

CALL FOR EVIDENCE FOR AN INITIATIVE WITH AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Data centres in the EU – Minimum performance standards
LEAD DG (RESPONSIBLE UNIT)	Directorate-General for Energy – Unit B2 on Energy efficiency (Policy and Financing)
LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE	Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council
INDICATIVE TIMETABLE	Q2 2027
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	Energy performance of data centres

This document is for information purposes only. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described, including its timing, are subject to change.

A. Political context, problem definition and subsidiarity check

Political context

The information and communication technology (ICT) sector is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Europe and globally. This sector touches upon two important EU objectives, namely the Union's technological sovereignty and the Union's energy resilience and security.

Expanding computing capacities and increasing the number of data centres on the Union's territory is essential, but it also poses challenges, not only in terms of increasing energy consumption but also for electricity grids, carbon emissions and environmental resources such as water. In response, the EU's [digital strategy](#) emphasises the need for highly energy-efficient and sustainable data centres. As highlighted by the [Draghi report on EU competitiveness](#), using energy more efficiently makes it possible to cut costs, which is vital for the competitiveness of European industries.

The [Energy Efficiency Directive \(EU\) 2023/1791](#) (EED) requires to promote energy efficiency and sustainability in data centres. Under Article 12(5) of the EED, the Commission is empowered to present legislative proposals containing further measures to improve energy efficiency. These include setting minimum performance standards for data centres.

In June 2025, the Commission pledged its [renewed commitment](#) to energy efficiency. To deliver on this pledge, one of the initiatives envisaged is a data centre energy efficiency package. This includes setting up a common EU rating scheme for data centres and launching a public consultation on establishing common minimum performance standards for data centres in the EU.

This initiative builds on existing Commission initiatives such as the reporting and rating schemes for data centres, the Strategic roadmap for digitalisation and AI in the energy sector, and the Cloud and AI Development Act.

Problem the initiative aims to tackle

As highlighted by the [Draghi report](#) and the [AI Continent Action Plan](#), expanding data centre capacity in the EU is essential for fostering AI innovation, accelerating digitalisation, boosting EU competitiveness across industries and supporting a mature data economy. To ensure this, several sustainability challenges need to be tackled:

1. **rising energy and water consumption**
2. **limited waste heat reuse and energy system integration**
3. **the lack of a framework guiding data centres' sustainability efforts**
4. **the lack of regulatory convergence between countries**
5. **competitiveness and affordability concerns**
6. **barriers to innovation and uptake of clean technologies**

Basis for EU action (legal basis and subsidiarity check)

Legal basis

The legal basis for this initiative is Article 194(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. It is an initiative in the field of energy, where competence is shared between the EU and Member States.

Practical need for EU action

EU action is needed to activate, coordinate and harmonise efforts across different EU countries. The proposal would provide added value by creating an EU framework that would phase out unsustainable practices and technologies in European data centres and avoid divergent or non-complementary national approaches weakening the EU's competitiveness. Furthermore, minimum performance standards at EU level would build on and complement the reporting scheme for data centres adopted in 2024 and the rating scheme for data centres in the EU adopted in 2026.

A [study](#) procured by the Commission in 2025 confirmed that setting common EU-wide minimum performance standards can help address inefficient facilities without limiting innovative or high-performance ones and guide investment while supporting the EU's climate and energy objectives.

B. Objectives and policy options

Based on its assessment of the first set of data reported by data centres to the European database for data centres, the Commission concluded in a report to the European Parliament and the Council that there is a need and opportunity to propose minimum performance standards for data centres in the EU.

The aim is to ensure that all new or retrofitted data centres meet a minimum performance level for energy efficiency, water use, waste-heat reuse, services to the grid and other selected sustainability criteria. Following the establishment of a reporting scheme and a rating scheme, the proposal for minimum performance standards will be a third step towards ensuring more sustainable data centres:

1. reporting scheme for more transparency (Delegated Regulation (EU) 2024/1364)
2. rating scheme and label to promote best practices (Delegated Regulation (EU) 2026/7000)
3. minimum performance standards phasing out the worst technologies and practices

The proposed standards will be reviewed regularly. This will ensure that they follow technological developments and the state of the art for the design and building of new data centres.

C. Likely impacts

Setting minimum performance standards for data centres in the EU should bring multiple benefits, including:

- **reducing the energy consumption and environmental footprint of data centres** in the EU by ensuring that all new or retrofitted data centres meet essential benchmarks for energy efficiency, water usage and other selected sustainability criteria.
- **improving the sector's competitiveness** by making better use of energy and water, thus reducing operational costs.
- **facilitating data centres' integration into the energy system** by better aligning their operations with power grid and heat network needs.
- **reducing fragmentation in the regulatory landscape** between Member States, to improve the operational environment for data centre operators.
- **supporting innovation** by creating an ambitious framework that evolves with technological advancements.

D. Better regulation instruments

Impact assessment

An impact assessment will be conducted to support the drafting of this legislative proposal. This is because the proposed regulation is expected to have a long-term impact on promoting the sustainable development of data centres and their better integration into the energy system. The impact assessment is expected to take place in Q4 2026.

Consultation strategy

The proposal has already undergone thorough and wide-ranging consultation with stakeholders and Member States over the past couple of years. This includes consultation:

- during the [preparation](#) of [Delegated Regulation \(EU\) 2024/1364](#);
- in the context of the technical assistance [study](#) that supported the implementation of Article 12(5) of Directive 2023/1791 on the energy performance and sustainability of data centres.

Given the proposed regulation's expected long-term impact on promoting the sustainable development of data centres and their better integration into the energy system, there will also be some additional consultation. This will consist of:

- a call for evidence and an open public consultation to initiate the process and help define the scope of the initiative.

- technical consultations with stakeholders (workshops, interviews and surveys) in Q1-Q4 2026 to complement and elaborate on the results of the open public consultation.
- targeted consultations with private stakeholders (industry, associations) and with public stakeholders (Member States, regulators), through dedicated workshops and events, including via the EED Expert Group.

Why we are consulting?

The consultation aims to collect in-depth evidence, information, data and feedback from stakeholders on the need for and feasibility of minimum performance standards for data centres in the EU and on the most appropriate way to establish them. It also aims to determine which indicators should have minimum performance standards and what thresholds should be set. Finally, the consultation will evaluate if further EU action is needed to support the sustainability of data centres in the EU.

Target audience

All individuals and organisations are welcome to contribute to this call for evidence and reply to the public consultation. The initiative is most likely to be of interest to stakeholders from digital and energy value chains, including data centre operators and owners, data centre associations, cloud service providers, IT suppliers, equipment manufacturers, network operators, grid operators and energy services companies. We are also interested in contributions from energy and environmental agencies, local/regional/national government officials, regulatory and policy authorities, research institutions and academia, non-governmental organisations and consumers.