Open Call

Eligibility and Technical Criteria

Project Website: www.evolve2care.eu

Open Call platform: https://accelup.eu/home

1. Eligibility Check

To participate in the Evolve2Care Open Call, applicants must meet specific eligibility criteria to ensure alignment with the project's objectives and the Horizon Europe funding framework. This section outlines the eligibility conditions for both Innovators and Living Labs, as well as specific requirements for mini-consortia applicants.

Sploro will conduct eligibility checks for all registered consortia based on predefined criteria. Please see below the eligibility criteria for Innovators and Living Labs.

1.1. Eligibility Check for Innovators

Innovators must meet the following criteria:

- Be one of the following type of innovators:

1. **SMEs/companies**

   ➢ Must submit legal data of the organisation as requested in the application form.

2. **Independent researchers or group of researchers**

   ➢ Must provide a detailed CV highlighting research experience in HealthTech and relevant achievements.

3. **Research Organisations:**

   ➢ Teams operating under universities, research institutes, NGOs, private companies, or public bodies.

   ➢ Must submit legal data of the organisation as requested in the application form.

4. **Associations, Foundations or Clusters in the health care sector**

   ➢ Must submit legal data of the organisation as requested in the application form.

- Have a Technology Readiness Level (TRL) between 4 and 7. TRLs between 4 and 7 will be prioritised and will influence the selection of the awarded mini-consortia teams. However, applicants may have a TRL higher than 7, but priority will be given to those with a TRL between 4 and 7.

- There are no geographical limitations for innovators. Any of the above-listed innovators from anywhere in the world are eligible for this Open Call.

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the European Union

- Innovators may submit multiple proposals.

1.2. Eligibility Check for Living Labs

Living Labs must meet the following criteria:

- Be an active certified member of ENoLL (European Network of Living Labs).

- Be located in an EU Member State or an Associated Country[1].

1.3. Eligibility Check timeline

The eligibility check will be conducted according to the following timeline:

- For the first CUT OFF: Between **03 – 06 June 2025**

- For the second CUT OFF: Between **26 – 29 August 2025**

- For the last CUT OFF: Between **20 – 24 October 2025**

2. Technical Evaluation

Proposals are assessed by the Partners' Review Committee based on **impact** and **innovation potential**, **feasibility** and **implementation**, **excellence** and **alignment** with Evolve2Care objectives. This review ensures that the selected projects can deliver measurable impact and advancing HealthTech innovation.

The Partners' Review Committee will consist of **two evaluators** from the Evolve2Care team, each bringing complementary expertise to assess the **impact** and **innovation potential**, **feasibility** and **implementation, excellence** and **alignment** with Evolve2Care objectives.

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[1]https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/strategy-research-and-innovation/europe-world/international-cooperation/association-horizon-europe_en#:~:text=Association%20agreements-,Countries%20associated%20to%20Horizon%20Europe,with%20entities%20of%20EU%20countries.

2.1. Evaluation Criteria and Scoring System

The **Partners' Review Committee** will assess the proposals based on predefined criteria, ensuring consistency and transparency (please see Table 1. Scoring Criteria). The evaluation includes a structured **scoring system** from **0 to 5**.

Each proposal will be scored based on the following criteria:

Table 1. Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Description	Weight on the Score	Threshold
Excellence and Alignment with Project Objectives	How well the proposal aligns with the goals of **Evolve2Care**	20%	3
	How well the proposal aligns with the Use Cases of **Evolve2Care**		
Impact and Innovation Potential	The novelty, impact, and added value of the proposed solution	50%	3
	The strength of the research methodology and evidence provided		
Implementation and Feasibility	The clarity and robustness of the plan for carrying out the project	30%	3
	The practical execution and implementation of the project		
	The adequacy of facilities, infrastructure, and expertise for execution		

The established threshold requires a minimum score of 3 points in each of the three evaluation sections, with a total combined score of at least 10 points across all sections.

2.2. Normalisation score

For the final score calculation, there will be **two** evaluators per proposal, where each one will score differently without knowing the evaluation of their colleague, thus

avoiding one evaluator conditioning the other. Therefore, the same evaluation may receive very different scores.

The normalisation process counts with a several steps approach:

- Evaluators Average (EEA) and Overall Average Score (OAS): each evaluator has evaluated several proposals. We calculate the average score of all applicants and compare it with the average score of each evaluator.
- Each Evaluator Average is compared to the Overall Average Score using a simple division (EEA / OAS). As a result, we know the percentage each evaluator represents of the OAS. This has a double meaning:
  - Evaluators under 100% have a negative pattern against the average. Their scores are then increased.
  - Evaluators above 100% have a positive pattern against the average. Their scores are then decreased.
- Correction factor: Based on this formula $1 + (1 - (EEA/OAS))$. This factor is unique for each evaluator.
- The following step is applying the Correction Factor to each criterion per evaluator. Excellence x Correction Factor | Impact x Correction factor | Implementation x Correction factor.
- Then we calculate the final score of each criterion as the average of each corrected score of the two evaluators on each proposal. (It may be the case that correction brings scores over a 5 in any criteria. In those cases, the score is capped in 5).
- We add the corrected scores and calculate the total score.
- Finally, we build the shortlist according from highest to lowest total score.

Using this method, a more balanced distribution of scores would be guaranteed, and the possibility of biases and distortions would be reduced. At the end of the evaluation process, all proposals will be ranked based on their scores. The list of accepted proposals at remote evaluation will be published as well as the information about the non-eligible proposals. All applicants will be informed about the evaluation results.

2.3. Technical Evaluation timeline

The technical evaluation will be conducted according to the following timeline:

- For the first CUT- OFF: Between **09 – 13 June 2025**
- For the second CUT OFF: Between **01 – 05 September 2025**
- For the last CUT OFF: Between **27 – 31 October 2025**

3. Ethical Evaluation

Ranked List of the projects undergo an ethical evaluation by an external ethics expert to ensure compliance with EU ethical standards and guidelines.

To ensure that all funded projects under the Evolve2Care Open Call align with the highest ethical standards, an External Ethics Expert Evaluation will be conducted as part of the selection process. This evaluation assesses the ethical, legal, and societal implications of each proposal, focusing on compliance with European Union regulations, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Horizon Europe's ethical guidelines.

3.1. Objectives of the Ethical Evaluation

The main objectives of the External Ethics Expert Evaluation are to:

- **Ensure Compliance:** Verify that projects adhere to EU and national ethical standards, including data protection, clinical research regulations, and responsible innovation practices.
- **Identify Risks:** Assess potential ethical risks related to data privacy, patient safety, informed consent, and vulnerable groups.
- **Promote Responsible Innovation:** Encourage ethical research and innovation practices that foster trust, transparency, and social responsibility.

3.2. Scope of the Ethical Evaluation

The evaluation will cover the following key areas:

1. **Data Protection and Privacy:**
   - Compliance with GDPR and relevant data protection laws.
   - Secure handling of personal, sensitive, or health-related data.
   - Technical and organisational measures to safeguard the freedoms and rights of the data subjects. (e.g., data anonymization, encryption, and storage security etc.).
2. **Informed Consent:**
   - Clear procedures for obtaining informed consent from participants, especially in clinical studies or user testing.
   - Transparency in communicating project objectives, risks, and participant rights.
3. **Ethical Treatment of Vulnerable Groups:**

- Special considerations for projects involving vulnerable populations (e.g., children, elderly, individuals with disabilities, minorities, migrants etc.).
- Safeguards to prevent exploitation or harm.

4. **Human Rights and Ethical Research Practices:**
   - Respect for human dignity, autonomy, and freedom.
   - Ethical sourcing of materials and responsible use of technology (e.g., AI, biometrics).

5. **Environmental and Social Impact:**
   - Assessment of potential environmental risks.
   - Consideration of social equity, diversity, and inclusion.

6. **Clinical and HealthTech Ethics (if applicable):**
   - Adherence to ethical standards in clinical trials, patient care, or medical device testing.
   - Compliance with medical research guidelines, such as the ICH GCP.

3.3. Evaluation Process

1. **Appointment of External Ethics Expert:**
   - Independent ethics expert with backgrounds in HealthTech, data protection, legal compliance, and research ethics will be selected.
   - The expert must have no conflict of interest with the applicants or the Evolve2Care consortium.

2. **Review Procedure:**
   - An expert will review shortlisted proposals after the technical evaluation phase.
   - Evaluations will be conducted using standardised ethical assessment criteria and checklists to ensure fairness and consistency.

3. **Results and Recommendations:**
   - Each proposal will be evaluated on its ethical compliance, with specific attention to identified risks and mitigation measures.
   - Projects with critical ethical concerns may be flagged for revision or rejected if non-compliance cannot be resolved.

4. **Ethics Review Report:**

A formal ethics review report will be issued for each evaluated proposal, summarising:

- Ethical risks identified
- Mitigation strategies recommended
- Final recommendations (approve, or reject)

3.4. Actions following the Ethical Evaluation

- Approval: Proposals that meet ethical standards will proceed to the final selection phase.
- Rejection: Proposals with severe breaches of compliance with ethical standards or regulations that cannot be mitigated will be ineligible for funding.

3.5. Ethics Compliance during the Project Implementation

- Funded projects must adhere to ethical guidelines throughout their lifecycle.
- Periodic Ethics Monitoring may be conducted to ensure ongoing compliance.
- Breaches of ethical compliance may result in funding suspension or termination.

3.6. Ethical Evaluation Timeline

The ethical evaluation will be conducted according to the following timeline:

- For the first CUT- OFF: Between **16 – 20 June 2025**
- For the second CUT OFF: Between **08 – 12 September 2025**
- For the last CUT OFF: Between **03 – 07 November 2025**