

Annex 2:

Guidelines for Applicants

Reinforcing the AI4EU Platform by Advancing Earth
Observation Intelligence, Innovation and Adoption

The background of the lower half of the page is a deep space image with a dark blue and black background, filled with numerous small, bright stars and larger, colorful nebulae in shades of blue, purple, and red. In the upper right corner, the letters 'AI' are rendered in a large, stylized font. The 'A' is a dark blue outline filled with a starry pattern, and the 'I' is a solid, glowing blue vertical bar. In the center-left, the words 'OPEN CALL' are written in a large, bold, light blue sans-serif font, with 'OPEN' on the top line and 'CALL' on the bottom line. A thick, solid blue curved line sweeps across the bottom right corner, separating the dark space background from a white area.

OPEN
CALL

June 2021

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1. Introduction

This document provides relevant information regarding the first (#1) Round of the AI4Copernicus Open Call for Proposals.

1.1. The AI4Copernicus Project

Delivering 12 TB of space data per day, Copernicus is the world's largest space data provider. At the same time, Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming an indispensable and ubiquitous tool for growth and innovation. In this context, the EU-funded AI4Copernicus project will bridge the EU AI on-demand platform [AI4EU](https://ai4eu.eu) with [Copernicus Data and Information Access Services \(DIAS\) platforms](https://cda.copernicus.eu) to allow innovative players break new ground.

Key information regarding AI4Copernicus project, open calls and all documents needed, you could find in our:

AI4Copernicus website: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/>

Open Calls related information: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>

1.2. AI4Copernicus Open Calls Approach

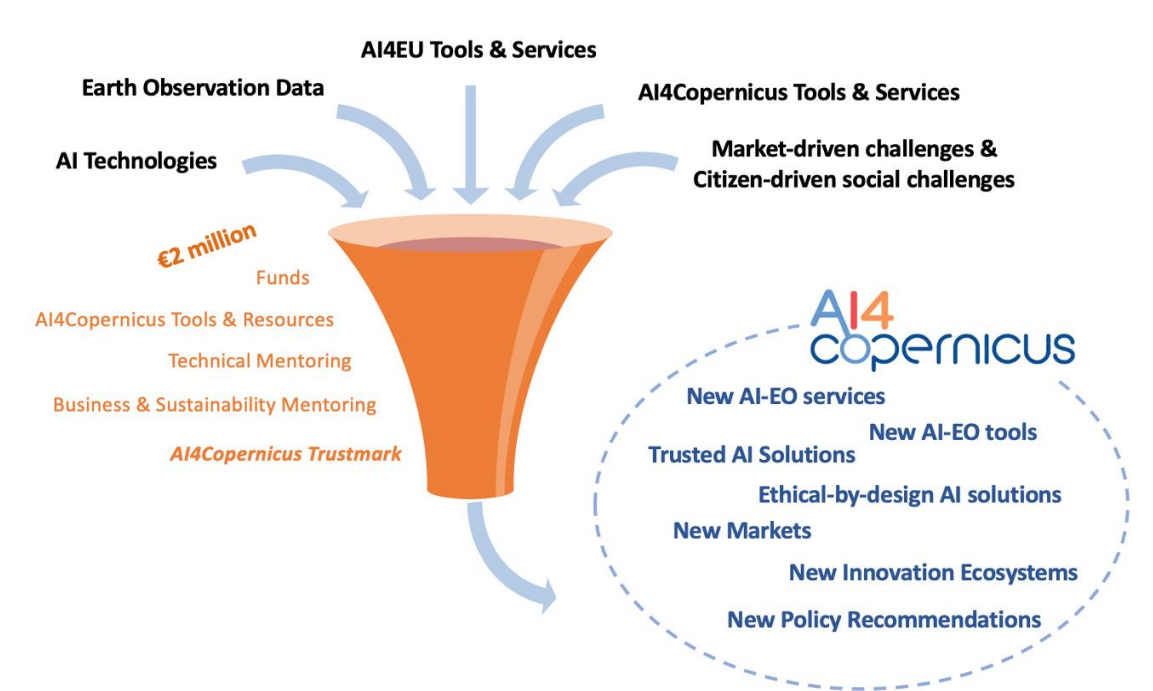


Figure 1: AI4Copernicus Open Calls



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The AI4Copernicus Open Calls aims to bring together diverse communities, such as the Artificial Intelligence and Earth Observation Communities, AI4EU ecosystems, tools and services, Earth Observation data and DIAS ([Data and Information Access Services](#)) tools and services as well as AI4Copernicus tools and services with diverse market-driven challenges in diverse industrial domains and citizen-driven social challenges (Figure 1).

1.2.1 Open Calls Overview

1.2.1.1 Open Call Rounds

The AI4Copernicus Open Calls have four distinct Rounds, targeting:

- **SMEs:** 1st Round, 3rd & 4th Round
- **Individuals:** 2nd Round for Citizens

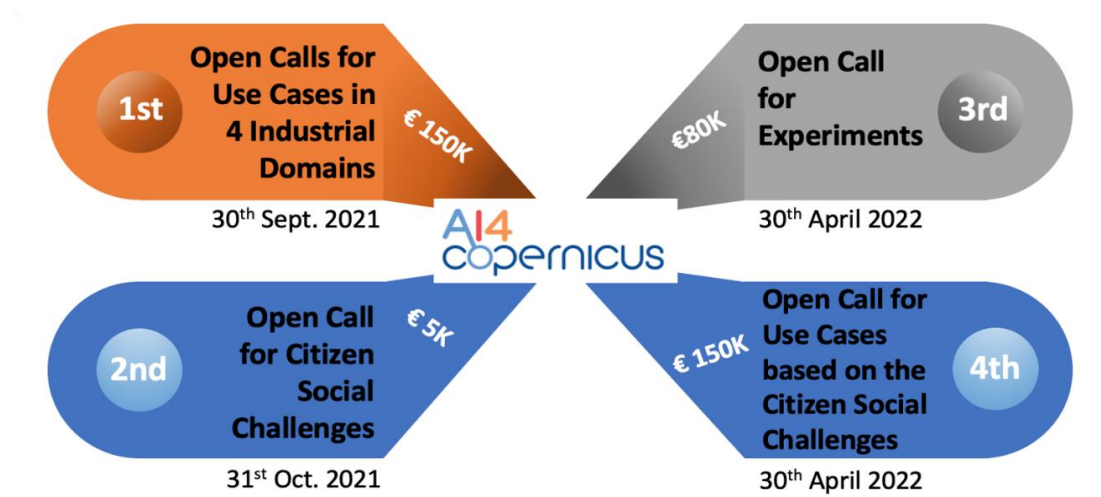


Figure 2: The 4 Rounds of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls (& submission deadlines)

As it can be seen, in the figure 2 these are:

- **1st Round of Open Calls** for Use-Cases (consortia projects with a low-technology SME by default) in 4 Industrial Domains: Energy, Security, Health, Agriculture
- **2nd Round of Open Calls** for Citizen Social Challenges
- **3rd Round of Open Calls** for Experiments (single company)
- **4th Round of Open Calls** for Use-Cases (consortia projects with a low-technology SME by default) based on the Citizen Social Challenges (of the 2nd Round)

1.2.1.2 Open Call Phases

The AI4Copernicus Open Calls have two to four phases depending on their type



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1.2.1.2.1 Open Calls for SMEs

The **Open Calls for SMEs** are 1st, 3rd, and 4th Round of Open Calls. These calls have four distinct phases as can be seen in figure 3.

In detail these phases are:

- **Phase 1** (3 months): Open Call Phase
- **Phase 2** (2 months): Selection Phase
- **GRANT AGREEMENT**
- **Phase 3** (14 months): Support Phase
- **Phase 4** (2 months): Sustain Phase

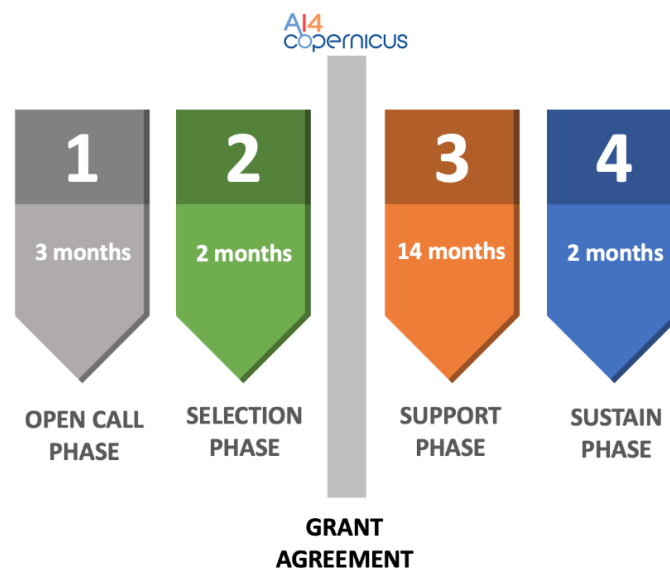


Figure 3: Open Call Phases for SMEs

1.2.1.2.2 Open Calls for Individuals

The only **Open Calls for Individuals** is the **2nd Round of Open Calls**. These calls have only two phases as it can be seen in figure 4. In detail these phases are:

- **Phase 1** (3 months): Open Call Phase
- **Phase 2** (2 months): Selection Phase
- **AWARD**





Figure 4: Open Call Phases for Individuals

1.3. AI4Copernicus Open Calls Overview

A high-level overview of all the AI4Copernicus Open Calls can be seen in the following figure.

AI4Copernicus Open Calls

Min. 19 Beneficiaries: 2 individuals, 9 consortia (use-cases), 8 SMEs (experiments)

4 Open Calls

€ 150k for 9 Prototypes (SME consortia 2-3 partners), €80k for 8 Prototypes (SMEs)

€5k for citizen-social challenges (2 challenges)

WHAT ACTIVITIES WE WILL SUPPORT?

Developing and testing AI technical solutions that address industrial and social challenges by exploiting AI resources and Earth Observation Data

Prototypes: AI TRL5 prototypes (use-cases SME consortia), TRL6 (experiments/single company)

Type of beneficiaries: SMEs, startups, spin-offs, high-tech & low-tech companies & individuals

Dates: 1st open call Q2 2021 2nd open call Q3 2021

3rd open call Q1 2022 4th open call Q1 2022

Website: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/>



Total FSTP : €2 million

VERTICALS

Energy
Security,
Health,
Agriculture,
& other sectors like
Maritime,
Aviation, etc

Support program

16 months acceleration

Services included:

- AI4Copernicus resources & tools
- AI4EU & DIASes Services
- Technical Mentoring
- Business & Sustainability Mentoring
- Certification/Trustmark

Results

17 AI solutions to be published at AI4EU
2 citizen-driven social challenges

Figure 5: AI4Copernicus Open Calls Overview



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2. General Information about the 1st Round of Open Calls

2.1. 1st Round of Open Calls Phases

The **1st Round of Open Calls** for Use-Cases (consortia projects with a low-technology SME by default) focusing on **4 Industrial Domains: Energy, Security, Health, Agriculture**. An overview of all the phases of the 1st Round of Open Calls, can be seen in the following figure.

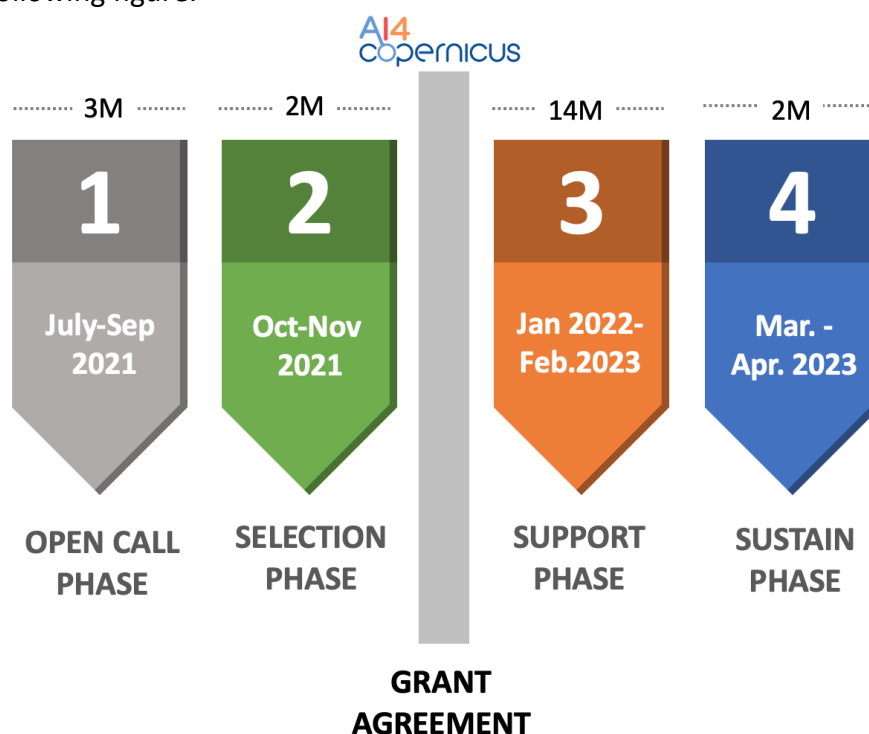


Figure 6: 1st Round of Open Call Phases for SMEs

In detail the phases of the 1st Round of Open Calls is presented in the following sections:

PHASE 1: OPEN CALLS PHASE

Time: July-September 2021

Phase 1: “Open Calls” involves the announcement of the 1st Round of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls for projects and will cover a period of **3 Months (3M)**. During this phase all relevant AI4Copernicus Open Call Annexes will be provided for interested participants to prepare their proposals.

PHASE 2: SELECTION PHASE (OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2021)

Time: October-November 2021



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Phase2: “Selection” involves the evaluation of all the eligible AI4Copernicus Open Call Proposals and will cover a period of **2 Months (2M)**.

GRANT AGREEMENT

Time: December 2021

The Grant Agreement process will cover a period of **1 Month (1M)** and will involve the contractual arrangements with the beneficiaries (selected AI4Copernicus project consortia), during the 1st Round of Open Calls.

PHASE 3: SUPPORT PHASE

Time: January 2022- February 2023

Phase 3: “Support” (see Figure 7) includes four sub-phases:

1. **Initial support:** will involve the preparation and launch of the AI4Copernicus selected projects (i.e., requirements regarding data, tools, components/services, identify missing tools, data, identify adaptations needed & design workflows, analyse legal, ethical, privacy, security concerns) as well as an initial implementation (experiment and implement workflows, etc.) with an on-going mentoring process. This sub-phase will cover a period of **5 Months (5M)**.
2. **Interim assessment:** will provide an initial feedback of the AI4Copernicus projects progress and will cover a period of **1 Month (1M)**. It will evaluate the status as well as the final potential of each project aiming to provide feedback that will enable the 1st Round of Open Calls project partners to adapt their projects as needed (if needed), ensuring this way the successful implementation of each project.
3. **Final support:** during this sub-phase the implementation of the 1st Round of Open Call projects will continue, taking into account the feedback from the interim-assessment and the on-going mentoring process. This sub-phase will cover a period of **6 Months (6M)**.
4. **Final assessment:** will involve the final evaluation of the output of the AI4Copernicus funded projects and will provide an overall final scoring.



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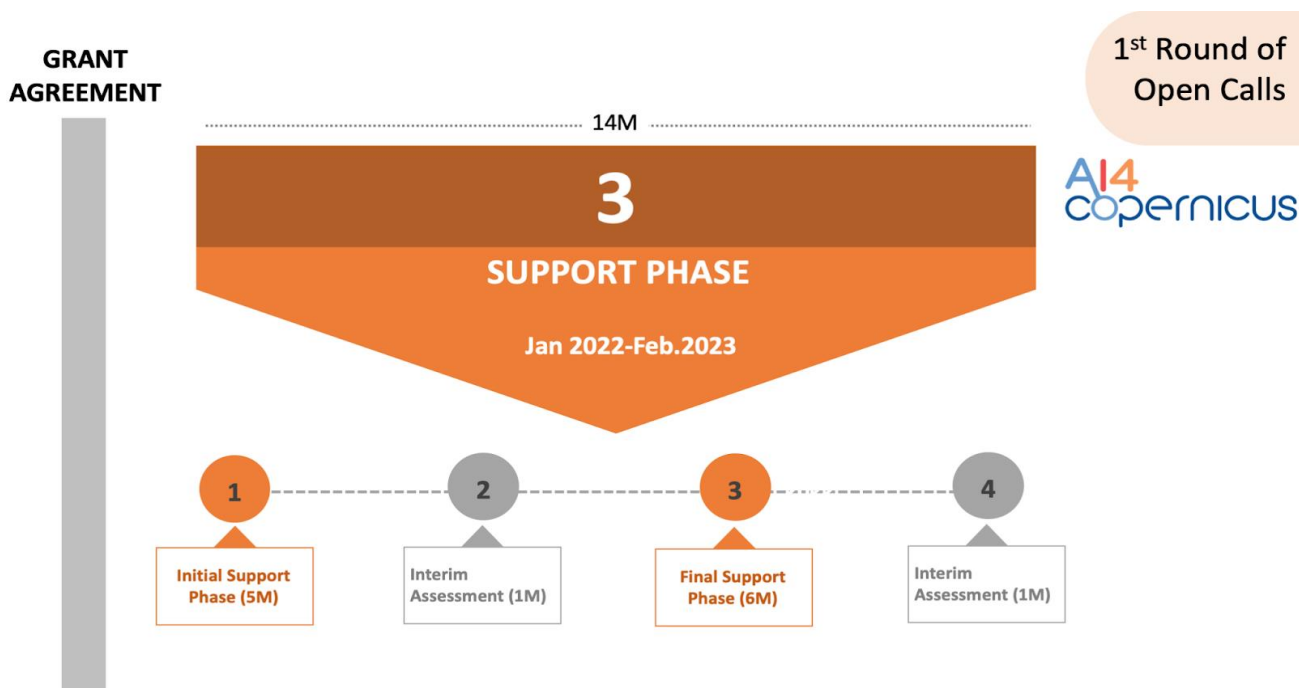


Figure 7: Phase 3 for the 1st Round of Open Calls

PHASE 4: SUSTAINABILITY PHASE

Time: March - April 2023

Phase 4: “Sustain” (see figure 8) will facilitate two distinct aspects:

- (1) **Sustainability of the AI4Copernicus projects** (use-cases and experiments) that will successfully graduate from “Phase 3: Support”. All graduated projects will acquire the “**AI4Copernicus Trustmark**” and provide access to the AI4EU marketplace;
- (2) **Sustainability of the AI4Copernicus and AI4EU ecosystems**, via a two-way user-driven feedback process:
 - (A) AI4Copernicus beneficiaries will assess and test, in a measurable manner the (A1) AI4Copernicus (service and open calls process) and (A2) AI4EU platform and service offering (covering scalability, usefulness, ease of (re)use, robustness, etc.). Respondents will be able to propose potential optimisations and enhancements, contributing this way to the sustainability of the AI4Copernicus & AI4EU ecosystems.
 - (B) AI4Copernicus will analyse input from the interim and final assessments of the different project which will subsequently cross-validate it with beneficiaries. This way it will provide user-driven insight (at a policy level¹) related to AI adoption barriers/challenges for the different types of users and at a macro-level (generic) and micro-level (platform/ecosystem-centric - AI4EU and AI4Copernicus).

¹ User-driven policy guidelines for AI-adoption barriers and challenges at a micro (platform-ecosystem level) and macro (generic level).





Figure 8: Phase 4 for the 1st Round of Open Calls

2.2. Eligibility Criteria

All proposals received via the Open Calls, will be checked according to the following items:

- 1. Type of Activity:** Use-Case, Small-Scale experiments, Social challenges, etc
- 2. Type of Beneficiary:** depending on the type of activity, the beneficiaries can be:
 - (a) *Open Calls for Use-Cases (Domain-Specific, Domain Agnostic) and Experiments:* SMEs (individual SMEs and/or consortia of SMEs that are high-technology and/or low or no-tech SMEs from EU member state or Associated Countries)
 - (a1) *Open Calls for Use-Cases in the domains of Health, Energy, Security, Agriculture (1st Round of Open Calls for Use-Cases):* Consortia of SMEs including at least 1 non-or low-tech SME by default
 - (a2) *Open Calls for Use-Cases in any industrial domain based on the citizen-driven social themes/challenges (4th Round of Open Calls for Use-Cases):* Consortia of SMEs including at least 1 non-or low-tech SME by default
 - (a3) *Open Calls for Experiments in any industrial domain:*
 - (b) *Open Calls for Social Challenges:* individuals (ages older than 18 years old)



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3. English-language. English is the official language for the open calls. The proposal must be in English in all its mandatory parts in order to be eligible. If the mandatory parts of the proposal are in any other language, the proposal will not be eligible.

4. Submission system. All the proposals should be submitted through the AI4Copernicus Open Call Platform. Proposals submitted by any other means, will not be evaluated.

5. Submission before the Deadline. Applications must be submitted by the closing time and date published in the open call. The time recorded by the Open Call Management Tool, as submission time of the proposal, will be the official one. Late proposals will not be admitted.

6. Absence of conflict of interest. Applicants shall not have any potential conflict of interest (if applicants are directly linked with an AI4Copernicus Partner or a member of the Advisory Board) with the AI4Copernicus selection process².

7. All Required documentation. All the requested documents must be submitted.

2.3. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

The following Intellectual Property Rights conditions should apply to the selected AI4Copernicus funded sub-projects:

1. The proposals submitted should be solely based on original work from the applicants and their foreseen developments are free from third-party rights, or be clearly stated.
2. All IPR created by the applicants via the AI4Copernicus funding will remain to the applicants, who will be the sole owners of the technologies created within the AI4Copernicus funding scheme and in the course of their projects. The applicants commit to exploit the results at least via AI4EU marketplace and shall make all reasonable efforts to exploit the results via any other appropriate marketplaces.
3. Any communication or publication by the funded applicants shall clearly indicate that: (a) the project has received funding from the European Union and the AI4Copernicus project displaying the EU logo, H2020 logo and the AI4Copernicus logo on all printed and digital material, including websites and press releases; (b) that the material published reflect only the author's views and the EC and AI4Copernicus consortium is not liable for any use of the information contained therein.

² Please note that, AI4Copernicus may withdraw an application in the event the participant is directly linked with an AI4Copernicus Partner or a member of the Advisory Board.



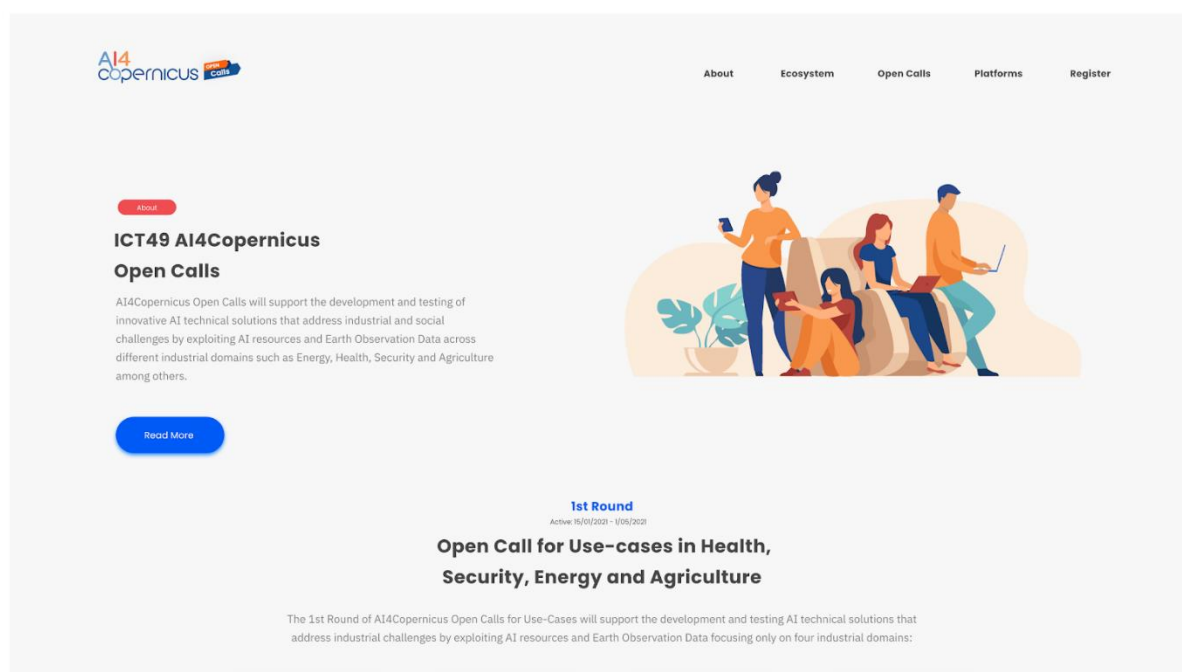
4. The projects that will be selected for funding (including the publishable summary of the proposal and the pitching videos that will be created at the end of the AI4Copernicus incubation and any content thereof) grant to AI4Copernicus the right to use for dissemination and communication purposes. Moreover, the EC, the AI4Copernicus consortium as well as the AI4EU consortium shall be authorized to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, information related to the funded sub-projects for dissemination and communication purposes.

2.4. Means of Submission

The **AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform** will be the entry point for the submission of all proposals. The platform can be accessed via the following link: <https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>

The submission in the **Open Calls Platform will open mid of August 2021**. A special Open Calls Platform Guide for Applicants will also become available at the same time.

Please note that documents required in subsequent phases (i.e., once the projects acquire funding) will be submitted via a dedicated channel, which will be indicated by AI4Copernicus consortium and will be communicated to all funded AI4Copernicus projects.



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2.5. Language

English is the official language for ALL AI4Copernicus Open Call Submissions. Submission done in any other language WILL NOT be evaluated (see "Eligibility Criteria").

2.6. Documents Format

All requested documents (in any part of the Open Calls process) will be submitted electronically in PDF format.

2.7. Number of Proposals per Applicant

Consortia will be led only by eligible industrial partners. Each industrial organization may participate in several application but can lead only one (1) proposal at each AI4Copernicus Open Call.

3. Open Call Submission and Evaluation Process for Use-Cases and Experiments

3.1. Proposal Submission

The AI4Copernicus submission process will involve the following phases:

3.1.1 1st Round of Open Calls Publication

Each AI4Copernicus Open Call will be published on pre-specified dates as denoted on the project website. Each Open Call will be supported by the following documents:

- **FAQs:** Frequently asked questions & answers published via the AI4Copernicus website
- **Annex 1: Open Call Related Information:** which provides information regarding the 1st AI4Copernicus Open Call for proposals
- **Annex 2: Guidelines for Applicants:** which sets out the guidelines for participation in the AI4Copernicus open calls
- **Annex 2.1: Indicative Scenarios:** which provide some indicative scenarios
- **Annex 2.2: Technical Documentation:** which provides an overview of the technical documentation
- **Annex 3: Proposal Form:** the application form will be made available via the AI4Copernicus website



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- **Annex 3.1: Proposal Supplement:** providing information on proposal consortium details, Ethical & Security details
- **Annex 4: Project Consortium Declaration & Declaration of Honour:** which declares that all consortium partners are in agreement, all data provided are true and legally binding and that all conditions of the open call are accepted by an SME legal representative and/or open call participant & Declaration of Honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest
- **Annex 5: SME Declaration:** evaluates the status of the SMEs participating at the open call (for open calls for use-cases)
- **Annex 6: Bank Account Information:** collects information on the applicant's bank account where the AI4Copernicus payments will be transferred to.
- **Annex 7: Sub-grant Agreement Template for use-case projects:** provides a template of the sub-grant agreement that the successful applicants will be requested to sign.

Relevant Documents for the:		
Proposal Preparation	Proposal Submission	Grant Agreement Phase
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 1: 1st Open Call Related Information • Annex 2: Guide for Applicants • Annex 2.1: Indicative Projects • Annex 2.2: Technical Documentation • FAQs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 3: Proposal Form • Annex 3.1: Proposal Supplement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annex 4: Project Consortium Declaration & Declaration of Honour • Annex 5: SME Declaration • Annex 6: Bank Account Information • Annex 7: Sub-grant Agreement Template for use-case projects

Please download the relevant files and read them carefully before you submit your proposal.

For the AI4Copernicus 1st Open Call the submission deadline is **30th September 2021**

3.1.2 Applicants Registration

Interested parties should register via the **AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform:**

<https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>

3.1.3 Proposal Preparation

All applicants are requested to follow the steps below:

1. Register online via the AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform: (<https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>)



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2. Download all relevant material and templates (see 1st AI4Copernicus Open Call page in the AI4Copernicus website)
3. Apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception).
4. Applicants can send any questions at info@ai4copernicus-project.eu.
5. Applicants need to ensure that ALL the necessary documents have been uploaded in the Open Calls Platform as well as that ALL the Eligibility Criteria (see Section “Eligibility Criteria”) are met.

3.2. Proposals Reception

All the Open Call proposal submissions must be done via the AI4Copernicus Open Call Platform (<https://ai4copernicus-project.eu/open-call-info/>)

For the 1st Round of Open Calls in the areas of Health, Security, Energy and Agriculture the application reception will close at **17:00 CET (Brussels Time) on the 30th September 2021**

There will be **NO deadline extensions** unless the open calls platform becomes unavailable due to technical problems.

3.3. Evaluation Process

The Open Calls Evaluation process involves:

- **STAGE 1: ELIGIBILITY Evaluation**
Initial filtering to discard non-eligible proposals based on the eligibility evaluation that follows.
- **STAGE 2: PROPOSAL Evaluation**
All eligible proposals will be evaluated based on a specific set of criteria that are presented in the following section.

3.4. Stage 1: Eligibility Evaluation

Eligibility Criteria	Eligibility Check: Yes/No
1. Full alignment between the requested type of Open Call Activity (i.e., Use-Case, Small-Scale experiments, Social challenges, etc.) ?	Y/N
1a. 1st Round of Open Calls for Use Cases in the areas of Health, Energy, Security, Agriculture	



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2. Full alignment with the requested type of Beneficiaries for the 1st AI4Copernicus Open Call (i.e., Consortia of SMEs including at least 1 non-or low-tech SME by default) ?	Y/N
3. Are the submitted documents by the applicants in English ?	Y/N
4. Are all the necessary Open Call documents submitted through the AI4Copernicus Open Calls Platform ?	Y/N
5. Has the submission deadline been respected?	Y/N
6. Is there any conflict of interest with the AI4Copernicus selection process?	Y/N
7. All required documentation has been submitted?	Y/N

Proposals being marked as non-eligible will get a rejection letter including the reasons (1 to 7) for being catalogued as non-eligible. No further feedback on the process will be given.

3.5. Stage 2: Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All eligible proposals will be evaluated by 2 (two) AI4Copernicus evaluators with wide expertise in AI within the fields prioritized in the AI4Copernicus's Target Use Areas. The experts will be selected accordingly with the specific characteristics of the project.

The proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

(1). EXCELLENCE will evaluate:

- **1.1 Ambition.** The applicants have to demonstrate to what extent that proposed project is beyond the State Of the Art related with the application of AI in the areas targeted by the project for: (a) Use-cases (One-stage approach): 4 high-value priorities: Energy, Agriculture, Security, Health, (b) Small-scale experiments (One-stage approach): Open themes covering all sectors/social causes (Bottom-up, industry-centric) (c) Use-cases (Two-stage approach): Pre-defined based on B1 results (Bottom-up citizen driven). Applicants must describe the approach behind it (e.g., ground - breaking objectives, novel concepts and approaches, new products, services or business and organisational models).
- **1.2 Innovation:** Applicants should provide information about the level of innovation within their market and about the degree of **differentiation** that this experiment will bring.



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- **1.3 Soundness of the approach:** Applicants should provide concrete and verifiable arguments, and/or evidence, with regard to the premises of the proposed ideas.
- **1.4 Ethical AI assessment:** Applicants will assess whether any ethical concerns, related to human rights and values could be raised by their proposed AI and EO projects and detail how they will be addressed/mitigated.

(2). IMPACT will analyse:

- **2.1 Economic impact:**
 - **(a) Market opportunity:** The applicants have to demonstrate a clear idea of what they want to do and whether the new/improved product/process is addressing a concrete market potential within the economic fields addressed in the project, e.g., because it solves a problem for a specific niche.
 - **(b) Competition:** The applicants have to provide information about the degree of competition for their particular product/process and if the idea is disruptive and breaks the market. i.e. the products/ process to be brought to market can be clearly differentiated from the competition.
- **2.2 Sustainability:** The applicants have to outline the strategy they will follow to get the scalability of the new/improved product/process beyond just solving a specific problem of a reduced number of end users.
- **2.3 Social impact:** The applicants have to show how the project might contribute to pave the way to, for example, new jobs, solve social challenges, and/or environmental challenges, etc.

(3). IMPLEMENTATION will consider:

- **3.1 Team:** The applicants have to demonstrate their management and leadership qualities, their ability to take a concept from ideas to market. The team should be balanced and show a strong commitment of the beneficiary organizations they are part of.
- **3.2 Resources.** Demonstrate the quality and effectiveness of the resources assigned in order to get the objectives/deliverables proposed. One important aspect is that applicants have to make clear in the proposal the intended use of technologies available in the AI4Copernicus platform, datasets, including technical and business solutions. It should be described till what extent the expected non-financial support to be provided by AI4Copernicus, will be critical for the execution of the project.
- **3.3 Liaison with AI4EU and DIAS platforms:** The applicants should provide concrete evidence on expanding and deepening the integration of AI4EU with DIAS platforms, so as to enrich the AI4EU service offering and enable far-reaching innovation between the AI4EU and DIASes.



- **3.4 Liaison with a critical mass of End Users:** The applicants should provide concrete evidence on their capabilities to reach out a critical mass of End Users that might adopt the resulting solutions

3.5.1 Stage 2: Ethical Evaluation

3.5.1.1 Ethical Assessment -General

Ethical Assessment is an integral part of the AI4Copernicus Open Calls proposals. Aligned with the [European Ethical Assessment in the context of the Horizon Europe Programme](#), a general ethical assessment section has been integrated in the AI4Copernicus proposals.

3.5.1.2 Ethical AI Assessment

Ethical AI by design is an integral part of the AI4Copernicus open calls projects from beginning to end. Thus, part of the ethical evaluation will be a dedicated AI Ethical Assessment. This will take place at the conceptual stage of the proposal not only to respect the legal framework including AI regulation but also to enhance the quality and envisioned impact of the AI4Copernicus Open Call projects.

As part of the Open Calls, applicants will be asked to conduct an apriori self-assessment of their AI Projects by answering the by detailing whether any ethical concerns, aligned with the Horizon Europe template. In addition applicants are asked to self-assess whether any ethical concerns, related to human rights and values could be raised by their proposed AI and EO projects based on a short assessment tool (in general/overall project aim, as well as in relation to the system, input data, algorithm(s), AI model(s), Output) and detail how they will be addressed/mitigated.

3.6. Proposal Scoring

Applications will be evaluated following three main criteria as described below. Each evaluator will rank the application assigning a **score from 0 to 5 for each award criterion** (half point scores may be given) and produce an **Individual Evaluation Report**.

The scale from 0 to 5 includes:

- **0 – Fail.** Application fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
- **1 – Poor.** The criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
- **2 – Fair.** The application broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.



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- **3 – Good.** The application addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
- **4 – Very good.** The application addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
- **5 – Excellent.** The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The **final score** will be calculated as the average of the individual assessments provided by the two Evaluators.

The default **threshold** for individual criteria is 3 (out of 5). The default overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three criteria scores, is 10 (out of 15). In order to be considered for support, the application must score above both individual and overall thresholds.

The AI4Copernicus external **Expert Advisory Board** will monitor the process and will finalize the list of projects that will be funded.

Ties will be solved using the following criteria, in order:

- Impact score,
- Team score (**ONLY** for Use-Cases and Small-Scale Experiments),
- Date of submission: earlier submitted proposals go first.

3.7. Proposal related data

If you have submitted a proposal, your project and company related information need to be stored on our servers until the payment of balance of the AI4Copernicus project, for potential reporting purposes towards the European Commission.

After this date all information will be deleted from our servers but will still be part of the statistics of the European Commission.

4. Financial Support Criteria

4.1. Overview of financial support criteria

The total amount per **Use Case Project**, that will be selected via the AI4Copernicus 1st Round of Open Calls, is calculated up to a lump sum of: **€ 150,000 per Use Case project**.

The financial support in the different Stages of the **Use-Cases project lifecycle (Support/Acceleration period)** is as follows:

1. **Award Stage (Pre-financing):** 30% of the total



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2. **Interim Assessment:** 30% of the total against depending on the assessment outcome
3. **Proof of Concept Stage/Final Assessment:** rest 40% of the total

4.2. Origin of Funds

Any selected proposer will sign a dedicated Sub-Grantee Funding Agreement with the members of the AI4Copernicus consortium (represented by the Coordinator NCSR-D).

The funds attached to the Sub-Grant Agreement come directly from the funds of the European Project AI4Copernicus and are, therefore, funds owned by the European Commission, whose management has been led to the project partners in AI4Copernicus via the European Commission Grant Agreement Number No. 101016798.

As it can be seen in the Sub-Grant Agreement template (Annex 7), this relation between the sub-grantees and the European Commission through AI4Copernicus project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees with the European Commission. It is the task of the sub-grantees to accomplish them, and of the AI4Copernicus consortium partners to provide this information about them.

4.3. Maximum amount to be granted to each third party of the 1st Round of Open Calls

The maximum amount of financial support to be granted to each project selected through the 1st Round of Open calls will be:

- **€150,000 total amount per project (min. 2 partners, max. 3 partners).** The maximum amount to be granted per third party (per partner) will **NOT exceed €80,000.**

5. Selection and Sub-Grant Agreement

Successful proposals will be invited to sign a Sub-Grant Agreement with the AI4Copernicus consortium.

After the conclusion of the Open Call evaluation, the AI4Copernicus consortium, represented by the project coordinator, will communicate with the successful proposals' coordinators in order to start the Sub-Grant Agreement process.

The Sub-Grant Agreement process will cover a period of **one month** after the selection process. During this time administrative and financial checks will be conducted and



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depending on the evaluators' comments technical clarifications may be discussed (if and wherever needed).

All consortium partners should have a valid [PIC number \(9-digit Participant Identification Code\) from the European Commission](#), before the Sub-Grant Agreement (15 days after the final approval of the proposal).

Failure to provide a valid VAT number and a valid PIC number will automatically result in proposal rejection.

In case the Sub-Grant Agreements have not been concluded within the above period, the proposal is automatically rejected (TERMINATION) and the next proposal in the reserve list is invited.

6. Funded Projects

Each funded project will be assigned to one main Support Officer/Coach.

The support officer will communicate with the project on a regular basis in order to overview the progress and provide technical or business advice aligned with the needs of each project.

6.1. Acceleration Process (Support & Sustain Phases)

The AI4Copernicus support program (acceleration process) involves a 16-month acceleration program, namely: **Phase 3: Support Phase (14 Months) & Phase 4: Sustain Phase (2 Months)**, as it can be seen in Figure 6, which includes the following services:

- **Financial Support:** Funding (depending to the type of the call) to implement their project for a period of 16 months
- AI4Copernicus Tools & Resources (including DIASes resources)
- AI4EU Tools & Resources or experiments
- Technical Support & Mentoring
- Business Support & Sustainability Mentoring
- Certification: AI4Copernicus Trustmark
- Visibility through AI4Copernicus digital channels and events as AI4Copernicus Ambassadors

6.2. Responsibilities of AI4Copernicus funded projects

The funded projects members are indirect beneficiaries of European Commission funding. As such, they are responsible for the proper use of the funding and ensure that the recipients comply with obligations **under H2020 (& Horizon Europe) specific requirements** as described in **Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for**



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Research and Innovation (2014-2020). The obligations that are applicable to the recipients include the following.

6.2.1 Conflict of Interest

The 3rd parties (AI4Copernicus Sub-Grant Agreement Beneficiaries) must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of their project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, personal or any other shared interest (conflict of interest).

Members of the funded projects must formally notify their Support Officer/Coach and the AI4Copernicus coordinator without delay about any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The AI4Copernicus coordinator may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken.

6.2.2 Maintaining Confidentiality

During the implementation of the AI4Copernicus funded projects and for 2 -5 years after the end of the project, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at Grant Agreement signing time ('Confidential Information').

If specific information has been identified as confidential during the project execution and/or only orally, it will be considered to be confidential only if this is accepted by the AI4Copernicus coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the Agreement.

The funded project beneficiaries may disclose confidential information to the AI4Copernicus consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

6.2.3 Financial Audits

The European Commission may, at any time during the implementation of the AI4Copernicus project and up to five years after the end of the sub-project, arrange for financial audits. These financial audits can be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) or on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996.

Such audits may cover financial, systemic and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. Each member of the sub-project consortium shall make available directly to the EC all



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detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorized by it.

6.2.4 Promoting the EU-funded sub-project

All funded projects must promote their projects and its results by providing targeted information to targeted audiences in an effective manner to highlight the financial support of the EC.

Any communication activity related to the action (i.e., electronic form, social media, etc.), any publicity, including conference, webinar/seminar and/or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation, etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must:

- (a) indicate that the project has received funding from the European Union and the AI4Copernicus project displaying the EU logo, H2020 logo and the AI4Copernicus logo on all printed and digital material, including websites and press releases;
- (b) that the material published reflect only the author's views and the EC and AI4Copernicus consortium is not liable for any use of the information contained therein.

7. Funded Projects Assessment Criteria

Two assessments will be conducted in the course of the funded AI4Copernicus Open Call Projects, namely:

- a. **1st Assessment:** Interim Assessment
- b. **2nd Assessment:** Final Assessment

7.1. 1st Assessment

The AI4Copernicus external Expert Advisory Board will review the 1st Round of Open Call funded projects' performance at the **interim assessment milestone**, according to the following criteria.

Each criterion will be scored from 0 to 10 and the **weight of each one of these criteria**, in the final score, will be as follow:

- 1. Deliverable quality (30%)**
- 2. Technical performance indicators (30%)**
- 3. Business performance indicators (30%)**
- 4. Ethical AI Assessment (10%)**

According with this final score:



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- **Best-in-class Projects** having a score above 75% will successfully receive the next payment and be candidate to continue in the program
- **Behind the Best-in-class.** Those projects who haven't reached the threshold will be reviewed by the Expert Advisory Board within 3 months after the interim assessment so as to take the final decision taking into account all possible objective reasons for underperformance (i.e. external factors which might have influenced the beneficiaries' performance). Those not passing this review will be invited to leave the AI4Copernicus Open Calls Program (their funding will not exceed 50% of the project budget).

7.2. 2nd Assessment: Final Assessment

The Expert Advisory Board will review the projects (Use-cases or Small-scale experiments) performance at the final review, based on:

- **the same criteria as in the INTERIM ASSESSMENT:**
 1. **Deliverable quality (30%)**
 2. **Technical performance indicators (30%)**
 3. **Business performance indicators (30%)**
 4. **Ethical AI Assessment (10%)**
- **a presentation “video pitch” that each team will make so as to provide an overview of their project and its accomplishments.**

According with this final score:

- **Best-in-class Projects (Graduates)** having a score above 75% will be awarded the AI4Copernicus Trustmark in order to support and empower them further during the commercialisation process.
- **Behind the Best-in-class.** For those beneficiaries who haven't reached the threshold, the Expert Advisory Board will take into account all possible objective reasons for underperformance (i.e. external factors which might have influenced the beneficiaries' performance) and will provide suggestions for future improvement.



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APPENDIX

1. AI4Copernicus Open Calls Publication (Annexes)

Each AI4Copernicus Open Call will be published on pre-specified dates as denoted on the project website. Each Open Call will be supported by the following documents:

- **Annex 1: 1st Open Call Related Information:** which provides information regarding the open call for proposals, and the AI4Copernicus project
- **Annex 2: Guidelines for Applicants:** which sets out the guidelines for participation in the AI4Copernicus open calls
- **Annex 2.1: Indicative Scenarios:** which provide some indicative scenarios
- **Annex 2.2: Technical Documentation:** which provides an overview of the technical documentation
- **Annex 3: Proposal Form:** the application form will be made available via the AI4Copernicus website
- **Annex 3.1: Proposal Supplement:** providing information on proposal consortium details, Ethical & Security details
- **Annex 4: Project Consortium Declaration & Declaration of Honour:** which declares that all consortium partners are in agreement, all data provided are true and legally binding and that all conditions of the open call are accepted by an SME legal representative and/or open call participant & Declaration of Honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest
- **Annex 5: SME Declaration:** evaluates the status of the SMEs participating at the open call (for open calls for use-cases and small-scale experiments)
- **Annex 6: Bank Account Information:** collects information on the applicant's bank account where the AI4Copernicus payments will be transferred to
- **Annex 7: Sub-grant Agreement Template for projects (use-cases):** provides a template of the sub-grant agreement that the successful applicants will be requested to sign
- **FAQs - 2nd Round of Open Calls :** Frequently asked questions & answers published via the AI4Copernicus website

Please download the relevant files and read them carefully before you submit your proposal. For the AI4Copernicus 1st Open Call the submission deadline is:

30th September 2021



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The logo for AI4 Copernicus, featuring the text "AI4" in a stylized font with a blue and orange gradient, and "copernicus" in a lowercase, sans-serif font below it.

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OPEN CALLS

find more information at ai4copernicus-project.eu