



# HEDGE-IoT

*Holistic approach towards Empowerment of the Digitalization  
of the Energy Ecosystem through adoption of IoT solutions*

## HEDGE IoT Open Call 1

### Guidelines for Applicants

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## 1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE HEDGE-IOT OPEN CALLS

This document summarizes the main features of the HEDGE-IoT Open Calls for third parties under the HEDGE-IoT Funding Programme. The two Open Calls will be conducted in two distinct waves, each with specific timelines:

- **Open Call 1:**
  - **Applications Period:** Opens July 2025, Closes October 2025
  - **Evaluation & Selection:** Starts November 2025, Ends December 2025
  - **Project Execution:** Opens February 2026, Closes July 2026
  - **Potential Exceptional Execution for applicants that apply for BUC-1-FI-02 (as described in Section 2.3), as additional time for impact maximization might be needed:** Closes October 2026
- **Open Call 2:**
  - **Applications Period:** Opens February 2026, Closes April 2026
  - **Evaluation & Selection:** May 2026
  - **Project Execution:** July 2026 – December 2026

The call invites developers and integrators to enhance and expand upon HEDGE-IoT's existing technology stack by contributing innovative services and applications in IoT ecosystems for smart energy management and intelligent grid solutions.

This guide complements the official Open Call Announcement and Proposal Template.

## 1.2 TECHNICAL DESCRIPTION OF HEDGE-IOT

HEDGE-IoT proposes a novel Digital Framework which aims to deploy IoT assets at different levels of the energy system (from behind-the-meter, up to the TSO level), to add intelligence to the edge and cloud layers through advanced AI/ML tools and to bridge the cloud/edge continuum introducing federated applications governed by advanced computational orchestration solutions. The HEDGE-IoT Framework will upgrade the RES-hosting capacity of the energy systems, unleash a previously untapped flexibility potential, leveraging on IoT solutions and will increase the resilience of the grid towards the digitalization of the energy sector, and the advancements in IoT standardization.

### 1.2.1 Scope and Objectives

HEDGE-IoT seeks solutions addressing:

- Enhanced energy efficiency through IoT-enabled demand response.
- Grid stabilization and flexibility management via predictive analytics.
- Integration of IoT platforms with advanced AI for real-time energy balancing.
- Secure data exchange and communication protocols adhering to industry standards

## 1.2.2 Technical Specifications and Expectations

Proposals should clearly align with and extend the HEDGE-IoT framework, demonstrating interoperability with established communication standards (such as CIM, MQTT, REST APIs) and providing tangible added value through innovative technical enhancements.

## 1.2.3 Business Use Cases

The following business use cases provide the thematic and practical context for proposals in Open Call 1. Applicants are expected to align their proposal with one of the described use cases.

DISCLAIMER: The business use cases presented in this section are indicative for Open Call 2 and may be updated based on the findings and lessons learned from Open Call 1.

### TOPIC 1: Solutions that Enhance Observability and Resiliency of the Grid (Cooperation with the Finnish Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Encourage the development of new sensor-based solutions and analytics that improve grid observability and allow operation closer to technical limits. Applicants may focus on fault prediction, maintenance enhancement, or technologies for locating and characterizing faults (e.g., drone-based inspections). Solutions should contribute to increasing network resilience and reducing downtime.

**Datasets available**

- Current and voltage measurement data from the Finnish distribution network
- Network topology information

**Tools & infrastructure offered** Applicants are expected to propose tools such as dynamic line/cable rating methods, anomaly detection algorithms, and post-fault analysis techniques (e.g., with drone-based inspection). There is also potential for deeper integration with the full HEDGE - IoT stack, depending on detailed discussions with applicants.  
 (The availability of existing tools or platforms from the Finnish demo may depend on the specific use case.)

### TOPIC 2: Market Integration for Local Flexibility Services (Cooperation with the Finnish Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Development of technical solutions that enable integration of DERs and prosumers into local flexibility markets. This includes facilitating DSO participation, enabling bidding and activation mechanisms, and enhancing interaction between grid operators and flexibility providers.

**Datasets available**

- Congestion Management planning data

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

Defined interfaces for data exchange with the Finnish demo infrastructure.  
 Applicants are expected to propose tools supporting DER-market integration and DSO participation.  
*(Access to parts of the Finnish pilot infrastructure may be considered depending on the Open Call project's scope.)*

**TOPIC 3: DER Optimization Tools (Cooperation with the Finnish Pilot)**

**Scope & expected results**

Encourage the development of algorithms that optimize the operation of different types of DERs—generation or storage systems—based on real-time data. Solutions should aim to improve local balancing, asset lifetime, and operational efficiency.

**Datasets available**

- Measurement data from DER sites (e.g., PV, Batteries)

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- Defined interfaces for data exchange
- Possibly a runtime environment for algorithm testing, depending on detailed discussion with the applicants.

Applicants are expected to develop optimization models for DER scheduling and operation.  
*(Potential access to real or simulated DER data or demo assets could be discussed case-by-case)*

**TOPIC 4: Energy resource forecasting models – Scalable edge-level solutions enabling distributed optimization of DERs (Cooperation with the Greek Pilot)**

**Scope & expected results**

Develop lightweight forecasting models deployable at the edge to support DSO congestion management by predicting residential energy demand and generation. Models should focus on both active and reactive power and aim for efficient, low-computation operation suitable for deployment on edge devices.

**Datasets available**

- Submetering data from residential assets
- Grid local measurements.
- Weather data.

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- Forecasting models for benchmarking
- Testing environments for edge deployment.

*(Software architecture and technical requirements from the Greek demo will be provided. Selected models may be integrated into the HEDGE-IoT App Store for reuse.)*

## TOPIC 5: Non-Intrusive Load Monitoring for Device-Level Visibility (Cooperation with the Greek Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Develop and test models that can identify active appliances within households without requiring additional hardware (e.g., plug-level meters).  
 The goal is to enhance device-level visibility using whole-home consumption data

**Datasets available**

- Time series energy consumption data from residential assets.
- Device - level usage data (where available)

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- Benchmarking models for load disaggregation

Finetuning datasets for algorithm adaptation.

*(Integration with internal HEDGE-IoT applications and testing against vision models for further optimization will be supported.)*

## TOPIC 6: AI-driven predictive flexibility pricing models – Development of dynamic pricing algorithms that optimize flexibility bids based on congestion and market conditions (Cooperation with the Greek Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Design and test algorithms for dynamic pricing and optimal bidding strategies in day-ahead and intraday electricity markets. The solutions should propose consumer incentive mechanisms and align with real market conditions and congestion signals.

**Datasets available**

- Submetering data from residential assets
- Energy market data and asset availability data
- Simulated consumer behavior datasets.

**Tools & infrastructure offered** Reference models for consumer behavior and bidding strategies

*(Selected solutions will be validated in a test environment and compared to existing HEDGE-IoT bidding strategy tools.)*

## TOPIC 7: DSO Perimeters for flexibility resources pre-qualification (Cooperation with the Italian Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Design and validate algorithms that define DSO perimeters suitable for forming Virtual Power Plants (VPPs) within the distribution grid. The goal is to identify “electrical cells” where resource pooling is feasible for more than 90% of the year. Solutions should combine DSO data with external open data sources (e.g., weather, social events) to simulate the impact of future conditions on grid configurations.

Applicants are expected to develop deployable modules that can operate within the HEDGE-IoT ecosystem and facilitate flexibility clustering at the community level

### Datasets available

- SCADA data (grid topology, historical configuration changes)
- GIS data (geospatial representation of grid assets)
- Grid and customer-level load and production measurements
- Open data (e.g., weather conditions, event-based inputs)

These datasets may be aligned with existing HEDGE-IoT ontologies or accessed through data exchange frameworks that support the project’s semantic interoperability goals.

### Tools & infrastructure offered

- Containerized deployment approach (e.g., Docker)
- Target execution environments: DSO’s ADMS Kubernetes (K8s) Cluster and HEDGE-IoT Marketplace
- Applicants are expected to provide their own development and test environments

Developed modules should be compatible with the HEDGE-IoT Marketplace architecture and support interoperability through Dockerized microservices and Kubernetes orchestration.

## TOPIC 8: Standardized IoT & Data-Sharing Protocols” – Development of open APIs and middleware that enable seamless integration of smart-grid assets for secure data exchange (Cooperation with the Dutch Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Innovative solutions that plug into the HEDGE-IoT Semantic Interoperability Framework through semantic adapters. Applicants should prototype at least one—and preferably a combination—of the following value-adding services:

1. AI-driven anomaly-detection service that spots (technical) abnormal behavior in energy nodes on - for example - Phase / voltage unbalance, power factor,

current outliers etc. and suggest corrective actions, thereby enhancing resilience.

2. Role-based real-time dashboards that visualize KPIs and alarms for distinct stakeholder groups in a business-park context (e.g. facility managers, tenants, DSO).
3. Digital twin of the campus energy system that integrates live and historical data from heterogeneous energy nodes and supports what-if analysis.

Solutions must expose data and control endpoints via semantic adapters that map to the campus ontology (compatible with ETSI SAREF (<https://saref.etsi.org/>) / CIM (IEC 61970, IEC 61968 and 62325 series)) and to the Knowledge engine ([www.knowledge-engine.eu](http://www.knowledge-engine.eu))

**Datasets available**

- Access to representative telemetry data streams from the Electricity Week Arnheims Buiten
- A historical archive of campus measurements for algorithm training and benchmarking.
- Example semantic models and device metadata that illustrate how current campus assets are described in Hedge-IoT.

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- A hosted interoperability middleware layer
- A basic security test environment to validate compliance with EU cyber-security guidelines.

**TOPIC 9: Standardized DER-Integration Solutions for Smart Grids” – Smart control & monitoring of heat pumps, PV, batteries, V2G chargers and building equipment (Cooperation with the Dutch Pilot)**

**Scope & expected results**

Integrate via the knowledge engine ([www.knowledge-engine.eu](http://www.knowledge-engine.eu)) a modular EMS/BMS component or (micro)service—deployable on edge or cloud—that preferably combine:

- day-ahead and intra-day forecasting & scheduling of campus DERs (PV, batteries, heat pumps, V2G, building loads) and potential external factors;
- standardized flexibility offers / instructions via the semantic framework;
- a human-in-the-loop interface so facility staff can review or override schedules.

Demonstrate measurable KPI improvements during a supervised pilot (e.g. peak-load shaving, self-consumption, CO<sub>2</sub> reduction).

**Datasets available**

- Access to representative telemetry data streams from the Electricity Week Arnhems Buiten of campus assets (for example (via) Building Management systems for heat pumps, PV inverters, stationary batteries, and V2G chargers, building loads).
- Optional (open source) contextual data feeds such as weather forecasts and dynamic grid-tariff signals.

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- A hosted interoperability middleware layer
- A basic security test environment to validate compliance with EU cyber-security guidelines.
- Remote access to a testbed where control strategies can be validated on real hardware.

**TOPIC 10: Hardware utilization for edge computing and testing facilities for HEDGE-IoT models operational testing (Cooperation with the Portuguese Pilot)**

**Scope & expected results**

Empower third parties, especially SMEs, to test and validate their own data-driven and IoT-enabled energy services using the hybrid edge-cloud digital infrastructure developed in the Portuguese pilot. Applicants should integrate and test solutions involving Smart Meters, HEMS, sensors, inverters, and other IoT devices across the edge-cloud continuum, with emphasis on edge offloading, orchestration, and AI portability. The goal is to increase the TRL of candidate services through experimentation in controlled and real-world pilot environments

**Datasets available**

- High-resolution data from IoT/edge devices (e.g., sensors, actuators, grid assets)
- Energy production and consumption data from residential and other DER assets (active and reactive power)
- Contextual data aligned with SAREF-based ontologies
- Data exchanged via data space connectors to ensure data sovereignty and interoperability

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- HEDGE-IoT edge and cloud computing platforms
- AI/ML tools designed for edge/cloud deployment
- Federated Learning platforms used in the Portuguese pilot
- Computational orchestration framework (e.g., based on KubeEdge)
- Data space connectors (e.g., Eclipse Data Space Connector - EDC)
- Monitoring tools (e.g., Kube Prometheus)
- HEDGE-IoT services

- EdgeConnect – integration of diverse IoT/edge devices
- OptiFlex – forecasting, pricing, optimization, and bid creation services
- Semantic interoperability components for standards-based integration

## TOPIC 11: Cross-border flexibility value chain and market integration (Cooperation with the Portuguese Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** Enable third parties (especially SMEs) to develop, test, and validate services along the entire flexibility value chain, including aggregation, bidding, activation, and settlement for participation in national and cross-border energy markets. Applicants are expected to connect diverse flexibility providers (residential, industrial, tertiary) to system operators (TSOs/DSOs), focusing on ancillary services, day-ahead market participation, and interoperable service deployment. The topic aims to demonstrate the scalability and replicability of such services using HEDGE-IoT’s hybrid edge-cloud infrastructure, while promoting data sovereignty, semantic interoperability, and interaction across stakeholders.

**Datasets available**

- High-resolution data from IoT/edge devices and DERs (e.g., PVs, batteries, EVs, heat pumps, building assets)
- Data from industrial and residential assets relevant to flexibility services
- Market-related datasets:
  - Flexibility needs
  - Consumer metering and baseline data
  - Bidding info and market results
  - Activation setpoints and settlement/payment data
- Forecasting data (demand/generation) and historical logs
- SAREF-aligned semantic datasets and models shared via data space connectors

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- EdgeConnect platform – facilitating flexibility service creation and market participation
- Market Simulator – supporting bidding, activation, and settlement for ancillary services
- OptiFlex – forecasting, scheduling, valorization of flexibility
- HEDGE-IoT edge/cloud computing infrastructure

- AI/ML tools for energy forecasting and flexibility optimization
- Data space connectors (e.g., Eclipse Data Space Connector - EDC) enabling cross-organizational data sharing
- KubeEdge orchestration framework for workload management
- Semantic interoperability modules and Kube Prometheus for system monitoring
- Components for data access control, policy mediation, and secure data exchange

## TOPIC 12: Federated Learning (FL) Algorithm Validation in Energy Communities (Cooperation with the Portuguese Pilot)

**Scope & expected results** This topic invites applicants to test and validate federated learning (FL) algorithms for energy-related applications in Energy Communities (ECs). FL is a privacy-preserving AI approach where local data stays on each node, and only trained models are shared. The goal is to develop and benchmark decentralized forecasting models—such as short-term load and renewable production forecasts—that support scalable, privacy-compliant, and low-latency edge intelligence. Emphasis is placed on validating the performance of these models in real community environments, leveraging the Portuguese pilot infrastructure and aligning with HEDGE-IoT's decentralization objectives.

**Datasets available**

- Residential household energy consumption from ECs
- Weather forecasts and high-resolution environmental data
- Energy data categorized by flexible asset (e.g., HVAC, PVs, batteries)
- Forecasting data from Sub-Use Cases (e.g., energy consumption, solar production, shared surplus)
- Datasets used for flexible load management optimization and storage modeling
- Data aligned with SAREF-based ontologies and shared via data space connectors (ensuring semantic interoperability and data sovereignty)

**Tools & infrastructure offered**

- FL algorithm baselines (e.g., VAR model with vertical FL) for time-series energy forecasting

- RECreation platform – energy community management and market participation service integrating FL forecast results
- Data space connectors (e.g., Eclipse Data Space Connector - EDC) for compliant data exchange between organizations
- EdgeConnect – enabling stakeholder integration and FL deployment across the flexibility value chain
- Computational orchestration layer for managing distributed workloads (e.g., KubeEdge)
- Relevant AI/ML tools for decentralized forecasting and optimization operating on the edge-cloud continuum

## TOPIC 13: Load Disaggregation at the Substation Level (Cooperation with the Slovenian Pilot)

<b>Scope &amp; expected results</b>	Develop a solution that identifies different types of distributed energy resources (e.g., PV installations, heat pumps) from aggregated demand measurements at the substation level, without requiring additional hardware installation. A specific algorithm needs to be developed for this purpose by the applicant, with the additional objective of defining the minimum required dataset for the functional service. The goal is to enhance observability of the grid, support DER integration, and improve forecasting. Since the Slovenian demo focuses on developing a similar algorithm limited to PV detection, the accuracy of the newly developed algorithm will be compared to that of the applicants' solution.
<b>Datasets available</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active and reactive power measurements at the substation level.</li> <li>• Weather data</li> <li>• Publicly available datasets of electricity consumption or generation by the type of DER</li> </ul>
<b>Tools &amp; infrastructure offered</b>	ML algorithm developed within the Slovenian demo with the similar aim as the newly developed algorithm by the applicant that can be used for benchmarking the solution and verifying the accuracy.

## TOPIC 14: Integration of Data Space Connectors compliant with the new Data Space Protocol showcasing scalability and technology agnostic connectivity

- Scope & expected results**
- Integration of Data Space Connector implementations (other than the Eclipse or the One-Net Data Space connectors that are already part of the HEDGE-IoT ecosystem) into the HEDGE-IoT Framework
  - Verification of successful data sharing and exchange through the new Connector among HEDGE-IoT users
  - Showcase of interoperability across Data spaces and ecosystem expansion

**Datasets available** Test Datasets to be created (e.g. Smart Meter data, Grid Operational data, Renewable Generation data, Energy Market and Trading data) to verify a successful data exchange between interconnected actors. Datasets should be aligned with semantic standards (e.g., RDF) to validate semantic interoperability.

- Tools & infrastructure offered**
- Information on the Existing Data Space Framework of the HEDGE-IoT project and the base components.
  - HEDGE-IoT Reference Architecture
  - Interoperable interfaces with the HEDGE-IoT framework

## TOPIC 15: AI-Enhanced Data App Discovery & Recommendation Engine

- Scope & expected results**
- Development of an AI-based chatbox to facilitate the discoverability of Apps in the HEDGE-IoT App Store based on the needs of a user
  - Ability to parse metadata from registered apps and infer utility
  - Plugin based integration with the HEDGE-IoT App Store interface

**Datasets available**

- List of registered Apps in the App Store with relevant attributes
- Keywords on functionality of each App (depending on App)
- Input/Output datasets of each App

- Tools & infrastructure offered**
- HEDGE-IoT App Store Access (user access, access to integration API endpoints)

## TOPIC 16: Semantic Mapper as a Service: A cloud-native or edge-deployable tool to map proprietary or heterogeneous data schemas to the HEDGE-IoT ontologies

<b>Scope &amp; expected results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support for mapping input JSON/XML/CSV schemas to target ontologies.</li> <li>• Integration with ETSI SAREF, SAREF4ENER, and optionally other ontologies (e.g., SAREF4GRID).</li> <li>• Compliance with the recently published ETSI EN 303 760 “SAREF Guidelines for IoT Semantic Interoperability; Develop, apply and evolve Smart Applications ontologies”</li> </ul>
<b>Datasets available</b>	HEDGE-IoT Ontologies
<b>Tools &amp; infrastructure offered</b>	HEDGE-IoT App Store Hedge-IoT Connector

### 1.3 CHALLENGES TO BE ADDRESSED BY APPLICANTS

Applicants should develop data-driven services running at the edge and/or cloud, exploiting the computational orchestration tools of the project and leveraging IoT assets. Proposals should address one or more of the key challenges below:

- Optimizing energy demand and response
- Enhancing grid flexibility and real-time predictive management.
- Securing IoT-driven energy data and transactions.

### 1.4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Applicants must comply with the following criteria:

- Legal entities should be registered in EU Member States or Horizon Europe associated countries.
- Applicants must be profit making Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) or Startups.
- Proposals should be submitted entirely in English.
- The submission should be executed exclusively through the HEDGE-IoT Open Calls Portal: <https://www.f6s.com/hedge-iot/about>
- Absence of conflict of interest with HEDGE-IoT consortium partners is a pre-requisite.

Applicants shall not have any actual or/and potential conflict of interest with the HEDGE IoT Open Calls process, from application phase to selected proposal’s implementation phase.

All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case. Conflict of interest may occur when there are conditions, involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest, that might affect the objective evaluation of the proposal, as defined in the Horizon Europe Programme and EC regulations.

Consortium partners, their affiliated entities, employees and permanent collaborators have not the right to participate.

## 1.5 FINANCIAL SUPPORT

To support innovation uptake, HEDGE-IoT will allocate up to **€1,700,000 in cascading funding** to up to **30 third-party experiments**, primarily targeting SMEs. This funding will be distributed **as follows across the two Open Calls**: i) In the first Open Call, **up to 12 projects** will be funded corresponding to an amount of up to **€700,000.00**, ii) In the second Open Call, **up to 18 projects** will be funded corresponding to an amount of up to **€1,000,000.00**. The selection process is described in Section A1.7.3 of this document. Selected applicants can receive **up to €60,000**, covering their eligible costs.

**The applicable funding rate for every project will be 70% of the eligible costs for profit making entities.**

### Eligible costs include:

- Personnel
- Travel and subsistence
- Consumables and equipment (max. 20% of total budget)
- Subcontracting (up to 20%) but should be fully justified for the action
- 25% overhead costs on all other costs except subcontracting

Funds will be disbursed based upon the successful delivery and approval by the HEDGE-IoT project, of the submitted technical and business reports and demonstrators, along the 6-month implementation program, scheduled to launch with the contract signature of the winning consortia.

### Payment structure:

- **25% pre-financing** at project start
- **45%** after successful mid-term review
- **30%** upon approval of final deliverables

A standard contract will define funding terms, IPR, reporting, and compliance with EU audit and control procedures.

To maintain financial transparency, **each funded entity must provide a detailed budget breakdown** as part of their proposal submission. This must include estimated costs for personnel, subcontracting, equipment, and other relevant expenses. The budget should align with project objectives and proposed work and reflect a cost-effective approach to achieving measurable results. The budget will be evaluated for its alignment to the proposed concept and methodology in criterion 3 (implementation).

## 1.6 APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

Proposals must be submitted via the HEDGE-IoT Open Calls Portal (<https://www.f6s.com/hedge-iot/about>)

Submission details include:

- Administrative and legal information.
- Technical proposal description, impact, and detailed work plan (max 10 pages).
- Proposals exceeding 10MB or page limits will be rejected.

Applicants are advised against last-minute submissions.

### 1.6.1 English Language

The official language for HEDGE-IoT Open Call shall be in English. Proposals must be written in English to a full extent. Any uploaded documents must also be in English.

If any part of the proposal is written in any language other than English, the entire proposal will be rejected. English is the only official language during the whole procedure of the HEDGE-IoT Open Calls. Any requested deliverables and/or reports shall be submitted only in English, otherwise not accepted.

### 1.6.2 Multiple Submissions

Applicants can submit multiple proposals across both Open Calls.

To ensure diversity and allow new actors to contribute, the following restriction will apply:

- Each proposal must target a different Business Use Case (BUC).
- If a participant submitted a proposal under a specific Business Use Case in Open Call 1 and was selected for funding, they cannot submit another proposal in Open Call 2.

### 1.6.3 Submission System

Only proposals submitted through the HEDGE-IoT Open Calls Portal (<https://www.f6s.com/hedge-iot/about>) within the given deadline will be accepted. Proposals submitted by any other means, will not be evaluated.

Only the documentation included in the Proposal Template and in the attachments to the below Template will be reviewed by Evaluators. The proposal and attachments can be only in PDF format.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to have all necessary information included in the Proposal Template. All data provided should be actual, true and complete and therefore allow the assessment of the proposal.

## 1.7 EVALUATION PROCESS

All proposals submitted to the HEDGE-IoT Open Calls will follow a transparent and structured evaluation process, in line with European Commission standards. This ensures fairness, impartiality, and equal treatment of all applicants.

### 1.7.1 Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

- **Expected Impact:** Contribution to IoT-grid interoperability, scalability, market potential, and alignment with the selected Business Use Case (BUC).
- **Technical Quality:** Soundness of concept, level of innovation, feasibility, and compliance with the HEDGE-IoT architecture.
- **Quality of Work Plan:** Coherence of the plan, clarity of milestones, resource allocation, and risk management.

Each criterion is scored from **0 to 5**:

- 0: Not addressed
- 1: Poor – serious weaknesses
- 2: Fair – significant weaknesses
- 3: Good – addresses the criterion with some improvements needed
- 4: Very Good – strong with minor issues
- 5: Excellent – fully addresses all aspects

Proposals must receive a **minimum of 3 points per criterion** and a **total score of at least 10 out of 15** to be eligible for funding.

### 1.7.2 Evaluation Steps

1. **Eligibility Check:** The Open Call Support Team verifies eligibility and admissibility.
2. **Individual Evaluation Reports (IERs):** Two external evaluators independently review and score each proposal.
3. **Consensus Phase:** Evaluators discuss and align on final scores and comments, resulting in a **Consensus Report (CR)**.
4. **Panel Review:** A panel reviews the ranked proposals, resolves ties (with priority given to SMEs, then Impact, then Technical Quality, and Gender Equality), and validates the final list.
5. **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR):** Applicants receive an ESR with results and comments within **70 days** of the submission deadline.

### 1.7.3 Specific Rules for Open Call 1

Open Call 1 will consist of two evaluation rounds.

- In **round 1**, a **maximum of 12 proposals** will be selected to proceed to round 2.
- Only proposals that score a **minimum of 3 points per criterion** and meet the overall eligibility threshold will be considered.
- Priority will be given to the **highest-ranked proposal under each Business Use Case**, to ensure a **diverse and representative selection** across all defined use cases.
- If multiple proposals fall under the same BUC, only the **top-ranked** one may be selected in this phase.

This approach is designed to ensure broad thematic coverage in round 1 and to promote balanced representation of all Business Use Cases.

Business Use Cases for Open Call 2 may be revised or updated based on the findings, feedback, and lessons learned from Open Call 1.

### 1.7.4 Redress Procedure

Applicants may submit a redress request within **10 business days** of receiving their evaluation results if they believe a procedural error has occurred. Requests must be sent to **info@inclusinn.com** and will be reviewed internally.

## 1.8 CONTRACTUAL PROCEDURES

Selected applicants must provide:

- Proof of legal existence (registration documents).
- Proof or validation of SME entity
- Certification of no outstanding social security or tax debts.
- Judicial record extracts.
- Declaration of Honor.
- Bank details (official confirmation or recent bank statement).

## 1.9 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND DELIVERABLES

Implementation involves the following deliverables:

- **Mid-term Report:** Due at the **end of M3 of the implementation period**, this report will cover technical and business progress and will be reviewed internally.  
 ► **Associated with a mid-term review and a 45% payment**, subject to successful approval.
- **Final Report:** Submitted at the **end of M6 of the implementation period**, this report will include technical results, validations, and potential market applications.  
 ► **Associated with the final review and release of the remaining 30% payment**, upon approval.

Each report is tied to a review process, and corresponding payments are made **only upon successful approval** of each review stage.

Execution deadlines:

- Open Call 1: February 2026 - July 2026 (potentially until October 2026 for BUC-specific applications as mentioned in Section 1)
- Open Call 2: July 2026 - December 2026

Extension of up to two weeks can be possible for quality assurance.

## 1.10 OBLIGATIONS OF BENEFICIARIES

Third Parties selected for funding must ensure that they comply with certain obligations originally detailed under the Grant Agreement between the HEDGE-IoT Project and the European Commission. These obligations are stated in the Contract Agreements signed between HEDGE-IoT representatives and the selected Third Parties.

When signing the Model Contract with HEDGE-IoT and therefore accepting to receive funding grants owned by the European Commission, Third Parties apply a relation between themselves and the European Commission through the HEDGE-IoT Project that carries a set of obligations to the Third Parties with the European Commission.

- Avoidance of conflicts of interest
- Confidentiality
- Dissemination of the action and visibility to the EU funding
- Liability for damages

Selected beneficiaries must accept the right of control of the European Commission, OLAF and the Court of Auditors and the right for the European Commission to make an evaluation of the impact of the action. In order to be able to fulfil these obligations, the contractual arrangements on the Third Parties will be included in the Contract Agreements (including control measures and/or reducing the financial support).

## 1.11 COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT

General communication will be through email notifications at critical evaluation milestones. Applicants may submit objections within 10 days after results publication.

Support and inquiries:

**Helpdesk:** info@inclusinn.com

Include contact details, specific query descriptions, and screenshots of encountered issues.

## 1.12 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Applicants must respect ethical guidelines according to European Commission standards and GDPR regulations. Data provided is solely for the purpose of evaluation, contracting, and monitoring under HEDGE-IoT.

## 1.13 PRIVACY POLICY

### 1.13.1 Selected platform

The [F6S platform](#) has been selected as the primary tool for managing the HEDGE IoT Open call due to its proven capabilities in handling large-scale application processes. F6S platform offers a comprehensive range of features that streamline the application process, including registration, submission, and communication with applicants, all in a user-friendly interface.

A key reason for selecting F6S is its ability to handle high application volumes efficiently, complete with tools for tracking, reviewing, and reporting. Moreover, its customizability allows the consortium to tailor the application process to individual project needs, from defining who can apply to establishing how submissions will be evaluated. The platform's intuitive design and straightforward instructions ensure a seamless experience for applicants, minimizing any difficulties in submitting their applications.

Through F6S platform proposals can be electronically submitted, reviewed, monitored and processed during the various stages of evaluation. The applicants will be required to register a profile at F6S to submit a proposal.

### 1.13.2 Data Protection

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 compliance. Please refer [here](#) to review the F6S platform's privacy policy and data security policy.

Please note that the HEDGE IoT consortium must retain generated data until five years after the balance of the HEDGE IoT project is paid or longer if there are ongoing procedures (such as audits, investigations or litigation). In this case, the data must be kept until the end.



**HEDGE-IoT**

