



Introducing SCALE model to European deep tech startups

Guidelines for the 2nd expression of interest for startups in DeepSAFE project

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About DeepSAFE

DeepSAFE wants to make it easier for European startups to raise investment. We're creating a simple, fair, and EU-friendly convertible loan agreement called EU SCALE (Simple Convertible Agreement for Loan to Equity).

Its objective is to cut out legal hassle, speed up early-stage deals, and help startups grow faster.

We'd love to invite you to be among the first to test our approach!

What is it about?

DeepSAFE is kicking off the second Expressions of Interest (Eoi, designed to spot and support early-stage startups ready to shake things up.

We're looking for deep-tech startups, to prepare their founders for the demands of the market and investor expectations and help them understand the SCALE agreements.

This call will spotlight up to 21 standout startups and invite them to the Venture Readiness Support Programme.

 #2 Eoi is open from February 12th (at noon Brussels time) until April 14th, 2026 (at 17:00 Brussels time) - joining is easy:

1. [Sign up](#) for OnePass with your company e-mail,
2. Create your workspace & complete your startup profile (in English),
3. Once steps 1 and 2 are completed, you will be redirected to the [link to express interest](#) in DeepSAFE, read and accept the clauses, and submit the form.

Selected startups will be invited to join the DeepSAFE Academia - Venture Readiness mentoring programme.

What's there for you?

If you are selected, you will be invited to:

- **Join the mentoring programme:** You will have the exclusive opportunity to receive 3 months of mentorship from the highly experienced mentors to improve the "Venture Readiness momentum". Specifically, the programme will address team composition, technology readiness, customer insight, and commercial scalability. You will deep dive into different investment schemes to understand what the EU SCALE agreement is and how it works to ease any potential process for investment.

- **Share your feedback:** Open, test, and provide feedback about the EU SCALE template, contributing to improving the seeking investment experience and tools, by letting us know what worked and what didn't. Your input matters!
- **Meet the investors:** Selected startups (that have attended all sessions of the Venture Readiness Programme) might be connected with early-stage investors (Business Angels, VCs) to explore the possibility of signing an agreement using the newly adapted EU SCALE convertible loan template.

Who are we looking for?

☀ DeepSAFE is looking for early-stage, deep-tech startups, based in Member States of the European Union or Ukraine.

To be categorised as “deep-tech”, an idea must be based on advanced scientific discoveries and cutting-edge advances, requiring continuous engagement with new research findings to remain technologically relevant.

To qualify as an “early-stage start-up,” a company must be under ten years old (prioritised up to five), possess an innovative product, service, or business model, aim for scale-up (increasing employees, turnover, or markets) and be looking for funding. Typically operating pre-revenue or with minimal revenue, with a small team engagement and no VC.

✓ Who can apply?

You're eligible if your startup:

- Is legally registered as a capital company in EU Member States or Ukraine,
- Is a tech SME that meets the [EU SME definition](#)¹,
- Has filled out min. 70% of the OnePass' company profile in English, including:
 - All mandatory fields (e.g., workspace type and fundraising needs)
 - Legal information,
 - Company overview,
 - Team info, and
 - Attach the pitch deck.
- Is open to provide feedback about the DeepSAFE agreement.
- Has no conflict of interest with the DeepSAFE project consortium partners.

Do you comply with these criteria? We will be happy to receive and review your pitch deck.

¹ You can read the EU user guide to understand SME definition at <https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/42921> or use the [SME self-assessment questionnaire](#) if you want to check if you fit in the definition.

We'll prioritize startups that:

- Are early-stage deep-tech,
- Are led by diverse teams.
- Works in areas like AI, Advanced Computing, Cybersecurity, Blockchain, IoT, Metaverse, Energy, GreenTech, AgriTech, FinTech.
- [Maturity of their technology](#) is between TRL 5 and 8.
- Operates on a relatively small scale (up to 10 team members), but demonstrates a high degree of innovation in its products, services, processes, or business models or distinguishes itself by actively engaging in the development and application of new ideas, technologies, or approaches that bring about significant advancements, improvements, or novel solutions to existing challenges.
- Has at least two co-founders.
- Looking for funding in a pre-seed or seed investment round and
- Limited funding history (up to 100,000 Euro).

Want to be prioritised? Make us aware: include these details and your key team members in the company profile at OnePass. You can also use the "Highlights" section of the profile to include some metrics proving these aspects.

How will the selection work?

We'll keep it straightforward and based on the info you will provide (e.g., OnePass company profile, pitch deck). Here's what to expect:

1. **First step.** Once the call closes (14th April 2026, at 17:00 Brussels time), we'll check if your startup meets the base eligibility criteria.
2. **Second step** (optional): If we get a lot of eligible applications (over 60), we'll screen them, following the highlighted priorities, to make sure they fit in the DeepSAFE scope.
 - *To be invited to the final evaluation stage, applicants must meet a minimum of 50% of the specified priorities. However, invitations will be limited to the 60 best-scoring applicants overall.*
3. **Final evaluation.** If you make it to the final stage, your startup will be reviewed by our experts to assess:
 - Scalability: The company's capacity to grow revenue faster than costs. Is there real potential, a clear need, and room to grow?
 - Go-to-market strategy: Market positioning, customer targeting, and sales channels. Do the startup have a good go-to-market strategy?
 - Team: Balanced and complete team composition and founders' potential. Could this team bring the solution to market successfully?
 - Eligibility: No eligibility concerns. Does the company fulfil all eligibility criteria?

Best on those results, the Selection Committee will pick up to 21 startups in total from those which obtain a positive assessment and will invite them to the Venture Readiness mentoring programme. Additionally, the committee may consider other important factors like ethical concerns, market overlap, or alignment with DeepSAFE's goals as obstacles to invite the company. In case of ties, the woman-led companies will be prioritised.

Our decision will be final, and there is no complaint procedure.

Final Notes

DeepSAFE may cancel or change this call at any time, or extend the deadline. If that happens, we'll inform all applicants as soon as possible.

Participation doesn't guarantee investment. This is a pilot program, and while we aim to support your fundraising journey, success depends on many factors.

Before signing any investment agreement, we strongly recommend you consult your legal and tax advisors to make sure that it's the right fit for your company.

Contact us

For more information about the DeepSAFE project and its template for SCALE agreements, please check our website: <https://eu-scale.eu/>
<https://eu-scale.eu/>

If you have any extra questions regarding the expression of interest or the selection process, you can send us a message to euscale@fundingbox.com.

Visit the OnePass Help Center at <https://help.getonepass.eu/>, if you have doubts while creating or completing your startup profile.