

# Annex 2

## AI4Media – Open Call #1 Guidelines for Applicants

<b>Project Title</b>	AI4Media - A European Excellence Centre for Media, Society and Democracy
<b>Contract No.</b>	951911
<b>Instrument</b>	Research and Innovation Action
<b>Thematic Priority</b>	H2020-EU.2.1.1. - INDUSTRIAL LEADERSHIP - Leadership in enabling and industrial technologies - Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) / ICT-48-2020 - Towards a vibrant European network of AI excellence centres
<b>Start of Project</b>	1 September 2020
<b>Duration</b>	48 months



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## 1 Introduction

This document provides the relevant information regarding the first open call for proposals for the AI4Media project, also referred to as **AI4Media – Open Call #1**.

The AI4Media – Open Call #1 aims to engage different entities, including individual entrepreneurs, researchers and companies, that develop and integrate applied research, and are committed to contribute to the enrichment of the pool of research and technology tools of the AI4Media platform.

In addition to the present Annex, all associated annexes must be considered for the submission of a proposal.

General information on the AI4Media project as well as the proposed challenges can be found in Annex 1.

## 2 General Information

### 2.1 Terms and definitions

This section describes the relevant terms that are used in the open call documentation. Unless otherwise stated, the definition of a term is the one stated in this section.

#### 2.1.1 Persons, entities, and committees

*Table 1. Definitions of persons, entities, and committees*

Term	Definition
<b>AI4Media consortium / consortium</b>	Group of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible for implementing the AI4Media project as defined in the Grant Agreement number 951911.
<b>Applicant</b>	Individual or organisation that intends to submit or has submitted a proposal to the funding programme.
<b>Beneficiary</b>	An individual or organisation that has submitted a proposal to the funding programme that has been accepted for funding and has signed or is in the process of signing a sub-grant agreement.
<b>External evaluator</b>	An expert that has been invited by AI4Media to assist in the evaluation of the proposal submitted to the funding programme. Experts cannot have conflicts of interest and are bounded by their own confidentiality agreement.





## 2.1.2 Funding programme

Table 2. Definitions of the funding programme

Term	Definition
<b>AI4Media funding programme</b>	Programme under which the present open call is run. It is defined by the documents and templates provided by the AI4media consortium as defined in section 4.1.1. The funding programme considers several phases: open call for proposals, evaluation, contract preparation and signing, and implementation with 3 sprints (for selected beneficiaries).
<b>Proposal phase</b>	Period when applicants can submit proposals to the open call. Each open call has a fixed deadline that is automatically enforced.
<b>Evaluation phase</b>	Period when the consortium evaluates and ranks the applications. At the end of the phase, all proposals are notified of the results of the evaluation.
<b>Contract preparation and signing phase</b>	Period when the selected proposals and the consortium complete the administrative procedures to sign the sub-grant agreement and prepare administrative documents.
<b>Implementation phase</b>	Successive period of 9 or 12 months, varying according to the track to which a proposal was submitted, when the work is performed by the beneficiary. At the end of each sprint, the project is subject to a formal evaluation made by an internal evaluation team to assess if the project is meeting its objectives.

## 2.2 Means of submission

The AI4Media page on the F6S platform (<https://www.f6s.com/ai4media>) will be the entry point for the submission of all proposals to the AI4Media open calls. Any proposal submitted through other channels will be automatically rejected.

Any documentation that is required and requested by the AI4Media consortium should be submitted via a dedicated channel that will be indicated by the consortium during the execution of the sub-granted projects.

## 2.3 Language

English is the official language for the AI4Media open calls. Submissions done in any language other than English will not be eligible or evaluated.

English is the only official language during the whole implementation of the AI4Media programme. This means that any requested submission of documentation and deliverables will be done in English to be eligible.

## 2.4 Documentation formats

Any documentation requested in any of the phases of the open call and projects' implementation must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing. For Annex 3.1, formatting guidelines must be respected as defined in the document.



## 2.5 Data protection

To process and evaluate applications, AI4Media will need to collect personal and industrial data. F6S Network Limited (F6S) will manage the data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure coverage.

It should be noted that AI4Media requests the minimum information needed to deliver the evaluation procedures or the implementation of the funding programme. The 'Annex 8: Bank account information' and 'Annex 4: Sub-grant Agreement template' are provided for reference and will only be requested if the applicant is accepted to the programme.

Please refer to <https://www.f6s.com/terms> to check F6S platform data privacy policy and security measures.

## 2.6 Origin of the funds

Selected applicants will sign a dedicated sub-grant funding agreement with the AI4Media consortium. **The funds attached to the Sub-grant funding agreement come directly from the funds of the European project AI4Media and therefore remain property of the EU until the payment of the balance, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in AI4Media via European Commission GA no. 951911.**

As detailed in **Annex 4: Sub-grant funding agreement template**, this relation between the sub-grantees and the EC through the AI4Media project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees with the EC. It is the task of the sub-grantees to achieve them and of the AI4Media consortium partners to inform about them.

# 3 Eligibility criteria

The following eligibility criteria, related to the applicants, funding, and proposals apply.

## 3.1 Applicants' eligibility

All applicants must meet the requirements described in this section to be eligible for the AI4Media – Open Call #1:

1. Submissions will ONLY be accepted through the F6S platform and respective page dedicated to the AI4Media – Open Call #1:  
<https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1>.
2. Fit within the target audience as indicated in section 3.1.1.
3. Are based in an eligible H2020 country as indicated in section 3.1.2.
4. The application and all requested documents are provided **only in English language**.
5. The proposal description is provided according to the guidelines in the *AI4Media – Open Call #1 Proposal Description Template* (Annex 3.1).



The detailed eligibility criteria as described in the sections below apply:

### 3.1.1 Types of applicants

The AI4Media – Open Call #1 will fund projects implemented by **single** entities (groups of entities are not eligible) that are considered eligible under H2020 rules. The following type of entities are invited to submit their innovative research or application ideas:

- European mid-caps, SMEs and micro-SMEs (as defined in EU law – EU recommendation 2003/361<sup>1</sup>).
- Individual web entrepreneurs and individual sole-traders (established in an eligible country, section 3.1.2; eligibility is about the person’s residence and not origin).
- European secondary and higher education establishments, research institutes and other not-for-profit research organisations.

The following additional conditions apply:

- The participating organisations should not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
- The organisations or individuals applying should not have convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, and unethical or illegal business practices.
- There should not be any conflict of interest with any of the AI4Media partners (beneficiaries), as detailed in Section 3.1.3.

*Note: Third parties receiving Financial Support from AI4MEDIA through the open call will not become part to the AI4Media Grant Agreement. The AI4Media Grant Agreement will not need to be amended to include the selected beneficiaries.*

### 3.1.2 Eligible countries

Single legal entities established in any of the following countries are eligible to participate in the AI4Media – Open Call #1:

- The Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions.
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to the Member States<sup>2</sup>;
- H2020 associated countries (those that have signed an agreement with the EU as identified in Article 7 of the Horizon 2020 Regulation): according to the updated list published by the EC<sup>3</sup>;
- UK applicants are eligible under the conditions set by the EC for H2020 participation at the time of the deadline of the call.

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<sup>1</sup> EC recommendation for Small and Medium- sized Enterprises (SMEs) 2003/361/.

[https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en)

<sup>2</sup> Entities from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked.

<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants\\_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/h2020/grants_manual/hi/3cpart/h2020-hi-list-ac_en.pdf)





### 3.1.3 Conflict of interest

Applications will not be accepted from entities who are partners (beneficiaries) or linked-third parties in the AI4Media consortium or who are formally linked in any way to the partners/ linked-third parties of the consortium. This excludes, for example, entities that have already engaged with and/ or contributed to the project through specific activities/ initiatives (e.g., AI Doctoral Academy, Associate Members) who remain independent from the project. Any individual/ entity with a previous link to an AI4Media beneficiary (e.g., spin-off), will not be accepted, unless a minimum of 2 years (as of the 1 September 2021) has passed since the termination of the link.

Applicants must not have any current and/or potential conflict of interest with the AI4Media – Open Call #1 selection process and during the whole programme. Applicants must formally and immediately notify the AI4Media coordinator of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective evaluation and implementation of the project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

If a conflict of interest is discovered and confirmed at the time of the evaluation process, the proposal will be considered as non-eligible and will not be evaluated.

## 3.2 Proposal submissions

The AI4Media – Open Call #1 is a competitive funding programme. Only **one proposal** per applicant (legal entity or natural person) can be submitted to this open call. In the event of multiple submissions by an applicant, only the last proposal received (timestamp of the system) will enter the evaluation process (and regardless of the track to which a proposal is being submitted to). Any other submitted proposals involving the same applicant will be declared non-eligible and will not be evaluated in any case.

Exceptionally, in the case of secondary/ higher education establishments, research institutes and other not-for-profit research organisations, up to 2 applications can be submitted from different groups/teams within the entity and using a different F6S user account. Nevertheless, only **one proposal** will be accepted for funding per applicant (legal entity or natural person).

In the case of an applicant applying as an individual web entrepreneur or sole trader:

- An individual will be selected for funding only once, as in the case of one legal entity.
- If the individual participates in another proposal as part of a different legal entity:
  - The members of the other legal entity will be informed about the participation of an individual in multiple proposals.
  - The individual participating in multiple proposals will be disqualified.





### 3.3 Financial eligibility

The following financial conditions apply for proposals to be eligible:

- The total budget per project may not exceed €50.000.
- The total amount requested must represent 100% of the total project costs.
- All proposals must provide justifications of the planned costs and resources of the project.

For approved projects, the funds will be disbursed in lump sums at the end of the three planned stages and pending the achievement of agreed milestones and deliverables.

### 3.4 Other conditions

Each applicant must confirm:

- It is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty accordingly to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18.
- The proposed project is based on original research/ ideas and, going forward, any foreseen developments are not limited by third party rights, or are clearly stated if they are limited.
- The project is based on work that has not been developed and offered as a commercial product or solution.
- It is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national and EU authority.



## 4 Open call: submission, selection and negotiation process

Proposals submitted to the AI4Media – Open Call #1 are submitted in a single stage and evaluated in two steps, as presented in Figure 1.

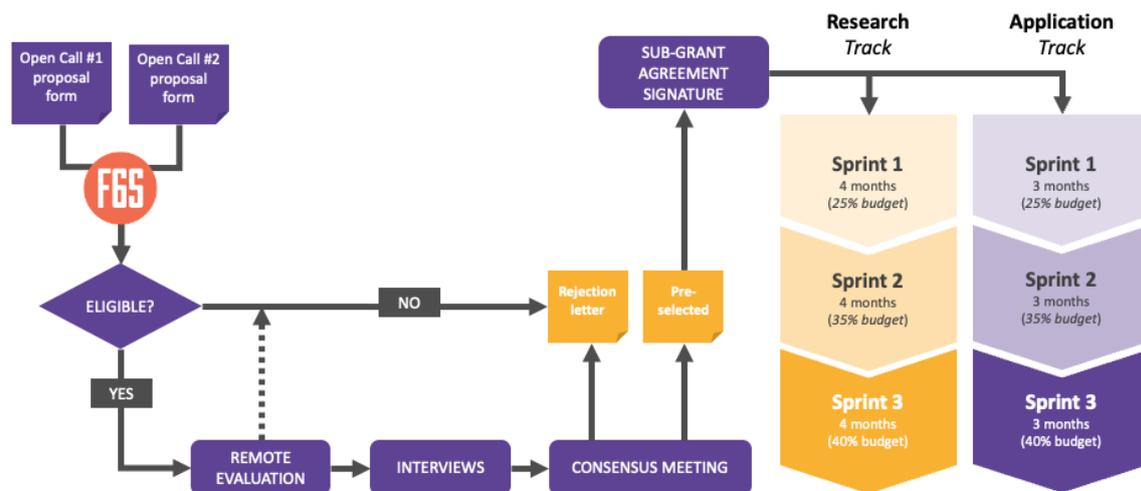


Figure 1. AI4Media Open Call #1 submission and evaluation process

### 4.1 Proposal preparation and submission

The submission of proposals to the AI4Media - Open Call #1 will follow the steps listed in this section.

#### 4.1.1 Open call publication and documentation

The open call is supported by the following documentation, which can be found at <http://www.ai4media.eu/open-call-1>:

- **Annex 1: Open Call #1 text**, which provides the scope and objectives of the open call.
- **Annex 2: Guidelines for applicants**, the present document.
- **Annex 3: Proposal form**, an online application form, available at F6S platform (<https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1>).
- **Annex 3.1: Technical proposal** (template), a Word template that indicates all the technical information that should be provided as part of the project proposal.
- **Annex 4: Sub-grant agreement template**, which provides a template of the sub-grant agreement that the successful applicants will be requested to sign.
- **Annex 5: Applicant Declaration of Honour** (for individuals), which declares that all conditions of the open call are accepted by the representative.
- **Annex 6: Applicant Declaration of Honour** (for non-individuals), which declares that all conditions of the open call are accepted by the entity's legal representative.



- **Annex 7: SME Declaration Form**, which evaluates the status of the SMEs.
- **Annex 8: Bank account information**, which collects information about the bank account to which payments will be made.
- **Annex 9: Competitive Calls Financial Support to Third Parties**, which contains the formal announcement to be published on the EU portal.

Applicants are encouraged to read and download all relevant files before proceeding with the submission. The **deadline for submissions to the AI4Media – Open Call #1 is 1 December 2021 (17h00 CET)**.

#### 4.1.2 Applicants' registration

Those interested in submitting a proposal to the AI4Media – Open Call #1 must be registered on the F6S platform: <https://www.f6s.com/>.

Submissions must be submitted through the AI4Media F6S page at <https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1>, which will be the main interface for managing the proposals.

#### 4.1.3 Proposal preparation

Applicants must consider the following steps when preparing their proposal:

1. For the proposal preparation, applicants are required to apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception) at: <https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1>.
2. Applicants that do not accept the terms and conditions and that do not sign and upload to the F6S platform the completed and signed annexes (as below) will not be eligible:
  - For individuals: Annex 3.1 and Annex 5.
  - For entities (non-individuals): Annex 3.1, Annex 6 and Annex 7.
3. Be specific and concise. Questions in the online form have character limitations.
4. It is strongly recommended that applicants submit their proposal well before the deadline. If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and if the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the AI4Media team to re-submit the proposal (for this purpose please contact [support@f6s.com](mailto:support@f6s.com)). **However, AI4Media does not guarantee that a resubmission will be feasible in due time in case the request for resubmission is not received by the AI4Media team at least 48 hours before the open call deadline.**

It is strongly recommended that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit their proposal. The failure to submit a proposal on time, for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.





#### 4.1.4 Proposal submission

Submissions will be done exclusively via <https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1>. Any submission not done via this channel will not be eligible.

A full list of applicants will be prepared containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity, which will be also shared with EC for transparency.

The deadline for submission of proposals is **1 December 2021, 17:00 CET** (Brussels time). The deadline of the open call will not be extended unless a major problem with the F6S platform makes the system unavailable.

## 4.2 Proposal evaluation and selection

### 4.2.1 Step 1: Eligibility verification

An initial eligibility verification will be done to filter out and discard non-eligible proposals. Proposals must meet **ALL the following eligibility criteria**, which will check the following:

- a. The proposing entities are **legal entities** eligible for funding under H2020 rules [Y/N].
- b. The rules as expressed in section 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 are followed [Y/N].
- c. All required sections of the proposal have been completed [Y/N].
- d. The proposal is aligned with the defined open call challenges [Y/N].
- e. The proposal is written in the **English** Language [Y/N].
- f. All required documentation, depending on the type of applicant, is submitted correctly: for **individuals**, Annex 3.1 and Annex 5; for **entities** (non-individuals), Annex 3.1, Annex 6 and Annex 7.

Proposals marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the eligibility criteria) will get a rejection letter with a justification. **No additional feedback on the process will be given.**

### 4.2.2 Step 2: External remote evaluation

Proposals considered eligible will move on to the external evaluation phase. The external evaluation will be done remotely by expert evaluators and using the F6S platform.

The evaluators will be selected from a pool of experts that will be established through a call for expressions of interest. The call will invite experts to provide their expertise in the domains of AI and media, professional and/or academic experience, as well as experience in evaluations. Expert profiles will be evaluated, and a pool of experts will be established. The top-ranked experts will be invited to evaluate proposals. At least **two external evaluators** will evaluate each proposal and will be distributed considering their domains of expertise and, whenever possible, country of origin.

The proposals will be scored based on the criteria below (Table 3).



Table 3. AI4Media - Open Call #1 evaluation criteria

Evaluation Criteria (EC)	Description
<b>EC1. Alignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The extent to which the proposal is aligned with the selected open call challenge.</li> </ul>
<b>EC2. Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity, robustness, and pertinence of the objectives.</li> <li>Excellence, innovation, and quality of the project concept.</li> <li>Ethical or legal issues associated to the work proposed and how they will be addressed.</li> </ul>
<b>EC3. Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contribution to the AI4Media ecosystem and objectives, considering the scope of the AI4Media project.</li> <li>Contribution to strengthening the competitiveness and growth of companies by developing research/ innovations that meet the needs of European and global markets; and, where relevant, by delivering such innovations to the markets.</li> <li>Expected economic effects of the projects</li> <li>Effectiveness of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results (including management of IPR), to communicate the project, and to manage research data where relevant.</li> </ul>
<b>EC4. Implementation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, including objectives, milestones and KPIs; appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources, and respective justification.</li> <li>Appropriateness of the skills and experience of the project team.</li> </ul>
<b>EC5. Value</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Justification of project costs, including those for the team and for other resources.</li> </ul>

**Each criterion will be scored between 1 and 5.** Half point scores are not given. For each criterion under examination, score values will indicate the following rationale:

Table 4. AI4Media - Open Call #1 scoring rationale

Score	Rationale
<b>1 / POOR</b>	The sub-project proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be judged due to incomplete or missing information.
<b>2 / FAIR</b>	The sub-project proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.
<b>3 / GOOD</b>	The sub-project proposal addresses the criterion well, but several shortcomings are present and minor weaknesses would need correcting.





Score	Rationale
<b>4 / VERY GOOD</b>	The sub-project proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present and specific improvements are possible.
<b>5 / EXCELLENT</b>	The sub-project proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

The final score (including for each criterion) is the average of the two evaluations provided by the external evaluators. The threshold for each criterion is **three (3)**, therefore the overall score threshold is **15**. This indicates that if a proposal scores less than 3 in any criterion or an overall score less than 15, the proposal is automatically rejected. **Any proposal scoring less than 3 on any criterion will automatically be disqualified.**

Each evaluator will record his/her individual assessment of each proposal using an Individual Evaluation Report (ISR). The evaluators will then hold a consensus meeting to prepare a single consensus Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) for each proposal, representing opinions and scores on which the evaluators agree and which they will sign.

#### 4.2.3 Step 3: Intermediate ranking of proposals

At the end of the remote external evaluation process, all proposals will be ranked in lists according to the two tracks, but independently of the track challenges being addressed. The criteria for the ranking of the proposals will be semi-automatic following the rules below:

- **Rule 1:** Proposals will be ranked based on their overall score (sum of scores for criteria 1 to 5).
- **Rule 2:** After applying Rule 1 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **C3. Impact**.
- **Rule 3:** After applying Rule 2 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **C2. Excellence**.
- **Rule 4:** After applying Rule 3 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **C4. Implementation**.
- **Rule 5:** After applying Rule 4 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **C1. Alignment**.
- **Rule 6:** After applying Rule 5 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to proposals that have the highest score on **C5. Value**.
- **Rule 7:** After applying Rule 6 and if there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to those led by women or with a share of women and men in the team that is closer to 50/50<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> In accordance with the Horizon 2020 guidelines to encourage gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men, consortia applying to the open call should seek to include both men and women in





The top-ranked proposals – at least twice the total number of proposals to be funded per track (tentatively 10 proposals per track) – will be invited to an online interview. Furthermore, at least two proposals per track challenge (if their score meets the minimum threshold) will be invited to the online interview. This applies in the case that proposals have been submitted to all track challenges.

Proposals that are not invited to an online interview will be notified.

#### 4.2.4 Step 4: Online interview

The objective of the online interviews is to better understand the project concept, quality of the applicant (individual or entity implementing the project), and willingness to exploit the project results. Interviews will be carried out by a selection of the external evaluators with the support of the AI4Media partners.

Interviews are expected to last approximately 30 minutes but may be extended if required. Applicants are expected to prepare and present a presentation (approximately 10 minutes in length) and answer any questions regarding their proposal from the evaluators (at least 2 evaluators will participate in the interviews).

The online interviews will evaluate proposals against the following evaluation criteria (Table 5):

*Table 5. AI4Media - Open Call #1 online interview evaluation criteria*

Interview Criteria (IC)	Description
<b>IC1. Concept and innovation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quality and novelty of the proposed project concept and innovation (research or application/ technology focused).</li> </ul>
<b>IC2. Impact and exploitation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Alignment with and contribution to the AI4Media project and ecosystem.</li> <li>Path towards exploitation of results in AI/media applications and/or by the market.</li> </ul>
<b>IC3. Applicant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge, capacity, and experience of the applicant.</li> </ul>

Like the external remote evaluation (section 4.2.2), each criterion will be scored between 1 and 5. Half point scores are not given. For each criterion, score values will be based on the rationale presented in Table 4.

If at any time during the interview the applicants do not commit to what was included in the submitted proposal, the proposal will be automatically disqualified.

If after the interview process the evaluators still have questions, the applicant may be requested to provide additional information in writing.

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the teams, with a participation as close as possible to 50/50 women and men. Further information: [https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/gender\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/docs/h2020-funding-guide/cross-cutting-issues/gender_en.htm)





#### 4.2.5 Step 5: Consensus meeting

Evaluators involved in the interviews will carry out a consensus meeting with the objective of gathering their evaluations, defining a common score for the proposals, and preparing evaluation reports.

#### 4.2.6 Step 6: Final ranking and selection

At the end of the interview evaluation process all proposals will be ranked based on their final scores. Five proposals will be selected for each track (total of 10), of which at least one proposal for each defined track challenge (see Annex 1).

All applicants will be informed about the result of their evaluation.

### 4.3 Redress process

Within three (3) working days of receiving (1) a rejection letter informing the proposal as non-eligible or (2) an ESR ranking the proposal below the selection borderline, an applicant may submit a request for redress if they believe the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated that may affect the final decision on whether to enter the funding programme.

In such a case, an internal review committee from AI4Media will examine the applicant's request for a redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants. Requests for redress must:

- Be related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- Clearly describe the complaint.
- Received within the time limit (three (3) working days) from the reception of (1) a rejection letter considering the proposal as non-eligible or (2) the ESR information letter.
- Sent by the entity's legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned only with the general evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.



- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score.

All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to the AI4Media team at: [opencall@ai4media.iti.gr](mailto:opencall@ai4media.iti.gr).

In the case where a proposal under the redress process is re-evaluated and the new evaluation score is higher, it will be compared with the proposal that has entered the funding programme with the lowest ranking (in the corresponding track). The comparison will use the ranking rules as detailed in Step 4 (section 4.2.3). In case the proposal under the redress process ranks higher, then both proposals will be invited to enter the funding programme.

#### 4.4 Sub-project negotiation and onboarding

At the end of the evaluation phase, 5 proposals from each track will be selected. The other proposals that were invited to the interview stage will remain in a reserve list in case a selected proposal fails to sign the sub-grant agreement.

All proposals will receive an acceptance or rejection letter together with an anonymised version of their proposal Consensus Evaluation Report. Proposals not having passed to the online interview stage will receive a report with results of the external remote evaluation. Proposals that passed to the online interview will receive a report with information from both the remote evaluation and interview stages.

##### 4.4.1 Step 1: Contract preparation and negotiation

After the evaluation phase is concluded and the sub-projects are selected, the AI4Media consortium will start the contract preparation phase in collaboration with the representatives of the sub-projects that have been awarded.

Contract preparation will run through an administrative and financial check (and potentially into technical or ethical/security negotiations) based on evaluators' comments. Depending on the contract preparation of each sub-project, a phone call or teleconference may be required and organised to clarify any pending questions.

The objective of the contract preparation is to fulfil the legal requirements between the AI4Media consortium and each beneficiary of the open call. The items covered are presented in Table 6.



Table 6. Requirements for contract preparation

For legal entities	For individuals (natural persons)
<p><b>Proof of legal existence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Company register, official journal or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Proof of legal existence:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A copy of the individual's national ID card or passport is required.</li> <li>Proof the individual is legally established and working in an eligible country, as defined in section 3.1.2.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Specific to SMEs:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Proof of the SME condition is required: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the H2020 Participant Portal, the PIC number must be provided.</li> <li>If the applicant has not been fully validated as an SME on the H2020 Participant Portal, the following documents will be required to prove the status as an SME: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>SME declaration (Annex 7) signed and stamped:</b> In the event the beneficiary declares being non-autonomous, the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organizations is required.</li> <li><b>Status Information Form</b>, which includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit &amp; loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> </li> <li>Supporting documents. <b>In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting documents which demonstrate headcount and ownership such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional, association records, etc.</b></li> </ol>	
<p><b>Bank account information (Annex 8)</b></p> <p>The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a specific form signed by the entity, individuals and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the entity/individual.</p>	
<p><b>Sub-grant agreement (Annex 4)</b></p> <p>Signed between the AI4Media consortium, represented by its coordinator (CERTH), the budget holder (F6S), and the beneficiary (see section 4.4.2).</p> <p>The sub-grant agreement will also include the comments (if any) of the proposal's ESR into the work plan.</p>	

It should be emphasised that each participating **entity should provide at contract preparation time a valid VAT<sup>5</sup>. Failure to provide a valid VAT number will automatically result in exclusion from the contract preparation.**

<sup>5</sup> To be checked at European Commission services such as [http://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/vies/](http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vies/)



The request of the above listed documentation by the AI4Media consortium will be sent to the sub-project representatives, including deadlines by which information and documentation should be sent. In general, the sub-project negotiation should be concluded within 2 weeks. An additional week may be provided by the AI4Media coordinator in case of a relevant reasoning. In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the proposal is automatically rejected and the next proposal in the reserve list is invited to initiate the contract preparation.

#### 4.4.2 Step 2: Contract signature

At the end of the contract preparation and negotiation phase, the sub-grant agreement (Annex 4) will be signed between the AI4Media consortium represented by its coordinator (CERTH), the budget holder (F6S), and the Beneficiary.

The sub-grant agreement/ contract will cover the three (3) phases of the sub-project, further detailed in section 0.





## 5 Implementation and reporting

After the finalisation and signing of the sub-grant agreement, the awarded sub-projects will move into the implementation phase. As shown in Table 7, and depending on the track under which the project has been funded, each sub-project will run from 9 to 12 months, structured into three phases, each with specific objectives and requirements. At the end of each phase, the sub-project beneficiary must produce a deliverable with the status of their sub-project and the results of the work carried out. A deliverable template will be made available to sub-project beneficiaries at the start of the implementation phase.

*Table 7. AI4Media implementation timetable and requirements*

Stage	Schedule	Deliverables	Payment
<b>Track: RESEARCH [12 months]</b>			
<b>Sprint 1</b> 4 months	Feb. 2022 – May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At M1: Detailed implementation plan, including objectives, milestones and KPIs.</li> <li>At M4: Preliminary report, with status and progress of sub-project.</li> </ul>	25%
<b>Sprint 2</b> 4 months	Jun. 2022 – Sep. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At M8: Interim report, with status and progress of sub-project.</li> </ul>	35%
<b>Sprint 3</b> 4 months	Oct. 2022 – Jan. 2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At M12: Final report, with status and progress of sub-project.</li> </ul>	40%
<b>Track: APPLICATION [9 months]</b>			
<b>Sprint 1</b> 3 months	Feb. 2022 – Apr. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At M1: Detailed implementation plan, including objectives, milestones and KPIs.</li> <li>At M3: Preliminary report, with status and progress of sub-project.</li> </ul>	25%
<b>Sprint 2</b> 3 months	May 2022 – Jul. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At M6: Interim report, with status and progress of sub-project.</li> </ul>	35%
<b>Sprint 3</b> 3 months	Aug. 2022 – Oct. 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At M9: Final report, with status and progress of sub-project.</li> </ul>	40%

At the end of each sprint, the Beneficiary must submit to the AI4Media consortium the corresponding deliverables no later than 10 calendar days after the end of the respective sprint, providing sufficient time for the AI4Media consortium to review it.

For both the Research and Application tracks, an initial implementation plan must be provided at the end of the first month of Sprint 1.

Table 8 presents the requirements (objectives and expected contents) for the deliverables associated to each of the sub-project stages.





Table 8. Deliverable requirements associated to the stages of the sub-project

Stage	Deliverable	Deliverable requirements
Sprint 1	Implementation Plan (M1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> Provide a detailed planification and workplan of the work to be carried out in the sub-project.</li> <li>• <b>Contents:</b> Specific objectives, milestones, KPIs, timeline and respective alignment with expected results.</li> </ul>
	Preliminary Report (M3/M4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> Provide a status and review progress achieved in Sprint 1.</li> <li>• <b>Contents:</b> Progress towards objectives and milestones; achievement of KPIs; deviations (if applicable); next steps for Sprint 2.</li> </ul>
Sprint 2	Interim Report (M6/M8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> Provide a status and review progress achieved in Sprint 2.</li> <li>• <b>Contents:</b> Progress towards objectives and milestones; achievement of KPIs; deviations (if applicable); challenges/ mitigation; use of resources; next steps for Sprint 3, including towards exploitation.</li> </ul>
Sprint 3	Final Report (M9/M12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Objective:</b> Provide a status and review progress achieved in Sprint 3.</li> <li>• <b>Contents:</b> Review of work developed; achievement of milestones and KPIs; exploitation and promotion actions implemented.</li> </ul>

If required, and for any sprint, a meeting may be scheduled to further assess the progress of the sub-projects and clarify any doubts on the deliverables provided.

The payment associated to each sprint will be disbursed once the respective deliverables have received positive assessment (up to 15 calendar days after being delivered to the AI4Media consortium).





## 6 Responsibilities of beneficiaries

The selected entities are indirectly beneficiaries of EC funding. Therefore, selected entities are responsible for the appropriate use of the funding and must comply with obligations under H2020 specific requirements as described in Horizon 2020. The obligations that are applicable to the recipients include:

### 6.1 Conflict of Interest

The beneficiaries must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the sub-project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must formally notify the AI4Media consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The AI4Media coordinator will verify if the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specific deadline.

If the sub-contract consortium member breaches any of its obligations, the sub-contract may be automatically terminated. Moreover, costs may be rejected.

### 6.2 Data protection and confidentiality

During implementation of the sub-project and for four years after the end of the sub-project, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at sub-contract signing time ('confidential information').

If a beneficiary requests it, the EC and the AI4Media consortium may agree to keep selected information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial four years. This will be explicitly stated in the sub-contract.

If information has been identified as confidential during the sub-project implementation or only verbally, it will be confidential only if this is accepted by the AI4Media coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the verbal disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the agreement.

The sub-project consortium may disclose confidential information to the AI4Media consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bounded by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

### 6.3 Promoting the action and give visibility to the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the sub-project, the AI4Media project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC.





Unless the EC or the AI4Media coordinator agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible (requiring a valid justification), any promotion activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity (including at a conference or seminar) or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the sub-grant must:

- display the EU emblem.
- display the AI4Media logo.
- include the following text:

For communication activities: *“The [sub-project acronym] has indirectly received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation action programme, via the AI4Media Open Call #1 issued and executed under the AI4Media project (Grant Agreement no. 951911).”*

For infrastructure, equipment and major results: *“This [infrastructure][equipment][insert type of result] is part of a sub-project that has indirectly received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme via an Open Call issued and executed under the AI4Media project (grant agreement No. 951911).”*

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the beneficiary is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page<sup>6</sup>.

Any publicity made by the beneficiary regarding the sub-project, in whatever form and or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author’s views and that the EC or the AI4Media project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the AI4Media consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information regarding the beneficiary:

- The name of the beneficiary.
- Contact address of the beneficiary.
- The general purpose of the sub-project.
- The amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the sub-project; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution received.
- The geographic location of the activities carried out.
- The list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground.

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<sup>6</sup> [https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/flag\\_en#eu-emblem](https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/flag_en#eu-emblem)



- The details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the sub-project, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication.
- The publishable reports submitted to the AI4Media consortium.
- Any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and AI4Media in the framework of the sub-project.

The beneficiary shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and AI4Media does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a suitably justified request by the sub-project coordinator on behalf of any sub-project member, the AI4Media consortium, if permission is granted by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

#### 6.4 Financial audits and controls

The EC will monitor that AI4Media beneficiaries and the open call beneficiaries comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 of the AI4Media GA and may take any action foreseen by the GA in case of non-compliance of the beneficiary concerned.

Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the AI4Media project and up to 5 (five) years after the end of the AI4Media project, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such audits may cover financial, systemic, and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The beneficiary shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorised by it, with a view of verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise and complete.

The beneficiary shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the project. These shall be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

To carry out these audits, the beneficiary shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the sub-project applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information



needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the sub-project. They shall ensure that the information is readily available during the audit and, if so requested, that data be handed over in an appropriate form.

Based on the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorised representative to the beneficiary concerned, which may provide observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The EC may decide not to consider observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the beneficiary within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

Based on the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures that it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the EC to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

## 6.5 Sub-project communication

The sub-project official representative should:

- Provide any notice in writing to the AI4Media Coordinator.
- Notify immediately of any change of persons or contact details to the AI4Media coordinator. The address list shall be accessible to all concerned.



## 7 Checklist

- 1) **Does your sub-project proposal and respective planned work fit the call for proposals?**  
*Check that your proposed work is aligned with the AI4Media Open Call #1 and addresses one of the challenges of the open call (see Annex 1).*
- 2) **Is your proposal eligible?**  
*Check that you meet all the eligibility criteria listed in section 3 – Eligibility criteria. Make sure that you satisfy the minimum participation requirements (entity from eligible countries).*
- 3) **Is your proposal complete?**  
*Have you completed all the mandatory questions? Check that all proposal form fields are filled.*
- 4) **Does your proposal fulfil all questions requests/comments?**  
*Proposals should be precise, concise and must answer to requested questions, which are designed to correspond to the applied evaluation. Omitting requested information will almost certainly lead to lower scores and possible rejection.*
- 5) **Have you maximized your chances?**  
*Expect competition in the open call. Therefore, edit your proposal tightly, strengthen or eliminate weak points.*
- 6) **Have you submitted your proposal before the deadline?**  
*It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.*
- 7) **Have you provided the necessary annexes?**
- 8) **Do you need further advice and support?**  
*You are strongly advised to communicate with the AI4Media team via the AI4Media profile at F6S platform (<https://www.f6s.com/ai4media>).*





## 8 Contact information

The AI4Media consortium will provide information to the applicants exclusively via <https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1/about>, so that all information (questions and answers) will be accessible to all potential applicants.

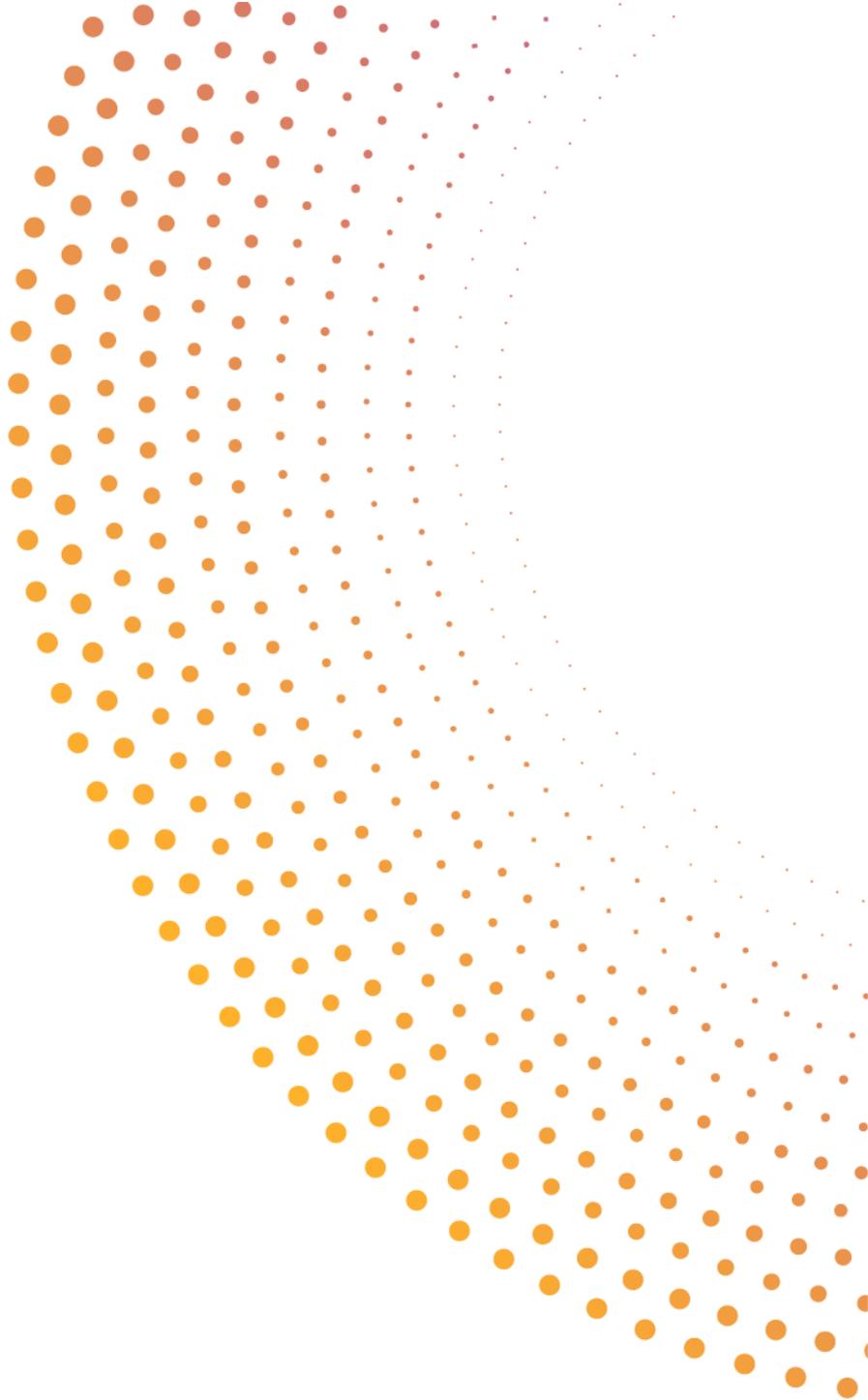
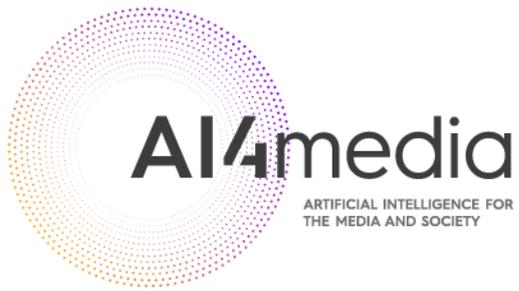
No binding information will be provided via any other means (e.g., telephone or email).

- More info at: <http://www.ai4media.eu/open-call-1>
- Apply via: <https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1/apply>
- Online Q&A: <https://www.f6s.com/ai4mediaopencall1/discuss>
- F6S support team (for platform issues during the application): [support@f6s.com](mailto:support@f6s.com)
- Other support<sup>7</sup>: [opencall@ai4media.iti.gr](mailto:opencall@ai4media.iti.gr)

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<sup>7</sup> Information exchanged is non-binding.





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[www.ai4media.eu](http://www.ai4media.eu)