



VALLEYS

Valorisation Alliance Linking Laboratories,
Enterprises and society Stakeholders

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

OPEN CALL #1

Project website:	https://valleysproject.eu/
Opening date:	14 October 2026
Closing date:	14 December 2026
Strand A:	https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-a
Strand B:	https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-b
Strand C:	https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-c



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Acronyms

3OC	Three O'clock
AI	Artificial Intelligence
CoP	Code(s) of Practice
EC	European Commission
ERA	European Research Area
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
HE	Horizon Europe
IASP	International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation
IF	Ideas Forward
IP	Intellectual Property
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KTO	Knowledge Transfer Office
KVI	Knowledge Valorisation Intermediary
LMS	Learning Management System
MS	Member State
OC	Open Call
SGA	Sub-Grant Agreement
SJIC	St John's Innovation Centre
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TTO	Technology Transfer Office
WP	Work Package

Open Call Summary

- **Project name:** Valorisation Alliance Linking Laboratories, Enterprises and Society Stakeholders
- **Project acronym:** VALLEYS
- **Project number:** 101287111
- **Project website:** <https://valleysproject.eu/>
- **Call ID:** VALLEYS – OC#1
- **Call name:** VALLEYS Open Call #1 – Knowledge Valorisation Intermediaries
- **Opening:** 14 October 2026
- **Closing:** 14 December 2026, 17:00 CET
- **Target audience:** Knowledge valorisation intermediaries (TTOs, incubators, accelerators, science parks, clusters, innovation hubs, IP advisory firms, citizen engagement organisations, and similar entities)
- **Helpdesk email:** helpdesk@valleysproject.eu
- **Funding body:** European Research Executive Agency (REA) – Horizon Europe
- **Total budget OC#1:** €210,000
 - Strand A – Toolbox Integration: €70,000
 - Strand B – Mobility and secondments: €60,000
 - Strand C – Combined approaches: €80,000
- **Maximum funding per beneficiary:**
 - Strand A – Toolbox integration: €10,000
 - Strand B – Mobility and secondments: €30,000
 - Strand C – Combined approaches: €40,000
- **Link for applications:**
 - Strand A: <https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-a>
 - Strand B: <https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-b>
 - Strand C: <https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-c>

1. Introduction

VALLEYS (Valorisation Alliance Linking Laboratories, Enterprises and society Stakeholders) is a Horizon Europe project dedicated to strengthening Knowledge Valorisation across Europe by empowering the organisations that bridge the gap between research, innovation, industry, policymakers, and society. These organisations, known as Knowledge Valorisation Intermediaries (KVIs), play a key role in transforming research results into societal, economic, and policy impact, yet they often operate in fragmented ecosystems with varying levels of capacity and resources.

To address this challenge, VALLEYS' aims to establish a European Network of Knowledge Valorisation Intermediaries connecting more than 150 organisations from over 25 countries, empowering organisations such as TTOs, incubators, science parks, clusters, and citizen engagement entities to adopt and scale the ERA Guiding Principles and Codes of Practice (on Intellectual Assets, Standardisation, Industry–Academia Co-creation, and Citizen Engagement).

The project provides a comprehensive package of support activities, including the development of an AI-enabled Knowledge Valorisation Toolbox, training and mentoring programmes, mobility and staff exchange opportunities, and thematic Working Groups focused on the implementation of the European Research Area (ERA) Codes of Practice. These activities are designed to strengthen the capabilities of intermediaries and accelerate the adoption of effective knowledge valorisation practices across Europe.

VALLEYS also includes a cascade funding programme, making available €500,000 through two Open Calls to support external organisations in testing and implementing innovative approaches to knowledge valorisation. The funded projects, with particular attention to widening countries and less-connected innovation ecosystems, will implement toolbox integration, cross-border mobility/secondments, and/or combined actions, focusing on topics such as industry-academia collaboration, intellectual asset management, standardisation, and citizen engagement.

The project brings together six organisations from across Europe with expertise in innovation management, capacity building, citizen engagement, science park ecosystems, venture development, and cascade funding management. Together, they are working to create a more connected, inclusive, and effective European knowledge valorisation ecosystem, contributing to the objectives of the European Research Area and enhancing the societal and economic impact of research and innovation across Europe.

More information about the project and its activities is available at: <https://valleysproject.eu/>

2. Open Call 1 Details

The guidelines presented in this document are intended for applicants interested in submitting proposals for the first Open Call (OC1) of the VALLEYS project, which will open on October 14th, 2026, and close on December 14th, 2026, 17:00 CET.

This document contains all information relevant to this specific Open Call, including eligibility criteria, evaluation procedures, and submission requirements, which have been carefully curated to ensure clarity and accuracy. Therefore, it is essential that all applicants thoroughly read and comprehend this document to ensure that their proposals meet the specific requirements outlined for the OC.

2.1. Scope & Objectives

The VALLEYS Open Call #1 funds knowledge valorisation intermediaries (KVIs) to accelerate the uptake of ERA Knowledge valorisation results through pilots that:

- Operationalise at least one EU Code of Practice (intellectual assets; standardisation; industry-academia co-creation; citizen engagement).
- Strengthen KVIs' skills and services and connect ecosystems via mobility/secondments and toolbox integration.
- Produce tangible outputs (e.g., mobility/secondment reports, toolbox adoption cases, co-creation protocols, standardisation roadmaps, citizen engagement playbooks) and a continuation/replication plan.

This call is open to organisations from all EU Member States and Horizon Europe Associated Countries and is structured around three complementary Strands:

Strand	Grant Size & Nº of partners	Description
Stand A – Toolbox integration pilots	€10,000 (1 partner)	Deployment and institutional use of the VALLEYS Knowledge Valorisation Toolbox, including AI-enabled assistants. Activities include installing or customising the Toolbox, embedding it into workflows, training staff, testing real cases, and producing documented case studies.
Strand B – Cross-border mobility and secondments	€30,000 (2 partners from different eligible countries: €10.000 for the host and €20.000 for the guest)	Structured exchanges of staff between knowledge valorisation intermediaries, transferring practices in areas such as IP management, standardisation, co-creation brokerage, or citizen engagement. Each secondment must result in both an individual skills upgrade and an organisational outcome.

Strand C – Combined approaches	€40,000 (2 partners from different eligible countries: €15.000 for the host and €25.000 for the guest)	Integrated actions combining cross-border mobility with Toolbox adoption. For example, an intermediary may send staff to a host organisation to learn best practices while simultaneously deploying the Toolbox to implement those practices at home.
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Table 1: Strands grant amount and general description

Each funded action must take the form of a **six-month, timebound pilot aligned with at least one of the four EU Codes of Practice**—covering intellectual asset management, standardisation, industry–academia co-creation, or citizen engagement—and must demonstrate measurable progress in knowledge uptake, institutional learning, and systemic valorisation. Across all strands, supported activities are expected to generate tangible outputs such as mobility reports, integration case studies, citizen engagement playbooks, or standardisation roadmaps, and to include a clear continuation plan to sustain practices beyond the funding period.

2.2. Strand A – Toolbox Integration Pilots

These projects will focus on the **deployment and institutional use of the VALLEYS Knowledge Valorisation Toolbox**, including its AI-enabled assistants, and producing documented **case studies** for replication. The objective is to turn high-level ERA guidance into practical, day-to-day tools for intermediaries.

The Toolbox comprises four AI-enabled modules that applicants may deploy individually or in combination:

- **IMPACT IP** — supports the triage of intellectual asset disclosures, portfolio scans and spin-out readiness assessments, with source-linked rationales.
- **Matchmaking Engine** — supports the identification of potential partners, companies, investors and standardisation bodies for a given research asset or capability.
- **Cascade Funding Cross-Referencer** — matches organisations with relevant open calls and funding opportunities. Designed for intermediaries supporting SMEs or research groups in accessing public funding.
- **Proposal Compliance Assistant** — a multilingual tool that supports non-expert users in preparing EU-compliant funding applications.

The VALLEYS Toolbox is being developed iteratively over the lifetime of the project through successive releases (Alpha, Beta, v1.0). Pilots funded under Open Call #1 will work with the Alpha release, the first functional version of the Toolbox. Sub-grantees under this call are therefore early adopters and co-testers of a product under development.

Eligible activities are those directly associated with deploying and testing at least one Toolbox module on real cases **from the applicant's own operational pipeline**. Concretely, funded activities may include:

- Onboarding onto the VALLEYS Toolbox: setting up the organisational workspace, user accounts and profiles, configuring taxonomies and adapting the applicant's own working procedures to accommodate the tool.
- Internal readiness work on the applicant's side, including a data protection and information security assessment covering the material to be processed through the Toolbox, and staff training on its use.
- Establishing a baseline of the process to be improved (e.g. current time-to-decision, current volume, current quality criteria) before Toolbox adoption.
- Testing the Toolbox on real cases aligned with at least one Code of Practice — for example, processing live intellectual asset disclosures with IMPACT IP, running a partner identification exercise with the Matchmaking Engine, or preparing a funding application with the Proposal Compliance Assistant.
- Conducting side-by-side trials comparing the baseline against Toolbox-supported performance on the same type of case.
- Documenting how Toolbox outputs and the associated practices can be embedded into the organisation's standard operating procedures or service offer and taking the first steps towards that adoption.
- Structured participation in feedback and co-design sessions with the VALLEYS technical team, including reporting of bugs, gaps and improvement needs.
- Producing the final case study report.

Expected outputs.

- (i) a **documented deployment** covering at least one module used on real cases;
- (ii) (a **baseline-versus-outcome comparison** with the indicators defined in the proposal;
- (iii) **structured feedback** delivered to the VALLEYS technical team; and
- (iv) a **final case study report**.

2.3. Strand B – Cross-border Mobility and Secondments

Strand B funds **structured staff exchanges between two knowledge valorisation intermediaries established in two different EU Member States and/or Horizon Europe Associated Countries**. One organisation acts as the **host** and the other as the **guest**. Both must be clearly identified in the proposal and must be fully independent legal entities: entities belonging to the same group, or an entity and its affiliated entities, do not qualify as a valid host-guest pair.

Applicants must meet the following requirements:

- The secondment must involve the physical presence of the guest staff at the host organisation's premises. Remote-only exchanges are not eligible, and remote periods do not count towards the minimum duration.
- The secondment must include a minimum of one month of physical presence, which may be completed in separate periods. Proposals are encouraged to go beyond this minimum.
- The physical secondment must take place entirely within the six-month implementation period of the pilot.
- Where more than one staff member is seconded, the proposal must justify the role and learning objectives of each person and demonstrate that the proposed split allows sufficient depth of immersion.
- Applicants must demonstrate a strong and well-justified host–guest match, including complementary profiles, a clearly identified knowledge gap at the guest organisation, and evidence that the host organisation has the relevant practice or expertise to be transferred.
- The proposal must include a realistic learning plan, with clearly defined learning objectives, a timeline, supervision arrangements at the host organisation, and planned outputs.
- The host and guest organisations must have appropriate IP and confidentiality arrangements covering the materials, information and practices that the guest staff will access during the secondment.
- The proposal must include a credible return-and-embed plan, explaining how the transferred practices will be adapted and institutionalised within the guest organisation after the secondment.
- Both organisations must confirm that they have assessed and accepted the practical and legal arrangements described under “Legal and practical responsibilities” below.

Applicants are responsible for identifying their own host and guest organisations. **VALLEYS does not broker host–guest matches for this Open Call.**

Applicants must demonstrate:

- A strong and well-justified host–guest match: complementary profiles, a clearly identified knowledge gap at the guest organisation, and evidence that the host genuinely holds the practice to be transferred.
- A realistic learning plan with defined objectives, a week-by-week schedule, named supervision arrangements at the host, and the planned outputs.
- IP and confidentiality arrangements between the two organisations covering the material the guest staff will access.

- A credible return-and-embed plan describing how the transferred practices will be institutionalised at the guest organisation after the secondment, with named internal owners.
- Confirmation that both organisations have assessed and accepted the practical arrangements set out under "Legal and practical responsibilities" below.

Eligible activities are those directly associated with the secondment and the transfer of valorisation practices. Funded activities may include:

- Structured secondments in which one or more staff members from the guest organisation spend time embedded within the host organisation, learning practices in areas such as intellectual asset management, standardisation in R&I, industry–academia co-creation, or citizen engagement.
- Design and delivery of a structured learning curriculum for the secondment, including learning objectives, a weekly schedule, supervision arrangements, and planned outputs (e.g. SOPs, playbooks, institutional frameworks to be adopted upon return).
- Joint working sessions on real cases at the host organisation, allowing the guest staff to learn hands-on from operational workflows.
- Knowledge transfer activities upon return to the home institution: presentation of lessons learned, adaptation of observed practices to the home context, and delivery of internal training sessions for colleagues.
- Any preparatory or follow-up activities directly necessary to make the secondment productive (e.g. pre-secondment alignment meetings, post-secondment implementation workshops), provided they are proportionate in scope.
- Production of a mobility report documenting the secondment experience, the practices transferred, and the institutional changes implemented or planned.

Legal and practical responsibilities. The host and guest organisations are jointly responsible for all practical and legal aspects of the secondment, including entry visas, residence and work permits where applicable; travel, health and accident insurance for the seconded staff; occupational health and safety at the host premises; and compliance with applicable employment, social security and data protection law in both countries. The seconded staff remain employed by the guest organisation throughout. **The VALLEYS consortium provides no immigration, insurance, legal or employment support, and assumes no liability in these matters.** Applicants are strongly advised to verify immigration requirements for the host country **before** submitting their proposal, as these vary significantly between Member States and Associated Countries.

Expected outputs.

- (i) A **mobility report** covering the learning objectives set (including the individual skills upgrade);

- (ii) and evidence of **at least one organisational outcome**: a new guideline, standard operating procedure, service, or institutional framework adopted as a result of the exchange.

2.4. Strand C – Combined Approaches

Strand C funds **integrated projects combining a cross-border staff secondment with deployment of the VALLEYS Knowledge Valorisation Toolbox**. A Strand C project involves a guest and a host organisation established in two different EU Member States or Horizon Europe Associated Countries.

All provisions set out under Strand A apply in full to the Toolbox component, and all requirements set out under Strand B apply in full to the mobility component of a Strand C project.

The Toolbox component must be deployed at the host organisation. Additionally, it is encouraged to be deployed at the guest organisation where this strengthens the integration, for example, where the two organisations test the same module on connected workflows during the secondment. In all cases the proposal must evidence at least one documented Toolbox application and one organisational outcome at the guest organisation. Deployment at the host alone does not qualify under this Strand.

Eligible activities combine those of Strands A and B. Funded activities may include:

- A structured cross-border secondment (as described in Strand B), where staff from the guest and host organisation learn practices in intellectual asset management, standardisation, co-creation, or citizen engagement at the host institution.
- Deployment of one or more VALLEYS Toolbox modules (as described in Strand A), either to support the secondment activities directly or to implement the practices learned during the mobility.
- Onboarding, configuration, baseline measurement and real-case testing of the Toolbox module(s), as set out under Strand A.
- Knowledge transfer, return-and-embed and institutionalisation activities at the guest organisation.
- Participation in feedback and co-design sessions with the VALLEYS technical team.
- Production of both a mobility report and a toolbox integration case study to be shared with the VALLEYS network as replication resources.

Expected outputs. A final report gathering:

- (i) the **mobility and secondment report** covering the learning objectives set and the **evidence of at least one organisational outcome** at the guest organisation: a new

- guideline, standard operating procedure, service, or institutional framework adopted as a result of the exchange;
- (ii) a case study of **Toolbox deployment and testing results** covering at least one documented real-case application and
 - (iii) **lessons learned from both components**, suitable for replication.

2.5. Timeline

To facilitate appropriate organisation of the applications, the indicative timeline of the call is presented in the table below:

Phase	Date
Open Call launch	14 October 2026
Info day 1	28 October 2026 at 11:00h CET
Info Day 2 & Brokerage session	9 November 2026 at 10:00h CET
Submission deadline	14 December 2026 at 17:00 CET (Brussels time)
Evaluation and selection	End of January 2027
Communication of results to applicants	End of January 2027
Legal validation & Contracting	February - March 2027
Project Start & Onboarding	Beginning of April 2027

Table 2: Open Call #1 timeline

All deadlines are expressed in Central European Time (CET). Please verify the applicable time zone in your location. The VALLEYS consortium reserves the right to adjust any date in the event of force majeure or unforeseen circumstances; applicants will be notified in advance of any changes.

2.6. Financial Support

The VALLEYS Open Call #1 provides Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) in the form of grants, with a total budget of €210,000, to be distributed as follows:

Strand	Amount/project	Projects funded in OC#1	Total OC#1
Strand A – Toolbox integration (1 partner)	Up to €10,000	Up to 7	Up to €70,000

Strand B – Mobility & secondments (2 partners)	Up to €30,000	Up to 2	Up to €60,000
Strand C – Combined approaches (2 partners)	Up to €40,000	Up to 2	Up to €80,000
TOTAL	-	Up to 11	Up to €210,000

Table 3: Total funds for Open Call #1

The **maximum cumulated contribution for a single organisation across all VALLEYS calls is €60,000.**

3. Rules & Conditions

3.1. Eligibility Criteria

To participate in the VALLEYS Open Call #1, applications must meet all the following eligibility criteria. An application will only be considered if it satisfies every criterion without exception. Proposals failing to meet any eligibility criterion will be automatically rejected. Applicable to both partners in any multi-partner proposal:

- The organisation is a **legal entity: SME / Startup; NGO / Foundation / Association; University / Research Organisation; and Public Bodies** (natural persons are excluded).
- The organisation is **legally established in an EU Member State or Horizon Europe Associated Country by the closure date of the call¹.**
- The organisation **qualifies as a knowledge valorisation intermediary (KVI)² as defined by VALLEYS³.**
- For Strand A proposals must consist of exactly one partner.**

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation-horizon-euratom_en.pdf

² For the purposes of the VALLEYS open calls, a knowledge valorisation intermediary is defined as an organisation (or department, or group inside a large organisation) that acts as a connector between research and innovation actors, industry, policymakers, and society to transform knowledge into social and economic value. Examples include but are not limited to: technology transfer offices (TTOs/KTOs), incubators, accelerators, innovation hubs, clusters, science and technology parks umbrella organisations, IP advisory firms, innovation consulting companies, tech transfer specialists, citizen engagement organisations, standardisation liaisons, and similar entities that provide professional services, products or both, to facilitate the uptake of research and innovation results. This reflects the European Commission's recognition of intermediaries in the Codes of Practice as crucial actors for cocreation, standardisation, citizen engagement and the management of intellectual assets.

³ Applicants must be legally registered as one of the four eligible types of organisations listed above: SME / start-up; NGO / Foundation / Association; University / Research Organisation; or Public Body. Natural persons are not eligible.

- e) **For Strands B and C** proposals must consist of **exactly two partners from two different countries**, which must be two independent legal entities (holding structures, groups and non-independent entities do not qualify). Clear identification of host and guest roles is required.
- f) **All required fields in the application form are completed in English, and all required documentation is provided.**
- g) **No partner in the proposal is legally linked or associated with any member of the VALLEYS consortium or is a consortium member itself.**
- h) The proposal **has not already been partially or fully funded by another open call for the same activities.**
- i) The same organisation may be involved in several proposals, under the same or different Strands, as applicant or as partner (host or guest). The **cumulated funding awarded to a single organisation across all VALLEYS Open Calls cannot exceed €60,000.**
- j) The proposal was **submitted via the official application platform before the submission deadline.**

3.2. Obligations of the Funded Pilots

- During the implementation period, all **funded organisations are required to become members of the VALLEYS Network and to actively participate in at least the thematic Working Group** corresponding to the Code of Practice addressed by their pilot (IP management, standardisation, industry-academia co-creation, citizen engagement, or policy). They will be encouraged to join and actively participate in additional Working Groups where relevant and where they can benefit from or contribute to the network. Continuation as a network member after the end of the funded action is voluntary and will be encouraged based on the added value the network offers. Further details on specific requirements will be set out in the Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA).
- The **minimum duration of physical presence within the secondment is one month**, which may be completed in separate periods. Proposals are encouraged to go beyond this threshold (Only for Strand B & C).
- **Participation in the VALLEYS online training programme**, delivered through the VALLEYS Learning Management System (LMS). This requirement ensures that pilots share a common baseline understanding of the ERA Guiding Principles and the four EU Codes of Practice, and that the learning generated by the pilots feeds back into the wider VALLEYS network. Each funded organisation must ensure that its designated staff complete **a minimum of 3 self-paced online modules, each lasting approximately 1.5 hours**, before the end of the implementation period. The modules will be selected from the list provided in [Annex 1](#).
- **Common obligations** for any EU funding beneficiary as stated in [Section 6](#). Beneficiaries' Responsibilities.

3.3. Data Protection

The VALLEYS consortium requires access to Personal and Entity Data in order to process and evaluate applications. Sploro will act as the Data Controller for all data submitted through the Open Call platform for the purpose of this Open Call. To ensure the safety and security of this data, the platform has been designed and operates under strict compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679 (GDPR).

Therefore, all applicants are required to accept the Privacy Policy of Sploro and the Legal Notice, Privacy Policy and Terms of Service of the Cascade Funding Hub when submitting their application. For more information regarding data privacy and the security measures implemented, please refer to <https://sploro.eu/privacy-policy/> and <https://cascadefunding.eu/privacy-policy/>

Essential data may be shared with consortium partners and/or project associates, ensuring confidentiality and integrity, solely for the purpose of fulfilling the evaluation of the proposal and delivery of the programme's services. Additionally, relevant personal and organisational data may be shared with service providers, other selected beneficiaries, and/or mission organisers, strictly to facilitate logistical coordination and participation in VALLEYS related activities.

3.4. Language

English is the official language of the VALLEYS project. All documentation, deliverables, reports, and communications must be prepared and submitted in English. All project-related meetings, workshops, trainings, and programme activities will be conducted exclusively in English. Participants are responsible for ensuring that any internal documentation, technical specifications, or supporting materials used during the programme are accessible in English when requested.

3.5. Absence of Conflict of Interest

Applicants must not have any real or potential conflicts of interest during the selection process or during the implementation of the project activities. This includes financial ties, personal relationships, or any situation that could affect impartiality. All potential conflicts will be reviewed by the VALLEYS selection committee. If a conflict is confirmed, the application may be disqualified. Please note that VALLEYS partners, their affiliates, staff, and subcontractors are not eligible to apply or receive funding, in line with European Commission rules.

3.6. Ethics

VALLEYS strictly adheres to the fundamental ethical principles outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity⁴. To ensure compliance, all applicants are required to acknowledge and accept the VALLEYS privacy policy and declaration of honour during the submission process.

During the submission process, an ethics self-assessment questionnaire must be completed. Applications that fail to adequately address ethical concerns or privacy aspects will be rejected.

All applicants must thoroughly review and assess their applications for any potential ethical issues before submission. Failure to comply with the ethical guidelines outlined in the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity could lead to disqualification of the application.

For further guidance, applicants are encouraged to consult the EC document “How to Complete Your Ethics Self-Assessment”⁵.

During the evaluation process, the VALLEYS consortium may verify whether the ethics self-assessment declaration aligns with the contents of the application. An ethics review will be conducted for all eligible applications.

4. Application submission

4.1. Application Form

Applications must be submitted exclusively the form available in the Open Call Platform, which is accessible via the link below:

- Strand A: <https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-a>
- Strand B: <https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-b>
- Strand C: <https://cascadefunding.sploro.eu/apply/program/valleys-oc1-for-applicants-strand-c>

The application form is divided in three different sections: 1. Contact information; 2. Organisation Information; 3. Grants. Please note that questions differ for each grant type.

We recommend carefully reviewing the application form before organising the proposal to familiarise yourself with key elements. To facilitate this, a template of the application form is available as a separate document as [Annex 2](#).

⁴ ALL European Academies. 2017. [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).

⁵ European Commission. 2021. [How to Complete Your Ethics Self-Assessment](#)

The absence of any answers or documents will automatically disqualify the application. Applicants are required to ensure that all information provided is accurate and truthful. Should any false information be identified, the application will be automatically disqualified and blacklisted from other VALLEYS calls.

Any required documents, and information must be uploaded in English. Submissions done fully or in part in any language other than English will be considered not eligible.

The form can be edited and saved before submission as many times as needed. **The deadline for submission of applications is December 14th, 2026, 17:00 CET.**

4.2. Helpdesk

Applicants are requested to review the Guidelines for Applicants and consult the project's website, Frequently Asked Questions, and recorded information sessions before resorting to the Helpdesk. If you still have questions after reviewing these resources, please contact the VALLEYS support team at:

- helpdesk@valleysproject.eu

The Helpdesk is the only official communication channel for this call. Any messages sent through personal emails, social media, or other informal means will not be considered. The Helpdesk will not evaluate proposals or provide advice on the eligibility of applicants.

Requests to the Helpdesk are typically answered within two working days. During peak periods, such as near the submission deadline, the response time may extend to four working days.

Requests submitted less than two working days before the call deadline will not be processed. Lack of receipt of an answer to an inquiry will not constitute grounds for an extension or re-evaluation of an application.

Applicants must maintain professional and respectful communication when engaging with the Helpdesk. Inappropriate behaviour, such as repeated demands, attempts to influence outcomes, or harassment, may result in disqualification.

4.3. Info Days

Info Days are informational webinars in which the current call will be presented in detail to potential applicants. During these sessions, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions and receive direct answers. Two Info Days are scheduled, taking place on:

- [Infoday 1: 28/10/2026, 11:00 CET](#)
- [Infoday 2 & Brokerage session: 09/11/2026, 10:00 CET](#)

These events will be widely promoted on the project’s website and social media channels, and prior registration is required. The sessions will be recorded and made available on the VALLEYS project website for further consultation.

4.4. Technical Issues

Applicants are strongly advised to submit their applications at least four days before the deadline to avoid potential technical issues that may arise due to high platform activity.

If you experience any technical issues that prevent submission, report them to the Helpdesk before the submission deadline. Applications or reports received after the deadline will not be considered or investigated.

When contacting the Helpdesk, provide a clear description of the problem, including any error messages, unexpected behaviour, and the steps that led to the issue. Attach a screenshot showing the problem, ensuring the system clock or another timestamp is visible. Include relevant details such as your device, operating system, and browser.

Even if you have a timestamped screenshot showing the error occurred before the deadline, **the report must reach the Helpdesk email before the submission deadline to be considered.** Technical issues will be reviewed and assessed by the project’s technical team, following the same deadlines and conditions outlined in the Helpdesk [section](#).

5. Evaluation and Selection Process

5.1. Selection Process

This chapter provides a detailed description of the Open Call’s Evaluation and Selection process, including the criteria, procedures, and required documentation.

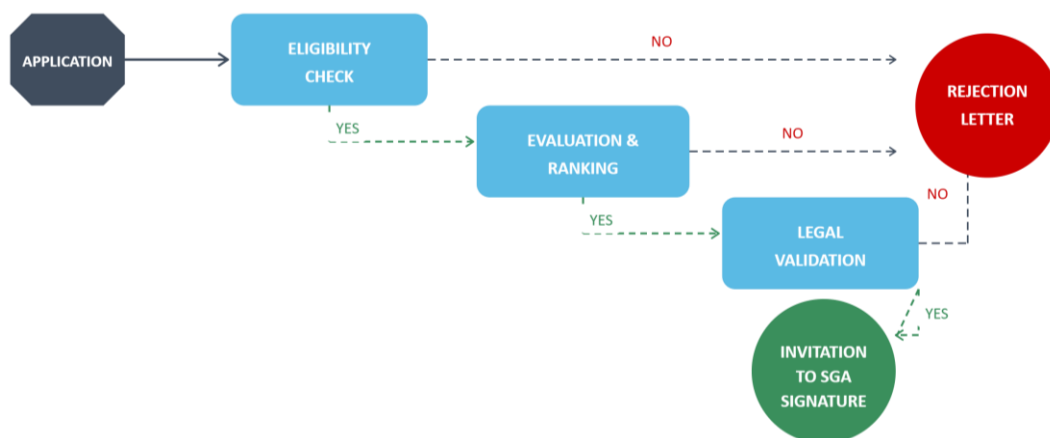


Figure 1: Open Call #1 selection process

The selection process consists of the following sequential phases:

1. **Submission:** Proposals are submitted via the official application platform during the open call period.
2. **Eligibility Check:** All received applications are screened by SPLORO against the eligibility criteria. Ineligible proposals are rejected at this stage.
3. **External Evaluation & Ranking:** Eligible proposals are assessed by two independent external experts against the three evaluation criteria. A Quality Evaluation Manager from SPLORO ensures compliance.
4. **Legal Validation:** Pre-selected applicants are required to submit legal and financial documentation before contracting.
5. **Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA) Signature:** Selected applicants sign the sub-grant agreement with SPLORO on behalf of the VALLEYS consortium.
6. **Project Execution:** Funded projects are implemented over a maximum of six months, with ongoing support from VALLEYS consortium mentors.

5.2. Eligibility Check

During the Eligibility Check, the eligibility criteria of all received applications will be verified by two independent evaluators, each conducting their assessment separately. The results of their respective evaluations will then be cross-checked. Any discrepancies identified will be jointly reviewed to reach a final decision. Proposals that fail to meet any of the eligibility criteria will be automatically rejected. For more information, please see [Section 3.1. Eligibility Criteria](#).

5.3. Evaluation and Ranking

Proposals that pass the Eligibility Check will be **assessed by two independent external evaluators** with expertise in knowledge valorisation, IP transfer, innovation management, or related fields. Each evaluator will assess every proposal individually under three criteria: 1- Excellence and Relevance, 2- Implementation and Quality, and 3-Impact, Uptake and Replication and assign a score from 0 to 5 for each evaluation criterion. A Quality Evaluation Manager from Sploro will provide support and ensure compliance throughout the entire evaluation process.

5.3.1. Evaluation Criteria

All three Strands are evaluated under the same three criteria:

Criterion	Description
1) Excellence and Relevance	Proposals must demonstrate a tight fit with VALLEYS' objectives and the ERA Codes of Practice by framing a clear problem or use-case and showing explicit application of at least one Code of Practice. A sound approach with coherent objectives, methodology and a work

	<p>plan proportionate to a six-month pilot is expected. Applicants should identify end-users and explain why the action matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strand A: specify the modules to deploy, the baseline versus target workflow, the integration pathway (including IT/security readiness) and capacity building needs. • Strand B: evidence a strong host–guest match, set clear learning objectives and curriculum, and define tangible outputs (procedures, SOPs, playbooks) to be institutionalised. Proposals involving organisations from widening areas or with limited prior access to cross-border mobility or secondment opportunities are encouraged. • Strand C: combine the requirements of Strands A and B.
2) Implementation and Quality	<p>A crisp plan with tasks, timeline, milestones and deliverables, KPIs, and risk/mitigation measures under proportionate governance. Teams should evidence the competencies, time commitment and access to stakeholders needed to deliver, supported where relevant by letters of commitment. Proposals must address ethics, data protection (GDPR), and IA/IP arrangements (e.g., background registers, licensing choices), and include any standardisation or citizen-engagement aspects when pertinent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strand A: should detail installation/customisation, sandbox/testing, staff training and case selection, and specify the support required. • Strand B: should set secondment duration, supervision, host facilities, IP/confidentiality arrangements and a robust return-and-embed plan. • Strand C: combine the requirements of Strands A and B.
3) Impact, Uptake and Replication	<p>Impact will be judged on concrete, measurable outcomes linked to KPIs (e.g., number of staff trained, cases processed, procedures adopted, contacts with SDOs established). Proposals should describe the institutional changes expected—policies, SOPs, tools and training packs—and how these will be embedded. A credible post-grant pathway is essential, covering continuation and replication (e.g., MoUs, internal budget lines, named governance owner), dissemination via the VALLEYS network, and the potential to inform standards, policy or citizen practice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strand A: should commit to quantified usage targets (e.g., volumes, turnaround time, user satisfaction) and a plan to maintain the tool beyond the pilot.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strand B: should evidence practice transfer (before/after), train-the-trainer effects and any new services created. • Strand C: combine the requirements of Strands A and B.
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Table 4: Evaluation criterion description

5.3.2. Scoring System

The evaluators will assign scores for each criterion based on the following scale:

Score	Rating	Description
0	Fail	The application does not 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.
3	Good	The application addresses the criterion well, but a few 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.

Table 5: Evaluators scores scale

5.3.3. Threshold

To be considered for funding, each proposal must achieve a **minimum score of 3 points in each of the three evaluation criteria** (Impact, Excellence, and Implementation) and an **overall score** — calculated as the sum of the three criterion scores, with a maximum of 15 points — **of at least 10 points**, based on the normalised scores described below. Proposals that do not meet these thresholds will be disqualified.

5.3.4. Normalisation

The scores assigned by each evaluator will undergo a normalisation process to remove potential biases and ensure consistency across evaluations conducted by different experts. The normalisation is done as follows:

1. The overall average score of all proposals across all evaluators will be calculated, referred to as the Total Average Score.
2. The average score assigned by each evaluator will be determined, known as the Average Score Per Evaluator.

3. By dividing the average score per evaluator by the total average score and subtracting this result from 1, we obtain the Evaluation Deviation Factor. This factor highlights whether an evaluator tends to be generally more positive or negative in their scoring compared to the overall average.
4. To normalise the scores, the deviation factor is adjusted by adding 1 and then multiplied by each score given by that evaluator.
5. The final score for each proposal will be the average of the normalised scores from the evaluators and the independent evaluators.

At this stage, the divergence in the normalised scores of two evaluators per application will be verified with the formula $ABS(Ev1-Ev2)/((Ev1+Ev2)/2)$. If the divergence is greater than 20%, the original (pre-normalised) scores will be verified using the same formula.

- If the original scores show less than 10% divergence, the average of the normalised scores will be taken as final score.
- If the original scores show more than 10% divergence and the normalised scores show more than 20% divergence, a consensus meeting between the two evaluators will be organised.

The consensus meeting will be overseen by the Open Call Manager. The application's new score will be the score agreed by the evaluators in that meeting, and normalisation will not be applied. If a consensus cannot be reached, a third evaluator will review the application, and the final score will be the average of the three evaluations. In this case, the score will not be normalised.

5.3.5. Ranking

At the end of the evaluation process, all proposals will be ranked according to their final scores, and only the highest-ranked ones will be invited to sign a Sub-grant Agreement. A list of proposals accepted after remote evaluation will be published, together with information on non-eligible proposals. All applicants will receive official notification of their results.

VALLEYS gives particular attention to organisations from Widening countries and EU Outermost Regions⁶, in line with the Horizon Europe objective of reducing research and innovation disparities across Europe. At least 30% of the proposals funded under this Open Call are expected to include at least one partner established in a Widening country (see Rule 1 below). This priority does not affect the eligibility of proposals without a Widening-country partner.

The ranking will follow the rules below:

⁶ https://rea.ec.europa.eu/horizon-europe-widening-who-should-apply_en

- **Rule 1:** Proposals will first be ranked separately within each Strand according to their final overall score. Based on the available budget, a provisional selection will be established comprising the highest-ranked proposals in each Strand: up to seven projects under Strand A, two under Strand B and two under Strand C. The provisional portfolio will then be checked against the VALLEYS target that at least 30% of funded actions involve at least one partner established in a Widening country. For Open Call #1, this corresponds to at least four of the eleven funded actions. If this target is already achieved through the merit-based provisional selection, no adjustment will be made. If the target is not achieved, the Widening shortlist of each Strand (proposals with at least one partner from a Widening country) will be considered, while maintaining the number of projects allocated to each Strand. In each Strand, the highest-ranked eligible Widening proposal below the funding threshold may replace the lowest-ranked provisionally selected non-Widening proposal. Where an adjustment is necessary in more than one Strand, priority will be given to the replacement resulting in the smallest difference in overall score between the two affected proposals. This process will be repeated only as necessary to reach the overall Widening target. All proposals selected through this mechanism must meet the applicable minimum quality thresholds.
- **Rule 2:** If two or more proposals have the same overall score, priority will be given to those with a higher score in the Impact award criterion.
- **Rule 3:** If a tie remains, proposals with a higher score in Excellence will be prioritised.
- **Rule 4:** If proposals are still tied, priority will be given to those that have appointed a larger number of women.
- **Rule 5:** Once the ranking and the Widening check (Rule 1) have been completed, if an organisation is part of several provisionally selected proposals whose awarded funding would exceed this limit, only the proposal under the same Strand with the highest final overall score will be funded. The other proposals will not be selected.

Based on the number of available grants, applications will be categorised as follows:

- **Pre-Selected:** Successfully selected for funding (up to 11 projects).
- **Reserve List:** Shortlisted as backup candidates in case others pre-selected applicants withdraw or are excluded during legal validation.
- **Not Selected**, with the following specific statuses:
 - **Above threshold not selected:** Met all requirements but not funded due to budget limitations.
 - **Under threshold:** Evaluated but did not meet the minimum scoring criteria.
 - **Non-eligible:** Failed the eligibility check.

All applicants will receive an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) and formal notification of the outcome. The ESRs will contain the final score per criteria and overall score. It will also include AI-based generated feedback. These consensus feedback will be the result of a procedure of providing the comments of both evaluators and the final score (normalised) to a standard LLM

model in a private environment (data protected). The output of the LLM model will be validated with the external evaluators before the inclusion in the final ESR for their confirmation or modification. Once validated, the project will communicate the results.

5.4. Appeals Procedure

The VALLEYS consortium has instituted an appeals process to ensure all applicants are treated fairly and transparently throughout the evaluation of their proposals. This process is designed to address concerns applicants may have about procedural errors during the evaluation or issues related to the eligibility check results.

If an applicant considers that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal was assessed, which could potentially impact the final funding decision, or if they believe that the results of eligibility checks are incorrect and do not adhere to the Open Call rules, the following procedure is available:

- Appeals must be submitted **within five calendar days** of receiving the evaluation results via the helpdesk@valleysproject.eu email. The request must include clear justification and any supporting evidence (e.g., screenshots, relevant documentation) that substantiates the claim.
- The VALLEYS Team will thoroughly investigate complaints to determine if a re-evaluation of the proposal is justified. **A decision will be communicated within no more than twenty days from the date of receiving the complaint**, provided that all required information has been submitted. If this timeline cannot be met, the applicant will be informed of the delay and given a new decision date.
- If the review concludes that a re-evaluation is justified, the new re-evaluation will not pursue a normalisation procedure (which could modify the evaluation shortlist) but will be based on standard average scorings, avoiding general delays in the open call process.

Applicants should note that differences of opinion or subjective judgments are not valid grounds for appeal. To maintain process efficiency, **each proposal is allowed a single appeal**, and the decision reached at the end of the appeal process is final, closing any further discussion regarding the evaluation.

The VALLEYS Open Call Team will not comment on or reinterpret the evaluators' opinions or scores unless a factual error is clearly identified.

5.5. Legal Validation

Before finalising the list of accepted applicants, a thorough validation of the legal entities will be conducted. This process involves submitting various documents to ensure compliance with the VALLEYS programme's requirements.

To speed up the validation process it is highly recommended that the applicants validate their legal entity via the Funding & Tenders portal. To get validated you should refer to the official guide [HERE](#).

The required documents for validation include:

- **Identification document:** Scanned copy of the signatory's identification card or passport.
- **Declaration of Honour**, confirming eligibility and absence of exclusion grounds (e.g. bankruptcy, fraud, or legal non-compliance).
- **Power of attorney:** Proof of the signatory's authority to represent the organisation.
- **Company registration certificate:** Extracts from the official company register, official journal, or equivalent documents showing the organisation's name, legal address, and registration number.
- **Participant Identification Code (PIC)⁷⁸:**
 - For entities with a **validated PIC Number**: the PIC Number and a screenshot of the Funding and Tender portal, evidencing the organisation type selected as a beneficiary.
 - For entities without a validated PIC number or a validated status (like self-declared SMEs): the **Legal Entity Form⁹** for private companies, which is a standard EC template required for EU funding eligibility. VAT Number registration (if applicable), a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).

Additional documentation (only SMEs and start-ups):

- **SME declaration form (see Annex 3):** A form based on the standard templates by the EC allowing VALLEYS to verify the ownership structure and financial figures.
- **Balance Sheet and P&L accounts** for the last two closed years (if applicable) and the most recent CAP table (shareholding distribution). In the case of linked or associated companies, additional information such as consolidated accounts, groups structure, or parent company data may be requested.

At the same time, the Financial Identification Form and bank account validation documents will be requested:

⁷ Search for an existing PIC or register your organisation: [EU Funding & Tenders Portal – Participant Register](#)

⁸ Step-by-step guidance: [Online Manual – Registration and validation of your organisation](#)

⁹ European Commission, [Identification Form – Private Law Body](#), accessed on 06 October 2026

- **Financial Identification Form (FIF):** A form identifying the bank account to which funds will be transferred, signed by both the organisation's legal representative and the bank representative.
- **Bank statement** showing the ownership of the account.

A legal entity that does not provide the requested data and documents in due time will not be awarded.

Templates and detailed instructions will be provided to guide applicants in preparing and organising the required documents. Organisations that successfully complete the validation process will be classified as "selected" and subsequently invited to sign the Sub-Grant Agreement.

5.6. Sub-grantee Agreement

To formalise the responsibilities of all parties involved, a contractual Sub-Grant Agreement (SGA) will be signed between the selected applicants and the VALLEYS consortium, represented by Sploro.

The Sub-Grant Agreement will address all relevant legal aspects, including the special clauses derived from Horizon Europe cascade funding rules, the payment schedule and associated conditions and milestones, as well as general provisions outlining the rights and obligations of both the VALLEYS consortium and each sub-grantee, including matters related to Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

Once the Sub-Grant Agreement has been signed, applicants will be formally recognised as beneficiaries and will be eligible to participate in the VALLEYS programme.

The grants will be disbursed following a lump sum, milestone-based approach. This means that funding is distributed gradually, subject to meeting specific outcomes and milestones, rather than administrative justifications of time and/or expenses.

Milestone achievement is assessed by IF, which is responsible for technical monitoring and for confirming that the agreed KPIs have been met (the 'buddy coach', an IF-appointed contact assigned to each funded project before implementation starts). Once IF's validation is received, SPLORO processes the corresponding payment. Other consortium partners may provide specialist technical support where relevant, but milestone validation remains the responsibility of IF.

Payments are structured across three milestones:

- **Milestone 1 – KPI and Milestones Agreement (initial payment; Month 2):** Following a general onboarding session covering administrative and operational aspects, each beneficiary will hold a 1-to-1 meeting with their assigned buddy coach and a set of

project-specific KPIs (used to measure the progress in the implementation phase) will be defined and agreed during M1. Upon approval, an initial payment of 10% of the grant amount will be released.

- **Milestone 2 – Mid-term Review (interim payment; Month 4):** The KPIs percentage of execution and milestone reach will be evaluated. A 100% completion of the KPIs defined for the intermediate period will launch a payment of an additional 45% of the grant amount. A lower completion of the tasks will launch the proportional payment. If the mid-term KPIs are met by less than 50% of the target for this period, the interim payment will be retained until the end of the implementation and subject to the completion of the final milestone.
- **Milestone 3 – Final Review (payment upon completion; Month 7):** The consortium will deliver final payment with the remaining grant amount according to the overall completion of KPIs by the use-case implementation at the end of the project. The final KPIs will be evaluated by the buddy coach in a way that 100% fulfilment of the agreed KPIs will trigger the release of the remaining payment, while a lower completion of the tasks will launch a proportional payment. Additionally, final payment is conditional on nominated staff from each beneficiary organisation having completed the minimum number of VALLEYS online training modules applicable to their Strand, as specified in the application form.

It should be noted that the funding, managed by SPLORO on behalf of the VALLEYS consortium, is provided under the Horizon Europe Programme and remains the property of the EU until the final payment has been completed.

For Strands B and C, the Sub-Grant Agreement is signed with one organisation acting as coordinator (typically the host), which is responsible for transferring the corresponding share to the partner organisation. The 10%/45%/45% milestone payment structure applies to each organisation's own allocated share of the grant. KPI achievement is assessed jointly for the partnership; where the minimum required level is not reached at an intermediate milestone, the corresponding share may be retained and reassessed at the final milestone.

6. Beneficiaries' Responsibilities

The selected Open Call #1 organisations are indirectly 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 Horizon Europe's specific requirements.

The obligations that apply to the recipients include:

6.1. Technical Monitoring and Reporting

Beneficiaries are required to cooperate fully with the monitoring team appointed to follow up their project, including submitting the agreed milestone and KPI evidence, project outputs, and any information needed for the project's impact, inclusivity, and best-practice analysis. Beneficiaries are also expected to participate in relevant surveys and feedback exercises, including on Toolbox utilisation and learning/skills outcomes where applicable.

As set out in [Section 3.2](#) Obligations of the Funded Pilots, funded beneficiaries are also required to comply with specific obligations.

6.2. Promotion of the Action and EU Funding Visibility

Financial support under this Open Call is provided by the VALLEYS consortium in its own name and under its own responsibility, using funds received by the consortium under its Horizon Europe grant. Beneficiaries of this Open Call do not hold a grant agreement with the European Union and are not beneficiaries of the Horizon Europe grant; their contractual relationship is exclusively with SPLORO, acting on behalf of the VALLEYS consortium. The financial support received must therefore never be presented as funding provided directly by the European Union.

Beneficiaries are nevertheless required to actively communicate and promote their involvement in the VALLEYS project, and are encouraged to acknowledge the EU support received by the project, in line with the visibility obligations transferred to them under Article 9.4 of the VALLEYS Grant Agreement. Outreach should be strategically tailored to various audiences, including the public and the media. The VALLEYS Communication Team will provide guidance, materials and assistance to ensure these communication efforts are effective.

Unless otherwise agreed by the VALLEYS coordinator, or unless impossible under specific circumstances, any communication or publicity activity related to the funded action — whether through digital channels, social media, events, printed or audiovisual materials — must include the VALLEYS project logo. The acknowledgement must always attribute the EU funding to the VALLEYS project and the financial support to the VALLEYS consortium.

When the EU emblem is displayed, it should be prominently when used alongside other logos. Its use does not grant any exclusive rights and remains subject to general rules on third-party usage, meaning it must not be misappropriated or registered as a trademark. No prior authorisation from the Commission is required under these conditions. More details on the correct use of the emblem can be found on the [Europa website](#).

All communications made by the beneficiary must clearly state that the content reflects only the author's views and that neither the European Commission nor the VALLEYS consortium can be held responsible for any subsequent use of the information provided.

The European Commission and the VALLEYS consortium may publish, by any means and format, the following information:

- The name of the beneficiary;
- A general overview of the project;
- The amount of financial support planned and, after project completion, the final amount received;
- The geographical location of the project's activities;
- Records of dissemination activities and outputs;
- Publishable reports submitted by the beneficiary;
- Any multimedia content (photos, videos, web materials) provided during the project.

The beneficiary must ensure that all necessary rights and permissions are secured for such publications and that no third-party rights are infringed. In exceptional cases, and subject to approval from the Commission, the VALLEYS consortium may agree to withhold publication of specific information if its disclosure would jeopardise the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

6.3. Financial Audits and Control

The European Commission (EC) retains the right to oversee beneficiaries' adherence to the financial support. This oversight may include financial audits, which can be carried out either by EC departments or by external auditors acting on their behalf, including bodies such as the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). Beneficiaries are required to provide full access to all relevant records, data, and documentation requested for the purpose of such audits.

Furthermore, all deliverables and supporting documents related to the sub-project must be retained by the beneficiary for a period of **five years following the project's completion**.

6.4. Internal Communication

Every chosen Open Call #1 project is required to designate a primary contact who will serve as the coordinator throughout the project's execution. This contact must:

- Provide any notice in writing to the VALLEY'S coordinator.
- Notify immediately of any change of persons or contact details to the **VALLEY'S** coordinator.
- Participate in onboarding activities and consortium meetings as required.
- Communicate any implementation-related risks, delays, or changes to the agreed work plan or KPIs directly to their assigned IF buddy coach, copying SPLORO where there may be administrative or financial implications in a timely manner.

ANNEXES

Annex 1

- **Module 1: Designing an IP/IA strategy** — Covers types of intellectual assets and how to design an IP/IA strategy aligned with an organisation's valorisation goals and the ERA Guiding Principles, drawing on TTO/KTO case studies.
- **Module 2: Open licensing & responsible IP** — Explores open licensing frameworks (Creative Commons, open-source licences) and how to balance openness with protection, including GDPR and ethical considerations in IP management.
- **Module 3: Data/know-how valorisation** — Looks at the regulatory and contractual frameworks for valorising data and know-how (trade secrets, data sharing agreements, FAIR principles), plus emerging challenges from AI-generated knowledge.
- **Module 4: How to integrate standards early in projects** — Explains the role of technical/operational standards in R&I and how to embed them at the project design stage, including liaison with standards bodies like CEN-CENELEC and ETSI.
- **Module 5: Standardisation & valorisation** — Examines how standardisation can accelerate market uptake and policy adoption of research outputs, and the EU policy landscape (ERA Action, Horizon Standardisation Booster).
- **Module 6: Successful industry-academia collaboration** — Introduces strategic choices and R&D models for industry-academia collaboration, illustrated with case studies of successful approaches.
- **Module 7: Bringing industry into the valorisation ecosystem** — Covers how to engage industry partners, their strategic options, and how to navigate the cultural divide between industry and academia.
- **Module 8: Developing entrepreneurial skills in researchers** — Focuses on the mindset, behaviours and business skills researchers need, and how to support them in developing these.
- **Module 9: Entrepreneurial thinking for research valorisation** — Explores pathways from research to economic/societal value, shifting from a technology-driven view to a problem/user-focused one, and entrepreneurial thinking as a process of testing assumptions.
- **Module 10: Foundations of citizen engagement for valorisation** — Introduces why and how to engage citizens in R&I, an organisation's engagement readiness, and light-touch entry-level methods.
- **Module 11: Facilitation and co-creation methods** — Covers living labs, design thinking for innovation/business modelling, and core facilitation techniques for running inclusive sessions.

- **Module 12: Impact and sustaining citizen engagement** — Addresses how to measure citizen engagement's impact against KPIs and how to sustain engagement as a route to social innovation beyond project funding.
- **Module 13: Open Innovation for Research-to-Market** — Covers identifying valorisation opportunities, engaging companies/investors/ecosystem partners, and pathways (pilots, open calls, funding) toward market uptake.
- **Module 14: Gender & Inclusion in Knowledge Valorisation** — Looks at barriers in valorisation processes and how to make outreach, support and access to mentoring/funding more inclusive.
- **Module 15: Research Data for Knowledge Valorisation** — Focuses on identifying and organising research data as evidence to support collaboration, funding and market-readiness.
- **Module 16: Business model discovery for research-based innovation** — Covers developing and testing value propositions from research results and comparing business/commercialisation models through structured experimentation.