



OPEN CALL #1

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Revision: V2

COVER PAGE

PROJECT	
Project number	101189819
Project Acronym	COP-PILOT
Project name	Collaborative Open Platform for PILOTing services across energing smart IoT and Edge computing environments
Call	HORIZON-CL4-2024-DATA-01
Topic	HORIZON-CL4-2024-DATA-01-03
Type of action	HORIZON-IA
Responsible service	INTRA
Project starting date	01/01/2025
Project duration	36 months

Open Call #1	
Submission Start	16/02/2026 9:00 CET (Brussels time)
Submission Deadline	17/04/2026 17:00 CET (Brussels time)
Expected Project duration	8 Months

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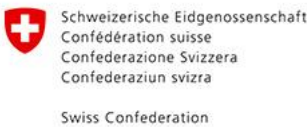
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Grant Agreement No: 101189819 | **Topic:** HORIZON-CL4-2024-DATA-01-03
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DISCLAIMER



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COP-PILOT IN A NUTSHELL...

COP-PILOT is an Innovation Action funded under the EU HORIZON program focused on developing a Collaborative Open Platform (COP) framework that enables end-to-end orchestration of services across diverse industry sectors. Building upon the foundations of edge computing, advanced 5G connectivity, and decentralized processing, COP-PILOT aims to overcome fragmented infrastructure and isolated service domains by providing a unified platform for secure, automated, and intelligent management of resources and data. This approach is essential for delivering advanced, cross-sector applications and unlocking the full potential of real-time IoT and edge intelligence in areas such as energy, smart cities, agriculture, and manufacturing.

At its core, COP-PILOT integrates novel AI-driven tools and automation solutions with robust security features to facilitate the onboarding and management of complex applications. The project prioritizes modularity, ease-of-use, and industry-standard interoperability, leveraging multi-tiered data processing, policy-driven optimization, and dynamic reasoning for service orchestration. Through hierarchical orchestration and resource slicing, COP-PILOT enables scalable, reliable, and SLA-preserving deployment of vertical services, making it possible to meet the precise needs of each sector while supporting cross-domain collaboration.

To validate its framework, COP-PILOT will conduct large-scale pilot programs in real-world environments across several European countries. These pilots will demonstrate the platform's impact on logistics, smart cities, sustainable energy grids, and agricultural transformation, highlighting how collaborative edge ecosystems can optimize supply chains, improve industrial efficiency, and deliver tangible societal benefits. By enabling sectors to interact seamlessly and innovate collectively, COP-PILOT is set to drive the next wave of digital transformation and market growth through edge intelligence. To conclude, the platform looks to integrate novel AI-driven tools, SLA-preserving automation, and secure infrastructure while piloting these real-world applications across sectors like energy, smart cities, agriculture, and manufacturing to drive cross-sector collaboration, innovation, and societal impact.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the COP-PILOT Open Call #1. This document provides essential information for those seeking to participate in this first Open Call for COP-PILOT, including details on eligibility, funding, submission guidelines, and evaluation criteria. Please carefully review this guide to ensure compliance with all requirements and maximize your proposal's chances of success.

Eligible applicants are established in EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated countries, ready to upscale their Cloud-Edge-IoT solutions in collaboration with COP-PILOT's cross-domain pilots. Awards of up to €200,000 are available per project, with a structured eighth-month support program covering, technical assistance, and opportunities for real-world validation and networking within Europe's innovation ecosystem. Applications must address a specific cluster identified by COP-PILOT, such as mining, smart building and cities, energy or agriculture.

Submission is through the COP-PILOT online form. The call opens on February 16, 2026, at 9h CET and the deadline is April 17, 2026, at 17:00 CET (Brussels time). All proposals should be submitted in English and must satisfy the outlined eligibility, documentation, and evaluation requirements.

For further questions, applicants can contact the COP-PILOT Open Call team at the following email address: opencalls@cop-pilot.eu.

We wish you good and we are looking forward to receiving your application!



1 OPEN CALL BASIC CONDITIONS

CALL TITLE:

COP-PILOT OPEN CALL #1

1.1 SUBMISSION PERIOD:

- Opens: 16 February 2026, 9:00 CET Brussels time
- Closes: 17 April 2026, 17:00 CET (**strict deadline**) late submissions will be rejected.
- Where: <https://cop-pilot.eu/>

1.2 FUNDING AVAILABLE:

- Total Available Budget: €1,600,000
- Maximum Funding per Project: €200,000
- Expected Funded Projects: 8 (min 1 and max 2 per cluster)
- Funding Rate: 100% of eligible costs (check section 6)

1.3 PROJECT DURATION

- Standard: 8 months execution + 2 months for reporting
- Expected start: June 2026 (after evaluation)

1.4 TARGETED PILOTING CLUSTERS:

Applicants must choose one of the following clusters:

- CL1. Business Integration in Mining
- CL2. Smart Sustainable IoT Solutions
- CL3a. AgriTech Transformation & Sustainability
- CL3e. Edge Intelligence for Grid Reliability
- CL4. Smart Vineyards & Sustainable Winery Ecosystems

2 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

● YOUR ORGANIZATION MUST BE:

- ✓ Registered in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country check:
https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf
- ✓ Not bankrupt or subject to insolvency proceedings
- ✓ Not guilty of grave professional misconduct or fraud
- ✓ Compliant with tax and social security obligations

● ELIGIBLE ORGANIZATION TYPES:

Eligible applicants are Single SME or SME-led consortia of at least 2 partners no maximum and don't need to be from different countries.

While the leading partner must be an SME, the other eligible partners can be as defined below:

- ✓ Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- ✓ Large enterprises
- ✓ Research institutions and universities
- ✓ Non-profit organizations
- ✓ Public entities (where permitted)

● WHAT YOU CANNOT DO:

- ✗ Receive funding from another EU source for the same work
- ✗ Submit incomplete proposals
- ✗ Use languages other than English
- ✗ Exceed page limit of **12** pages
- ✗ Apply for more funding than **€200,000**

3 HOW TO APPLY (STEP-BY-STEP)

3.1 STEP 1: PREPARE YOUR PROPOSAL

Read all documentation:

- This Guide (what you're reading now)
- Proposal Guidelines (editing details, proposal sections that must be addressed, and details per section)
- Technical guidelines (get informed about overall platform and the specific piloting clusters to target, including what can be offered in terms of services, APIs and hardware capabilities)
- Understand what's expected:
 - Review your target cluster's requirements
 - Confirm your team has needed expertise
 - Verify you can meet the timeline

3.2 STEP 2: COMPLETE THE PROPOSAL GUIDELINE

Use the mandatory COP-PILOT_OC1_Proposal_Guidelines.docx:

- Project Overview
- Section 1 Excellence:
 - 1.1 Detailed Description
 - 1.2 Infrastructure Requirements
- Section 2 Impact:
 - 2.1 Expected Impact and Sustainability
 - 2.2 Expected Outcomes
- Section 3 Quality and efficiency of the implementation:
 - 3.1 Work Plan & Timeline
 - 3.2 Team Qualifications
 - 3.3 Funding & Justification

Annex I: Declaration of Honour (mandatory - to be signed)

Annex II: SME Checklist

Annex III: Privacy & Ethics

Annex IV: Consortium Agreement

3.3 STEP 3: PREPARE YOUR DOCUMENTS

Save all files as PDF:

- ✓ Open Call Proposal document (PDF)
- ✓ Signed Declaration of Honour (PDF)
- ✓ SME Checklist (PDF)
- ✓ Consortium Agreement (PDF) (if applicable)

Follow the file naming example:

[Acronym]_CPOC1_Proposal_[SubmissionDate].pdf

Example: SMARTGRID_CPOC1_Proposal_20260315.pdf

3.4 STEP 4: REGISTER ON SUBMISSION PORTAL

Visit: <https://cop-pilot.eu/>

Actions:

1. Fill in the OC application form
2. Verify your organization details
3. Confirm you are an authorized representative
4. Select your target cluster challenge

Need help? Contact: opencalls@cop-pilot.eu.

3.5 STEP 5: SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

On the Website:

1. Click "Get Funded" followed by "Apply Here"
2. Fill in the online form with project details
3. Verify all mandatory fields are filled in
3. Upload all PDF documents
4. Review everything before submitting
5. Click "SUBMIT"

IMPORTANT: You will receive a confirmation email.
Save this email for your records.

DEADLINE: 17 April 2026, 17:00 CET

Late submissions will NOT be accepted.

4 WHAT WILL BE EVALUATED

Proposals will be evaluated on **three main criteria**. To be considered for funding, you must achieve a minimum score of **3 (Good)** in *each* individual criterion.

- **Criterion 1: EXCELLENCE (Score 0-5, minimum 3)**

- 1.1 Clarity and Pertinence of Objectives

Wherein proposal template: Section 1.1.1 "Concept and Objectives"

Evaluators look for:

- SMART objectives (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound)
 - Clear problem statement
 - Alignment with COP-PILOT goals and cluster objectives
 - Platform validation contribution stated
 - Measurable success criteria

- 1.2 Soundness of Methodology

Where in template: Section 1.1.1 (methodology part) + Section 1.2 "Infrastructure Requirements"

Evaluators look for:

- Technical approach is scientifically/technically sound
 - Standards compliance (FIWARE, TMForum APIs, Eclipse Arrowhead, GAIA-X)
 - Infrastructure requirements realistic (testbed, computing, storage)
 - Integration protocols specified (MQTT, OPC UA, REST, etc.)
 - Risk assessment and mitigation

- 1.3 Ambition & Innovation

Where in template: Section 1.1.2 "State of the Art and Innovation"

Evaluators look for:

- State-of-the-art analysis (what exists currently)
 - Clear advancement beyond existing solutions
 - Novel approach or technology
 - Realistic ambition for Cloud/Edge/IoT ecosystem
 - TRL progression (typically TRL 5-6 → TRL 7-8)

- **Criterion 2: IMPACT (Score 0-5, minimum 3)**

- 2.1 Strategic Fit & Expected Impact

Where in template: Section 1.1.3 "Relevance to COP-PILOT Scope" + Section 2.2 "Expected Outcomes"

Evaluators look for:

- Specific cluster and use case (UC#) targeted
 - COP-PILOT platform integration described
 - Platform components leveraged identified
 - New capabilities/extensions proposed
 - Cross-sector scenarios supported
 - Platform validation demonstrated:
 - Platform component validation (ServOrch, SIF, LLM-UI, etc.)
 - Ecosystem expansion (new services via Workflow 1 or new domains via Workflow 2)
 - Cross-domain collaboration (interaction with existing COP-PILOT clusters)

- 2.2 Sustainability & Replicability

Where in template: Section 2.1 "Expected Impact and Sustainability" + Section 1.1.4 "Data Management"

Evaluators look for:

- Technical, economic, scientific, environmental/social impact described
- Dissemination plan (how results will be shared)
- Sustainability plan (solution valuable after project ends)
- Replication potential to other clusters/sectors
- Open access/data sharing plans

● **Criterion 3: IMPLEMENTATION (Quality & Efficiency) (Score 0-5, minimum 3)**

● 3.1 Work Plan Quality & Feasibility

Where in template: Section 3.1 "Work Plan and Timeline"

Evaluators look for:

- Clear phases (Design, Implementation, Testing, Evaluation/Reporting)
- Mandatory milestones:
 - ◆ M4 intermediate report (period M1-M3)
 - ◆ M9 final deliverable (period M4-M8)
- Realistic 8-month timeline
- Resource allocation per activity
- Dependencies and critical path identified
 - Gantt chart or timeline table provided

● 3.2 Consortium Capacity & Expertise

Where in template: Section 3.2 "Team Qualifications"

Evaluators look for:

- Necessary expertise present
 - Sufficient resources available
 - Single applicant OR consortium (2-5 partners maximum)
 - Track record in similar projects
 - Clear role distribution among partners
 - Publications or project references

● 3.3 Management & Resources Where in template: Section 3.3 "Budget & Justification"

Evaluators look for:

- Budget ≤ €200,000 (mandatory)
- Budget breakdown table completed:
 - ◆ Personnel (person-months)
 - ◆ Travel
 - ◆ Equipment & Software
 - ◆ Subcontracting
 - ◆ Other Direct Costs
 - ◆ Indirect Costs (max 25% of direct costs)
- Justification for each budget line
- Proportional to expected results (value for money)
- Efficient resource allocation

SCORING SCALE

Evaluators will score each criterion on the following **0 to 5 scale**:

Table 1: Scoring Scale

Score	Definition	Description
0	Fail	The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be judged due to missing information.
1	Poor	The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2	Fair	The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
3	Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary. (Minimum Threshold)
4	Very Good	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.
5	Excellent	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

FINAL WEIGHTED SCORE

To calculate the final proposal ranking, the raw scores (0-5) are weighted. **Excellence** is given a higher weight to ensure operational feasibility.

To pass, a proposal must meet **TWO** requirements:

1. **Individual Threshold:** Score at least **3** (Good) in *every* criterion.
2. **Overall Threshold:** Achieve a total weighted score of at least **60 points**.

Table 2: Weight Calculation

Criterion	Raw Score (0-5)	Weighting Factor	Max Possible Score	Minimum Weighted Threshold
1. Excellence	0-5	x 8	40 points	24 points
2. Impact	0-5	x 6	30 points	18 points
3. Implementation	0-5	x 6	30 points	18 points
TOTAL			100 POINTS	60 POINTS

5 SELECTION PROCESS & TIMELINE

YOUR PROPOSAL GOES THROUGH 5 EVALUATION STEPS:

- STEP 1: ELIGIBILITY CHECK (1 week)

Timeline: 17-22 April 2026

What we check:

- ✓ Organization is eligible
- ✓ Proposal is complete

Result: Eligible or Rejected

- STEP 2: Feasibility Screening (1 week after step 1)

Timeline: 23-29 April 2026

What we check:

- ✓ Check call alignment
- ✓ Technical feasibility screening (by consortium representatives/cluster experts)
- ✓ Prepare external review list

Result: Feasible or Not Feasible

- STEP 3: INDEPENDENT EXPERT SCORING (3 weeks)

Timeline: 30 April 22 May 2026

What happens:

- ✓ Minimum two independent experts read your proposal
- ✓ Each score on 3 criteria

Result: Individual expert scores (0-100 Points)

- STEP 4: CONSENSUS MEETING (1 week)

Timeline: 25-29 May 2026

What happens:

- ✓ All experts & consortium meet
- ✓ Discuss each proposal
- ✓ Reconcile different opinions
- ✓ Agree on final ranking

Result: Ranked list of winners + reserves

- STEP 5: NOTIFICATION (1 week)

Timeline: June 2026

What happens:

- ✓ All applicants notified by email
- ✓ Evaluation Summary Report provided (further feedback available on request)

Result: Your result + detailed feedback

FULL TIMELINE:

16 Feb 2026 → Call Opens (9.00 CET)
17 Apr 2026 → Deadline (17:00 CET)
23 April 2026 → Eligibility results
30 April 2026 → Feasibility screening results
22 May 2026 → Expert scoring complete
30 May 2026 → Consensus meeting
June 2026 → Winners announced
mid June 2026 → Contract & project start

6 FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

What COSTS ARE ELIGIBLE:

- ✓ Personnel: Salaries for project staff
- ✓ Travel: Meetings, conferences, site visits, webinars
- ✓ Equipment: Computing hardware, sensors, software licenses,
- ✓ Subcontracting: Outsourced services (with clear justification and maximum 20%)
- ✓ Other Direct Costs: Consumables, services, publications
- ✓ Indirect Costs: Maximum 25% of direct costs

Funding LIMITS:

Minimum: No minimum (but must be justified)

Maximum Funding per project: €200,000

Indirect Costs: Max 25% of direct costs

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

Payment 1: 50% upon contract signature (June 2026)

Payment 2: 50% upon final report approval (2027)

Payment following Lump Sum principles available:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon/lump-sum>

WHAT'S NOT ELIGIBLE:

- ✗ Loan or debt repayment
- ✗ Purchase of land or buildings
- ✗ Profit or contingency reserves
- ✗ Salaries not directly related to project
- ✗ Travel costs above €1000/person/month average

7 IMPORTANT OBLIGATIONS

IF YOUR PROJECT IS FUNDED, YOU MUST:

- **REPORT PROJECT PROGRESS**
 - Mid-term report at Month 4
 - Final report of Month 8 at Month 9
 - Follow reporting template
- **MAINTAIN FINANCIAL RECORDS**
 - Keep all receipts and documentation
 - Segregate project costs
 - Be ready for audit at any time
- **RESPECT INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**
 - Properly attribute all sources
 - Respect third-party IP rights
 - Register your outputs appropriately
- **ENSURE DATA PROTECTION**
 - Comply with GDPR requirements
 - Obtain informed consent for personal data
 - Implement data security measures
- **PROVIDE OPEN ACCESS**
 - Make results accessible
 - Publish findings (open access recommended)
 - Share code on GitHub/GitLab (if applicable)
 - Make data available (where feasible)
- **ACKNOWLEDGE FUNDING**
 - In all publications and presentations
 - On project website and materials
 - Grant Agreement: 101189819
 - EU flag and "Funded by EU" statement
- **MAINTAIN AUDIT TRAIL**
 - Document all decisions and changes
 - Keep communication records
 - Track any project modifications
 - Provide evidence of compliance

8 CONTACT INFORMATION & SUPPORT

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

<https://cop-pilot.eu/>
opencalls@cop-pilot.eu

TECHNICAL IT SUPPORT:

info@cop-pilot.eu

INFORMATION WEBINAR:

Date: March 2026

Time: 14:00 Brussels Time

Topics:

- Open Call overview
- Cluster-specific guidance
- Proposal writing tips
- Q&A session

Register: <https://cop-pilot.eu/>

DOCUMENT DOWNLOADS:

All resources available at: **cop-pilot.eu**

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Proposal Template (editable)
- Declaration of Honor
- SME Checklist
- Technical Application Guidelines

ADVISORY SUPPORT:

Want feedback before submitting?

Contact: opencalls@cop-pilot.eu

Request: "Preliminary Advisory Review"

SUBMISSION SUPPORT:

Portal problems?

Technical issues?

Contact: info@cop-pilot.eu

APPEALS:

Disagree with results?

Contact: opencalls@cop-pilot.eu

Request: "Appeal (Proposal Name) "

Within **15** calendar days of notification

9 CONCLUSIONS

FINAL REMINDERS:

- ✓ Read this guide fully before applying
- ✓ Download the mandatory proposal guidelines
- ✓ Ensure your organization is eligible
- ✓ Submit well before the deadline
- ✓ Use English language throughout
- ✓ Keep a copy of your submission
- ✓ Check your email for confirmation
- ✓ Prepare for evaluation feedback

GOOD LUCK WITH YOUR PROPOSAL!