

OPEN CALL #2 – INFORMATION DOCUMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ALTAI	Assessment List for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence
API	Application Programming Interface
ATSI	AgriTech Transformation and Sustainability Initiative
BM-L	Business Management Layer
BMP	Business Management Portal
CET	Central European Time
CNCF	Cloud Native Computing Foundation
COP	Collaborative Open Platform
DDO-L	Distributed Domain Orchestration Layer
DIS-L	Distributed Infrastructure Services Layer
DM	Data Management
DO	Domain Orchestrator
EAER	Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research
EC	European Commission
EIC	European Innovation Council
ESO	End-to-end Service Orchestration
ESO-L	End-to-end Service Orchestration Layer
ETSI	European Telecommunications Standards Institute
EV	Electric Vehicle
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions
FSTP	Funding Support to Third Parties
INFRA-L	Infrastructure Layer
IoT	Internet of Things
JWT	JSON Web Token
KPI	Key Performance Indicator

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LLM	Large Language Model
mTLS	Mutual Transport Layer Security
MQTT	Message Queuing Telemetry Transport
NGSI-LD	Next Generation Services Interface - Linked Data
OC1 / OC2	Open Call 1 / Open Call 2
OCI	Open Container Initiative
OCMB	Open Call Management Board
OIDC	OpenID Connect
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
PIC	Participant Identification Code
PKI	Public Key Infrastructure
PM	Person Month
RAN	Radio Access Network
RES	Renewable Energy Sources
SAML	Security Assertion Markup Language
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SIF	Secure Integration Fabric
SIF-L	Secure Integration Fabric Layer
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SPIFFE	Secure Production Identity Framework for Everyone
TMF	TeleManagement Forum
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
UC	Use Case
VAT	Value Added Tax
WP	Work Package
ZSM	Zero-touch network and Service Management

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1 INTRODUCTION TO COP-PILOT OPEN CALL 2

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

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.

1.2 OPEN CALL 2 (OC2): OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The main objective of COP-PILOT Open Call 2 (OC2) is to select innovative SMEs and SME-led consortia, which may include industry, research organisations and academia, to develop, integrate, test, and validate new digital solutions within the COP-PILOT Collaborative Open Platform, addressing real-world industrial challenges.

COP-PILOT platform enables secure, intelligent, and automated management of digital services across different industries.

OC2 translates this overall ambition into practical innovation by funding external innovators to bring their technologies into the platform and demonstrate their value in real-world pilot environments.

The specific objectives are to:

- Integrate innovative solutions into the existing COP-PILOT platform
- Test and validate technologies in real industrial environments

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- Demonstrate cross-sector applications using IoT, edge computing, AI, and intelligent automation
- Improve interoperability, security, and efficiency in the deployment and management of digital services
- Accelerate innovation and market uptake by helping promising technologies progress from development to real-world implementation
- Solutions entering OC2 shall already be demonstrated in a relevant environment (TRL 6) and shall reach TRL 7 or TRL 8 during the project, validated in a real COP-PILOT pilot environment. For Cluster 1 (CL1_CH1), however, the expected end-of-project TRL is 6 rather than 7–8. This is because validation will take place in the pre-production environment at RISE ICE, which emulates relevant mining conditions but does not constitute an operational mining environment. While this enables demonstration and validation of the integrated solution at TRL 6, it does not provide the operational conditions required to demonstrate TRL 7–8. The general minimum entry requirement of TRL 6 still applies to Cluster 1 applicants.

1.3 CALL SUMMARY: FUNDING, DURATION, DEADLINES AND TARGET APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants are single SMEs or SME-led consortia of up to three organisations, legally established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country and meet the eligibility conditions in Section 4 and Annex 7. OC2 offers financial support of up to €200,000 per third-party project for a maximum implementation period of eight months, together with technical support and expert mentoring. Each proposal must address one of the OC2 Clusters listed in Section 2.6.2 and select one of the challenges defined for that cluster in its Technical Guidelines. Solutions must start from at least TRL 6 and reach TRL 7 or TRL 8 by the end of the project, except for Cluster 1 (CL1_CH1), as specified in Section 1.2. Each organisation, identified by its Participant Identification Code (PIC), may take part in only one OC2 proposal, whether as single applicant, consortium leader or consortium member (see Section 4.3).

Submission is only through the COP-PILOT online form. The call is organised in two submission steps: feasibility check and final submission, both mandatory. The feasibility check is a first scope screening: proposals that do not address a published challenge will not be admitted to the final submission (see Section 5.2.1).

The call is scheduled to open on **23 November 2026.** The feasibility-check submission deadline is 24 January 2027 at 17:00 CET (Brussels time), and the final-submission deadline is 18 February 2027 at 17:00 CET (Brussels time).

Proposals must be submitted in English and meet the eligibility, documentation and evaluation requirements set out in this Information Document.

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2 THE COP-PILOT ARCHITECTURE AND INSTANTIATED PLATFORM

2.1 HIGH-LEVEL ARCHITECTURE AND KEY ABSTRACTIONS

To better convey COP-PILOT to the EU citizens and ecosystem of potential users, we deem important to provide a simplified view of the COP-PILOT architecture (see Figure 2-1) that abstracts away low-level details without losing essential context. This figure boils down the complex COP-PILOT architecture into five (5) essential pieces:

- Distributed COP-PILOT domains across the COP-PILOT Clusters in Europe. Individual domain stakeholders exploit domain-level orchestration (DO) and Data Management (DM) services for jointly managing compute, network, and data resources.
- A Secure Integration Fabric (SIF) for allowing secure on-the-fly data and service-level interactions between multiple domains,
- An End-to-end Service Orchestrator (ESO) for managing services that span across multiple domains, thus highlighting the “collaborativeness” of the COP-PILOT system.
- A Business Management Portal (BMP) offers a central marketplace of products and an LLM-driven assistant to turn stakeholders’ intents into actionable platform operations.
- A vertical CI/CD platform ensuring continuous integration and delivery of new features and bug fixes across every piece of software in Europe.

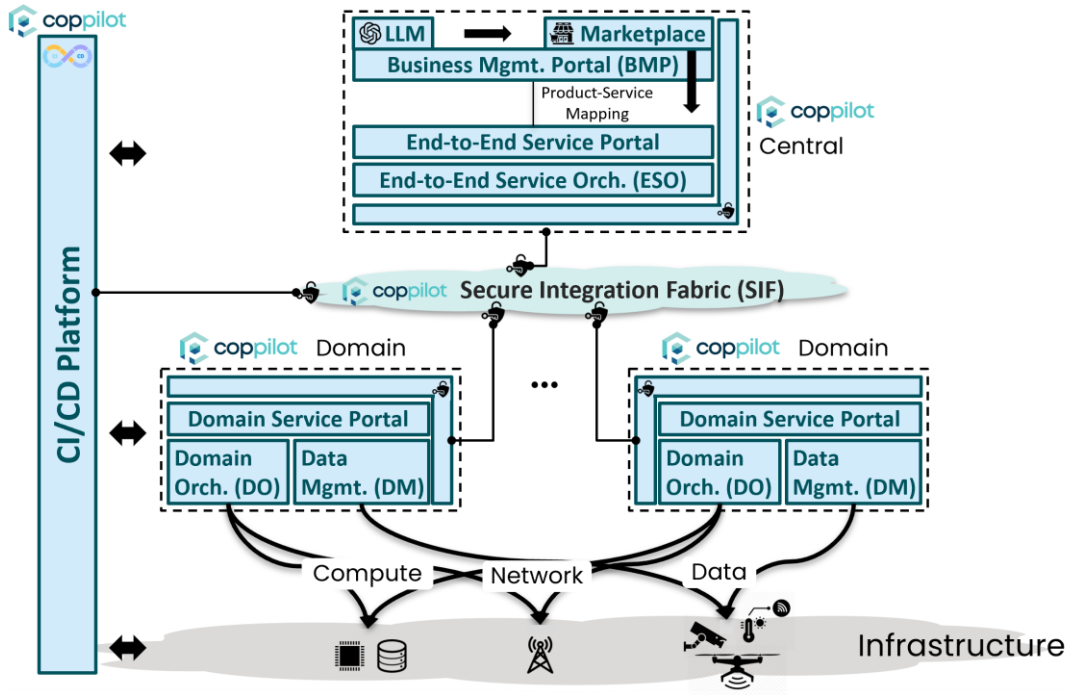

Figure 2-1: A minimal view of the final COP-PILOT architecture.

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Note that the minimal view of the final COP-PILOT architecture shown in Figure 2-1 focuses solely on COP-PILOT elements. To make this view more complete, Figure 2-2 adds additional items to sketch the entire ecosystem around COP-PILOT: (i) the layers of the architecture shown at the right hand side in Figure 2-2, (ii) the span of the infrastructure at the bottom part in Figure 2-2, (iii) the various stakeholders associated with COP-PILOT (see user icons in Figure 2-2), (iv) the primary vertical sectors that COP-PILOT facilitates via piloting activities (top part in Figure 2-2), and (v) the way COP-PILOT and 3rd party services interact with the platform. Note also that the pink-highlighted boxes in Figure 2-2 are presented as distinct abstractions of the platform in the rest of this section.

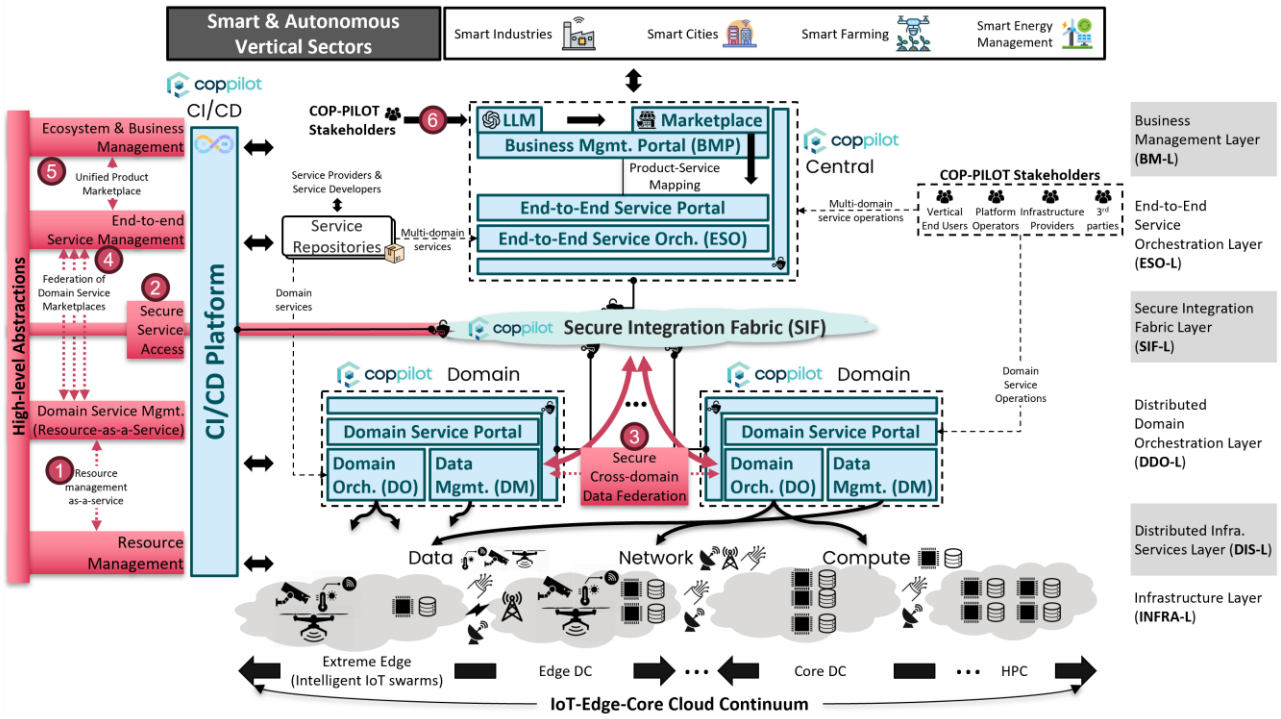

Figure 2-2: A simplified equivalent of the final COP-PILOT architecture.

Key COP-PILOT Abstractions:

(1) Resource management in an as-a-service manner: Despite dealing with a massively heterogenous continuum of physical and virtual compute, network, and data resources in every domain, COP-PILOT hides the details of these resources under a resource-as-a-service model. This allows infrastructure owners to easily expose the abilities of their hardware without disclosing resource-level details to the consumers. Having resources-as-a-service also allows the infrastructure owners to monetize these services in the COP-PILOT marketplace, linking them with products that can be purchased by interested stakeholders.

(2) Secure Service Access: COP-PILOT offers identity-first, zero-trust connectivity services within the entire COP-PILOT ecosystem, eliminating the need for managing traditional "connect first, verify later" VPNs in large ecosystems of multiple administrative entities.

(3) Secure Cross-domain Data Federation: The synergy between COP-PILOT's SIF and DM components allows secure sharing of data between domains to enable collaborative scenarios throughout the COP-PILOT piloting activities.

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(4) Federation of Domain Service Marketplaces: COP-PILOT's end-to-end service orchestrator binds with multiple domain orchestrator instances across multiple domains to federate domain-level marketplaces into a large multi-domain marketplace of services offered to the COP-PILOT stakeholders.

(5) A unified Product Marketplace: Maps the end-to-end services offered by the COP-PILOT ESO to standardized products and product offerings of a unified Pan-European marketplace offered to all COP-PILOT stakeholders.

(6) LLM-driven interaction with the Product Marketplace: COP-PILOT offers a native LLM assistant as part of a business management portal to greatly facilitate the way stakeholders consume the COP-PILOT products and product offerings.

2.2 GUIDELINES ON THE INTEGRATION APPROACH

No matter whether your solution comprises only of software or a combination of software and hardware, every open call project should either deploy its own individual "COP-PILOT Domain" with the specific elements shown in Figure 2-1, or host its solution within an existing domain of the selected cluster, where the cluster's Technical Guidelines provide for it. Part of your integration plan should explain how your new devices (e.g., IoTs, data sources, compute/network elements) should be integrated with COP-PILOT Domain platform components (t(deployed in your domain, or provided by the host domain, with guidelines provided by COP-PILOT) as well as how your overlay services (e.g., vertical applications) will be instantiated via COP-PILOT within your domain or the host domain. Reaching this point will then allow COP-PILOT to pull your services into the central service marketplace of the COP-PILOT Central domain visualized in Figure 2-1 and how to turn these services into sellable products.

This integration approach is crucial as it (a) preserves ownership (you keep your business intact) of your solution strictly within your administrative boundaries and (b) sets clear trust boundaries between existing COP-PILOT assets and OC assets, thus also preserving ownership within existing COP-PILOT Domains.

In the following sub-sections, we provide you technical details regarding the open-source projects used to instantiate the COP-PILOT architecture blocks presented in Section 2.1 as well as the implemented standards by COP-PILOT in each layer. Your proposed integration plan is important to outline how you will integrate with these instantiated components as well as the exact API and standardized interface you will leverage to make your solution part of COP-PILOT.

2.3 THE COP-PILOT PLATFORM TECHNOLOGIES AND PROTOCOLS

This section links the COP-PILOT platform assets (i.e., elements of the COP-PILOT architecture described in Section 2.1) with relevant technologies, protocols, etc as shown in Table 2-1.

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Table 2-1: Map of COP-PILOT Platforms Assets related to relevant technologies and protocols.

COP-PILOT Component Name	Architectural layer of COP-PILOT Component	Relevant Technologies, Protocols, etc.
Business Management Portal (BMP)	BM-L	Next.js (The React Framework for the Web) React Keycloak (Identity and Access Management) LangChain Ollama or vLLM Hugging Face Transformers Vector Databases (e.g. FAISS, Qdrant)
End-to-End Service Orchestrator (ESO)	ESO-L	Next.js (The React Framework for the Web) React Apache Quarkus (Java framework) Keycloak (Identity and Access Management) Redhat Kogito (Business Process Model and Notation) Prometheus (Metrics and monitoring) Grafana (Loki, Tempo, Dashboard) Hashicorp Vault (Secret management) Apache Kafka (Distributed event streaming) Technologies that the ESO orchestrates: - RedHat Open Cluster Management (OCM) multi-domain orchestration - Kubernetes (Container orchestration) - RedHat OpenShift
Domain Orchestrator (DO)	DDO-L	Angular (Web application framework) Spring Boot (Java framework) Keycloak (Identity and Access Management) Flowable (Business Process Model and Notation) Apache ActiveMQ (Distributed event streaming) MCP (Standard for connecting AI applications to DO) Prometheus (Metrics and monitoring) Grafana (Loki, Dashboard) Elasticsearch (Central log aggregation) Kroki (Diagram creation tool) Technologies that the DO orchestrates: - Kubernetes (Container orchestration) - RedHat OpenShift - ColonyOS - GitOps exchange model - LF Sylva Framework - NFV Orchestrators (implementing SOL005) - External Orchestrators (following TMF ODA)
Data Management (DM)	DDO-L	- Orion Context Broker - Scorpio Context Broker - Stellio Context Broker - Eclipse Arrowhead
Secure Integration Fabric (SIF)	SIF-L	- OpenZiti - Go (Golang) — primary implementation language for controllers, routers, and SDKs - X.509 / PKI — cryptographic identities for services, workloads, and endpoints - mTLS (Mutual TLS) — mandatory mutual authentication and encrypted transport - Libsodium — modern cryptographic primitives (key exchange, encryption, signatures)

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		- SDKs / Client Libraries — application embedding of secure connectivity (e.g. Go, C, Java, JS)
CI/CD Platform	SIF-L	Github (Git based cloud platform for hosting and managing software projects) Jenkins (CI automation) Harbor (Container & charts registry) Portainer (Container management) Kubernetes (Container Orchestration) Keycloak (Single sign-on & identity management)
Compute Controller	DIS-L	Kubernetes (vanilla), microk8s, k3s, k9s, and more flavours. RedHat's OpenShift, Open Cluster Management (OCM), ColonyOS
Network Controller	DIS-L	Any controller for managing private 5G resources (RAN, Transport, Core) can be integrated with OpenSlice, especially if it is described as a Kubernetes Custom Resource (CR). Example 5G controller integrations already in place: 1) NOKIA's Network as Code (NaC) controller, 2) OTE's Slice Manager based on Ericsson's hardware, and 3) ETSI OSM 5GC provisioning based on Open5GS helm charts (other 5GC soft. Stack is supported if packaged as a cloud native software)
IoT Controller	DIS-L	Any IoT controller that complies to the standardized ETSI NGSI-LD or NGSI-v2 data models (mentioned above) or Eclipse Arrowhead southbound protocols

2.4 THE COP-PILOT PLATFORM STANDARDS AND COMMUNITIES

This section links the COP-PILOT platform assets (elements of the COP-PILOT architecture described in Section 2.1) with relevant standards and open-source (software) communities as shown in Table 2-2.

Table 2-2: Map of COP-PILOT Platforms Assets related to relevant standards and open-source communities.

COP-PILOT Component Name	Architectural layer of COP-PILOT Component	Relevant Standards	Relevant Open-source Communities
Business Portal	BM-L	TMF 633 Service Catalog Mgmt. TMF 641 Service Ordering Mgmt. TMF 638 Service Inventory Mgmt. TMF 634 Resource Catalog Mgmt. TMF 652 Resource Ordering Mgmt. TMF 639 Resource Inventory Mgmt.	Main component: Open-source COP-PILOT Business Portal (GitHub) → Will be open soon Based on: AG-UI: the Agent-User Interaction Protocol (GitHub)
End-to-End Service Orchestrator (ESO)	ESO-L	TMF 633 Service Catalog Mgmt. TMF 641 Service Ordering Mgmt. TMF 638 Service Inventory Mgmt. TMF 640 Service Activation Mgmt. TMF 634 Resource Catalog Mgmt. TMF 652 Resource Ordering Mgmt. TMF 639 Resource Inventory Mgmt. TMF 642 Alarm Mgmt. TMF 632 Party Mgmt. TMF 669 Party Role Mgmt. TMF 673 Geographic Address Mgmt. TMF 674 Geographic Site Mgmt. ETSI GS ZSM 003 v1.1.1 (2021-06): Zero-	Main component: ETSI OpenSlice HypO Module Development Group (MDG) created through COP-PILOT on January 14, 2026 Part of ETSI OpenSlice Software Development Group (SDG) The COP-PILOT ESO recently demonstrated compliance with ETSI ZSM via PoC 16

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		touch network and Service Management (ZSM); End-to-end management and orchestration of network slicing ETSI GS ZSM 008 v1.1.1 (2022-07): Zero-touch network and Service Management (ZSM); Cross-domain E2E service lifecycle management	
Domain Orchestrator (DO)	DDO-L	TMF 620 Product Catalog Mgmt. TMF 622 Product Ordering Mgmt. TMF 637 Product Inventory Mgmt. TMF 633 Service Catalog Mgmt. TMF 641 Service Ordering Mgmt. TMF 638 Service Inventory Mgmt. TMF 640 Service Activation Mgmt. TMF 634 Resource Catalog Mgmt. TMF 652 Resource Ordering Mgmt. TMF 639 Resource Inventory Mgmt. TMF 702 Resource Activation Mgmt. TMF 628 Performance Mgmt. TMF 632 Party Mgmt. TMF 669 Party Role Mgmt. TMF 673 Geographic Address Mgmt. TMF 674 Geographic Site Mgmt. ETSI GS ZSM 003 v1.1.1 (2021-06): Zero-touch network and Service Management (ZSM); End-to-end management and orchestration of network slicing ETSI GS ZSM 008 v1.1.1 (2022-07): Zero-touch network and Service Management (ZSM); Cross-domain E2E service lifecycle management ETSI GS NFV-SOL 005 V4.3.1 (2022-08) ETSI GS NFV-SOL 018 V5.1.1 (2024-07) IETF: A YANG Data Model for the RFC 9543 Network Slice Service	Main component: ETSI OpenSlice Software Development Group (SDG) The COP-PILOT DO demonstrated compliance with ETSI ZSM via PoC 16 and PoC 2 Components that integrate with OSL (thus be potentially exploited): 1. ETSI Open-Source MANO (OSM) Software Development Group (SDG) 2. ETSI TeraFlowSDN Software Development Group (SDG)
Data Management (DM)	DDO-L	ETSI NGSI-LD by ETSI GS CIM 009 V1.9.1 2025-07	Main components: • FIWARE Orion-LD • Scorpio broker • Stellio Context Broker • Lepus for combined NGSI-v2 and NGSI-LD data spaces • Eclipse Arrowhead
Secure Integration Fabric (SIF)	SIF-L	CNCF SPIFFE OpenID Connect (OIDC) authentication protocol built on top of the OAuth 2.0 framework	Main component: OpenZiti OpenZiti GitHub

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		RFC 7519: JSON Web Token (JWT) mTLS extension of OAuth 2.0 RFC 5280: X.509 Public Key Infrastructure Certificate	
CI/CD Platform	SIF-L	OAuth 2.0 Authorization protocol (RFC 6749) OpenID Connect (OIDC) Identity layer on OAuth 2.0 SAML 2.0 Authentication/SSO standard JWT (JSON Web Token) OCI Image Specification OCI Distribution Specification	Jenkins Community Forum Harbor Community Page Portainer Community Forum Keycloak Community Kubernetes Discuss Forum
Compute Controller	DIS-L	Any standards applicable to the entire Kubernetes ecosystem	All communities related to the entire Kubernetes ecosystem
Network Controller	DIS-L	Any standards applicable to private (beyond) 5G systems	All communities related to private (beyond) 5G systems
IoT Controller	DIS-L	(Commercial) IoT platforms that comply with standardized ETSI NGSI data models	All IoT communities that comply with standardized ETSI NGSI data models

The relation of the above platform components with open-source software and relevant standards is shown in Figure 2-3: Mapping of COP-PILOT platform components to open-source software and standards.

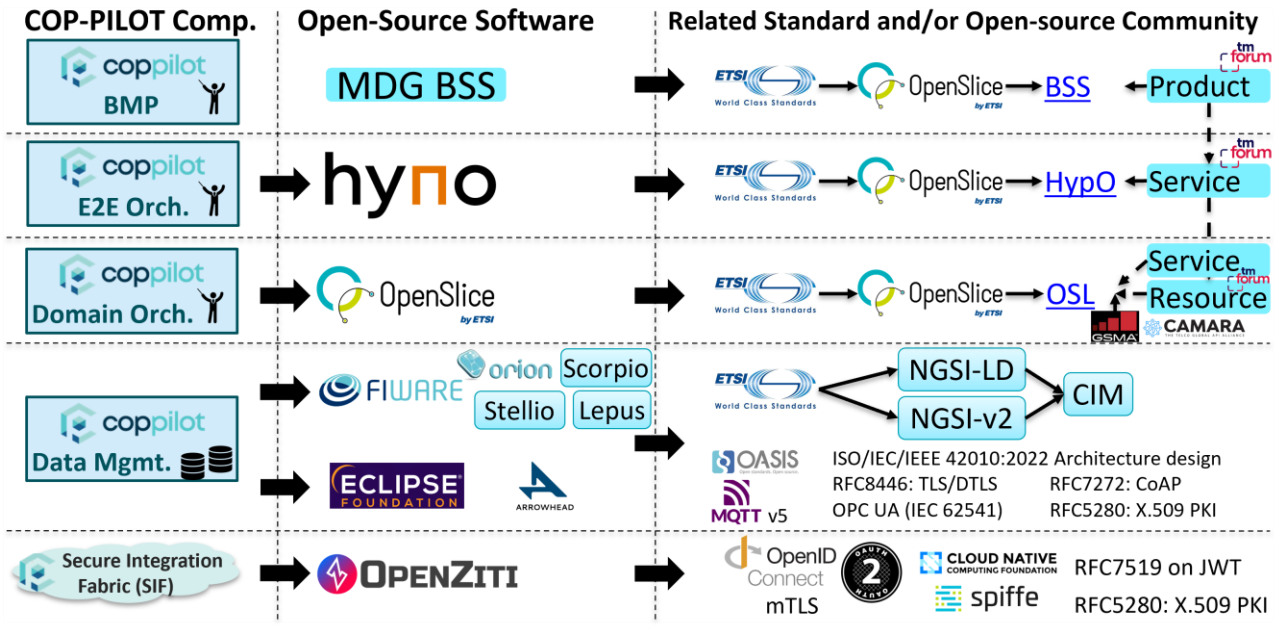

Figure 2-3: Mapping of COP-PILOT platform components to open-source software and standards.

2.5 EXPECTED BENEFITS FROM OPEN CALLS AND LINK TO THE PLATFORM

Proposals submitted to the COP-PILOT Open Calls will be evaluated on their ability to deliver tangible benefits to the ecosystem. All funded projects must successfully demonstrate the following outcomes, which are directly linked to the validation and expansion of the COP-PILOT platform:

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- **Platform Validation and Feedback**

  Applicants must deploy their solutions using the core components of the COP-PILOT platform. The primary goal is to validate the platform's key innovations, including the LLM-assisted product onboarding and the end-to-end service orchestration (COP-PILOT ESO and DO components). A mandatory outcome for all projects is the delivery of concrete validation data (e.g., performance KPIs, service deployment times, scalability metrics) and qualitative feedback on the platform's usability, robustness, and features.

- **Ecosystem Expansion and Innovation**

  Applicants must introduce tangible, innovative assets that expand the COP-PILOT ecosystem. Such assets are expected to be new vertical applications or platform services relevant to the project's core piloting clusters (Mining, Smart City/Building, Agriculture and Manufacturing), as well as new infrastructure domains that offer unique resources (e.g., a new testbed, a private compute cluster, a unique data-as-a-service offering) to the federation. Any such asset must serve the cluster challenge selected by the applicant; assets that are not linked to a published challenge are out of scope.

- **Demonstrate Cross-Domain Collaboration**

  Proposed solutions must not operate in a silo. A key expected outcome is the demonstration of tangible cross-domain collaboration. This must be achieved by interacting with, consuming data from, or deploying services to at least one of the existing COP-PILOT piloting domains. Alternatively, it may offer the scaling of an existing COP-PILOT use case or service into a newly federated third-party domain.

- **Adherence to Open Standards and Interoperability**

  All proposed solutions must strictly comply with the platform's open, standards-based interfaces. This includes using the specified TMForum (TMF) based APIs for service and resource orchestration and management as well as the NGSI-LD / NGSIv2-LD and smart data models for standardized data management. This adherence is critical to ensure interoperability and to validate the core COP-PILOT vision of a unified, open, and standardized European ecosystem.

2.6 COP-PILOT PILOTING CLUSTERS AND USE CASES

2.6.1 Overview of COP-PILOT Piloting Clusters and Use Cases

COP-PILOT provides applicants with the opportunity to develop, integrate, test and validate innovative digital solutions in real-world environments through four clusters covering a range of industrial and societal challenges. The clusters represent distinct application domains in which Cloud–Edge–IoT technologies, artificial intelligence (AI), data integration and distributed computing can address concrete operational needs, improve efficiency and support sustainable digital transformation.

Each cluster brings together a set of related use cases and publishes a limited number of OC2 challenges in its Technical Guidelines. The use cases describe the pilot environments; the challenges define what OC2 proposals must address. The use cases also illustrate how digital technologies can support real-time monitoring, predictive maintenance, intelligent automation, resource optimisation, secure data sharing and collaboration across systems and sectors.

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The four clusters cover the following areas:

- **Cluster 1 – Business Integration in Mining**: Optimize mining operations through real-time
- monitoring, predictive analytics, and autonomous systems integration using edge-to-cloud computing.
-
- **Cluster 2 – Smart Sustainable IoT Solutions in Valencia**: smart-city applications, sustainable mobility, campus resource optimisation, and maritime and terrestrial traffic management.

- **Cluster 3A – AgriTech Transformation and Sustainability Initiative (ATSI)**: precision agriculture, crop monitoring, agricultural robotics, secure data management and supply-chain optimisation.

- **Cluster 4 – Smart Vineyards & Sustainable Winery Ecosystems**: vineyard monitoring, water-use efficiency, sensor lifecycle management, winery production optimisation and AI-supported sustainable energy management.

Applicants must select one cluster and one of the challenges published in that cluster's Technical Guidelines and summarised in **Table 2-3**. Proposals that address no published challenge are out of scope and will be declared **not feasible at the feasibility check and will not be admitted to the final submission**. Applicants must state the selected cluster and **challenge ID** in the application form and in the proposal.
Several proposals may address the same challenge, and more than one of them may be funded. Proposals addressing the same challenge are evaluated and ranked independently, within the ranking of their cluster (see Section 6.4).

Out of scope
The following are considered out of scope of OC2 and will be declared not feasible:

- proposals that do not address one of the challenges published in the cluster Technical Guidelines, or that address more than one cluster or challenge;
- solutions that have not yet been demonstrated in a relevant environment (below TRL 6 at the start of the project);
- pure research, feasibility studies or market studies without integration and validation in a COP-PILOT pilot environment;
- hardware-only deployments or stand-alone solutions without integration with the COP-PILOT platform components and open interfaces (Section 2);
- generic platform development not linked to the selected challenge.

The following subsection introduces the COP-PILOT clusters across the verticals and provides links to dedicated documents containing further information on their scope, challenges and individual use cases. Applicants are encouraged to consult the guidelines to understand the available resources, integration requirements, and expected impacts of their proposed solutions

2.6.2 Application of COP-PILOT across the vertical sectors

The generic COP-PILOT platform is applied across heterogeneous vertical sectors in Europe, the details of which are provided in the following links:

Cluster 1 – Business Integration in Mining

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Cluster 2 – Smart Sustainable IoT Solutions in Valencia

Cluster 3A – AgriTech Transformation and Sustainability Initiative (ATSI)

Cluster 4 – Smart Vineyards and Sustainable Winery Ecosystems

Table 2-3 summarises the OC2 challenges published by each cluster. Applicants must quote the Challenge ID in the application form and in the proposal.

Table 2-3: OC2 challenges per cluster

Cluster	Challenge ID	Challenge title
Cluster 1 – Business Integration in Mining	CL1_CH1	On-premises Edge Node Operation in Mining
Cluster 2 – Smart Sustainable IoT Solutions in Valencia	CL2_CH1	Smart Traffic Monitoring at the Port of Valencia
	CL2_CH2	Smart monitoring of buildings and public spaces in Valencia
Cluster 3A – AgriTech Transformation and Sustainability Initiative (ATSI)	CL3A_CH1	Autonomous Drone-in-a-Box and On-Site Imagery Service
	CL3A_CH2	AR-Powered Field Scouting and Decision Support Assistant
Cluster 4 – Smart Vineyards and Sustainable Winery Ecosystems	CL4_CH1	Large-Scale Sensing and Data Integration across Vineyards and Wineries

Refer to the Technical Guidelines of each cluster for the full description of each challenge, its requirements and the resources available.

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3 FUNDING SCHEME AND FINANCIAL CONDITIONS

3.1 AVAILABLE BUDGET AND MAXIMUM FUNDING

Subject to conditions explained under this document, COP-PILOT provides financial support to third parties involved in developing and validating solutions that align with the project's objectives. These projects will contribute to the experimentation and validation activities carried out within COP-PILOT. Each selected applicant's project is referred to as a Third-Party Project. These projects are independent works carried out by external parties outside the COP-PILOT consortium that contribute to the project's overall objectives.

The details of the financial support provided in COP-PILOT OC2 are given in Table 3-1. The number of projects funded will depend on the funding requested by applicants and the outcome of the evaluation by external reviewers. Requested funding cannot exceed €200,000 per project, and each project cannot exceed 8 months in duration.

Table 3-1: COP-PILOT OC2 financial support

Open Call	Duration of 3rd party projects	Max funding (€)	Indicative Number of projects	Total funding (€)
COP-PILOT -OC2	8 Months	200,000	12	2,400,000

3.2 FUNDING RATES AND FINANCIAL LIMITATIONS

The maximum financial support is €200,000 per selected third-party project. The call is intended to cover 100% of eligible costs, subject to the final approved amount and the conditions set out in the Sub-Grant Agreement. The budget is an estimate used to justify the requested lump sum; applicants must follow the call-specific financial rules and the Sub-Grant Agreement.

3.3 ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

Financial support provided through the Open Calls is intended to cover costs directly related to project implementation. Applicants must submit a budget estimate alongside their implementation plan and justify the resources required to execute the proposed activities. During the evaluation process, the adequacy and relevance of the proposed budget will be assessed in relation to the work plan and the expected results of the project. The following cost categories are eligible for support through the financial contribution:

- **Personnel costs**: costs relating to the human resources involved in implementing the project activities.
- **Travel costs**: costs arising from travel activities required for project execution, including attendance at project meetings and events, project implementation, and promotional activities.
- **Equipment costs**: costs related to equipment required for the development, testing or validation of the proposed solution (only depreciation for usage within the project timeframe).

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- **Other costs and services**: costs related to consumables, publications and promotional material.
- **Overhead costs**: indirect costs automatically calculated as 25% of the direct project costs (personnel, travel, equipment and other direct costs and services)
- **Subcontracting**: costs for outsourced services are permitted but must be clearly justified and must not exceed 20%.

All budget categories and requested amounts must be explained in the proposal template.

3.4 PAYMENT SCHEDULE AND CONDITIONS

Payment schedule is as follows:

- **Advance payment**: 50% of the maximum financial support upon signature/approval of the Sub-Grant Agreement and completion of the required administrative set-up.
- **Interim payment**: 35% of the maximum financial support following submission and approval of the Final Report and Results, in accordance with the COP-PILOT monitoring and approval process.
- **Final Payment**: 15% of the maximum financial support will only be paid after the completion and approval of all Work of the COP-PILOT Project by the European Commission.

The Payments will follow the Lump Sum principles for the Horizon Europe Work Programme[1].

3.5 ORIGIN OF FUNDING

The funds allocated to the selected applicants originate from the COP-PILOT project, which is funded under the Horizon Europe Framework Programme through European Commission Grant Agreement No. 101189819. The selected projects will be formally associated with the COP-PILOT consortium through a sub-grant agreement, which will define the conditions governing the implementation of the third-party projects and the transfer of financial support.

Projects funded through the Open Calls cannot receive double funding from other European Union funding programmes. However, synergies with other funding sources, including other Horizon Europe projects, are permitted, provided the funding is used for complementary activities and not for overlapping purposes. Each applicant must therefore declare that they have not received funding for the same activities from another European Commission funding scheme, by completing Annex 5 – Declaration on Double Funding.

[1] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/programmes/horizon/lump-sum

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4 ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

4.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS AND ORGANISATIONS

Eligible applicants can be single SMEs or SME-led consortia of up to three organisations (including the Leader), and they do not need to be from different countries.

For a consortium application, the lead applicant must be a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME). Other consortium members may be:

- Small and medium-sized enterprises
- Industry
- Research/scientific organizations
- Academia
- Non-profit organisations

4.2 ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Applicants must be legal entities established in an EU Member State or a Horizon Europe Associated Country producing legal effects on the call opening date in accordance with the official EC list (Annex 7). Participation is strictly restricted to categories 1 and 2 of Annex 7.

Legal entities from non-associated third countries, countries associated solely to the Euratom programme, or countries subject to transitional arrangements not yet producing legal effects for this budget are not eligible to receive financial support.

The list of eligible countries is based on the official Horizon Europe list in force on the call opening date.

4.3 PARTICIPATION RESTRICTIONS AND EXCLUSIONS

Applicants must meet all the following eligibility requirements:

- **Independence**: Applicants must be fully independent of the project partners, their affiliated entities, employees and any companies under their control.
- **Financial standing**: Applicants must not be bankrupt or subject to insolvency proceedings.
- **Professional integrity**: Applicants must not have been found guilty of grave professional misconduct or fraud.
- **Tax and social security compliance**: Applicants must be up to date with all applicable tax and social security obligations.

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- **Double funding**: Applicants must not have received any other EU grants for this proposal.

- **One participation per organisation (PIC check)**: Each organisation may participate in only one Open Call 2 proposal across all the clusters, regardless of its role (single applicant, consortium leader or consortium member). Participation is verified on the Participant Identification Code (PIC) of every organisation listed in the application form, at the feasibility check and again at the final submission. If the same PIC appears in more than one proposal, only the first proposal submitted (according to the submission timestamp) will be considered; any later proposal including that PIC, whether in the same or in a different cluster, will be declared ineligible. Updating the same proposal before the deadline does not count as an additional proposal: only the latest version submitted before the deadline will be assessed.

- **Valid PIC**: Every organisation in the proposal (leader and members) must hold a valid 9-digit PIC registered in the EU Participant Register (Funding & Tenders Portal) and must provide it in the online form at the feasibility check submission. Proposals in which any organisation has no valid PIC will be declared ineligible.

- **Entities funded under COP-PILOT Open Call 1** (OC1) are ineligible to apply to OC2. For consortium applications, this restriction applies to every consortium member and is verified on the PIC.

- COP-PILOT reserves the right to reject a selected application if any of the aforementioned conditions are not met.

Verification of eligibility
The conditions above are checked, on the basis of the information and declarations provided in the online form (including the PIC, country and legal status of every organisation), before external evaluation and during contracting (Section 7.1).
Proposals found ineligible will not be admitted to the final submission.

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5 APPLICATION PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

This section outlines the procedures for the submission of applications to the COP-PILOT Open Call 2 (OC2).

Before you apply: eligibility and scope self-check.

Applicants should only submit a proposal if they can answer "yes" to all of the following questions:

- Is the lead applicant an SME, and does the consortium include at most three organisations?
- Is every organisation legally established in an EU Member State or in a country listed in categories 1 or 2 of Annex 7?
- Does every organisation have a valid PIC, and does none of them take part in another OC2 proposal?
- Is every organisation independent of the COP-PILOT partners, and has none of them received funding under OC1?
- Does the proposal address exactly one challenge published in the Technical Guidelines of one cluster (Table 2-3)?
- Has the solution already been demonstrated in a relevant environment (TRL 6), with evidence that can be provided?
- Can the solution be integrated with the COP-PILOT components and open interfaces (Section 2) and validated in the pilot environment within eight months?
- Is the requested funding no more than €200,000?

5.1 SUBMISSION TIMELINE AND KEY INFORMATION

Stage	Date / Deadline	Description & Responsible Body
Call Opening	23 November 2026	Official call launch and opening of the online submission platform
Feasibility Check Submission	24 January 2027 at 17:00 CET	Mandatory submission of the online form with eligibility information for every organisation (PIC, country, legal status, role), and of the project summary and proposal sections 1.1.1–1.1.3 and 1.2.
Feasibility Feedback to Applicants	6 February 2027	Feasibility feedback issued by the Cluster teams: Feasible or Not feasible (not admitted to final submission).
Final Proposal Submission	18 February 2027 at 17:00 CET	Mandatory submission of the full 12-page proposal, all Annexes, and the feasibility feedback copy. Open only to proposals assessed as Feasible.
Proposals Evaluation	19 February –9 March 2027	Eligibility checks (including PIC check), final feasibility check, and external independent expert scoring.

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Notification of Provisional Ranking	10 March 2027	Individual notification sent to applicant contact points containing ESR (Evaluation Summary Report) and provisional ranking / reserve list status.
Redress period	15 March 2027	Within 5 calendar days of provisional notification, non-selected applicants may lodge procedural complaints via opencalls@cop-pilot.eu.
Final Selection and Reserve List Announcement	Beginning April 2027	Final approval by the Open Call Management Board (OCMB) after resolving admissible redress requests.
Documents Validation & Contracting	April 2027	Verification of legal existence, SME status, and financial capacity; Sub-Grant Agreement signature.
Projects Implementation (8 Months)	April 2027 – November 2027	Sub-project execution: • M3 (June 2027): Milestone 1 (Lab Rehearsal) & Intermediate Report R1 • M8 (November 2027): Milestone 2 (Real Trial), Final Report R2

Please note that the above calendar is indicative and might be slightly adapted whenever needed.

5.2 SUBMISSION PROCESS

COP-PILOT Open Call 2 (OC2) has a two-step submission process:

- Feasibility check submission
- Final Submission

Both submissions must be made through the OC2 submission system, accessible via the COP-PILOT website. The same proposal template must be used for both stages.

5.2.1 Feasibility check submission

The Feasibility Check Submission is **mandatory** and aims to assess in advance whether the proposed project aligns with the COP-PILOT infrastructure, scope, and objectives. It aims to identify ineligible or out-of-scope proposals at an early stage, before applicants invest in a full proposal.

Applicants must complete all fields of the online form on the submission platform, including, as a minimum: the selected cluster and Challenge ID; the PIC, legal name, country, legal status (SME or other) and role of every organisation; the current TRL of the solution with supporting evidence (e.g. reference to a previous demonstration); and whether the solution will be deployed in its own COP-PILOT domain or hosted in an existing domain. Applicants must also provide the following mandatory sections of the proposal template:

- Project summary
- 1.1.1 Concept and Objectives
- 1.1.2 State of the Art and Innovation
- 1.1.3 Relevance to COP-PILOT Scope

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- 1.2 Infrastructure Requirements

Only one proposal per organisation may enter the feasibility check (see Section 4.3). If the proposal is updated before the feasibility deadline, only the latest version will be assessed.

Feasibility check criteria. The feasibility check covers:

- **Eligibility:** compliance with the conditions in Section 4, based on the online form and the PIC of every organisation;
- **Scope:** the proposal addresses one challenge published in the Technical Guidelines of the selected cluster;
- **Infrastructure:** the resources required (Section 1.2 of the template) are available in the selected or host domain, or will be provided by the applicant;
- **Maturity:** credible evidence that the solution is at TRL 6 or higher;
- **Integration:** the solution can realistically be integrated with the COP-PILOT components and open interfaces and validated within eight months.

The selected cluster team will provide Feasibility Feedback to the contact person indicated in the application form. The feedback will explain the rationale for the assessment and give one of the following outcomes:

- **Feasible:** the applicant may proceed to the final submission.
- **Not feasible:** the proposal is ineligible or out of scope, or cannot be implemented with the available infrastructure. It will not be admitted to the final submission.

5.2.2 Final submission

Only applicants whose proposal was assessed as Feasible may make a final submission. Applicants must submit the final version of their proposal through the OC2 submission system, using the same proposal template as for the feasibility check.

The final submission must include the following documents and completed materials:

- Completed proposal template: All sections and subsections must be fully completed.
- Completed online submission form: All required fields must be completed on the submission platform.
- Feasibility Feedback: A copy of the feedback received during the initial feasibility check must be included.
- Completed annexes: All applicable annexes must be duly completed and signed, where required:
  - Annex 1: Proposal Template
  - Annex 2: Declaration of Honour

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- Annex 3: SME Declaration
- Annex 4: Consortium Agreement Declaration
- Annex 5: Declaration on Double Funding for Recipients
- Annex 6: Privacy and Ethics

Applicants must ensure that the final proposal incorporates any modifications required in response to the Feasibility Feedback, where applicable. The final submission must remain consistent with the proposal submitted for the initial feasibility check. Only modifications necessary to address the feasibility issues identified in the feedback are permitted. Substantial changes resulting in a materially different proposal are not allowed.

Before being forwarded for external evaluation, each proposal will undergo the eligibility check (including the PIC check described in Section 4.3) and a final feasibility check, to verify that the conditions stated in the Feasibility Feedback have been respected. Proposals that do not pass these checks will not be forwarded to external evaluation.

5.3 APPLICATION FORM AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

The Application Form is available online on the COP-PILOT website on the dedicated page (https://cop-pilot.eu/open-calls/2nd-open-call/) and must be completed in full, ensuring that all required information is provided accurately and consistently with the proposal and its supporting documentation. All mandatory sections must be completed before submission. Any missing information or inconsistencies between the application form, the proposal, and the supporting documents may lead to rejection of the application.

5.4 SUBMISSION PORTAL

Applications must be submitted electronically through the OC2 submission portal linked to the COP-PILOT open-calls webpage.

Paper submissions and submissions through other channels will not be accepted.

5.5 LANGUAGE, FORMAT AND PAGE LIMITS

Applications must use the forms provided in the electronic submission system and the proposal template in Annex 1 – Proposal Template

Applications will be rejected if they do not use the provided template, are incomplete, or contain information that is inconsistent with that in the submission system, mandatory annexes, and supporting documents.

Applications should be written in English and be readable and printable.

All text must be in 11 point font minimum with standard margins.

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The page number and sections subject to limits will be clearly shown in the application templates. The limit for a full application is 12 pages. Any excess pages will not be considered by the evaluators. Incomplete proposals will not be evaluated.

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6 EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

6.1 EVALUATION STAGES AND EXTERNAL EVALUATION

The diagram below illustrates the step-by-step evaluation pipeline and the decision stages.



Figure 6-1 OC step-by-step evaluation.

6.2 EVALUATION CRITERIA

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.

Detailed breakdown of evaluation criteria, sub-criteria, corresponding proposal sections, and assessment requirements for external evaluators.

Table 6-1: evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criterion	Sub-Criterion	Template Section	Evaluator Assessment Focus
1. EXCELLENCE (Score: 0–5 | Minimum: 3)	**1.1 Clarity & Pertinence of Objectives**	*Section 1.1.1 (Concept & Objectives)*	• **SMART Objectives:** Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound. • **Problem Statement:** Clear definition of the core challenge addressed. • **Strategic Alignment:** Direct fit with COP-PILOT goals and cluster objectives. • **Platform Validation:** Stated contribution to validating the COP-PILOT platform.

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			• **Success Criteria:** Concrete, measurable criteria for success.
	1.2 Soundness of Methodology	*Section 1.1.1 (Methodology) & Section 1.2 (Infrastructure Requirements)*	• **Technical Validity:** Scientifically and technically sound approach. • **Standards Compliance:** FIWARE, TMForum APIs, Eclipse Arrowhead, GAIA-X. • **Infrastructure Feasibility:** Realistic demands for testbed, computing, and storage. • **Integration Protocols:** Clear specifications (MQTT, OPC UA, REST APIs, etc.). • **Risk Assessment:** Identification of technical risks and realistic mitigation strategies.
	1.3 Ambition & Innovation	*Section 1.1.2 (State of the Art & Innovation)*	• **State-of-the-Art Baseline:** Clear analysis of existing solutions and technologies. • **Innovation Advancement:** Demonstrable advancement beyond state-of-the-art. • **Novel Approach:** Innovative concepts or technologies applied to Cloud/Edge/IoT. • **TRL Progression:** Expected entry at TRL 6 or higher, supported by evidence, reaching TRL 7–8 by the end of the project, except for Cluster 1 (CL1_CH1), where the expected end-of-project TRL is 6.
2. IMPACT (Score: 0–5 | Minimum: 3)	**2.1 Strategic Fit & Expected Impact**	*Section 1.1.3 (Relevance to Scope) & Section 2.2 (Expected Outcomes)*	• **Targeted Scope:** Clear alignment with the selected cluster and challenge (Challenge ID). • **Platform Integration:** Detailed description of COP-PILOT platform integration. • **Component Utilization:** Specific COP-PILOT components leveraged (ServOrch, SIF, LLM-UI, etc.). • **Capability Extension:** New capabilities, services, or extensions proposed. • **Platform Validation:** Demonstrates component validation, ecosystem expansion, and cross-domain collaboration.
	2.2 Sustainability & Replicability	*Section 2.1 (Impact & Sustainability) & Section 1.1.4 (Data Management)*	• **Multi-Dimensional Impact**: Technical, economic, scientific, and environmental/social impact described. • **Dissemination Plan:** Structured plan for sharing results with relevant stakeholders. • **Post-Project Sustainability:** Clear strategy to ensure solution viability after project completion. • **Replication Potential:** Scalability and applicability to other clusters, sectors, or domains. • **Open Access & Data:** Robust plans for open science and data sharing.
3. IMPLEMENTATION (Quality & Efficiency) (Score: 0–5 | Minimum: 3)	**3.1 Work Plan Quality & Feasibility**	*Section 3.1 (Work Plan & Timeline)*	• **Structured Phases:** Clear breakdown into Design, Implementation, Testing, and Evaluation/Reporting. • **Mandatory Milestones:** Includes M3 Intermediate Report (M1–M3) & M8 Final Report (M4–M8). • **Realistic Timeline:** Feasible execution plan within the mandatory 8-month window. • **Resource & Risk Alignment:** Clear activity resource allocation, critical path identification, and Gantt chart/timeline table.
	3.2 Consortium Capacity & Expertise	*Section 3.2 (Team Qualifications)*	•**Technical Expertise:** High domain knowledge and complementary skills present. • **Resource Capacity:** Sufficient staff allocation and operational capacity. •**Consortium Structure:** Single applicant or balanced consortium (up to 3 organisations). • **Proven Track Record:** Relevant experience, prior projects, or reference publications.

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			• **Role Allocation:** Clear, logical division of responsibilities among partners.
	3.3 Management & Resource Allocation	*Section 3.3 (Budget & Justification)*	• **Budget Cap:** Total maximum requested budget €200,000. • **Detailed Breakdown:** Completed breakdown for Personnel (PMs), Travel, Equipment, Subcontracting, Other Goods and services and Indirect Costs. • **Cost Justification:** Clear rationale for each budget line item. • **Value for Money:** Efficient resource allocation proportional to planned outcomes.

6.3 SCORING SYSTEM AND THRESHOLDS

Evaluators will score each of the three criteria on a scale from 0 to 5. A proposal must achieve at least 3 points in each criterion and a total weighted score of at least 60/100 to pass the thresholds.

Table 6-2: 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 6-3: 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**

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6.4 RANKING, SELECTION AND RESERVE LIST

Proposals will be ranked based on the final results of the external evaluation process and when applicable upon completion of the redress period. The ranking will be established separately for each cluster, according to the scores awarded to the proposals.

The proposals receiving the highest scores within each cluster will be selected for funding/support, with a minimum of two projects selected per cluster.

Within each cluster, more than one project may be selected for the same challenge. Projects will be selected in descending order of score among the proposals that meet all thresholds, provided that they do not overlap. The total number of projects to be funded is set out in Table 3-1.

If a cluster does not receive enough proposals meeting all thresholds, or if budget remains after the per-cluster allocation, the remaining budget will be allocated to the next highest-ranked eligible proposals across clusters.

In addition, a reserve list of two projects per cluster will be established, comprising the highest-ranked non-selected proposals. These projects may be considered for selection should one or more of the initially selected proposals withdraw, become ineligible, or otherwise be unable to proceed, in accordance with the applicable rules.

6.5 NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS

Applicants shall be informed of the preliminary outcome of the evaluation which include their individual score and whether they are beyond the threshold. Applicants wishing to contest their score or a rejection may submit a request for redress in accordance with Section 6.6.

The final results of the evaluation procedure will be communicated upon completion of all the stages described in Section 6.1 only after the applicable redress period has expired and when applicable, upon completion of the redress period (i.e. all admissible requests for redress have been examined and resolved). Any communication issued before the completion of the applicable redress procedure shall be considered preliminary and shall not constitute a final award decision or create an entitlement to funding.

The final ranking may differ from the preliminary ranking as a result of the redress procedure, including where a successful request for redress affects the ranking of another proposal. Any resulting changes shall be made in accordance with the published evaluation criteria, ranking methodology, available budget and principles of transparency and equal treatment. Applicants whose projects have been selected will be formally notified following the expiry of the redress period specified in Section 6.6.

All communications concerning the results of the evaluation and selection process will be sent exclusively to the applicant designated as the contact person in the submitted application. It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that the contact details provided are accurate and up to date.

6.6 COMPLAINTS AND REDRESS PROCEDURE

Applicants wishing to contest the outcome of the evaluation process may submit a request for redress within five calendar days of receiving the notification of the preliminary evaluation results.

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The request must be sent to the dedicated email address opencalls@cop-pilot.eu and must clearly state the grounds for the complaint, explaining why a review of the evaluation procedure is considered necessary.

Where clear evidence of a procedural shortcoming that could have affected the evaluation outcome, ranking or funding decision is identified, also by the reviews conducted by relevant Cop-Pilot/external bodies, the Open Call Management Board may recommend appropriate corrective action, including a full or partial re-evaluation of the affected proposal or proposals, as appropriate. Any corrective action shall be limited to what is necessary to address the identified shortcoming and shall be conducted in accordance with the published evaluation criteria and methodology.
While undertaking the examination of a request for redress, the Open Call Management Board shall follow the same methodology and apply the principles of transparency and equal treatment as in the first evaluation.

Following completion of the redress procedure, if the selection status of an applicant changes because of the redress procedure, the Open Call Management Board shall inform such affected applicant of the potential impact and give such affected applicant an opportunity to submit observations limited to the relevant procedural implications, within a reasonable period specified by the Open Call Management Board. Such observations shall not entitle the affected applicant to challenge another applicant's proposal on grounds unrelated to the procedural consequences affecting its own application. Confidential information relating to other applicants, including their individual evaluation details, shall not be disclosed.

The applicant(s) submitting the request for redress shall be informed of the outcome by email sent by the Open Call Management Board. The decision resulting from the redress procedure shall be final within the framework of the Open Call, no additional redress period shall be available following the notification of the decision, without prejudice to any rights or remedies that may be available under applicable law.

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7 CONTRACTING AND PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

7.1 CONTRACTING PROCEDURE AND DOCUMENTARY VALIDATION

Following the selection of projects at the end of the evaluation phase, COP-PILOT will initiate the contracting procedure with the selected applicants for the preparation and signature of the sub-grant agreements. This process will include administrative and financial checks to verify the eligibility and compliance of the selected applicants before the award of funding.

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure that all applicable legal, administrative and financial requirements established by the European Commission, the COP-PILOT consortium and the relevant funding rules are met by the selected beneficiaries.

The documentary validation process will include, but will not necessarily be limited to, the following checks:

- **Verification of the legal existence and status** of the applicant: confirmation that the applicant is a legally established entity, based on official supporting documentation, such as an extract from the relevant company or organisation register, an official publication or an equivalent national document. The documentation must identify the organisation's legal name, registered address and date of establishment, and provide evidence of VAT registration where applicable.

- **Verification of the financial capacity** of the applicant: assessment of the applicant's financial capacity to implement the proposed project and fulfil its obligations under the sub-grant agreement. Where appropriate, this assessment may be based on supporting documentation, such as recent financial statements, annual accounts or other relevant financial records, in accordance with the applicable requirements. The assessment may also consider whether the applicant is subject to bankruptcy, insolvency or equivalent proceedings that could affect its ability to implement the project.

Selected applicants will be required to provide the requested supporting documents within the timeframe communicated by COP-PILOT. Failure to provide the required documentation, or failure to meet the applicable eligibility and compliance requirements, may result in the withdrawal of the selection decision and the proposal being replaced by a project from the reserve list, where applicable and in accordance with the Open Call rules.

The sub-grant agreement will be signed only after the successful completion of the documentary validation process.

7.2 SUB-GRANT AGREEMENT

Each selected third-party project will be subject to a Sub-Grant Agreement based on a lump-sum funding model, in accordance with the applicable Horizon Europe rules and the COP-PILOT funding framework. The agreement will establish the terms and conditions governing the award, transfer and use of the financial support provided through the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) mechanism.

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The Sub-Grant Agreement will define the rights and obligations of the parties, including the maximum amount of the sub-grant, project duration, implementation milestones, key performance indicators (KPIs), expected outputs and results, reporting obligations, monitoring arrangements and applicable payment conditions, as detailed in Section 3.4, Payment Schedule and Conditions.

The agreement will also include provisions on intellectual property rights, confidentiality, personal data protection, communication and dissemination, and other legal and administrative matters necessary for the proper implementation of the funded activities. Beneficiaries will be required to comply with the applicable EU rules and the relevant obligations arising from the COP-PILOT funding framework.

The Sub-Grant Agreement will include the necessary provisions to ensure that the European Commission, the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF), the European Court of Auditors and any other competent bodies entitled to exercise such rights under the applicable rules may carry out checks, reviews, audits or investigations and access relevant documents, information and records relating to the implementation of the funded activities.

Where a project is submitted by a consortium, the Sub-Grant Agreement will be signed exclusively with the designated consortium leader. The consortium leader will act as the main point of contact with COP-PILOT and will be responsible for receiving and managing the financial contribution on behalf of the consortium, in accordance with the applicable contractual arrangements.

The distribution and management of the financial contribution among consortium members, together with their respective rights and obligations, will be governed by a consortium agreement. The Annex 4 – Consortium Agreement Declaration is **mandatory** for consortium applications and must be submitted with the final submission.

Third parties receiving financial support through the FSTP mechanism will not become beneficiaries of the COP-PILOT project or parties to the main grant agreement between the European Commission and the COP-PILOT consortium. Their rights and obligations will be governed by the relevant Sub-Grant Agreement and, where applicable, the Consortium Agreement Declaration.

The Sub-Grant Agreement will be provided by COP-PILOT in a standard, non-negotiable format. Selected applicants will be required to accept its terms and conditions as a prerequisite for receiving financial support. Failure to accept the agreement or to provide the required documentation within the specified timeframe may result in the withdrawal of the funding award and, where applicable, the selection of a project from the reserve list in accordance with the Open Call rules.

7.3 PROJECT DURATION, MILESTONES AND REPORTS

Each funded third-party project will have a maximum implementation period of eight months. The project starting and ending dates will be specified in the OC2 Sub-Grant Agreement.

Implementation milestones

The implementation plan must include the following two key milestones. The exact dates for each milestone will be confirmed in the Sub-Grant Agreement.

- **Milestone 1 – Lab Rehearsal (M3):** This milestone includes:
  - **In-lab integration**: Integrating the proposed solution with COP-PILOT interfaces and components in a controlled, reproducible environment.

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- **In-lab testing**: Verifying interoperability and functional behaviour through controlled integration tests.
- **Dry run:** Rehearsing the complete end-to-end trial workflow under representative conditions before deployment to the real testbed.

- **Milestone 2 – Real Trial (M8):** This milestone includes:
  - **On-site integration:** Deploying and integrating the validated solution into the actual COP-PILOT infrastructure and physical pilot environment.
  - **Troubleshooting**: Identifying and resolving issues arising from the transition from the controlled environment to the real testbed.
  - **Initial validation**: Executing the use case in the real testbed to verify that the integrated solution meets its functional requirements.
  - **Fine-tuning**: Optimising the deployment, configuration and operation of the solution based on the initial validation results.
  - **Final trial and validation:** Participating in a dedicated event to conduct the final end-to-end trial and demonstrate compliance with the agreed objectives.

Reporting requirements

Each funded third-party project must submit two reports corresponding to the milestones above. Both reports must include the technical, financial and administrative information required by the COP-PILOT reporting templates.

R1 – Intermediate Report (due at M3): Covers the implementation period from M1 to M3 and must describe technical progress, preliminary results, the current implementation status and the updated execution plan. It must also include the financial, administrative and other information required by the COP-PILOT reporting template.

R2 – Final Report and Results (due at M8): Covers the implementation period from M4 to M8 and the project as a whole. It must present the technical results and outcomes, lessons learned, and information on sustainability and replicability. It must also include the financial, administrative and other information required by the COP-PILOT reporting template. Where applicable, the report must include a publishable version of the technical progress and results.

7.4 MONITORING REQUIREMENTS

To ensure the smooth implementation of the Open Call projects, a Team of Patrons (ToP) will be established, comprising members of the COP-PILOT consortium. The ToP will support funded projects throughout their implementation by providing technical guidance, monitoring progress against agreed objectives and milestones, and facilitating coordination with the COP-PILOT consortium.

- The **Patron Pair** will act as the project's primary point of contact with the COP-PILOT consortium and will be responsible for:
- **Technical guidance**: Providing advice on technical matters, integration with COP-PILOT interfaces and components, and alignment with the project's objectives

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- **Progress monitoring:** Following the project's progress against its implementation plan, milestones and deliverables, and identifying potential risks, delays or issues.
- **Milestone and deliverable follow-up**: Reviewing progress towards key milestones and providing feedback on submitted reports and technical results, as appropriate to their assigned role.

The Patron Pair will support and monitor the project but will not replace the responsibilities of the funded beneficiary or the formal decision-making and approval procedures established under the OC2 Sub-Grant Agreement.

Projects will be required to participate in at least two face-to-face activities: an onboarding meeting at the beginning of the project and a final event to present and demonstrate the results. In addition, regular online meetings will be organised with the Patron Pair. The frequency and schedule of these meetings will be agreed at the start of each project and may be adjusted according to the project's progress, specific needs and implementation challenges.

7.5 AUDITS AND FINANCIAL CONTROLS

The European Commission will monitor compliance with all obligations and responsibilities defined in the Horizon Europe Grant Agreement.

During the implementation of the COP-PILOT project and for up to five years after its conclusion, the European Commission may carry out financial audits through external auditors or its own services, including the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). These audits may cover financial and administrative aspects related to the proper implementation of the Grant Agreement.

Each third-party beneficiary must provide the European Commission with any requested information or documentation to verify that project activities have been implemented in accordance with the Grant Agreement, and that declared costs comply with its provisions.

Third-party beneficiaries must keep all relevant project deliverables and supporting documents related to the funded activities for up to five years after the end of the COP-PILOT project. These documents must be made available to the European Commission during an audit, if requested.

Based on the conclusions of such audits, the European Commission may take any necessary measures, including recovering part or all of the funding and imposing any applicable sanctions.

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8 LEGAL, ETHICS AND COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

8.1 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Intellectual property rights relating to projects funded through the COP-PILOT Open Call will be managed in accordance with the provisions set out in the COP-PILOT Grant Agreement and the Horizon Europe framework. Third parties receiving financial support will be able to access and use the results they generate during their funded activities within the COP-PILOT framework to implement their project tasks.

Further provisions concerning intellectual property rights, including the rights and obligations of the parties involved, as well as the conditions relating to the use of results, will be set out in detail in the sub-grant agreement.

8.2 CONFIDENTIALITY AND PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

At the application stage: A list of applicants will be compiled, including the basic information necessary for statistical and monitoring purposes. This information may also be shared with the European Commission to ensure transparency in the Open Call process. This list will not be made public and will only be used for the internal reporting and communication activities of the COP-PILOT project.

At the evaluation stage: For the purposes of the evaluation process, the submitted proposals will be shared with the external experts involved in the evaluation. All experts participating in the evaluation will sign a non-disclosure agreement and commit to maintaining the confidentiality of the information contained in the proposals.

At the implementation stage: During the implementation of the funded projects and for a period of five years after the end of the COP-PILOT project, the parties involved must treat any data, documents or other material identified as confidential at the time of signing the sub-grant agreement as confidential. Additional provisions related to confidentiality and data protection may apply, as defined in the COP-PILOT project framework. More detailed conditions regarding confidentiality and the protection of information

8.3 ETHICS AND REGULATORY COMPLIANCE

All third-party beneficiaries must comply with the ethical principles and standards defined under the Horizon Europe Programme, including those related to research integrity, fundamental rights, environmental protection, and societal impact.

Beneficiaries are responsible for identifying and addressing any ethical issues that may arise during the implementation of their projects. This includes, where relevant:

- The involvement of human participants or personal data
- The use of artificial intelligence or automated decision-making systems
- Potential impacts on the environment, animals, or agricultural ecosystems

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- Risks related to the misuse or unintended consequences of the developed technologies

Where applicable, beneficiaries must ensure compliance with relevant European and national legislation, including but not limited to the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 and applicable regulations on artificial intelligence and data governance.

Projects involving Artificial Intelligence must take into account the principles of trustworthy AI, including human oversight, transparency, fairness, and technical robustness (as defined in the EU Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI and the Assessment List for Trustworthy Artificial Intelligence (ALTAI), where relevant to the proposed activities. In addition, where the proposed solution involves AI systems that may fall within the scope of Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (the EU AI Act), beneficiaries are responsible for assessing the risk classification of their system and ensuring compliance with the applicable obligations under that Regulation, including, where relevant, requirements relating to transparency, documentation, human oversight, data governance and conformity assessment.

The COP-PILOT consortium reserves the right to request additional information or documentation related to legal and ethical considerations at any stage of the project. Failure to comply with legal and ethical requirements may result in corrective actions, including the suspension or termination of the financial support.

8.4 EU FUNDING ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND VISIBILITY

Each funded third-party project must communicate its participation in COP-PILOT and its results to relevant audiences, including the public and the media, and acknowledge EU funding in accordance with the applicable Sub-Grant Agreement and EU visibility requirements.

Any communication related to the action (including electronic communication, social media, public events or dissemination activities), as well as any publicity material such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations or other promotional content and any infrastructure, equipment or major results funded by the grant must:

- Display the EU emblem
- Display the COP-PILOT logo
- Include the following statement: “Project [name of the project] has been indirectly funded, via the cascading funding mechanism, from the European Union’s Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme under project COP-PILOT (Grant Agreement No 101189819)”.

8.5 GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

The legal terms and conditions applicable to the COP-PILOT project and to the related sub-granting framework are governed by the applicable EU law and, where necessary, by the law of Belgium. Any dispute concerning the interpretation, application or validity of these conditions shall be handled in accordance with the dispute settlement provisions of the Grant Agreement.

For EU beneficiaries, disputes shall be brought before the EU General Court and, on appeal, the Court of Justice of the European Union. For non-EU beneficiaries, disputes shall be brought before the courts of Brussels, Belgium, unless an international agreement provides for the enforceability of EU court judgments.

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9 HELPDESK, CONTACT INFORMATION AND REFERENCES

9.1 APPLICANT SUPPORT AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Information about COP-PILOT and COP-PILOT Open Call 2 will be published through the following channels:

- The COP-PILOT open-calls webpage: https://cop-pilot.eu/open-calls/, where the official call documents and updates will be published.
- A **Frequently Asked Questions** (FAQ) section on the project website. A list of frequently asked questions will be published and updated regularly during the application period. Applicants are encouraged to consult the FAQs before submitting their application.
- **Dedicated webinars** for potential applicants, presenting the technical and administrative aspects of the Open Calls and the application process. At least one webinar will present its challenges, pilot environment and available resources before the feasibility check deadline; dates will be published on the open-calls webpage.
- **Promotional material** related to the Open Calls may be published on the project website and communication channels.
- **Social media channels**, including X and LinkedIn, will be used to share relevant updates and announcements related to the Open Calls.
- A **dedicated contact email** address (opencalls@cop-pilot.eu) is available for applicants to submit questions and requests for clarification regarding the Open Calls. Queries submitted through other communication channels, including social media, will not be considered or addressed. Please note that questions received may be published in the FAQ section of the Open Calls website, unless they are explicitly marked as confidential by the applicant. Applicants are encouraged to submit questions on eligibility and on the scope of a challenge before the feasibility check deadline.

9.2 REFERENCES AND RELEVANT RESOURCE

- Programme: Horizon Europe (HORIZON). Call World leading data and computing technologies (HORIZON-CL4-2024-DATA-01). Available at:

  https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/topic-details/horizon-cl4-2024-data-01-01

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1: PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

Annex 1 – Proposal Template

ANNEX 2: DECLARATION OF HONOUR

Annex 2 – Declaration of Honour

ANNEX 3: SME DECLARATION

Annex 3 – SME Declaration

ANNEX 4: CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT DECLARATION

Annex 4 – Consortium Agreement Declaration

ANNEX 5: DECLARATION ON DOUBLE FUNDING FOR RECIPIENTS

Annex 5 – Declaration on Double Funding

ANNEX 6: PRIVACY AND ETHICS

Annex 6 – Privacy & Ethics

ANNEX 7: LIST OF ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Eligible applicants must be legal entities established in one of the countries specified below, based on the official European Commission guidance document “List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe” published on 07.10.2026 and in force on the call opening date (November 2026)

List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe published on 07.10.2026

1. European Union Member States
Legal entities established in any of the 27 EU Member States (including their outermost regions and linked Overseas Countries and Territories):
Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

2. Third Countries Associated to Horizon Europe

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Legal entities established in the following third countries whose association agreements have started producing legal effects (through entry into force or provisional application) applicable to Horizon Europe Pillar II on the date of call opening:
Albania
Armenia
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Canada (associated to Pillar II 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness')
Egypt
Faroe Islands
Georgia
Iceland
Israel
Japan (associated to Pillar II 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness')
Kosovo (without prejudice to positions on status, in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion)
Moldova
Montenegro
New Zealand (associated to Pillar II 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness')
North Macedonia
Norway
Republic of Korea (associated to Pillar II 'Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness')
Serbia
Switzerland
Tunisia
Türkiye
Ukraine
United Kingdom

Eligibility Restrictions and Exclusions
Exclusion of Non-Associated Third Countries: Legal entities established in non-associated third countries (including low- and middle-income countries that may be automatically eligible for funding in standard collaborative Horizon Europe calls) are not eligible for funding under this Open Call.
Euratom Programme Exclusion: Association to the Euratom Research and Training Programme is not applicable to this Open Call, as COP-PILOT is funded exclusively under Horizon Europe Pillar II. Entities whose association or agreement relates solely to Euratom are not eligible.

Exclusion of Countries Under Transitional Arrangements: Third countries listed in the EC guidance under transitional arrangements whose association agreements have not started producing legal effects for Pillar II under the relevant funding budget on the date of call opening are not eligible.

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