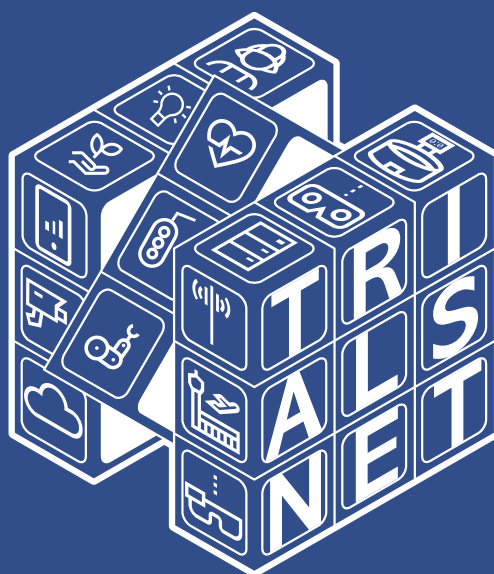




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6GSNS

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OPEN CALL

GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

trialsnet.eu | opencall@trialsnet.eu

TRIALSNET OVERVIEW

MOTIVATION, VISION AND GOALS

Smart Cities have already attracted attention as one of the possible solutions to improve “livability” and people’s quality of life. Beyond 5G and 6G are candidate technologies to positively impact aspects of immense social value as sustainability, resilience, inclusion, trust, security, etc.

TrialsNet vision is to enable the realization of compelling societal values through the implementation of 5G and beyond applications, which will be propaedeutic for the transition towards the next generation of mobile networks.

TrialsNet will deploy full large-scale trials to implement a heterogenous and comprehensive set of innovative 6G applications based on various technologies such as Cobots, Metaverse, massive twinning, Internet of Senses, and others, covering the three relevant domains of the urban ecosystems in Europe identified as i) Infrastructure, Transportation, Security & Safety, ii) eHealth & Emergency, and iii) Culture, Tourism & Entertainment. This future ecosystem is on course to be more collaborative and inclusive than previous generations of network, and TrialsNet aims to lead the way by promoting open architectures, large experimentation sites and taking a multi-stakeholder approach with the objective to connect the digital with the physical and natural worlds.

TrialsNet will propose technological innovations towards real-life services in the communication area, to enable Europe to achieve a leading position also in the standardization process (e.g., 3GPP, ETSI), thus securing a leading position for Europe in the global ICT market over the coming years.

Thanks to its activities, TrialsNet will contribute to Europe’s technological leadership in communication technologies and in future emerging enabling technologies, by strengthening European capacities in key parts of future services.

USE CASES AND INFRASTRUCTURES

In the context of the three domains introduced above, TrialsNet is going to design and implement 13 innovative use cases that will be developed over wide coverage areas with the involvement of extended sets of real users in 4 geographical clusters, located in Italy, Spain, Greece and Romania respectively. The TrialsNet use cases have been conceived as transversal: the pan-European clusters of TrialsNet targets use cases for the identified domains and, most importantly, different implementations of the same use case are potentially developable in more clusters. This approach allows for a holistic evaluation of the network KPIs and KVIs of the 6G applications in different contexts and scenarios, including different network deployments and solutions.

The documents describing the sites, related infrastructures, and use cases of each cluster as well as the TrialsNet framework including the overview of the KPIs and KVIs can be downloaded from the [Open Call page](#).

SCOPE AND TERMS OF THE CALL

GENERAL OBJECTIVES

The project TrialsNet, co-funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe program, launches an Open Call to invite third parties such as verticals, companies (including SMEs), research centres, start-ups, or any other relevant entity as well as facilities and infrastructure owners, to undertake a set of new or complementary use cases to further enrich the TrialsNet domains and to perform related beyond 5G large-scale trials.

The proposed use cases should address one of the main areas identified by the project:

- Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Security & Safety
- eHealth
- Emergency
- Culture
- Tourism
- Entertainment

The main objective of the TrialsNet Open Call is to provide added value to the project through the following main actions:

- Involve key actors to perform beyond 5G large-scale trials through diversified and heterogeneous vertical use cases that cover key industrial and societal sector.
- Support the deployment of new trials over the project platforms and network solutions, as well as to extend its infrastructures domain in other geographical locations in Europe (to complement the core clusters).

The Open Call will maximize the impact and accelerate the adoption of TrialsNet solutions by demonstrating its flexibility, user acceptance, and technology transfer.

Through its Open Call, TrialsNet will foster the further take-up of TrialsNet solutions as well the enlargement of scopes and scale of beyond 5G demonstration activities by inviting new or complementary innovative use cases towards the new generation of mobile networks.

TrialsNet is giving the opportunity to the applicants of the Open Call to participate through two different options:

- **Option 1:**
 - a) **New use case(s)** and field trials **supported by one or more TrialsNet infrastructures** in terms of platforms and network solutions,
- **or**
- b) **Improvement of TrialsNet use case(s)** by the integration of software applications, features, devices, new users, and datasets

- **Option 2:**
 - a) **New use case(s)** leveraging **on new additional field trials infrastructures** such as experimental, private, and/or commercial network deployments.

For both Option 1 and Option 2 single or multiple (maximum 3) beneficiary proposal is possible.

The Open Call will have a clear European dimension.

The sub-projects selected in the Open Call will be requested to provide feedback on the required improvements and infrastructure evaluation to meet the need of 5G services evolution. All trials should gain high levels of exposure and visibility.

GRANTS OFFERED BY THE OPEN CALL

TrialsNet allocates in total **€5.580.900** to provide financial support to the selected applicants. Each of them will run for a period of 12 months and will receive a funding up to **€200.000 (under Option 1)** or **€300.000 (under Option 2)**.

A single applicant may receive up to €200.000.

A specific Helpdesk is active to support the applicants for both technical and administrative questions: opencall@trialsnet.eu.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The call for applications is accessible to legal entities located in eligible countries. These entities must be established in the Member States of the European Union or Associated Countries, following the rules of Horizon Europe.

Following the Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. A list of these institutions can be found [here](#). The restrictions apply case-by-case using the PIC number. The most updated information on what are the entities 'maintained' by public interest trusts concerned by the Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506 can be found on [this page](#) of the EU Funding and Tender Portal.

Applicants must maintain complete independence from project partners, their affiliated entities, and/or any controlled companies. Institutions, organizations, or other legal entities funded by or affiliated with a TrialsNet partner are ineligible.

TrialsNet reserves the right to reject a selected application if any of the aforementioned conditions is not met.

Successful applicant(s) awarded funding will be required to sign the TrialsNet Third Parties agreement with CERTH, on behalf of the TrialsNet Consortium, in order to be able to receive the funds and become third party of the project.

The submitted proposals must meet the following criteria:

- Proposals shall be submitted on time (deadline: **19th of January 2024 at 17:00 CET**).
- Proposals should be presented by consortia of legal organizations registered in a Member State of the European Union or in a Horizon Europe Associated Country.

- Compliance with TrialsNet Ethics guidelines that will be provided to the selected applicants during the contract phase
- Proposals should respect the page limit according to the template.
- The language of the applications must be English.

EXCLUSION

Grants will not be awarded in the event of:

- Bankruptcy, winding up, court-administered affairs, creditor arrangements, suspended business activities, or other comparable procedures (including procedures that involve persons who have unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- Non-compliance with social security or tax obligations (including if such non-compliance is committed by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts).
- Commission of grave professional misconduct (including if such misconduct is committed by persons who possess powers of representation, decision-making, or control, beneficial owners, or those who are crucial for the award or implementation of the grant).

HOW TO APPLY

GENERAL

This section outlines the procedures for the submission of applications to the TrialsNet Open Call.

Applications should be submitted electronically via the [dedicated Funding Box tenders portal](#) submission system using the forms provided inside platform.

The structure and presentation will correspond to the instructions given in the forms. Applications will be discharged in case they are not complete and don't contain all parts and mandatory Annexes and supporting documents.

Applications should be written in English, be readable, accessible, and printable. The page limits, and sections subject to limits, are clearly shown in the application templates in the Funding Box Tenders Portal electronic submission system.

The evaluation is limited to 60 eligible proposals. Priority is given by the time stamp of the completion and submission of the proposal.

APPLICATION FORM

The Application Form is online, available through the [dedicated Funding Box tenders portal](#) and requires filling in information regarding the following aspects:

- Legal and contact information
- Description of the proposed use case(s) and related trials
- Applicants' experience
- Applicants' activities plan
- Expected impact
- Applicants' capabilities
- Resource/budget allocation

The maximum length of the text for each section is set in the platform and all fields are mandatory to be filled in.

The applicant shall indicate the estimated allocation of resources (person-months) and costs, specifying a budgetary breakdown per direct cost item (staff, travel and subsistence). A 25% (calculated on direct costs) flat rate as overhead costs may be added.

The total costs allocated for the application must not exceed 200,000 euros for Option 1 and 300,000 euros for Option 2.

The cost reduction towards the ceiling will not be considered as a preferential criterion for the evaluation of the application.

The previous categories are broken down into specific questions in the application form, which can be found and submitted through the [dedicated Funding Box tenders portal](#).

SUBMISSION OF THE APPLICATIONS

The online Application Form shall be completed any time after the launch of the Open Call (16 October 2023) until the **19th of January 2024 at 17:00 CET**.

The form will be deactivated on 19 January 2024 at 05:00:00 PM CET. Any applications received after the specified deadline will be automatically rejected. It is highly advised that applicants submit their applications well in advance of the deadline to account for any potential technical or connectivity issues and ensure timely delivery.

Upon receipt of the application, TrialsNet will send a confirmation receipt to the provided email address. This confirmation serves as acknowledgment that the application was received on time but does not certify that it is complete and suitable for evaluation.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Applicants are invited to visit regularly the TrialsNet [Open Call page](#) in order to get the latest news.

In case of specific queries on the call, applicants may write an e-mail to opencall@trialsnet.eu with the subject "Support" to receive help from the TrialsNet Applicant Helpdesk team.

SUPPORT MATERIALS

The applicants may refer to the TrialsNet website to get more familiar with the project concept, approach, use cases, infrastructures and trials, as well as with the project outcomes so far, and to be informed about upcoming webinars. Downloadable material related to the Open Call is at the disposal of the applicants on the [Open Call page](#), while the most useful one would be the project deliverables published on the TrialsNet website in the [dedicated page](#).

FROM APPLICATION TO EXPERIMENTATION

Feasibility check

The Open Call applicants are encouraged to contact the TrialsNet consortium to share their intentions of contribution in order to verify the feasibility of the proposal and to receive informal and not binding feedback on it. To perform the feasibility check, the applicants need to fill the online Feasibility Check Form accessible through the [Open Call page](#). A **draft version of the proposal** can be also sent to opencall@trialsnet.eu indicating in the subject the short name of the proposal to provide more detailed information in support to the Feasibility Check Form. Received requests will be processed according to their arrival and feedbacks will be provided not later than 5 working days.

Feasibility check requests can be submitted until the **10th of December 2023 at 17:00 CET**.

Eligibility status

After closing the application phase, all received applications will be first filtered, according to their eligibility status, based on criteria described below; for all non-eligible applications, no further evaluation will take place. Extra information may be requested by the applicants to validate their legal entity status characterization (i.e., to fill in documents related to the "Declaration of Honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest", downloadable from the [Open Call page](#)).

As regards eligibility rules for participation and funding in the Open Calls, the General Annexes to Horizon Europe for the Work Programme 2023-2024 apply. The call for applications is accessible to legal entities located in eligible countries. These entities must be established in the Member States of the European Union or associated countries, following the rules of Horizon Europe.

Following the Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. A list of these institutions can be found [here](#). The restrictions apply case-by-case using the PIC number. The most updated information on what are the entities 'maintained' by public interest trusts concerned by the Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506 can be found on [this page](#) of the EU Funding and Tender Portal.

Applicants' organizations can submit multiple proposals; however, only one proposal per organization can be selected for funding in this Open Call.

Beneficiaries of the TrialsNet project are not eligible to participate in this OpenCall.

Third party agreement

Once a proposal is selected, the applicants organization will be contracted by the project as a third party receiving financial support. This will require the signature of the Declaration of Honour that can be downloaded from the [Open Call page](#) together with all the other Open Call relevant documentation.

Further remarks

Before awarding any grants to a third party, it will be checked whether the third party is a legal entity with a history of at least three years of commercial operations and has not been declared insolvent.

Any third party funding agreement will contain a clause ensuring that the European Commission and the Court of Auditors can exercise their powers of control, concerning documents premises and information, including those stored on electronic media.

The final number of contracts will be a function of:

- the amount of request grants
- testbed availability/capability constraints (for proposals following Option 1)

Limitation of evaluated proposals

In case the number of applications passing the feasibility check is higher than 60, the proposal latest submitted will be discharged, and only the first 60 will be evaluated.

This process will indicatively take 15 working days from the closure of the submission phase. At the end of this, the selected applicants will be informed via email.

CONTRACTING TIME

The successful applicants will be informed by the contracting party and they will be put in contact with the suitable testbed.

Granted applicants will be asked to sign an appropriate Non-Disclosure Agreement.

The selected applications will start the contracting phase, which should end within the official kick-off of activities (planned date: within May 2024).

REPORTING

The experimentation cycle ends with the creation of a report describing the activities and the results that have been achieved during the validation phase.

In case the produced outputs of the experiments lead to scientific publications or if they are presented in presentations or webpages, they should include an acknowledgement to TrialsNet, the SNS program and the European Commission with the respective logos.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The following aspects will be considered and evaluated. The criteria that will be evaluated are presented in bullet form:

- Capacity of the applicants to perform the field trial (Threshold 3/5; Weight 2).
- Relevance for TrialsNet and for 5G evolution (Threshold 3/5; Weight 2)
- Industrial and/or scientific innovation (Threshold 3/5; Weight 1).
- Clarity and methodology (Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)
- Impact for market and society (Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)
- Technology expertise and quality (Threshold 3/5; Weight 1)

Each criterion is scored on a scale from 0 to 5, as follows:

0 - Fail: The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information.

1 - Poor: The criterion is addressed in an inadequate manner, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 - Fair: While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses.

3 - Good: The proposal addresses the criterion well, although improvements would be necessary.

4 - Very good: The proposal addresses the criterion very well, although certain improvements are still possible.

5 - Excellent: The proposal addresses successfully all aspects of the criterion.

EVALUATION PROCESS

All submitted proposals will be evaluated using criteria similar to Horizon Europe. Evaluations will be organized in three steps.

Initially, each proposal will be assigned to at least two external expert evaluators, acting as independent experts not belonging or involved in the TrialsNet Consortium.

After individual evaluation, the experts will have a consensus telco to agree on a common evaluation text and an overall score.

Finally, to smooth out any human factors, all evaluators will have a common panel telco together with the project's representatives to rank and short list the proposals.

LEGAL DISCLAIMER

The information and views set out in this document are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union. The information in this document is provided "as is", and no guarantee or warranty is given that the information is fit for any specific purpose. Neither the European Union institutions and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained therein. The TrialsNet Consortium members shall have no liability for

damages of any kind including without limitation direct, special, indirect, or consequential damages that may result from the use of these materials subject to any liability which is mandatory due to applicable law.

ATTENDANCE TO THE MEETINGS

Attendance at the meetings listed below is required. It is therefore recommended to budget these in the proposal:

- General meeting with the project's representatives within one month from the contracting date.
- At least 2 technical meeting to be held by the chosen testbed: TBD case by case
- Trials results will undergo a formal review by the project. The formal review is required for obtaining full payment of the selected applicants.

ACCEPTABLE COSTS

As the selected applicants will be linked to the TrialsNet consortium as third parties receiving financial support, specific arrangements are given by the EC with respect to financial costs and payment schemes.

As a third party, the applicant needs to include an overview of the estimated costs in its proposal at the time of submission. Costs consist of personnel costs, direct costs (such as travel, consumables, etc.) and indirect costs.

The project contribution to the third parties will be 100% of the declared costs, in accordance with the corresponding rules for participation in the SNS JU programme.

The costs incurred by a third party must adhere to the regulations and principles outlined in the Horizon Europe program and must be properly documented in the third party's financial records. This means that the rules pertaining to cost eligibility, identification of direct and indirect costs, upper funding limits, as well as controls and audits, must be followed.

The costs of a third party have to comply with the rules and the principles mentioned in the [Horizon Europe AGA - Annotated Grant Agreement](#), in the same way as the beneficiaries, and must be recorded in the accounts of the third party. In other words, the rules relating to eligibility of costs, identification of direct and indirect costs and upper funding limits apply. Equally those concerning controls and audits of the European Commission.

PAYMENTS SCHEDULE

The payment is scheduled in three parts, subject to the level of development of the action, the submission of deliverables and the accomplishment of KPIs as reflected in the description of the trial:

- 20% of the assigned Grant after 1 month from the Grant signature against presentation of a detailed plan of activities.
- 65% at completion of the contracted activities.
- 15% when the EC accepts the projects final results.

AUDITS

The selected Third Parties should ensure in written that, as recipient of EU financial support, allow the Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS

Regarding intellectual property rights (IPR), we outline the principles that will govern the management of IPR within the third-party project. The grant awarded to the chosen applicants will not impact the ownership of any pre-existing intellectual property, including background technologies, designs, works, inventions, software, data, techniques, know-how, or materials. The third-party that contributes with TrialsNet will retain ownership of the intellectual property.

ETHICS REQUIREMENTS

The selected beneficiaries must adhere to the recommendations outlined in the project's Ethics Requirements that will be provided during the contract phase as well as the guidance provided by the project.

Furthermore, the beneficiary must follow the instructions and comply with the project's Data Management Plan that will be provided during the contract phase.

If applicable, the beneficiary is responsible for obtaining all necessary ethical and regulatory approvals from the relevant committee(s) before engaging in any project activities that require such approvals. Additionally, if involving human subjects or their legal guardians in the project, the beneficiary must obtain properly signed informed consent and acknowledgement forms.

Failure to comply with the ethical obligations outlined above will be considered a serious violation of the contract, resulting in its premature termination.