an integrated dictionary specific to the Greek public administration, ensuring accuracy and consistency in translations. To maintain the system's correctness, automated evaluation and feedback mechanisms are necessary to identify and rectify any errors or ambiguities. The tool should also be dynamically trainable to enable automatic document updates. Integrating a chatbot would enhance the user experience, providing interactive assistance. Regarding language determination, the need for automatic translations into Greek requires a choice between multilingual or bilingual models. Finally, it is crucial to include the capability of translating files of all formats, including PDF, with proper preservation of content and processes integration. By incorporating these ideas, the developed tool will effectively address the challenges and provide comprehensive language services within the Greek public administration.

1.1.3 Beneficiaries

Employees across different agencies, such as AADE, the Ministry of Interior, and KEP, would benefit from the automatic translation system integrated into Gov.gr. The solution will reduce their workload and simplify complex cases by providing a unified structure of information. The translation mechanism would greatly facilitate the work of embassies, improving the country's image and cooperation with foreign nationals. For citizens who do not speak Greek, the solution enables better understanding of procedures, saving time and promoting equal access to public services. Academic institutions and businesses focused on utilizing modern technologies would also find value in the solution, contributing to its development and deployment. Strategic partners, such as the Ministry of Digital Governance, can provide oversight and support for the tool's implementation across the

Greek public administration, ensuring proper promotion, implementation, and effective training for employees.

1.2 Streamlining Multifaceted Administrative Procedures with AI

The Greek Ministry of Development and Investments is facing a challenge in promptly and efficiently addressing the numerous queries from citizens about various benefits and services, due to a steady increase in the volume of requests and a lack of sufficient staffing. Finding relevant information on most Greek Governmental websites can prove burdensome, particularly for citizens less familiar with digital navigation.

GR digiGOV-innoHUB calls upon innovative SMEs and start-ups to propose technology-based solutions to deliver personalized services which streamline benefits related administrative procedures. The aim is to make the process of seeking information and receiving services related to benefits as intuitive and frictionless as possible.

Potential solutions could include the development of a digital assistant, like a chatbot, which can provide citizens with fundamental information about services and benefits, as well as guide them towards the appropriate service, person, or further information. Another promising avenue could be an integrated AI system capable of accepting applications, routing them to the appropriate teams, offering advice, and communicating the results effectively.

1.2.1 Technical challenges

The second technical challenge, presented by the Ministry of Development, revolves around the problem of a **complex and fragmented knowledge** about the procedures involved in providing services and assistance to citizens, encompassing various departments and offices. Knowledge about these processes is dispersed, with individuals in each department possessing a detailed understanding of how requests for benefits are handled within their own jurisdiction, often unaware of the procedures in neighboring offices. The challenge owner metaphorically described the cognitive representation of these processes as "spaghetti knowledge" and seeks solutions in AI and ML. To address this challenge, several proposals were put forward, including **extracting knowledge from relevant individuals with the use of chatbots**, focusing on specific processes, **reorganizing the internal knowledge** of the organization **in an interoperable manner**, and **facilitating knowledge sharing** within the organization. **Knowledge can be implicit**, possessed by insiders (ministry employs) and outsiders (e.g. accountants) **or explicit**, written in the application circulars, which translate legislation principles into specific steps, and all types should be taken into account.

1.2.2 Requirements

The main challenge is to unravel the complexity of procedures that award benefits to the citizens. Users essentially seek a navigation service to the appropriate department and a clear list of the required documents they need to provide in order to become eligible for a benefit. They expect the digital assistant to have knowledge of their (social, financial etc) profile and inform them in a timely

manner if they meet the basic requirements for receiving a benefit or if they are excluded in advance. Once eligible to apply, they want the guide to direct them to the correct services, assist them in gathering the necessary documents, and monitor the progress of their request. Furthermore, the employees within the services themselves will be able to efficiently access this information while assisting citizens. In other words, this system will benefit both external and internal users.

The solution that will be developed for the second challenge should include at least the following: documenting the benefit-related procedures of the Ministry in Mitos, implementing common documentation systems, training the ministry's personnel, identifying naturally occurring examples of user searches to improve the training of the system, developing a model to predict the appropriate department that will handle each case, creating a language model to parse legislation, developing a reverse chatbot for acquiring the implicit knowledge through structured questions, and using reinforcement learning to enhance the model's performance beyond initial training. The solution of a digital assistant has been promoted, capable of processing requests formulated in natural language and providing step-by-step instructions on the required documents and the responsible departments for submitting them. As a future feature, the assistant was proposed to monitor the progress of each request from the user's perspective.

1.2.3 Beneficiaries

During the analysis of stakeholders, several groups of beneficiaries were identified as the most involved, including citizens, application developers, employees of the Ministry of Development, and particularly vulnerable citizens. Other stakeholders that emerged from the process included Athena Research Center (a highly involved solutions provider), THEA, EBEA, and Elevate Greece (strategic partners highly involved in the initiative), and the European Central Bank (ECB) as a moderately involved strategic partner.

1.3 AI-Driven Solutions to Improve Efficiency in the Greek Justice System

Slow delivery is the core challenge facing the judicial system in Greece, majorly due to the overwhelming volume and complexity of case-related information that judges, court officials, and lawyers must sift through for each case. Often, these documents exist in non-digital formats, further impeding rapid information processing. The enormity of the information, coupled with its complexity and the absence of effective ICT tools to support the analysis and comprehension of such large volumes of text, leads to increased workloads, raising the likelihood of delays, human errors and decline in overall service quality. The challenge not only impacts judges and court officials but also other stakeholders such as the parties involved in cases, lawyers and citizens.

GR digiGOV-innoHUB is seeking proposals for pilot AI solutions to help stakeholders in the Greek justice ecosystem to analyze large volumes of textual data, such as case files, legal documents, witness statements, and court decisions. Indicative pilot proposals may, for instance, include a Semantic Search Assistant for exploring and/or summarizing case file information and data, a Case Precedence Assistant for speeding up research in previous similar cases to see how they were

resolved and an Evidence Review Assistant to streamline identification, categorization and presentation of key pieces of case evidence for legal professionals.

1.3.1 Technical challenges

The main technical challenges in this context involve **semantic search, information extraction, and retrieval**. The complexity of the information, especially legal texts and procedures, makes it difficult to quickly locate and comprehend relevant details. Additionally, the lack of effective ICT tools tailored to support judicial officials during the analysis phase further complicates the process. Existing tools have not focused on providing assistance in extracting conclusions from large volumes of text, such as **automatic summarization** and semantic search. This leads to increased workload for those involved and potentially overlooks critical details. To overcome these challenges, modern NLP and machine learning techniques can be employed. These technologies can **analyze extensive textual data**, including legal documents, witness statements, and court decisions, to **extract insights** that would otherwise be difficult to identify even **from scanned documents**. By utilizing these emerging technologies, judges and court officials can conduct their research more effectively, speeding up the preparation process and facilitating decision-making.

1.3.2 Requirements

The proposed approach involves developing a prototype digital case file solution integrated with an AI assistant capable of processing and analyzing legal documents, identifying relevant information, and presenting it in a user-friendly manner. The main requirements for the solution, as defined by the participating stakeholders, include the creation of standardized forms for automated decisions, the utilization of Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques for finding similar judicial decisions, for the automatic classification and correlation of case-related documents and the generation of a judicial decision, and the digitization of incoming documents. This solution aims to provide judicial officers with access to the system during case study and trial proceedings, while considering the need for modules to enable digitization of essential case elements, and digitization of existing physical materials/documents. In addition, the development of a new information system for the Ministry of Justice to ensure interoperability among existing ICT systems has been highlighted although it is not an AI/ML related challenge.

1.2.3 Beneficiaries

As primary internal users, judges and judicial officials need to examine and understand vast amounts of information quickly and accurately. Their motivation is to make well-informed decisions based on a comprehensive understanding of the case. AI tools can reduce their workload and potentially improve the accuracy of their work. This category should play a role in shaping and co-developing the solution. Lawyers and Support Staff also handle a significant volume of legal information. AI tools can assist them in preparing their cases more effectively, thereby serving their clients more efficiently. Although not directly involved, citizens have a direct interest in the efficient functioning of the justice system.

Especially in the field of Natural Language Processing (NLP), the AI Technology Providers are driven by the opportunity to demonstrate the effectiveness of their technology in a high-impact practical

environment. They may have already developed AI tools for legal research. Other tools may not be specifically designed for legal research, which could limit their effectiveness, but they could significantly improve search and support for the involved parties.

Apart from the beneficiaries and solution providers, more stakeholders are engaged in the challenge. The Ministry of Justice seeks an efficient and fair justice system, aiming to enhance public services and public trust. The National Codification Portal contributes its knowledge and access to codified legislation for integration and AI system training. Judicial Associations and Bar Associations bring their expertise to shape effective solutions, considering the unique needs and challenges of legal professionals. They provide insights into ethical and professional considerations related to AI adoption in the justice system.

1.4 AI Voice Command System to Enhance Accessibility of Public Administration Websites

At the heart of a truly inclusive society lies the ability for all its citizens to access and use public services without exception. Currently, citizens with disabilities face difficulties in accessing digital public services independently. Digital Public Services comply with AA level of W3C and a significant missing function to achieve AAA compliance is the provision of voice commands. This gap is observed both at the service search level and at the service provision level, which typically involves the filling out of a citizen's online application.

GR digiGOV-innoHUB is seeking proposals for pilot solutions to address this challenge by creating a robust voice command system, incorporating speech to text conversion capabilities and AI technology. Indicative pilot proposals may, for instance, include a Voice Enabled Service Search allowing users to vocally search for the service they need, a Form Filling Virtual Assistant allowing citizens to fill web based forms by speaking their answers to each question, a Navigation Assistant allowing citizens to access different parts of a digital public service by interpreting and executing their vocal commands.

1.4.1 Technical challenges

The main technical challenge in this case is the **creation of a voice command system** that will perform speech-to-text and text-to-speech conversion to improve accessibility for all citizens that use gov.gr. The accessibility for all citizens should have been considered during the design of the gov.gr site, but due to the time required for W3C/AAA compliance, it has remained at the AA level. The development of a **voice command system** would benefit individuals with disabilities, citizens with limited digital literacy and all citizens that struggle to navigate the platform. **Voice search** would make the platform accessible, easier to use, more attractive, and add value to the service. The challenge of a **voice-based form filling** service lies in ensuring a seamless and accurate user experience. In five steps, the user can fully utilize the service through voice commands: (1) activating the gov.gr service, (2) conducting voice-based searches within gov.gr, (3) user authentication within the system, (4) completing the document through voice input, and (5) finalizing the action by sending the document or saving it in their mailbox. The technical implementation should address complexities such as **accurately interpreting voice commands**, **handling various document formats**, and **ensuring data privacy and security** throughout the process. Additionally, robust training and

continuous improvement are necessary to overcome any technological limitations and provide an efficient and user-friendly form filling experience.

1.4.2 Requirements

The adoption of an interactive voice assistant that would lead to comprehensive platform navigation and completion of documents generated by gov.gr may arise as a combination of various technologies. Simply adopting text-to-speech tools would require users to hear the entire site and then type or click on a command in order to use the desired service, making the platform usage more challenging. Simple voice-based search would provide users with desired information but would not allow further interaction and document generation. By implementing an interactive voice assistant, all users would be able to voice-operate the site. It would assist not only individuals with disabilities but also those facing temporary difficulties or those who are less familiar with website navigation.

1.4.3 Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries of the solutions include employees of Citizen Service Centers (KEP), Registry Offices, and service providers that use gov.gr to deliver their services. As the primary internal users assisting citizens, the development of voice command systems would enhance accessibility and improve their work quality by reducing the workload associated with daily citizen services and addressing bureaucratic or systemic difficulties. The effective functioning of the system would enhance citizens' trust in the government and the services it offers, fostering a sense of inclusion and overall well-being in citizen-state relationships. Technology providers from universities and companies possess the expertise and can contribute to the design and implementation of the project. Although the tools may not be specifically designed for gov.gr, their technical knowledge can effectively aid in identifying and adopting appropriate solutions. Strategic collaborators like the Ministry of Digital Governance and the National Accessibility Authority can also contribute by promoting the adoption of voice command systems and facilitating the search for and availability of resources.

1.5. Solutions addressing the consequences and impact of natural disasters

The recent floods in the Thessalian plain and the summer fires are estimated to have significant and long-term effects on the Agri-Food sector, the Environment, and Tourism. Innovative companies and research institutions are invited to contribute to the use of modern technologies to deal with these effects and to take advantage of recent experience to improve forecasting, information and mobilization systems. Particular importance is given to addressing the immediate needs of the residents and professionals of the affected areas.