DATA SPACES SUPPORT CENTRE

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European Data Space Awards 2027

Funded by the European Union

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Publisher

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1. Introduction

Data is one of Europe's greatest economic assets. This is why the upcoming **European Data Union strategy** aims to establish a genuine internal market for data, enabling the EU to scale up AI development effectively. In Europe, data is widely distributed across numerous public and private stakeholders within the Digital Single Market. European industrial data markets are central to this ecosystem, and their success will depend on instruments that guarantee trust, ensure data sovereignty, and deliver a fair distribution of the value generated from data use.

In this context, the **European Data Spaces Awards** are launched with the objective of **promoting the best-in-class European data sharing initiatives**. Highlighting the achievements of selected initiatives will help to increase visibility and promote best practices that can guide others. This **yearly award** celebrating best practices will encourage the community to grow and improve.

The **first edition of the European Data Spaces Awards** was a considerable success with more than **60 high-quality applications received from initiatives across 11 EU Member States**, demonstrating the growing maturity and diversity of the European data spaces landscape.

Applicants competed across two categories:

- **Category 1 – Excellence in End-User Engagement and Financial Sustainability;**
- **Category 2 – Most Innovative Emerging Data Space.**

Category 1 attracted **33% of all applications**, while **67%** were submitted under Category 2, highlighting the strong interest in both the operational sustainability of data spaces and the emergence of innovative new initiatives.

Following a highly competitive evaluation process, **six finalists were selected**, three in each category.

Category 1 finalists:

- **Catena-X**, a collaborative data ecosystem for the automotive value chain;
- **data.gouv.fr**, a shared public data ecosystem across key societal domains;
- **DjustConnect**, an agri-food data space focused on transparency and farmer ownership.

Category 2 finalists:

- **DEPLOYTOUR**, Deployment European Tourism Data Space – Connecting tourism with mobility, smart cities, culture, and more;
- **SM4RTENANCE**, a cross-sector manufacturing data space covering the full asset lifecycle;
- **sphin-X e.V.,** advancing discoverable and usable health data across pharma, medtech and research.

The **Category 1 award** was won by **DjustConnect**, which demonstrated how collaborative data sharing can empower stakeholders and generate measurable impact across the agri-food sector.

The **Category 2 award** was won by **sphin-X e.V.**, a collaborative healthcare data space that preserves data sovereignty for all stakeholders while building trust, increasing efficiency and creating added value across the ecosystem.

Figure 1 Celebrating with the winners and nominees of the 1st edition of the European Data Space Awards during the Data Spaces Symposium 2026 in Madrid, Spain

Following the success of the first edition of the European Data Space Awards, the DSSC is preparing for the second edition, the European Data Space Awards 2027, which will celebrate the excellence and achievements of the data space ecosystem in 2026. The following sections of this document outline the practical aspects of the second edition and provide an overview of how the awards will be organised.

2. Organiser

The Awards are organised by the **Data Spaces Support Centre** (DSSC) in collaboration with the **European Commission**.

3. Categories of Awards

Applicants can submit applications to one or the other category or apply for both (two separate applications).

- **Category 1: Excellence in end-user engagement and financial sustainability;**

This award category recognises data spaces that have moved beyond concepts and pilots to demonstrate real-world operation, with active participants, operational use cases and actual data transactions. It celebrates initiatives that generate tangible value for end-users and can demonstrate their scale, activity and growth through concrete evidence. At the same time, they should demonstrate a viable long-term financial model, supported by the governance, business and technical mechanisms needed to sustain and expand their operations.

- **Category 2: Most innovative emerging data space**

Recognising data spaces that bring genuinely innovative approaches, use cases and services to the data space ecosystem. It celebrates emerging initiatives that demonstrate the potential to transform how data is shared, accessed and used through novel business, technical or governance approaches. Particular recognition is given to innovative value-added services, the use of AI and data for AI, and other forms of impactful innovation. The focus of this award category is on the novelty, ambition and transformative potential of emerging initiatives, with particular emphasis on their potential to generate meaningful business, societal and other forms of positive impact beyond addressing governance and technical challenges.

4. Who can apply?

Any initiative fulfilling the following requirements:

- The governance authority is registered in the EU (*);
- It operates totally or partially in the EU;

- It is actively being used to share data (**);
- Data being shared includes restricted data (not only open data).

(*) During 2026 many data spaces are still in implementation phase through a project, therefore the project coordinator is eligible to apply on behalf of the data space consortia.
(**) During 2026 many data spaces are still in implementation phase, data shared in pilots close to operational or real-life conditions is considered valid to fulfil the requirements.
Please note that **only the governance authority or the project coordinator can apply on behalf of the data space**.

5. How to apply?

Applications must be submitted through the online form accessible through the dssc.eu awards landing page:

➔ **Link to the awards landing page**

On this page you will get access to the application form but also to relevant information such as the guideline for applicants, templates and other relevant documents, including access to an **Info Session recording** organised on October 19th. Applicants must decide for which category they want to apply. If the data space wants to apply to both categories a separate standalone application must be submitted per category.

The online application form includes:

- **Basic questions about the applicant and the data space** (short online questionnaire) (mandatory).
- **Maturity Assessment unique identifier / Reference No** – Applicants need to complete the maturity assessment before submitting their application – a unique identifier is provided upon the maturity assessment completion and needs to be added in the form (mandatory).
- **Eligibility questions** (4 questions online / Self-declaration) (mandatory).
  - !Applications that do not meet all eligibility criteria will not proceed to further evaluation!
- Submission space to **upload** your **Awards Application Document** (mandatory).
- Submission space to add links to any additional resources you would like to provide (optional – purely supporting and not to be evaluated).

Required application document:

Applicants are required to submit a document **in .pdf format**. We will refer to this document as the **Awards Application Document**. This is the only document that will be used by the evaluators to assess your application against the evaluation criteria.

Applicants can use their own branding and graphic elements, but they must follow a predefined template structure. The templates can be downloaded from **the Awards landing page**.

- Template for awards application document Category 1 (Excellence in end-user engagement and financial sustainability).
- Template for awards application document Category 2 (Most innovative emerging data space).

Maximum length of the document is 8 pages (including figures). Additional instructions are included in the template.

Optional documents:

In addition to the mandatory application document, applicants are invited to provide any additional resources (e.g. videos, presentations, additional documents, brochures, etc). (Optional). The purpose of these extra resources is to provide **additional evidence** or extend any relevant information provided in the main application document. These resources will only be used as complementary information and never as the main source of information for evaluation. Please don't provide information critical for the evaluation that is not included in the main application doc. The applicant should store these additional resources in accessible folder. Access to these resources must be **provided through a link in the application form**.

6. Evaluation process and important dates

Important dates:

- Period to submit applications: **September 21st to ~~November 2nd~~ November 9th, 2026;**
- Announcement of the nominees per award: **December 21st, 2026;**
- Awards ceremony with all nominees, announcing the winners per category: **March 9th, 2027 (as part of the** Data Spaces Symposium 2027 **in Brussels, Belgium).**

Evaluation process:

- The evaluation will be performed in **3 stages**:
  - Eligibility review;
  - Evaluation and selection of a short list per category (nominees);
  - Selection of the winner per category.
- The **eligibility review** will be carried out by an internal team of DSSC based on the eligibility criteria (self-assessment by the data space), the completion of the maturity assessment (by cross-checking the unique identifier) and the submission of the mandatory application documents.
- The **evaluation and selection of a short list of candidates per category** (maximum 3) will be done by a pool of volunteer evaluators with no conflict of interests from the DSSC and potentially its network of stakeholders. Each application will be evaluated by

at least 3 evaluators based on the criteria defined and described in the next section. The short-listed candidates (nominees to the Awards) will be announced by December 21st. All nominees will be publicly announced.

- **A jury** composed by policy makers, user organisations, investors and DSSC representatives will assess the short-listed candidacies per category and **decide on the winners**. The composition of the jury will be communicated at a later stage. The announcement of the winners will be performed during a special Awards ceremony celebrated as part of the Data Space Symposium 2027. All nominees may be requested additional information for this stage and for the awards ceremony.

7. Awards

All applicants will benefit from participating in the European Data Spaces Awards, as completion of the maturity assessment tool (a prerequisite for applying for the awards) will provide them with a set of maturity indicators that allow them to track progress over time, benchmark their maturity against peers, identifying strengths and weaknesses - providing valuable input for their continued development and improvement.

In addition, the maturity assessment will bring value to the award application process by providing a quantitative perspective on the maturity of participating data spaces. This complements the qualitative assessment of the applications, which is based on the criteria and questions described in the Awards Application document. The maturity assessment results will serve as an additional source of information for the evaluators, without directly influencing the evaluation or determining the outcome of the awards.

Further, the awardees (and nominees for the awards) will get strong visibility and recognition. This includes:

- being part of the ceremony at the Data Spaces Symposium;
- a winner profile on the DSSC website;
- a dedicated feature in the DSSC newsletter;
- an announcement series on DSSC social channels;
- an invitation to present in a DSSC public webinar.

The winners will be announced during the Data Spaces Symposium 2027 (DSS2027), that will be celebrated in Brussels on 9-10 March 2027. A special Awards ceremony will take place on March 9th. All nominees will be invited to join the ceremony on stage.

The awardees won´t receive any monetary compensation.

8. Evaluation criteria

In alignment with **CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 Maturity assessment of Common European Data Spaces** the following evaluation criteria will be used during evaluation. Beyond minor

improvements based on the experiences from the 1st edition of the European Data Space Awards, adapting the awards evaluation criteria with the dimensions and the underlying questions of the TS was one major change compared with last year's awards. The templates for applications provide more details on how the different application sections align with these evaluation criteria.

Category 1: **Excellence in end-user engagement and financial sustainability**

Building Block	Criteria	Alignment CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 - Dimensions	Alignment CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 - Questions	Weight
Business	Viable business models	Business Dimension	Q9-Q12	3
Business	Successful use cases	Business Dimension	Q13-Q17	2
Business	Data space value offering to end-users	Value Creation Dimension	Q45, Q46, Q50, Q52	2
Governance and legal	Solid governance	Governance Dimension	Q1-Q4	2
Governance and legal	Participation management	Governance Dimension, Value Creation Dimension	Q5-Q8, Q51	3
Governance and legal	Regulatory compliance	Legal Dimension	Q18-Q20	1
Governance and legal	Contractual framework in place	Legal Dimension	Q21-Q23	1
Technical	Data interoperability	Interoperability Dimension	Q24-Q27	1
Technical	Data interoperability	Interoperability Dimension	Q28, Q29	1
Technical	Data sovereignty and trust	Control Over Data and Trust Dimension	Q33-Q41	1
Technical	Discover of data products and services	Value Creation Dimension	Q42-Q44, Q47	1
Operations	Participants volume and growth	Value Creation Dimension	Q48	2
Operations	Data shared volume and growth	Value Creation Dimension	Q49, Q52	2
None	Diversity of participants	None		1
None	Engagement of SMEs	None		1

Building Block	Criteria	Alignment CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 - Dimensions	Alignment CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 - Questions	Weight
None	Viable financial model (today) and sustainability in the medium-long term	None		3
None	Openness of the solutions applied or offered in your data space	None		1
None	Data sharing for AI applications	None		1

Category 2: **Most innovative emerging data space**

Building Block	Criteria	Alignment CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 - Dimensions	Alignment CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026 - Questions	Weight
Business	Innovative use cases	Business Dimension	Q13-Q17	3
Business	Innovative services offered to the end user	Value Creation Dimension	Q50-Q52	3
Technical	Innovative value-added services	Value Creation Dimension	Q45-Q46	3
Governance and legal	Solid governance	Governance Dimension	Q1-Q4	2
Technical	Data interoperability	Interoperability Dimension	Q24-Q27	1
Technical	Data sovereignty and trust	Control Over Data and Trust Dimension	Q33-Q41	1
Technical	Discover of data products and services	Value Creation Dimension	Q42-Q44, Q47	1
Operations	Emerging	None		3
None	Diversity of participants	None		1
None	Engagement of SMEs	None		1
None	Openness of the solutions applied or offered in your data space	None		1
None	Usage of AI in the data space	None		2
None	Data sharing for AI applications	None		2
None	Impactful innovation in the wider ecosystem	None		3

9. Supporting documents

- CEN-CENELEC, **Maturity assessment of Common European Data Spaces**, CEN/CLC/TS 18331:2026, July 2026.

  - **https://standards.cencenelec.eu/ords/f?p=205:110:::::FSP_PROJECT:82502&cs=1C5006BDEAA29488741E53015A85FD636 ;**
  - **https://dssc.eu/articles/maturity-assessment-of-common-european-data-spaces%20;**
- **Data Spaces Blueprint v3.0: https://blueprint.dssc.eu/ ;**
- **Frequently asked questions:** A FAQs document will be uploaded and regularly updated;
- **Info session (October 19th) recording: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qCg4Qokm1z8**
- **Support channel for additional questions:** If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact **the helpdesk** (you need to select the option "European Data Space Awards" in the "Request Topic" field).