

D1.6

Methodology and Platform for the Management of the Calls and Call Guidelines

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D1.6 / Methodology and Platform for the Management of the Calls and Call Guidelines

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Abstract

This deliverable presents an overview of the three funding schemes that are part of the EOSC Future project: a) Procured Services; b) Digital innovation Hub (DIH); c) RDA Open Calls.

Per each category of funds, the deliverable indicates its nature, its objectives and the processes that have been or will be put in place to issue the calls for procurement and for RDA proposals, together with the procedures to be followed for the DIH. This entails aspects like relations with relevant Work Packages (mainly WP8 and WP10), definition of the call and its boundaries, publication, collection of applications, assessment, approval, distribution of fund etc.

The role of the Grant Committee, which acts both as coordinating entity of the different calls and liaison with the other boards and partners in the consortium, is equally described.

Finally, a section is devoted to the Funding Management Platform, the ad-hoc web-platform where all opportunities for funding are published. The Funding Management Platform acts also as a portal for the submission of applications and for their evaluation.

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List of Abbreviations

Acronym	Definition
DIH	Digital Innovation Hub
GC	Grant Committee
GPP	Green Public Procurement
IaaS	Infrastructure-as-a-Service
OCRE	Open Clouds for Research Environments
PaaS	Platform-as-a-Service
RDA	Research Data Alliance
R&E	Research and Education
SaaS	Software-as-a-Service

1 Introduction

EOSC Future, in line with the specifications set up by the European Commission in the INFRAEOSC-03- 2020-2021 call, has decided to consider reserving a portion of its overall budget with the objective of distributing it to 3rd party entities (therefore externals to the consortium) that will, on different levels, support the uptake of EOSC.

The project has grouped these entities in categories, according to the typology of provision that they will be able to offer during the EOSC Future lifetime: implementation of technical services on the EOSC platform, use-cases, definition of standards, engagement of researchers, industry commitment to EOSC, supply of innovative technological and data analysis tools etc

EOSC Future has established three different financial schemes that will provide grants to third parties:

1. Procured services grants;
2. Digital Innovation Hub business pilots;
3. RDA Open Calls.

The management of the RDA Open Calls (in accordance with Annex K of the Horizon 2020 Work Programme 2018-2020), the adoption of the portfolio of procured commercial services as well as the selection of business pilots that will be supported by the Digital Innovation Hub (DIH) is under the oversight of WP1 T1.5 'Management of RDA Open Calls, Business Pilots and Procurement', under the leadership of TGB and the cooperation of ARCTIK, EGI, GÉANT, PSNC, RDA, TRUST IT, UGOE.

Nevertheless, EOSC Future is aware that every call that is going to be outlined and issued must reflect an actual need stemming from scientific and technical discussions and decisions that have been taken on the appropriate WPs and/or Boards of the project. In this respect, the RDA Open Calls are specifically directed to support initiatives related to 'Support for EOSC via RDA' (WP10), while the procurement adoption funding and the Digital Innovation Hub is addressing 'Widening the service offer with commercial services' in direct collaboration with WP8.

Therefore, the needs for external calls, related content, the selection, and quality criteria, as well as the monitoring of the selected projects and the assurance of the quality of their work, are responsibilities of the respective WPs, whereas the decision-making process, the coordination of the calls, and the contractual and financial management are responsibilities of WP1 T1.5.

2 About the Grant Committee

The Grant Committee (GC) consists of a representative of each of the beneficiaries involved in the three different financial grants, EGI, GÉANT, PSNC, RDA, and UGOE as well as TRUST-IT who run the grants platform and Technopolis Group Belgium (TGB) as project coordinators. The committee is structured so that it meets bi-weekly to discuss the oversight of all the calls. Specifically, during the bi-weekly meetings the progress of each call is discussed along with the forward planning and roadmaps. Issues such as timeframes, budget, allocating grants are dealt with as well. The committee will be presented with the final short list of candidates and will sign off according to criteria specific to each call. The GC will ensure that activities are carried out in a transparent and fair manner. During the running of the calls the mid- and end-term reports will be flagged up if any issues are raised.

3 Procured Services

EOSC Future moves from the fact that a functional EOSC must rely on the enablement of commercial commodity and tailored cloud services in EOSC that will have to be procured from commercial providers, through a European Tendering procedure in accordance with all key principles.

3.1 Characteristics

3.1.1 Rationale

The process of identifying current and future available commercial frameworks (IaaS, PaaS and SaaS services, including Earth Observation) that are accessible to the EOSC end users under favourable terms and conditions and subsequently adopt the decision of implementing a call for procurement of specific services will be kickstarted in EOSC Future by WP8 T8.1 Commercial Cloud Services Procurement.

Linkages established under OCRE with the R&E community, science clusters, and commercial providers with whom framework agreements are in place, are used. Furthermore, requirements for additional commercial Cloud services are collected from the users, in collaboration with science clusters and other research communities, for which no existing framework is yet available. Building on the experience and best practices of OCRE, the EOSC procurement model is developed and delivered in compliance with legal and administrative requirements to complement the offer of the INFRAEOSC-07 projects, which are tasked to increase the service offer of EOSC by providing access to public e-Infrastructure services supplied at national, regional, and institutional levels. The process ensures that the qualifications defined within the Green Public Procurement (GPP) initiative are met by the proposed services, being also in line with the plan for energy consumption and environmental impact of technologies used in the context of EOSC Future. An integral part of this process is to identify a mechanism that would allow users to use the services 'free at the point of use' and deal with VAT complexity. A procedure to channel adoption in an eligible way according to H2020 rules and compliant with the national VAT regulations and European Directives to the EOSC end users is also going to be adopted.

3.1.2 Budget

An amount equal to €4,800,000 has been allocated to GÉANT as budget to be used in procurement of commercial services. This budget is allocated specifically to ensure the use of commercial services is fostered and EOSC users can benefit from existing commercial Cloud services frameworks. Where requested, new frameworks will be procured in response to the aggregated user needs.

3.1.3 Timing

The activity of procurement of commercial services for EOSC in the framework of the EOSC Future project will start as from M6 (October 2021) and will be finalized by M28 (July 2023)

3.2 Processes

3.2.1 WP8 Strategy Plan

WP8 T8.1 will use the first eight (8) months of the project to define the Strategy Plan aiming at outlining the landscape in which the EOSC Future procurement activities will have to operate and the different areas in which services will have to be identified and procured.

European not-for-profit research user market:

- big and complex
 - 750.000 researchers
 - 10.000+ institutions
 - 39 countries

Project resources:

- staff capacity limited
- €4,8 million (W2,W3) vs community size



Figure 3.1: Geographical scope, targeted population and resources committed in EOSC Future procurement activity (image taken from OCRE project)

Type A Infrastructure Cloud Services	Type B Earth Observation Platform Services
Mature supplier market, mature services (AWS 2006)	Immature supplier market, immature services
Immature user market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adoption discussed many years, much mental preparation done, very limited real uptake Institutions and researchers hesitant 	Immature user market <ul style="list-style-type: none"> new concept adoption starting from scratch
Pan-European scalable agreement delivery vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> GÉANT -> NRENs -> institutions (GN4-2 result) Active use 300+ institutions in 11 countries, researchers not so much 	No existing pan-European agreement delivery vehicle <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researchers only likely users
Majority of community spend on Type A agreements expected to be self-funded	Majority of service consumption for Type B agreements expected to come from adoption funding.
Framework agreements = supplier community fixed	DPS allows adoption funding to influence available suppliers in OCRE portfolio
Procurement funding is to stimulate hesitant users (researchers) to adopt mature services	Procurement funding is to stimulate the development of a green field market: from nothing to something

Figure 3.2: Typologies of Procurement Agreements (Type A and Type B) (image taken from OCRE project)

3.2.2 Relations with WP8

Stimulation of the use of commercial Cloud services via EOSC will be done by reaching out to users inviting them to send in project proposals for which funding is requested. WP1 T1.5 in a collaboration with WP8 T8.1 will define criteria for successful proposals and determine how often these funding waves will take place. Once WP1 T1.5 selects projects for Adoption Funding, WP8 T8.1 will facilitate the connection between demand and solution (commercial Cloud provider).

The following conditions will need to be met before procurement takes place: (a) Procurement activities will only be initiated once it is established that a wider selection of users and/or science clusters have a clear demand for certain services, (b) Initiation of a tender will require an active participation of the institutions, users and/or science clusters to clarify the needs and specifications of the additionally requested Cloud services, (c) WP1 T1.5 mission is to give guidance on resource allocation and rules of participation. The decision on the

procurement of the new Cloud services frameworks as well as allocation of the financing assistance budget to the respected beneficiaries are made by WP1 T1.5, and (d) A threshold for a minimum procurement value may be set to ensure resources are spent on procurements with highest impacts.

3.2.3 Definition of the calls

According to the specifications and references provided by WP8 T8.1 the Grant Committee foreseen in WP1 T1.5 will convene and design the text of the call for procured services.

As it is the mandate of the Grant Committee to oversee the use of the budget and ensure that the processes that have been put in place are followed by all actors involved, the Grant Committee has the freedom to adjust the budget of the calls, its Terms of Reference, and timings the way it deems more appropriate. Nevertheless, no call will be issued if it has not been object of consensus between WP1 T1.5 and WP8 T8.1.

All formal aspects of the calls for procurements will be defined according to the specifications and guidelines described in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement of Horizon2020.

3.2.4 Publication

The calls for procured services will be published on three main outlets:

1. The website of the European Commission;
2. The EOSC Future project website;
3. The ad hoc EOSC Future Funding Platform, which is the tool that will be used to:
 - a. engage with prospective applicants, allowing them to deposit their applications, make questions and receive answers and,
 - b. automatize the process of collection of applications, their evaluation and assignment of procurement to the successful candidate.

Once the text of the Open Call has been agreed and has been developed in its final form, it is the duty of the representative of TGB in the Grant Committee to contact the Project Officer in DG CNECT and communicate the availability of a new Open Call together with its text. In turn, the Project Officer will activate the internal channels in the European Commission to have the Open Call published on the EC Portal.

Simultaneously to the publication of the Procurement Call on the EC Portal, Trust-IT will take care of the publication of the Call on the EOSC Future Funding Platform in the section dedicated to RDA cascading grants.

A text will be provided with an overview of each call and each available funding opportunity will be presented with its basic details: title, duration, available budget, etc. By clicking on the title of the call, the visitor of the platform (and potential applicant) will be directed to the page devoted to the specific open call where it will be possible to find the full-length text of the call, the terms of reference, the guidelines for the submission of the application, etc.

It is to be observed that in order to have access to the full text of the call and to submit an application, a creation of a profile in the EOSC Future Grant Platform is needed.

The Communications and Outreach Coordinator will be responsible for the timely and targeted communication and publication of the Procurement Adoption Funding open calls.

3.2.5 Collection of application

Applications will be sent individually by each candidate by uploading the relevant material on the Grant Platform. Once collected the applications will be sent to the Grant Committee for the evaluations. Incomplete applications will not be brought to the attention of the Grant Committee.

3.2.6 Evaluation and involvement of consortium partners

Once the applications have been gathered and submitted to the Grant Committee, this Board will begin the evaluation process based on the criteria that have been defined jointly by WP1 T1.5 and WP8 T8.1

The Grant Committee is collectively responsible for the evaluation and for the eventual outcome. Nevertheless, the Grant Committee may decide to appoint up to three (3) of its members as persons in charge for the assessment of applications related to a specific call.

This group will be in charge of getting in contact with the candidates for the interviews (when needed) and will formulate its advice to the Grant Committee. The Grant Committee will then decide on the validity of the proposal made by the ad hoc group and approve, adapt and/or reject it.

The result of the evaluation process will be published on the EOSC Future Grant Management Platform, and the successful candidate will receive a message from the Grant Committee Coordinator. The unsuccessful applications will receive an automatic notification.

3.2.7 Contractual Management

Technopolis Group Belgium (TGB) together with the GEANT (leader of WP8 T8.2) will get in contact with the successful applicant to establish the contractual framework that will govern the delivery of the procured service and the schedule of payments.

The mechanics of T8.1 Adoption Funding distribution are still being developed based on the lessons learned from the OCRE project and are dependent on the different adoption channels. Subject to the approval of the Grant Committee some processes of the Adoption Funding distribution will be improved in the course of the Project.

3.3 Follow-up and conclusion of the procured activity

3.3.1 Monitoring

During the development of the procured activity funded through the Procurement Fund, GEANT will take the responsibility of establishing a continuous channel of communication with the applicant to receive updates about the work that has been done, the work to be delivered, potential obstacles and risks. It will be the duty of GEANT to report back to the Grant Committee about the status of the activity. The Grant Committee is allowed to make requests to the applicant at any time.

3.3.2 Intermediate reporting

Half-way between the beginning and the foreseen end of the activity, the applicant will be asked to provide a short report about the status of the activity. The report will have to cover the following information:

- Work that has been completed;
- Use of the resources;
- Deviation from the application;
- Potential risks;
- Next steps.

The intermediate report should not go beyond four (4) pages.

3.3.3 Final delivery

Once the activity has been completed, a final report will have to be sent by the applicant clearly indicating:

- Description of the delivered activity;
- Description of the resources that have been used;
- Deviations;
- Impact of the activity on the research environment.

The report will have to be completed by a financial statement indicating the use of the financial resources employed for the delivery of the activity and any deliverable foreseen in the application.

3.3.4 Validation

The Work Package is entrusted with the task of making a first assessment of the final reports and providing the Grant Committee with a structured opinion about the quality of the results. The Grant Committee will then decide by consensus whether the delivered activity has responded satisfactorily to the requisites of the Procurement Call and the plan proposed in the application. In case of positive outcome, GEANT will be invited to take the necessary legal and financial steps to close the process. On the other hand, if the Grant Committee is not satisfied from the results of the activity, it can decide whether to give more time to the applicant to implement the requested actions (no modifications to the budget) or to decrease the amount foreseen for the final payment.

3.3.5 Conclusive administrative steps

Following the decision to be made by the Grant Committee, GEANT will prepare a letter of successful completion of the activity in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Procurement Call and will transfer to the applicant the remaining part of the budget allocated to the activity.

3.3.6 Communication

Once an activity funded through a Procurement call has been successfully finalised, the Grant Committee will inform the partners of the project in WP10 (especially WP10 leader) in order to identify the aspects of the activity that deserve to be highlighted, communicated and disseminated through the different project channels.

4 Digital Innovation Hub

4.1 Characteristics

4.1.1 Rationale

The scope of the EOSC Digital Innovation Hub (EOSC DIH) within T1.5 is to manage the funds for innovation of products/services from private companies to improve/extend/enhance the services offered to the EOSC communities. The DIH can also provide a single access point to EOSC services, research data, and expertise, and serve as an innovation catalyst for industry to contribute to the provision of solutions for the benefit of EOSC, thus ultimately helping to remove the barriers between Open Science and Industry and facilitating the integration of EOSC services.

The EOSC DIH expects to enhance the EOSC and the EOSC DIH itself with the concept of Open Innovation. EOSC DIH is looking for innovative services outside to be onboarded or integrated with services inside Open Science community. Open Innovation in its approach of 'outside in' requires the research of external innovative services or solutions that may cover the needs or gaps, and that are not easily available in the market.

4.1.2 Budget

A total amount of €600,000 has been allocated to support EOSC DIH activities as part of WP8 T8.2 using the Article 10 financial mechanism for the purchase of goods and services.

4.1.3 Owner

The amount of €600,000 budget has been entrusted to the EGI Foundation (EGI.eu) as part of the WP8 budget but it will be coordinated following agreed guidelines established within WP1 T1.5. It will ultimately be the duty of EGI.eu to arrange all the contractual and financial processes to ensure that each contract is administratively managed and correctly transferred to the successful applicants of the different DIH requests.

4.1.4 Timing

In order to increase the usefulness of results, requirements will be collected from the EOSC ecosystem regarding what services or solutions are specifically needed, e.g., content review, engagement with key stakeholders, etc. Below is the initial timeline for the first round, which will be repeated over the course of the project. Exact timelines may change in future requests based on lessons learned.

Table 4-1: Indicative timeline for DIH activities

Activity	Period
External consultation for the EOSC needs	Oct-Dec 2021
Internal consultation for the EOSC DIH needs	Oct-Dec 2021
Analysis and articulation of potential solutions to be purchased	Jan-Feb 2022
Documentation, legal support, and contractual agreements	June-July 2022
Content for and launch via EOSC Future Platform	April-May 2022
Development/ integration of goods / services	Starting in July 2022
Performance Review	After 6 months of delivery
Refine from lessons learned and repeat	

4.2 Processes

4.2.1 DIH Strategy Plan

WP8 T8.2 will use the first six (6) months of the project to define the overall DIH strategy and plans, which will be documented in D8.4 EOSC Digital Innovation Hub Strategy and Plans (M6). The following months' activities (Oct-Dec'21) will be focused on the requirements collection from across the EOSC landscape, using a mix of

desk research, direct engagement, and surveys launched via WP8 T8.1. Also, the analysis of innovative mechanisms that could improve the operation, outreach and impact of EOSC DIH will be considered.

4.2.2 Definition of relations with T8.2

Representatives from WP8 T8.2 (EGI.eu, PSNC) are directly involved in the grant management coordination under WP1 T1.5. WP8 T8.2 will provide all relevant information required (the content) and will also serve as the principal evaluators of the applications received.

4.2.3 Definition of the calls

According to the specifications and references provided by WP8 T8.2, the Grant Committee foreseen in WP1 T1.5 will review all text associated with the purchasing of services.

As it is the mandate of the Grant Committee to oversee the use of the budget and ensure that the processes that have been put in place are followed by all actors involved, the Grant Committee has the freedom to adjust the budget of the calls, its Terms of Reference, and timings the way it deems more appropriate. Nevertheless, no publication will be issued if it has not been the object of consensus between WP1 T1.5 and WP8 T8.2.

All formal aspects will be defined according to the specifications and guidelines described in the Annotated Model Grant Agreement of Horizon2020.

4.2.4 Publication

The requests for services and solutions to be purchased, information will be published on four (4) main outlets:

1. The website of the European Commission;
2. The EOSC Future project website;
3. The EOSC DIH website (and disseminated through EOSC DIH communication channels);
4. The EOSC Future Funding Platform, which is the tool that will be used to:
 - a. Engage with prospective applicants, allowing them to deposit their applications, ask questions and receive answers and,
 - b. Automate the process of collection of applications, their evaluation and assignment of procurement to the successful candidate.

4.2.5 Collection of application

Applications will be sent individually by each candidate by uploading the relevant material on the Funding Platform. Once collected the applications will be sent to the Grant Committee for the evaluations. Incomplete applications will not be brought to the attention of the Grant Committee.

4.2.6 Evaluation and involvement of consortium partners

Once the applications have been gathered and submitted to the Grant Committee, the evaluation process will begin based on the criteria that have been defined by WP8 T8.2 and validated by WP1 T1.5.

The Grant Committee will be collectively responsible for the evaluation and for the eventual outcome. Nevertheless, the Grant Committee may decide to appoint up to three of its members as persons in charge for the assessment of applications related to a specific call. This group will be in charge of getting in contact with the candidates for the interviews (when needed) and will formulate its advice to the Grant Committee.

The Grant Committee will then decide on the validity of the proposal made by the ad hoc group and approve, adapt and/or reject it. The result of the evaluation process will be published on the EOSC Future Funding Platform, and the successful candidate will receive a message from the Grant Committee Coordinator.

The unsuccessful applications will receive an automatic notification.

4.2.7 Contractual Management

The EGI Foundation, as the leader of WP8 T8.2, budget holder and serving in the role of purchaser, will get in contact with the successful applicant to establish the contractual framework that will govern the delivery of the service and the schedule of payments.

4.3 Follow-up and conclusion of the DIH activity

4.3.1 Monitoring

The practical monitoring of the activities within each contractual agreement will be shared between WP8 T8.2 partners, specifically:

- EGI Foundation: Financial, legal, administration aspects;
- PSNC: Technical support;
- TGB: Monitoring and evaluation system;

It will be the duty of the EGI Foundation and PSNC, as members of WP1 T1.5, to report back to the Grant Committee regarding the status of the activity and collect any necessary feedback that should be considered or implemented.

4.3.2 Intermediate reporting

No intermediate reporting is foreseen.

4.3.3 Final delivery

Once the activity has been completed, a final report will have to be sent by the applicant clearly indicating a description of the delivered activity and how the requirement specifications have been fulfilled.

4.3.4 Validation

WP8 T8.2 will be in charge of making a first assessment of the final reports and providing the Grant Committee with a structured opinion about the quality of the results. The Grant Committee will then decide by consensus whether the delivered activity has responded satisfactorily to the requisites of the contract.

In case of a positive outcome, the EGI Foundation will take the necessary legal and financial steps to close the process. On the other hand, if the Grant Committee is not satisfied with the results of the activity, it can decide whether to give more time to the applicant to implement the requested actions (no modifications to the budget) or to decrease the amount foreseen for the final payment.

4.3.5 Conclusive administrative steps

Following the decision made by the Grant Committee, the EGI Foundation will prepare a letter of successful completion of the activity in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the service request and will transfer the appropriate financials to the applicant.

4.3.6 Communication

Once an activity funded through the DIH has been successfully finalized, the Grant Committee will inform the partners of the project in WP10 (especially WP10 leader) in order to identify the aspects of the activity that deserve to be highlighted, communicated and disseminated through the different project channels. WP8 T8.2 will also conduct relevant dissemination and communication activities via the EOSC DIH channels.

5 RDA Open Calls

5.1 Characteristics

5.1.1 Rationale

In accordance with the requirements defined in the text of the INFRAEOSC-03 call, over the next two and a half years of its duration, the EOSC Future project will develop a virtual environment with professional data services, open research products and infrastructure. The objective is to create a so-called 'system of systems' that will support European researchers in managing the entire lifecycle of data: from sharing, managing, and exploiting their own data to discovering, re-using and recombining the data sets of others. The project will engage, train and support (potential) EOSC users and will encourage providers to sign up by offering easy onboarding, ticket management and analytics.

To enable the co-creation of EOSC, via early adoption, technical and domain solution development, and interoperability, EOSC Future will be running a comprehensive set of regular open calls. The RDA Open Calls mechanism is backed by an amount of €1,000,000 grant earmarked for engaging with multiple stakeholders, including targeted scientific communities, technical experts, and early career researchers. The calls will be complemented by a broad range of support activities, such as events, use cases, info packages, best practices, a Scientific Ambassador Network, and dedicated RDA groups. These activities will enable a continual innovation workflow and engagement with science projects to support the implementation of an EOSC environment.

The RDA Open calls will allow the EOSC expand project to ensure the engagement with and involvement of diverse stakeholders to achieve the overall project goals at different stages over the lifetime of the project. The RDA Open Call / Cascading Grant mechanism (as per Annex K H2020 EC work programme) will include Calls focused on scientific discipline and domain specific support (for individuals and organizations, Calls focused on RDA recommendation maintenance and technical support (for individuals), Calls focused on meeting participation (for individuals) and Calls focused on RDA & EOSC meeting support (for organizations)).

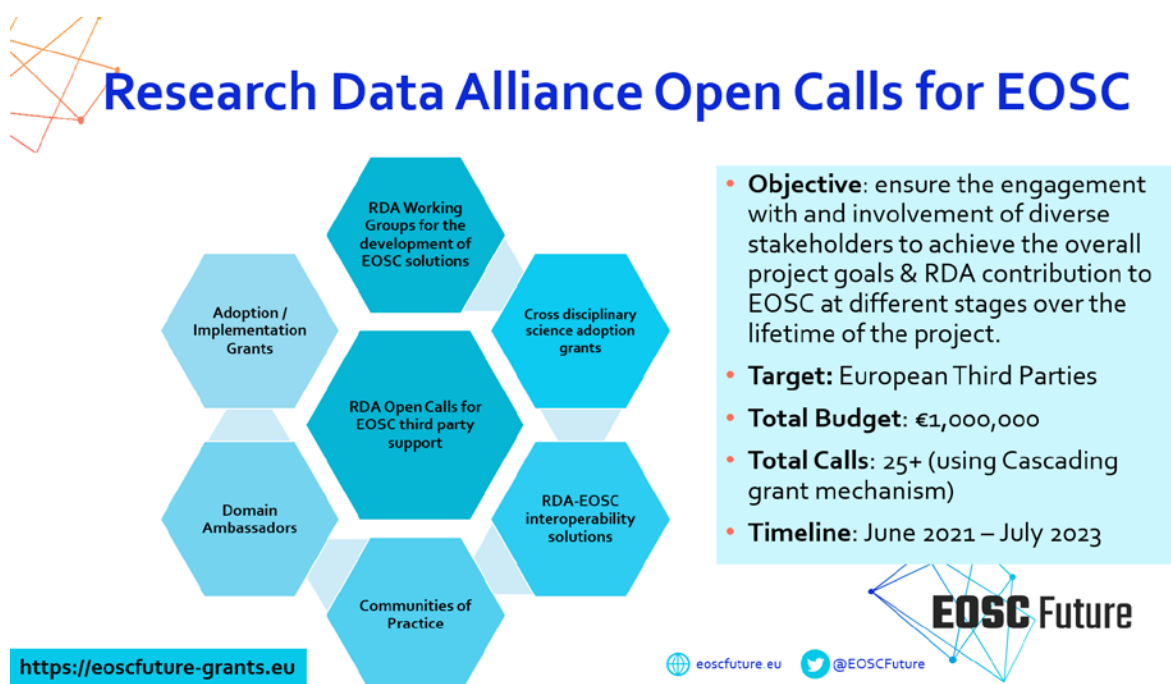


Figure 5.1: Action areas for RDA Open Calls

5.1.2 Budget

The budget earmarked for the RDA Open Calls amounts to €1,000,000 and has been distributed across the different calls in the following way:

Table 5-1: Budget for RDA Open Calls UPDATED and approved by the EOSC Future project officer in May '22

Call Focus	Open Call Topic	Funding Categories	Support criteria	Expected EU Impact	Total Budget	Estimated Unit Rate	No. Units
Call Management	External evaluators	Individuals with domain, technical and RDA knowledge	Knowledge of RDA, EOSC	Ensures transparency, openness and fairness of open call. Ensure no conflict of interest in evaluation.	€ 110,000.00	€ 500.00	220
Calls focused on RDA recommendations on maintenance and technical support	Technical expertise for domain specific take up of EOSC & RDA solutions	Technical experts including infrastructure managers, repository managers	Specific technical expertise in RDA outputs (involved in the definition and development of the solution) to ensure availability of RDA solutions.	Implementation and maintenance of open and community-based standards and solutions in EOSC. Support for EU and global interoperability.	€ 50,000.00	€ 12,500.00	4
Calls focused on RDA recommendations on maintenance and technical support	Maintenance facilities	Web development and web architects	understanding of technical standards, outputs and specifications maintenance facilities and requirements	Maintenance of open community developed technical solutions for implementation in EOSC	€ 40,000.00	€ 40,000.00	1
Calls focused on RDA Working Groups for the development of EOSC solutions (For organisations and individuals)	Technical, domain and editorial expertise	Individuals and organisations with domain, technical and RDA knowledge	Creation of an RDA Working Group dedicated to EOSC solutions	Fast track, high quality EOSC solutions with technical documentation and maintenance plans	€ 60,000.00	€ 15,000.00	4
Scientific discipline and domain specific support (For individuals and organisations)	Domain ambassadors	Scientific and domain representatives expert in data management and open science	Proven experience in data management / open science for the specific domain or discipline	Accessibility of EOSC explained and clarified to new scientific communities.	€ 170,000.00	€ 10,000.00	17
Scientific discipline and domain specific support (For individuals and organisations)	Dedicated community of practice support	Organisations and Individuals from scientific communities not represented in the project	Meet criteria of RDA Community of Practice, available support infrastructure to manage CoP	Supporting the engagement of new scientific communities in EOSC through dedicated experts to advise on EOSC.	€ 30,000.00	€ 15,000.00	2
Scientific discipline and domain specific support (For individuals and organisations)	Cross disciplinary science adoption grants	Domain and discipline specific organisations not represented in the project adopting RDA outputs	Dedicated infrastructure, service, etc. for implementation of technical or domain specific solutions	Implementation and maintenance of open and community-based standards and solutions for EOSC by scientific communities in discipline specific	€ 400,000.00	€ 50,000.00	8

		in support of EOSC implementation		repositories and infrastructures to support EOSC interoperability and, ultimately, uptake.			
Calls focused on RDA & EOSC meeting support (For organisations)	Meeting and Conference Support	European organisations committed to hosting RDA plenary meetings	MoU with RDA global to host event: virtual, physical or hybrid	Identification of an EU member state / associated country to host the global event in Europe and demonstrate EU contribution to global open science.	€ 60,000.00	€ 30,000.00	2
Calls focused on RDA interoperability solutions (For organisations and individuals)	Standards and adoption	Early career researchers, data science experts, technical experts and standardisation experts	Expertise, knowledge and experience in dedicated call topic focus, early career researcher with studies in pertinent call topic area, support for standardisation application and accompanying technical documentation	Expert insights to EOSC developments and knowledge and expertise exchange with global data professionals to ensure EOSC interoperability.	€ 80,000.00	€ 40,000.00	2

5.1.3 Owner

The amount of €1,000,000 budget for the RDA Open Call has been entrusted to Technopolis Group Belgium (TGB). It will be the duty of TGB to arrange all the contractual and financial processes to ensure that each grant is correctly transferred to the successful applicants of the different RDA Open Calls.

5.1.4 Timing

The first call to be launched (15 June 2021 and until the end of the project) is directed to the selection of the independent evaluators that will take care of the assessment of all applications that are submitted in the framework of the Open Calls.

Further eight (8) topics will be the subject of Open Calls starting from 13 August 2021 (Optimising (RDA) Open Science Frameworks and Guidelines in the context of EOSC) and released progressively until the end of 2022.

Except from the call for evaluators, all other calls will remain open for at least two (2) months in accordance with the rules described in Annex K of the Work Programme for H2020.

It is foreseen that all activities performed in the context of Open Calls will be concluded by June 2023 (M27 of EOSC Future) to allow enough time for the assessment of the results and for the execution of the final payments.

5.2 Processes

5.2.1 Definition of relations with WP10

Whereas the contractual management and coordination of the Annex K – RDA Open Call / Cascading Grant mechanism will be covered under WP1 T1.5, it pertains to WP10 to define and coordinate effective engagement mechanisms via the EOSC Co-create programme of which the RDA Open Calls in EOSC Future are a significant part. For this reason, WP10 includes Activity 10.2.3. This activity is responsible for the scientific and research orientation and content of the calls to be opened over the EOSC Future project. In close collaboration with all other WPs (particularly WP3, 4, 5 and 6), the strategic focus and direction of the calls to be published and specific

aspects to be funded will be coordinated by this sub-task. The open calls will be designed within the framework of the RDA Guiding principles of Openness, Consensus, Inclusivity, Harmonisation, Community-driven, Non-profit, and technology-neutral.

5.2.2 Definition. of the calls

Taking into consideration the list of Open Calls that has been published in Annex I of the Grant Agreement, it is the responsibility of the Grant Committee to draft the text of each call. As a rule, RDA, UGOE and TGB are responsible for the definition of the first draft of the call, based on the elements already presented in the Grant Agreement and on the inputs received by the other components of the Grant Committee and from WP10 and specifically Activity 10.2.3. Once ready, the first draft will be submitted to the attention of the Grant Committee that either will approve the text or will invite it to implement modifications. When consensus will be reached within the Grant Committee, ARCTIK and Trust-IT will take the necessary steps to guarantee that the EOSC Future visual and branding characteristics are adopted for what is related to the formal aspects (design, fonts, logos) of the text of the Open Call before it is published.

5.2.3 Eligibility

Special attention will be given to ensure that evaluators and call applicants are eligible for funding. This is detailed in the call text, namely

- Staff working for beneficiaries of the EOSC Future project are not eligible to apply for grants under the RDA Open Calls.
- If the evaluator's institution applies for an RDA Open Call, the evaluator must declare their conflict of interest in reviewing the application. Evaluators will be asked to sign a non-conflict of interest agreement before being accepted to perform their duties for a specific RDA Open Call evaluation. A conflict of interest exists if an evaluator: (a) was involved in any way in the preparation of the proposal or submitted the proposal itself (b) stands to benefit directly or indirectly if the proposal is accepted (c) has a close family or personal relationship with the applicant or the applicant's organisation (d) is a director, trustee or partner or is in any way involved in the management of the applicant's organisation (e) is employed or contracted by one of the applicant's organisation or any named subcontractors (f) has submitted a proposal for the same domain and in response to the same call.

5.2.4 Publication

The text of each Open Call is published on two platforms, following validation from the Project Officer:

1. The European Commission Portal for Funding & Tender opportunities¹
2. The EOSC Future Funding Platform²

By virtue of their nature of Cascading Grants in the framework of an Horizon2020 project, each Open Call must be published on the EC Funding & Tender Portal and must remain on display and available for the duration of two (2) months.

Once the text of the Open Call has been agreed and has been developed in its final form, it is duty of the representative of TGB in the Grant Committee to contact the Project Officer in DG CNECT and communicate the availability of a new Open Call together with its text. In turn, the Project Officer will activate the internal channels in the European Commission to have the Open Call published on the EC Portal.

Simultaneously to the publication of the Open Call on the EC Portal, Trust-IT will take care of the publication of the Call on the EOSC Future Funding Platform in the section dedicated to RDA Open Calls.

After a general introduction about RDA Open Calls, each available funding opportunity will be presented with its basic details: title, duration, available budget, etc. By clicking on the title of the call, the visitor of the platform

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/opportunities/competitive-calls>

² <https://eoscfuture-grants.eu/>

(and potential applicant) will be directed to the page devoted to the specific open call where it is possible to find the full-length text of the call, the terms of reference, the guidelines for the submission of the application, etc.

It is to be observed that to have access to the full text of the call and to submit an application, a creation of a profile in the EOSC Future Grant Platform is needed:

- Platform management
- Collection of application
- Evaluation.

The evaluation of the applications received for each Open Call is performed by external independent evaluators who will be selected through a call for published on both the EC and the EOSC Future Platforms.

5.2.5 Call Timeline

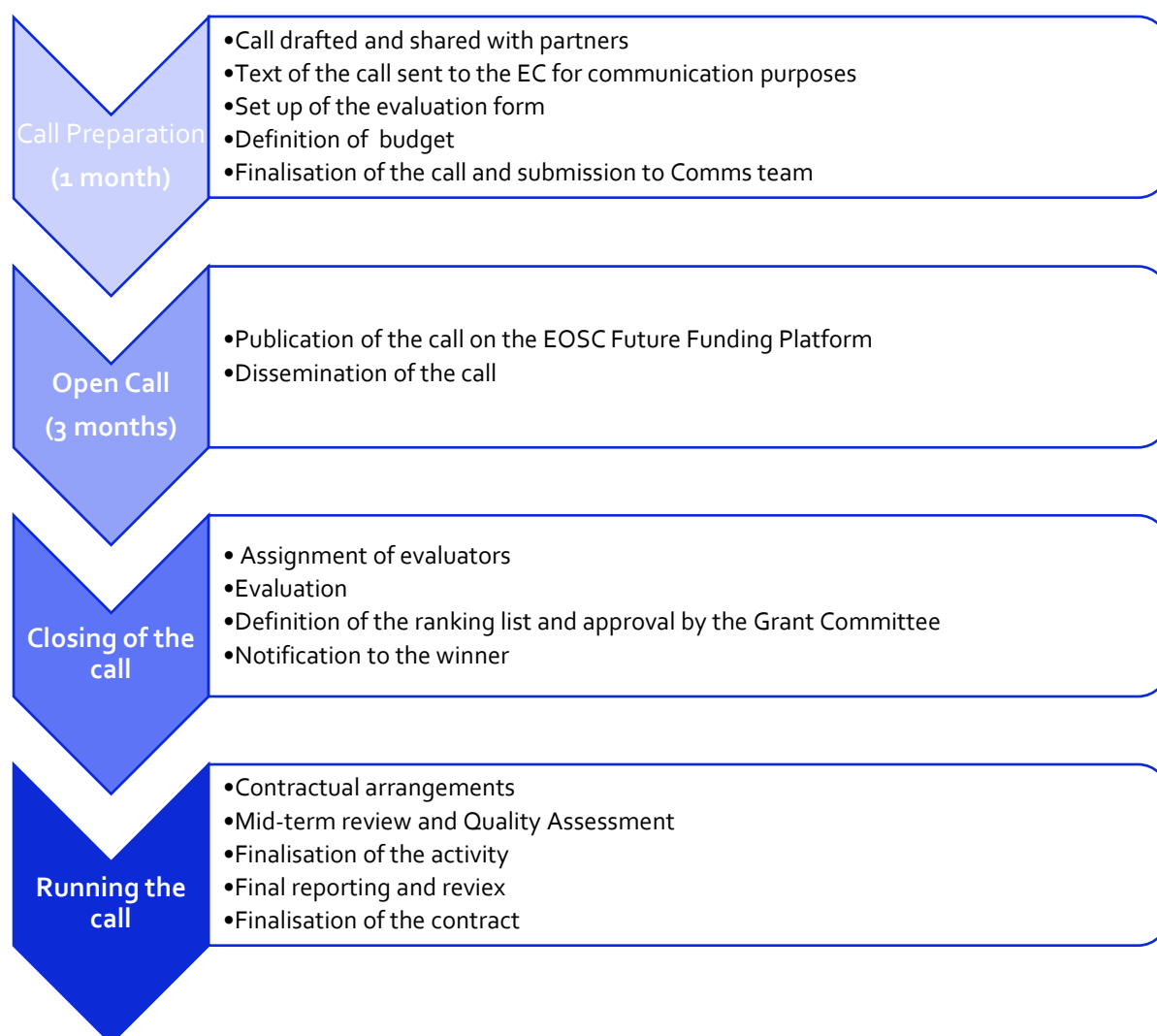


Figure 5.2: Call Timeline

5.2.6 Communication and Engagement

All WP10 members are invited to help in creating and authoring the calls. The drafts are shared and collaborated on. RDA will initiate virtual **Info Share meetings**, open to all beyond the consortium, where potential applicants

can learn about the call programme and with a focus on the current call. Calls will be disseminated by EOSC Future via the EOSC portal³, RDA⁴ and all other relevant and appropriate communication channels available.

5.2.7 Selection of the evaluators

As part of RDA's principles of transparent and community-driven action, EOSC Future has decided to make use of external expert evaluators to support its decision-making processes for the award of RDA Open Calls grants in Europe.

In order to put in place a pool of evaluators, a 'Call for RDA External Evaluators' has been issued on 15 June 2021, which will remain open until 30 June 2023. Any individual who is interested in becoming an evaluator for the RDA Open Calls can submit his/her application through the links provided in the EOSC Future Grant Platform.

The EOSC Future Grant Committee has established the following criteria to be met for being selected as Evaluator:

- Have a strong demonstrated expertise in an area relevant to RDA's mission;
- Have good insights into the European Open Science Cloud or other international open science and research commons developments;
- Be actively involved in RDA as a contributor to a Working Group, Interest Group or some other activity, especially in the past 12 to 18 months;
- Active engagement in RDA plenaries, national, and/or regional workshops is desirable;
- Previous experience as an evaluator (e.g., for the European Commission, other funding bodies/agencies) is desirable;
- Have a good understanding of the European Commission's processes and procedures, irrespective of affiliation and nationality;
- Applications from beyond Europe are strongly encouraged, reflecting the global mission of RDA;

Selection of evaluators will include criteria to establish balanced representation:

- Geographical balance;
- Gender balance;
- Domain expertise balance.

Based on these criteria, selected representatives of RDA, UGOE and TGB will assess the applications and accept and/or reject them. Evaluators will be routinely selected from the pool (approximately 200 evaluators in total) according to the expertise required and to ensure that no conflict of interest exists in their duties as evaluators. External evaluators will operate remotely via the EOSC Future Grants Platform and will be responsible for evaluating the applications in response to RDA Open Calls.

It must be noted that evaluators will be asked to sign a non-conflict of interest and confidentiality agreement before being accepted to perform their evaluation duties. Selected evaluators will be contracted until the end of the EOSC Future project (September 2023) and the number of applications to be evaluated will be based on the expertise required, lack of conflict of interest, etc.

For each individual evaluation the compensation for drafting the individual evaluation report will be €150 (which equals to a fixed number of 0.3 working day(s)). In some exceptional cases applications may require more time and experts will be notified in writing of this when contacted for evaluation duties

5.2.8 Evaluation of the applications

The evaluation of all applications received in each call will be performed by three (3) evaluators selected by the EOSC Future Grant Committee.

The evaluators will receive a set of guidelines from WP10 Activity 10.2.3 which outlines how to use the platform and guidelines for evaluation. Personal login details enable the evaluators to access the internal dashboard of

³ <https://eosc-portal.eu/>

⁴ <https://www.rd-alliance.org/>

the EOSC Future Funding Platform where they will have the opportunity to make acquaintance with the received applications.

Under the guidance and supervision of RDA, UGOE and TGB the evaluators will be able to express their assessment by giving marks on a scale of 1 to 10 per each one of the criteria that have been identified in the Open Call. The Platform will record the marks given by the multiple evaluators and will automatically calculate the average score for each application.

The result of the assessment is then provided to the Grant Committee by UGOE, which is solely and jointly responsible for the use of the budget of the RDA Open Calls budget. The Grant Committee can either approve the report made by the evaluators and therefore close the evaluation process or can: a) ask for explanations; b) reject it and ask for a new assessment.

The report of an evaluation can be rejected only once. The Grant Committee will be obliged to approve the second report, even in the case the results are the same with the ones of the first report, unless the Committee finds that legal and/or financial elements of a selected application may bring prejudice to the use of the RDA Open Calls budget. In this case the issue will be brought to the attention of the Strategy & Oversight Board (SOB) that will have the final word.

The selected applicant(s) will be notified of the success of the application via an email that will be sent by TGB. The unsuccessful candidates will receive an automatic message through the Funding Platform. Not selected applicants will be given ten (10) days to ask for further information about the rejection of the application.

5.2.9 Contractual Management

Once the evaluation process has reached a positive conclusion, it is the responsibility of TGB as budget holder to establish the process that leads to the conclusion of the agreement between TGB (EOSC Future consortium is not a legal entity) and the successful applicant.

The agreement, filled in with all necessary details of the two parties, will refer to the EOSC Future Grant Agreement, the Open Call, and the terms of references. The application will be inserted as Annex of the Agreement.

Once the Agreement has been signed by the two parties, TGB will take care of transferring 50% of the Grant as pre-financing, whereas the remaining part will be transferred after the successful completion of the activity.

5.3 Follow-up and conclusion of the RDA calls

5.3.1 Monitoring

During the development of the activity funded through the RDA Open Call, RDA and UGOE will take the responsibility to establish a continuous channel of communication with the applicant to receive updates about the work that has been done, the work to be delivered, potential obstacles and risks. It will be duty of RDA and UGOE to report back to the Grant Committee about the status of the activity. The Grant Committee is allowed to make requests to the applicant at any time.

5.3.2 Intermediate reporting

Half-way between the beginning and the foreseen end of the activity, the applicant will be asked to provide a short report about the status of the activity. The report will have to cover the following information:

- Work that has been completed;
- Use of the resources;
- Deviation from the application;
- Potential risks;
- Next steps.

The intermediate report should have at least two pages but not exceed more than four pages.

5.3.3 Final delivery

Once the activity has been completed, a final report will have to be sent by the applicant clearly indicating:

- Description of the delivered activity;
- Description of the resources that have been used;
- Deviations;
- Impact of the activity on the research environment;
- Potential of re-use and follow up.

The report will have to be completed by a financial statement indicating the use of the financial resources employed for the delivery of the activity and any deliverable foreseen in the application.

5.3.4 Validation

The Grant Committee will jointly evaluate the final reports and will assess the quality of the work delivered by the applicant. The Grant Committee will invite the applicant in a meeting/call where the finalised activity will be presented. Members of the Grant Committee will have the opportunity to enquire about the results, the methodologies that have been implemented, the obstacles, the use of resources etc.

The Grant Committee will then decide by consensus whether the delivered activity has responded satisfactorily to the requisites of the RDA Open Call and to the plan proposed in the application. In case of a positive outcome, TGB will be invited to take the necessary legal and financial steps to close the process. On the other hand, if the Grant Committee is not satisfied by the results of the activity, it can decide whether to give more time to the applicant to implement the requested actions (no modifications to the budget) or to decrease the amount foreseen for the final payment.

5.3.5 Conclusive administrative steps

Following the decision to be made by the Grant Committee, TGB will prepare a letter of successful completion of the activity in accordance with the Terms of Reference of the Open Call and will transfer to the applicant the remaining part of the budget allocated to the activity.

5.3.6 Communication

Once an activity funded through an RDA Open call has been successfully finalised, the Grant Committee will inform the partners of the project in WP10 (especially WP10 leader) in order to identify the aspects of the activity that deserve to be highlighted, communicated and disseminated through the different project channels.

The Grants Committee approval workflow consist of oversights activities that are marked red in the following Figure 5.3, they show the role of the Grant Committee, where it intervenes and where it has to approve.

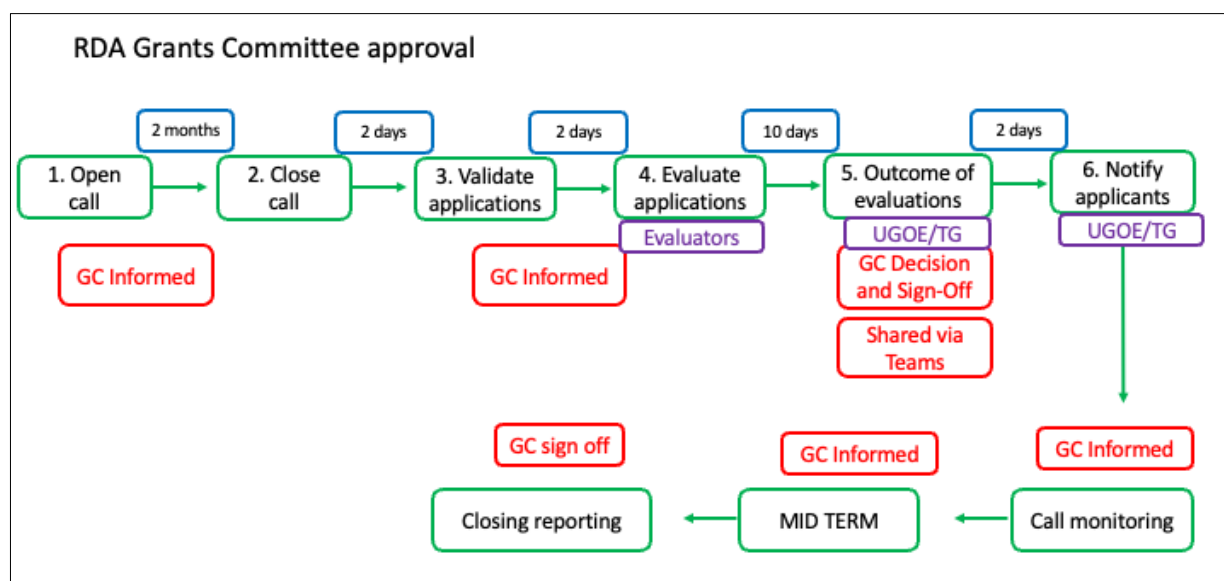


Figure 5.3: RDA Grants Committee approval

5.4 Where the Grant Committee plays a role in the RDA calls

The Grant Committee is presented with a summary overview of successful applications per call based on an evaluation summary provided by the Expert Evaluation Board. This summary is the automatically determined average of the scores given by three external evaluators; they work with a pre-defined scoring mechanism. Based on the workflow presented below, the final stage is to get acceptance from the Grant Committee before the successful awardees are notified.

The GC will reach an agreement on the scores and comments for all proposals within a call, checking consistency across the evaluations and, if necessary, resolve cases where evaluators were not able to agree. In addition, the diversity aspect of the application will be considered – gender, geography, and RDA under-represented fields. RDA is committed to diversity across gender and geographic lines and to ensure that all disciplinary fields are being encouraged to get involved.

The Grant Committee should sign off on the following criteria and aspects:

- 1. Passing the scoring threshold -**
- 2. Resources** – A summary will be given by the Evaluation committee, appropriate spending for the resources.
- 3. Diversity** – Observations to be provided on Gender, Geography, under-represented communities. Preference to candidates that have not already previously received RDA funding. Preference to candidates in underrepresented domains within RDA.
- 4. Excellence** – Commitment to EOSC, links to relevant infrastructures, demonstration of links to RDA.
- 5. Impact** – Does the project bring value to the aims of the EOSC Future project?

6 The EOSC Future Grant Management Platform

EOSC Future launched the EOSC Future Funding Platform, to manage the Calls for Procurement, the EOSC DIH Requests for Business Pilots and the RDA Open Calls. For the EOSC Future Funding Platform the highly customisable TRUST-GRANTS™ platform, was implemented and tailored to the specific needs of EOSC Future. As explained in the detailed documentation of the TRUST-GRANTS™, the platform allows the ranking and management of the applications received with this multi-user platform:

- The platform is customised to the specific needs of the RDA open calls and EOSC DIH Requests for Business Pilots.
- All administration steps can be monitored (e.g., eligible, under evaluation, approved, down to monitoring of the individual funded projects), as well as funding steps.
- The platform manages the progress report of the selected applicants.
- The platform provides password-protected access to proposers, independent evaluators, and call managers.

6.1 EOSC Future Funding Platform for RDA Open Calls and DIH Requests for Business Pilots

The EOSC Future Funding Platform is a standalone instance, linked to and from the EOSC Future project website, the EOSC Portal, RDA website and EOSC DIH website.

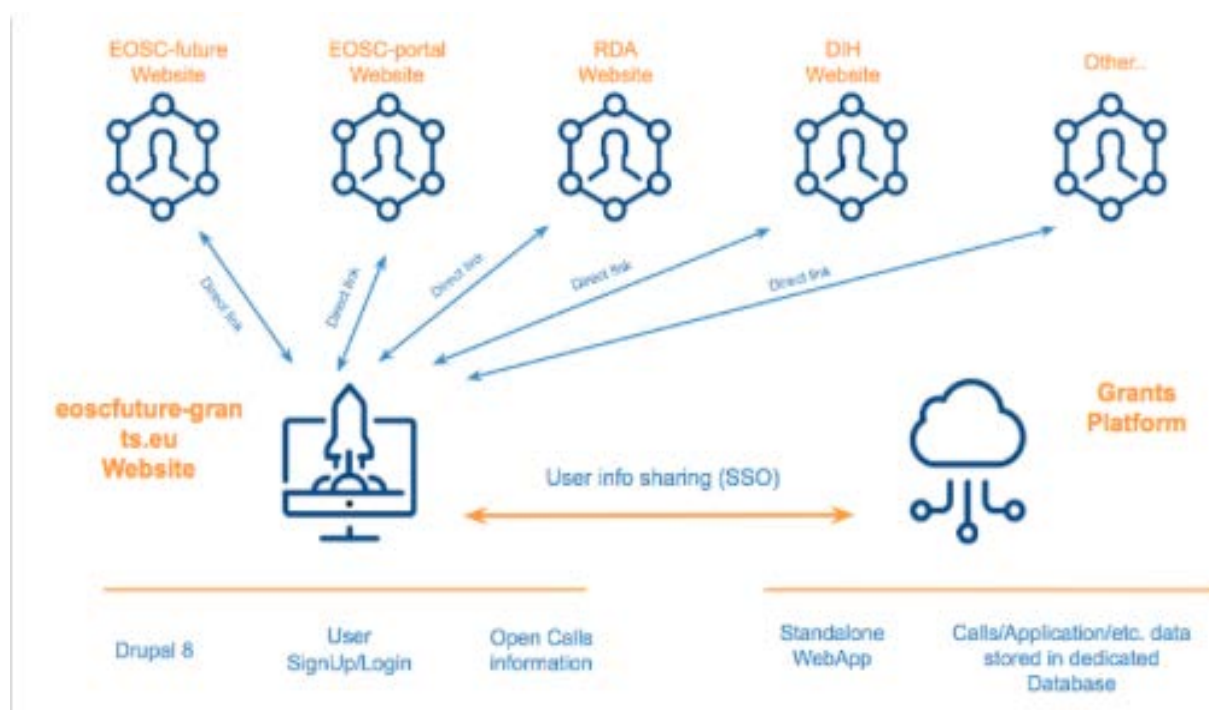


Figure 6.1: EOSC Future Funding Platform connection to other EOSC platforms

The EOSC Future Funding Platform manages and showcases both RDA Open Calls and the EOSC DIH Requests for Business Pilots and provides easy navigation and application for both opportunities. Below we provide a few screenshots to illustrate the navigation and communication on both opportunities to help advance the EOSC.

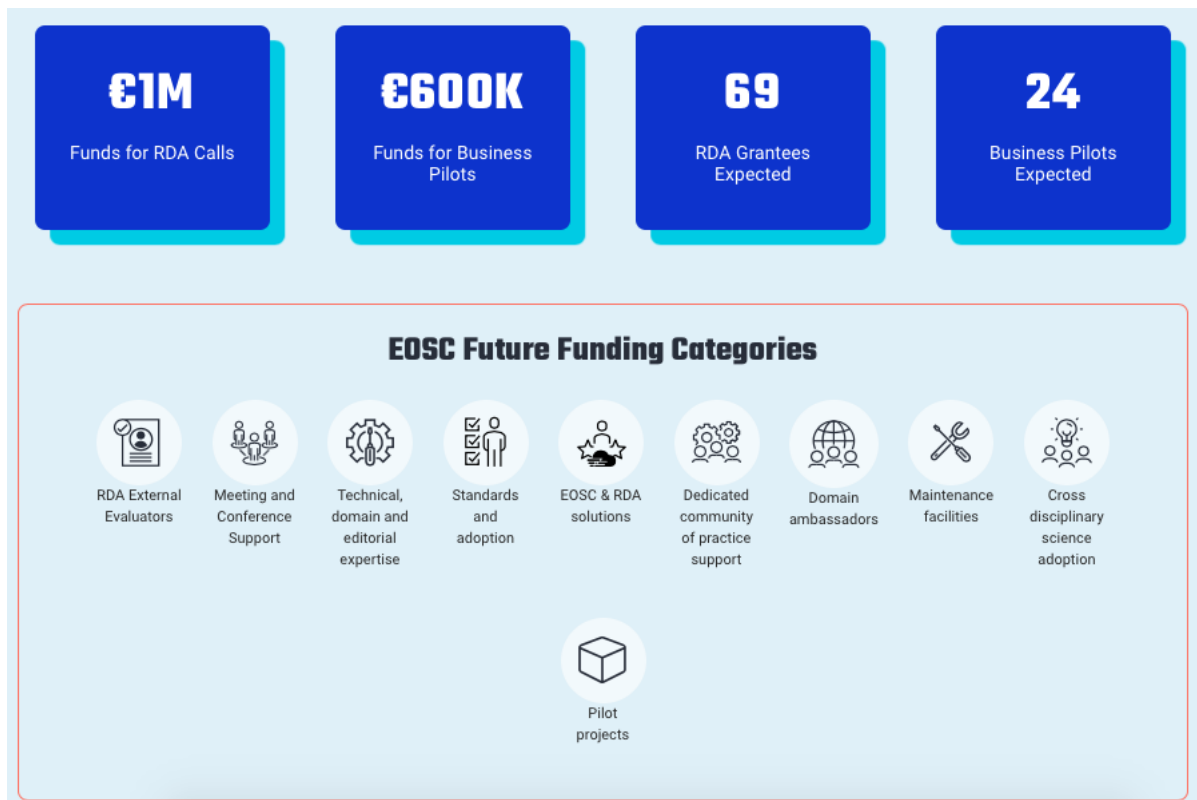


Figure 6.2: Showcasing the EOSC Future opportunities to help advance the EOSC

6.2 EOSC Future Funding Platform Enhancements

The EOSC Future Funding Platform allows the management of the RDA Open Calls and the EOSC DIH Requests for Business Pilots through the following functionalities, further explained in the detailed documentation of the TRUST-GRANTS™:

- the cockpit of the call manager;
- administration and funding from one single point;
- proposals evaluation dashboard;
- a streamlined monitoring reporting system.

Based on internal feedback and a general approach of continuous improvement, several modifications were made to the EOSC Future Funding Platform to enhance the User Experience of the Applicants and the Evaluators. In this chapter we explain the enhancements.

In addition, to the extensive evaluation workflow set in place for the EOSC DIH Requests for Business Pilots as illustrated in the infographic below.



Figure 6.3: EOSC Future Funding Platform supported evaluation workflow for EOSC DIH Requests for Business Pilots

A **swift and lightweight online evaluation process** is designed and supported by the online platform, for the high number of RDA Open Calls.

An **internal communication log** for the evaluation of RDA External Evaluators by the EOSC Future Grant Committee, has been set in place to:

- Allow for comments on a negative or positive vote for an evaluator to become part of the RDA External Pool of Evaluators (EPE).
- Allow for these comments to be downloaded in the data dump, for the improved overview for the decision making on the RDA External Pool of Evaluators (EPE).

A message pop-up was implemented, to provide **an individualised evaluation on the reason for rejection, in the automated message to applicants.**