

Results out now

AID4SME**Open Call 1****269 applications | 189 eligible proposals | 11 winners**

Eager for AI: AID4SME funds 11 high-impact projects to revolutionize European smart production

With nearly 270 applications submitted resulting in 11 winning projects, the AID4SME project has highlighted a strong push from European small businesses to adopt AI and digital tools for smarter, more efficient production.

May 2026 - The [AID4SME project](#) has officially concluded the selection process for its first [Open Call 1](#), a strategic initiative designed to empower European SMEs and startups through the adoption of AI and data-driven solutions. This inaugural call followed a rigorous timeline, opening on June 30, 2025, and closing for submissions on September 11, 2025. Following an intensive evaluation period throughout September and February 2026, the results were announced in late March 2026.

The first Open Call saw an overwhelming response, receiving **269 applications** from ambitious startups and SMEs across the continent. Following a rigorous vetting process, **189 high-quality proposals** moved forward to the expert evaluation phase, demonstrating the high caliber of innovation currently brewing in the European tech sector.

While interest was widespread, **Southern Europe and the Mediterranean** emerged as the primary hubs for this digital transformation. **Italy** took the lead with the highest number of



submissions, followed closely by strong participation from **Spain, Türkiye, and Greece**, signaling a powerful regional drive to modernise industrial operations through AI.

The Open Call was structured around four key pillars of industrial evolution: **Data Collection, Creating Insights, Decision Support, and Automation**. While all areas saw activity, the standout interest was in tools that help managers make smarter choices in real-time.

Specifically, the challenge for **Digital Twin-Enabled Smart Production Planning**, under the pillar “Decision Support” emerged as the most popular category, attracting over **35% of all eligible applications**. This high level of interest confirms that for modern factories, AI-driven “Decision Support” is no longer a luxury—it is a top priority for companies looking to optimise their production lines and reduce waste.

From a highly competitive pool of eligible proposals, **11 standout projects** involving **13 European entities** have been selected for funding. These winners represent the best in class for AI and data innovation, covering everything from robotic recycling to advanced energy management.

The journey is just beginning for these innovators. The selected projects are now entering a 14-month deployment phase, running from March 2026 to April 2027. Throughout this period, the AID4SME Community of Practice will provide expert mentoring and coaching. This hands-on support ensures that these digital solutions don’t just work in a lab but are fully prepared to enter the market and deliver real-world benefits to the European economy.

The winning projects represent a high-caliber group of companies from across the continent: [Superlinear](#), [iTherAI](#), and [Raidyn](#) (Belgium); [iLINK](#), [LOCAL AI](#), and [PLEGMA LABS](#) (Greece); [BeChained AI](#) and [PAL Robotics](#) (Spain); [FORCERA](#) (Portugal); [ARVRtech](#) (Serbia); [ELVEZ](#) (Slovenia); [A Arti Muhendislik](#) (Türkiye); and [Stogl Robotics](#) (Germany).

More details about these winners and their Pilots will soon be shared on the AID4SME website.

About AID4SME:

AID4SME is an EU-funded project which enables SMEs to develop AI and DATA solutions through the support of a Community of Practice and low-TRL and high-TRL playgrounds.

Combined AI & data technologies are a synergistic duo and key drivers of future economic development. However, they have been facing a low adoption in Europe and most likely running



behind other parts of the world. AID4SME project aims to resolve this current scenario and expand the AI and data solutions great potential for the European economy and societal benefits.

Press contact and social media

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