



ELE 2 – European Language Equality 2

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Pilot Projects and Preparatory Actions (PPPA)

FSTP – SRIA Contribution Projects Open Call Call Documentation

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Document history

Date	Short Description of Changes
29 September 2022	Call documentation created and published.

1 Summary – Key Parameters

SRIA Contribution Project Topics	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data sets for more robust speech technology 2. Study of language coverage for text mining and natural language understanding in key European industrial sectors 3. Legal Assessment (Desk Research) 4. General NLP/LT/AI Landscaping (Desk Research) 5. General NLP/LT Domains (Desk Research) 6. Analysis of AI and LT in European news media 7. Computing facilities for LT (Desk Research) 8. Demonstrably Greener Models of MT 9. Survey of the use of LT in the hospital sector 10. Basic LAnguage Resource Kit (BLARK) (Desk Research)
Budget Allocation	<p>€25,000 (maximum amount of eligible costs per single project) €185,000 allocated for the call</p>
Eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research organisations, NGOs, incorporated associations, companies • EU Member States • One organisation per project only (i.e. no collaborative multi-party projects) • 10 proposals per applicant (only one per topic) will be accepted for evaluation
Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short proposal (approx. 5 pages, incl. formalities) • Lightweight submission and evaluation procedure
Evaluation criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective fit • Feasibility • Innovativeness • Impact • Budget adequacy
Schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • published: end of September 2022 • project submission period: end of September – November 2022 • project start: December 2022/January 2023 • project duration: 2 – 3 months
Funding Principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • funding rate 90% • financial support will be provided in form of lump sum after completing all project activities
Contact	<p>e-mail: open-call@european-language-equality.eu Website: https://european-language-equality.eu/open-call/</p>

2 Introduction

Open Call for SRIA Contribution Projects

ELE 2 consortium will organise one open call for SRIA (Strategic research, innovation and implementation agenda for achieving full digital language equality in Europe by 2030) contribution projects. The call will be opened at the end of September 2022 and closed at the end of November 2022.

The SRIA contribution projects are meant to provide meaningful, so far missing, convincing, compelling input for the strategic agenda and roadmap for achieving full digital language equality in Europe by 2030. These projects will not only directly contribute to the SRIA but they will also produce tangible outcomes in the form of project reports and potentially also software, studies and analyses that will be used, primarily, for the strategic agenda but maybe also for other communication and dissemination purposes, depending on the nature of the proposed work. The aim of this open call is to bring in external expertise and ideas in a substantial way.

The maximum amount of eligible costs will be up to 25,000€ per single project with a funding rate of 90%, the duration of the projects is expected to be in the 2-3 months range.

Research organisations, NGOs, incorporated associations and companies are allowed to apply in individual projects.

Outcome of the SRIA Contribution Projects

The SRIA contribution projects will produce, among others, clearly defined and potentially also implemented use cases and best-practice examples of language resource development and language technology implementations in relevant industry sectors and areas of life, including feasibility studies, cost estimates, the validation of KPIs and guidelines for concrete implementations to motivate and facilitate the buy in and take-up from the funding agencies and implementing parties.

FSTP Project Board

The FSTP Project Board consists of ELE 2 consortium members and is set up for the supervision of the SRIA contribution projects. The overall responsibility of the FSTP Project Board is the general supervision of the open call for SRIA contribution projects: the FSTP Project Board evaluates project proposals submitted to the open call and provides a forum for discussion on the progress of the selected projects, their intermediate feedback and results.

About the Strategic Research, Innovation and Implementation Agenda (SRIA)

The primary goal of the ELE 2 project is to revise, extend and further promote the strategic research, innovation and implementation agenda and roadmap for achieving full digital language equality in Europe by 2030 (SRIA). This agenda specifies strategic recommendations that, in their totality, can be conceptualised as the Eu-

European Language Equality Programme, i.e., as a scientifically, economically, socially and politically relevant strategic plan jointly endorsed by the EU and the Member States towards the realisation of digital language equality in Europe by 2030.

Within the original ELE project, the strategic agenda and, hence, the ELE Programme, were jointly prepared with the whole European Language Technology, Computational Linguistics and language-centric AI community. In addition to this, representatives of many relevant initiatives and associations, language communities and regional and minority language groups that were either partners of the ELE 1 consortium or that the ELE 1 consortium has reached out to are included in the initiative, through external consultation sessions and providing incentives to stakeholders in relevant user industries and social constituencies.

Find out more about the European Language Equality Programme at ELE's [website](#).

The ELE 2 project coordinator is Dublin City University (Dublin, Ireland). Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic) is responsible for the open call administration.

3 SRIA Contribution Projects Open Call

3.1 Basic Description

The objective of the open call is to provide defined use cases and feasibility studies for concrete application scenarios in following topics:

1. Data sets for more robust speech technology

For many languages there is a lack of datasets for speech technology. In the existing sets, many types of voices are usually not represented and some are overrepresented. There is a lack of datasets reflecting the voices of children and young people, older people and people with foreign accents or regional variation.

The project should analyse current strategies used to develop a broader coverage of speakers and investigate the possibility of developing a European strategic data collection effort with a basic broad coverage for all languages.

2. Study of language coverage for text mining and natural language understanding in key European industrial sectors

This topic aims at producing a measurable understanding of the level of coverage available in terms of both existing language technologies and resources for the different European Languages and sectors of economic interest, like e.g. health, finance, insurance, media, defense, science, and retail. The study would produce the cartography of such coverage along three main dimensions: language, industrial sector, and text mining and understanding functionality. The goal is to identify strategic gaps that would encourage a quick reaction to the SRIA. Of particular interest would be the identification of gaps related to benchmarks required to measure performance of real-life industrial projects in such sectors involving text mining and natural language technologies in a common, standardized manner.

3. Legal Assessment (Desk Research)

The of data in general from various resources is often linked with legal aspects and conditions depending on resource type and purpose for the data usage. The aim of this topic is to explore the legal aspects of using language data provided by national language institutes or libraries, or other legally sensitive data sources, for developing language models. The study should detect and specify related challenges and issues and propose possible solutions for emerging problematic aspects in this area.

4. General NLP/LT/AI Landscaping (Desk Research)

Continuous mapping of general NLP/LT/AI landscape is obviously one of the crucial steps for achieving digital language equality in the near future. We are expecting that the proposed research will continue with the progress already made, particularly with the ELG project. The proposed project should fulfil following tasks:

- Prepare list of 1. all European LT developing companies, 2. all European LT developing research organisations, 3. all European AI companies and startups in the NLP/LT/language-centric AI area (using the current list available in ELG as seed) with relevant indicators such as area, size (in terms of employees), revenue etc.
- Prepare an easy way to update this list on a regular basis

These tasks should result in up-to-date list of all relevant stakeholders so that we're finally able to indicate the size of the whole European LT community.

5. General NLP/LT Domains (Desk Research)

The goal of this topic is complementary to the previous topic (No. 4). The aim of the proposed projects is to map usage of NLP/LT in various domains. In which domains is NLP/LT used a lot and in which rarely or not at all? The proposed project should identify the most relevant domains and make recommendations on how to approach the other domains for participation in the ELE programme. The expected output of the project is list of domains which are relevant for ELE/NLP/LT. This topic is expected to go to breadth rather than depth, especially not in the media and healthcare domains (which are subject to topics 6 and 9).

6. Analysis of AI and LT in European news media

News media have traditionally been considered data providers, but are increasingly becoming aware of the power of their resources. However, they seem to be looking mainly at AI and not so much at LT. There seems to be interest in text-based technologies but also in speech recognition for instance the transcriptions of interviews etc.

The expected output of the project proposed for this topic is a survey of the use of AI and LT in the main European news media, what initiatives could improve knowledge sharing among them, and what could motivate them to share data more openly. Furthermore, the survey should focus on what kind of technology news media will use in the future.

7. Computing facilities for LT (Desk Research)

Nowadays, there are many initiatives offering high-performance computing (HPC): EuroHPC JU, PRACE, LUMI, national consortia, etc. The project proposed for this topic should map to which extent they can support current LT. It should for example, assess GPU capacity for small and large experiments, offered access protocols and their compatibility, capacity for current large neural models etc. The research should involve language diversity, different domains, tasks and modalities and detect prioritised disciplines. The project should also survey the access modes for those HPCs, with focus on access provided to SMEs. Also, proper sensitive data handling should be inspected.

8. Demonstrably Greener Models of MT

The project proposed for this topic aims to demonstrate on using data from companies what efficiencies can be gained by training/running smaller models for MT with relatively little (undetected by human experts) degradation in performance.

A huge dichotomy has emerged between the massive multi-national companies and what even well-resourced SMEs/university groups can do. Demonstrating real gains in efficiency and communicating the savings in terms of energy costs and lower CO2 emissions will influence other companies to change their current behaviour, save money for their clients, and benefit the planet. The solution developed for MT can be potentially adopted to other areas of NLP.

9. Survey of the use of LT in the hospital sector

Technological support for the healthcare sector is undoubtedly the one of the top priorities in our society and LT is very important part of this effort. Speech recognition is used in some areas, but does not seem to gain much traction. There is a constant lack of personnel in this sector and the demands for documentation are increasing which leads to reduction in time for the actual work with patients. The expected output of the project proposed for this topic is for a survey of use of LT in the hospital sector with focus on increasing efficiency in healthcare.

10. Basic LAnguage Resource Kit (BLARK) (Desk Research)

The aim of this topic is to define BLARK for the new deep learning era. The project proposed to this topic should propose how to build it for a particular language (specifically the endangered ones), define which European languages and which quality criteria should this new BLARK cover. For instance, if we include a MT model for language X to English and viceversa which should be the required BLEU, METEOR, etc. to be considered sufficiently good? Monolingual BLARKs or Multilingual BLARKs?

The Maximum Amount of Financial Support

The maximum amount of eligible costs is €25,000 per project. The funding rate is 90% of the project's eligible costs. The maximum amount of financial support is thus €22,500 (90% of the maximum amount of eligible costs per project).

The financial support will be provided in form of a lump sum and the payment will be made after finishing all project activities have been completed and on the delivery of all project results.

When the projects have been completed, a presentation will be required from project's team to show and discuss the results. The payment has to be separately approved by the FSTP Project Board based on the Awardee's performance.

Criteria for Calculating the Exact Amount of the Financial Support

Submitted project proposals need to set their own requirements for financial support, including the budget structure. The initial proposal evaluation procedure will make sure that these requests for funding are in line with the criteria set out in this document, in sum as well as in the structure. No financial reporting is required, but documentation should be retained in case of an EC audit, as per the FSTP rules.

3.2 Timeline

Publication time of the call:	29 September 2022
Submission deadline:	29 November 2022 (23:59 CET)
Evaluation and selection of projects:	December 2022
Contract signing and project start:	December 2022 – January 2023
Project duration:	2 – 3 months

After the selection of the winning proposals, the ELE 2 consortium will publish the outcome of the call, including a description of the third party (Awardee), the date of the award, duration, and the legal name of the Awardee and its country.

3.3 Applicable Law

Any matters not covered by this document will be governed by Czech law, in particular the provisions of the Civil Code, and any other applicable legislation in the European Union.

4 Eligibility Criteria

4.1 Types of Activities and Funding Conditions

List of Activities that Qualify for Financial Support

Only the following types of activities are eligible for funding:

- desk research, consultations, surveys, studies, analyses, mapping projects;
- research activities;
- awareness and dissemination actions;
- putting together best practice examples, preparation and publishing of ready-to-use guidelines;

Only the following cost categories are eligible for funding;

- (a) Personnel costs;
- (b) Subcontracting costs;
- (c) Travel and subsistence;
- (d) Equipment;
- (e) Other goods, works and services;
- (f) Indirect costs;

Indirect costs will be reimbursed at the flat-rate of 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories (a)-(e)) from which are excluded: direct costs of subcontracting (category (b)).

Specific eligibility conditions for each budget category are defined in Appendix 2 – Excerpts from the Grant Agreement – principal Terms and Conditions of Third Party Agreement (ARTICLE 6 — ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE COSTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS).

It is mandatory to justify the part of budget related to personnel costs by the corresponding number of Person-Months.

4.2 Type of Beneficiaries

Definition of Persons or Categories of Persons that May Receive Financial Support

Research organisations (including but not limited to higher education organisations and independent research organisations), NGOs, incorporated associations and companies eligible for EU funding are allowed to apply for individual projects (**one organisation per project only**).

Partners of the ELE 2 consortium are not eligible to apply for funding.

Up to 10 proposals per applicant will be accepted for evaluation, with a maximum of one for each topic (the last proposal submitted for each topic will be evaluated). Proposals in addition to this will be discarded. No double funding is allowed between the project ELE 2 and/or any other incubator or similar scheme for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP).

4.3 Countries

Only beneficiaries legally established in EU Members States will be eligible to apply for the SRIA contribution projects.

4.4 Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is allowed to exist between the applicant and any member of the ELE 2 project's consortium. This is confirmed by the Declaration on Honour signed by the applicant.

The FSTP Project Board members evaluating proposals shall not have a conflict of interest with the project proposal that they are evaluating. In case of such a conflict, they shall excuse themselves from the evaluation of such a project.

5 Preparation and submission of the proposals

5.1 Proposal submission

Proposals are to be submitted via the ELE 2 project website. For more information on the proposal submission see Annex 1 – Guide for Applicants.

5.2 Proposal Template

See Annex 3 – Proposal Template.

5.3 Communication with ELE 2 consortium

All relevant questions and communication with applicants will be published on the ELE 2 website. For any queries please contact us at open-call@european-language-equality.eu.

5.4 Language

Project proposals and all related documents should be written and all communication will be held in English.

6 Summary of the evaluation process

6.1 Eligibility Check

See Annex 4 – Evaluation Criteria.

6.2 Evaluation

Financial support will be awarded to the selected applicants following an open, transparent and experted evaluation process. The key selection criterion will be central to a rigorous assessment of whether the proposed SRIA Contribution Project will be able to contribute in a significant way to the overall success and uptake of the strategic agenda. Innovativeness, impact, reasonability and appropriateness of the budget will also be evaluated.

Evaluation: Two members from the FSTP Project Board, will evaluate each proposal against the following criteria:

- (a) Objective fit
- (b) Feasibility
- (c) Innovativeness
- (d) Impact
- (e) Budget adequacy

The criteria descriptions, points awarded, and weights of the individual criteria are specified in detail in Annex 4 – Evaluation Criteria.

For each topic 1-10 the FSTP Project Board will select one proposal with the highest score from all proposals submitted to this given topic (if there is no proposal submitted to the given topic or the proposal with the most points in given topic received less than 182 points, no proposal will be selected for this topic). The FSTP Project Board will then rank these (maximum 10) selected proposals in descending order and decide how many projects will be accepted for funding. If all of these selected proposals are accepted for funding other proposals (ranked in descending order) can be selected for funding up to the remaining budget.

It is expected that 8-12 projects will be selected, up to the maximum amount of funding available.

Budget. The requested budget for the projects might be reduced based on the evaluation results, item (e) “Budget Adequacy”. If changes are proposed by the evaluators and accepted by the FSTP Project Board, they will be communicated to the applicant, who can accept or reject them. Rejecting the recommended reduction of the requested budget by the applicant means that the project will be rejected. Based on the ranking, the first non-funded project might be accepted for funding.

Final Selection and Contracting. Selected projects will be publicly listed on the project website and full proposals and evaluations will be provided to the European Commission. Awardees will be invited to sign the contract within a given, short period of time after the awards are announced. All Awardees will sign a sub-grantee agreement (see Annex 2) between them and the ELE 2 consortium (represented by Charles University). The Awardees are obligated to allow the European Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises.

6.3 Complaint Procedure

If, at any stage of the evaluation process, the applicant considers that a mistake has been made or that the evaluators have acted unfairly or have failed to comply with the rules of this ELE 2 Open Call, and that her/his interests have been prejudiced as a result, the following appeal procedures are available.

A complaint should be drawn up in English and submitted by e-mail to the ELE 2 Coordinator Andy Way (andy.way@adaptcentre.ie). Any complaint made should include:

- contact details (including postal and e-mail address)
- the subject of the complaint
- information and evidence regarding the alleged complaint

Anonymous complaints will not be reviewed. Complaints should be made within five (calendar) days after the evaluation results have been presented to the Applicants.

As a general rule, the ELE 2 Coordinator (DCU) will investigate the complaints with a view to arriving at a decision to issue a formal notice or to close the case within no more than seven days from the date of reception of the complaint, provided that all required information has been submitted by the complainant.

7 SRIA Contribution Projects Execution

Selected projects will be offered guidance and supervision throughout the lifecycle of the project once the contract is in place and the project has started.

Each selected project will be supervised by one member of the FSTP Project Board (“Project Coach”) appointed by the FSTP Project Board. The Project Coach will be responsible for guiding the project’s team, collecting and answering questions from the team during the execution of the project and collecting reports and project results. After the projects have finished, a presentation will be required from project’s team to show and discuss the results.

Evaluation of the final results

The final evaluation of a project will be performed after finishing all project activities and delivering the project’s results to the ELE 2 consortium. The Project Coach will then prepare a short report (to be made public) and recommend to the FSTP Project Board to approve (or not) the payment of the awarded financial support to the project Awardee.

8 Obligations of Beneficiaries

Obligations of Awardees are specified in Annex 2 – Third Party Agreement.

9 Intellectual property rights

Intellectual property rights are specified in Annex 2 – Third Party Agreement.

10 Annex 1 Guide for Applicants

This annex is available at ELE 2 website:

<https://www.european-language-equality.eu/open-call/>

11 Annex 2 Third Party Agreement

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12 Annex 3 Project Proposal Template

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13 Annex 4 Evaluation Criteria

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