Annex 1
Guidelines for Applicants

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1 Introduction and call objectives

This document provides the relevant information regarding the XR4ED - Open Call, which consists of the **Call for Developers** and **Call for Pilots** tracks.

The overall aim of the open call is to fund projects that take advantage of the XR4ED solutions, validate them, and further contribute to enriching the XR4ED platform. Additional general objectives include:

- Provide financial and technical support to digital start-ups, SMEs, and industry active in the XR sector to further advance early prototypes of XR educational solutions (TRL4) to a market ready product (TRL6).

- Populate the XR4ED platform with pilots focusing on educational material, therefore demonstrating its potential.

- Demonstrate the usefulness of the XR4ED platform as an XR technology development platform.

The specific objectives of the two tracks are:

- **Call for Developers**: Provide digital learning solutions to enrich the XR4ED platform, using XR technologies, including both hardware and software. Applicants applying to this track must choose one of the six challenge areas and provide a solution for it.

- **Call for Pilots**: Develop a market ready educational product addressing one of the six challenge areas. The product prototype must undergo mini-pilots testing, in collaboration with educational actors. All developed solutions will be based on open standards and will be published on the European solution catalogue.

The Open Call targets start-ups and SMEs that are providers of XR technologies for education; and start-ups, SMEs and educational institutions (schools, high schools, universities and VET institutions) that are providers of digital learning solutions and contents. Specific conditions for participation of these organisations apply and are detailed below.

2 General information

2.1 Terms and Definitions

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

2.1.1 Persons, entities, and committees

The following terms and definitions are related to persons, entities, and committees.

Term	Definition
Consortium	Group of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible for implementing the XR4ED project as defined in the Grant Agreement number 101093159.
Applicant	Individual or organisation that intends to submit or has submitted a proposal to the funding programme.
Beneficiary	An individual or organisation that has submitted a proposal to the funding programme that has been accepted for funding and has signed or is in the process of signing a sub-grant agreement.
External evaluator	An expert that has been invited by XR4ED to become an external evaluator and assist in the evaluation of the proposals submitted to the funding programme. Experts cannot have conflicts of interest and are bound by their own confidentiality agreement.

2.1.2 Funding programme

The following terms and definitions are related to the funding programme.

Term	Definition
XR4ED funding programme	Programme under which the present open call is run. It is defined by the documents and templates provided by the XR4ED consortium as defined in section 4.1. The funding programme considers two parts: (1) Open call for proposals, evaluation, contract preparation and signing; (2) implementation of the projects by selected beneficiaries.
Proposal phase	Period when applicants can submit proposals to the open call. Each open call has a fixed deadline that is automatically enforced.

Term	Definition
Evaluation phase	Period when the consortium evaluates and ranks the applications. At the end of the phase, all proposals are notified of the results of the evaluation.
Contract preparation phase	Period when the selected proposals and the consortium complete the administrative procedures to sign the sub-grant agreement and prepare administrative documents.
Implementation phase	Successive period of 12 months when the work is performed by the beneficiary. At the end of each stage, the project is subject to a formal evaluation made by an internal evaluation team to assess if the project is meeting its objectives.

2.2 Means of submission

The XR4ED pages on the F6S platform will be the entry point for the submission of all proposals to the XR4ED open calls.

- Call for Developers - apply [here](#).
- Call for Pilots - apply [here](#).

Any proposal submitted through other channels will be automatically rejected.

Any documentation that is required and requested by the XR4ED consortium should be submitted via a dedicated channel that will be indicated by the consortium during the execution of the sub-granted projects.

2.3 Language

English is the official language for the XR4ED open calls. Submissions done in any language other than English will not be eligible or evaluated.

English is the only official language during the whole implementation of the XR4ED programme. This means that any requested submission of documentation and deliverables will be done in English to be eligible.

2.4 Documentation formats

Any documentation requested in any of the phases of the open call and projects' implementation must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing. For Annex 2, formatting guidelines must be respected as defined in the document.

2.5 Data protection

To process and evaluate applications, XR4ED consortium will need to collect personal and industrial data. F6S Network Ireland Limited, will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the F6S platform for these purposes. Please see the privacy policy here. A Data Protection Officer (DPO) has been appointed by F6S to ensure compliance with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and that personal data is collected, processed, and stored in a secure manner.

The F6S platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). Each applicant will accept the F6S terms to ensure compliance. Please refer here to review the F6S platform's privacy policy and data security policy.

Apart from the F6S platform, data will also be stored in the F6S Google Drive, and in the project repository on SharePoint managed by the project coordinator CYENS.

Please note that the XR4ED consortium must retain generated data until five years after the balance of the XR4ED project is paid or longer if there are ongoing procedures (such as audits, investigations or litigation). In this case, the data must be kept until the end.

2.6 Origin of the funds

Selected applicants will sign a dedicated sub-grant funding agreement (see Annex 6) with the XR4ED consortium. The funds attached to the sub-grant funding agreement come directly from the funds of the European project XR4ED and therefore remain property of the EU until the payment of the balance, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in XR4ED via the European Commission GA no. 101093159.

As detailed in Annex 3, the relation between the sub-grantees and the EC through the XR4ED project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees. It is the task of the sub-grantees to respect them and of the XR4ED consortium partners to inform about them.

3 Participation and eligibility criteria

XR4ED invites entities to submit proposals to develop projects that will take advantage of the XR4ED solutions, validate them, and further contribute to enriching the XR4ED platform. The following eligibility criteria, related to the applicants, funding, and proposals apply.

- Submissions will only be accepted through the F6S platform and respective page dedicated to the XR4ED – Open Call.

- Fit within the target applicant as indicated in section 3.1.1.

- Are legally based in an eligible country as indicated in section 3.1.1.

- Have provided their application and all requested documents only in the English language.

- Have provided the proposal description using the XR4ED – Open Call Proposal Description Template (Annex 2.1) and followed all mandatory guidelines.

3.1 Applicants' and consortium eligibility

All applying entities and consortia members must meet the requirements described in this section to be eligible for the XR4ED – Open Call.

3.1.1 Types of applicants

The call will fund projects developed by single entities or a consortium of 2-3 entities, led by a Coordinator. Natural persons applying alone are not eligible.

Note: In the Call for Developers, only start-ups, SMEs and Mid-Caps are eligible to participate (alone or as a consortium of 2-3 entities). In the Call for Pilots, a consortium is required (and must be led by a start-up/ SME).

The following types of entities (legally established) may apply as part of a consortium:

- **Start-ups, SMEs**[1] and **Mid-Caps**[2] that are providers of XR technologies for education or providers of digital learning solutions.

- **Universities**, working on XR research and innovation focused on digital learning solutions.

- **Vocational and educational training (VET) organisations**, working in the areas addressed by the Open Call, and capable of working on programmes and pilots aligned with the challenge areas.

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[1] 1 A SME is considered as such if it complies with the European Commission's Recommendation 2003/361/EC.
[2] A Mid-Cap is an enterprise that is not an SME and that has up to 3,000 employees, considering the staff headcount is calculated according with Articles 3 to 6 of the Annex to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC

- **Non-for-profit organisations** representing and/ or working with the target groups (e.g. vulnerable/ underserved groups, teachers, students, primary/ high schools) required for the open call challenge areas (as defined in Annex 1.1).

Note: Universities, VET organisations, and non-for-profit entities can only apply as part of a consortium and not individually.

3.1.2 Consortia Requirements

For the Call for Pilots, when applying as a consortium (mandatory condition), the following rules apply:

- The consortium must be led by a start-up/ SME (who will act as the consortium Coordinator).
- A 2nd and 3rd partner (if applicable) must be an SME (including start-ups), mid cap, university, VET, or non-for-profit organisation, showing capacity to contribute to the development of the XR-based digital learning solution and mobilisation of the required education actors to carry out the pilot activities.
- The specific roles of each partner must be described in the technical proposal.

Note: All entities, including those participating in a consortium, must be registered with a verifiable VAT (which will be requested as part of the individual Declaration of Honour). Unincorporated startups are not eligible, even if the Coordinating entity on a given application is registered.

3.1.3 Eligible countries

All entities, including those participating in a consortium, must be established in any of the following countries to be eligible to participate in the XR4ED – Open Call:

- The Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions.
- Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to Member States.
- Horizon Europe associated countries (those that have signed an agreement with the EU as identified in the [HE Programme Guide](#)) according to the updated list published by the EC.
- In general, the XR4ED – Open Call follows the rules applied by the EC for the R&D Programme Horizon Europe in terms of geographical coverage, eligibility, and exclusions, which take precedence.

Note: the UK is not eligible to participate as they have joined the Horizon Europe programme as an Associated country in January 2024. The XR4ED project and FSTP funds are prior to the UK and EU agreement.

3.1.4 Conflict of interest

Applications will not be accepted from entities who are partners (beneficiaries) or affiliated entities/ linked-third parties in the XR4ED consortium or who are formally linked in any way to them. Any entity with a previous formal and legal connection to a XR4ED beneficiary (e.g., spin-off), will not be accepted, unless a minimum of 3 years (as of 1 January 2024) has passed since the termination of the link.

Applicants must not have any current and/or potential conflict of interest with the XR4ED – Open Call selection process and during the whole programme. Applicants must formally and immediately notify the XR4ED Coordinator of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

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

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

3.1.5 Number of proposal submissions

The XR4ED – Open Call is a competitive funding programme. An SME – participating alone or as part of a consortium – can only participate in one proposal to this open call.

Exceptionally, universities can participate in more than one proposal. However, only one proposal will be funded per entity, regardless of the track and challenge.

3.2 Financial eligibility

The following financial conditions apply for proposals to be eligible:

- The total budget per project may not exceed €230.000. The total amount requested (not exceeding €230.000) must represent 100% of the total project costs, and cover personnel costs, other direct costs, and indirect costs (25%). Subcontracting is not eligible in this open call.

- All proposals must provide justifications of the planned costs and resources of the project following the guidelines and calculation rules provided in Annex 2.1 – Technical proposal.

- For equipment costs:
  - Call for Pilots: only depreciation costs are accepted must be justified.
  - Call for Developers: equipment costs are not accepted as costs.

For approved projects, the funds will be disbursed in lump sums and pending the successful delivery and evaluation of reports.

3.3 Other conditions

Each applicant must confirm:

- The proposed project is based on original research/ ideas and, going forward, any foreseen developments are not limited by third party rights, or are clearly stated if they are limited.

- The project is based on work that has not been developed and offered as a commercial product or solution.

- It is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty according to the European Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18.

- The participating organisations should not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.

- The organisations should not have convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, and unethical or illegal business practices.

- It is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national and EU authority.

Note: Third parties receiving financial support from XR4ED through the open call will not become part of the XR4ED Grant Agreement. The XR4ED Grant Agreement will not need to be amended to include the selected beneficiaries.

4 Open call submission, selection, and contracting

Proposals submitted to the XR4ED – Open Call are submitted in a single stage and evaluated in multiple steps, as presented in the figure below.
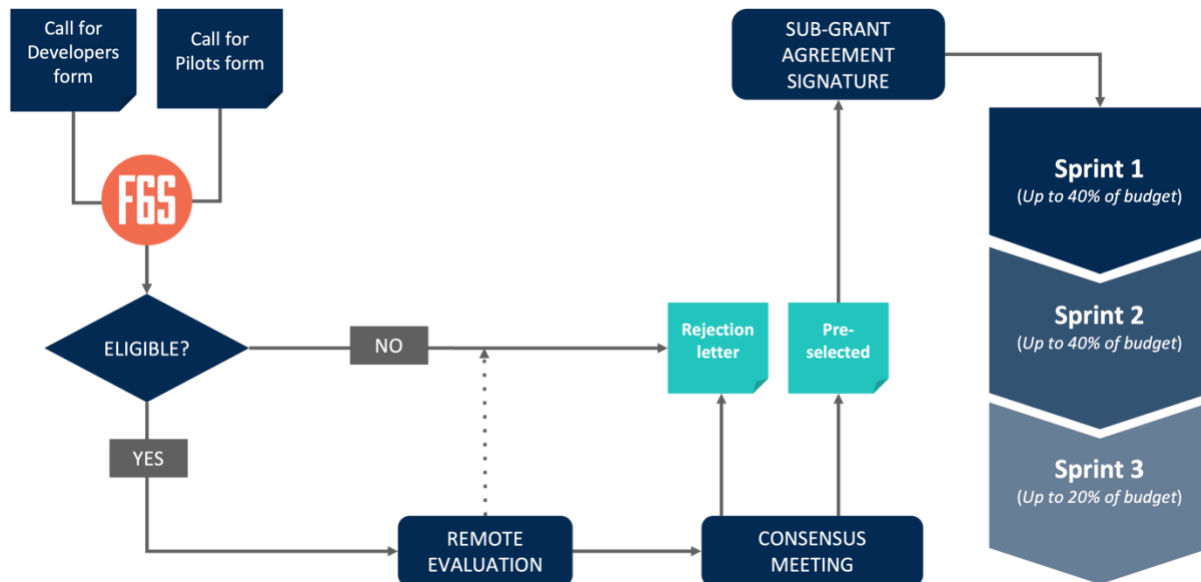
4.1 Proposal preparation and submission process

The submission of proposals to the XR4ED - Open Call must follow the steps listed in this section.

The open call launches on **1 May 2024**. The deadline for submission of proposals is **3 July 2024**, 17:00 CEST (Brussels time).

4.1.1 Applicants' registration

Those interested in submitting a proposal to the XR4ED – Open Call must be registered on the F6S platform: https://www.f6s.com. The F6S platform will be the central interface for managing the proposals during the open call.

4.1.2 Proposal preparation and submission

Applicants must consider the following when preparing their proposal:

- Applicants must apply online and answer all mandatory questions (with no exception) at:
  - XR4ED - Call for Developers
  - XR4ED - Call for Pilots

- Any submission provided by any means other than F6S will not be accepted.

- The information and documentation to be provided/ submitted are:
  - **Application form**: includes the administrative questions to be completed directly on the F6S platform at the respective call page (above).
  - Selection of the **challenge** the proposal addresses (on the application form and technical proposal template). Please note that the open call will fund a maximum number of proposals per each challenge.
  - **Annex 2.1 - Technical Proposal**, submitted as a PDF only. This describes the project and is structured into multiple mandatory sections. *Note: The technical annex provides guidance on document formatting and the required items to be addressed.*
  - Information addressing general questions for statistical purposes.
  - Tick boxes for the applicants to confirm that they have read and agree with the conditions defined in this Guidelines for Applicants and the open call.
  - Applicants are recommended to become familiar with Annex 3 - Sub-grant agreement; Annex 4 – Declaration of Honour (applicable to all entities); Annex 5 – Consortium Declaration of Honour; and Annex 6 – SME Declaration (applicable to entities that are SMEs). These documents will be requested from the applicant if they are selected for funding and are mandatory to finalise the contract and enter the funding programme.
  - **It is strongly recommended that applicants submit their proposal well before the deadline**. If the applicant discovers an error in the proposal, and if the call deadline has not passed, the applicant may request the XR4ED team to re-submit the proposal (for this purpose please contact support@f6s.com). However, XR4ED does not guarantee that a resubmission will be feasible in due time in case the request for resubmission is not received by the XR4ED team at least 48 hours before the open call deadline.
  - The open call deadline will not be extended unless a major problem with the F6S platform makes the system unavailable. In case an extension is provided, all applicants will be notified.

○ The failure to submit a proposal on time, for any reason, including network delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

4.1.3 Selection of the open call and challenge area

The XR4ED – Open Call welcomes proposals that address one of two sub-calls (tracks) and six challenge areas, as shown in the figure below. There are specific requirements to be addressed in the application form and Annex 2.1 - Technical proposal depending on the track and challenge selected. Please refer to Annex 1.1 - OC Technical specifications for the requirements.

XR4ED has defined a minimum number of proposals that will be funded per challenge area, as defined in Annex 1.1 - OC Technical Annex, as long as these are above the defined evaluation threshold.

In the case there are challenge areas without proposals that guarantees this distribution, primacy will be given to the proposals with the highest score. Challenge areas will alternately be allocated additional proposals until each track has been allocated the targeted 10 proposals.

For challenge areas where more than one proposal will be funded (i.e. virtual field trips applications (3), training of young professionals (2), and accessibility and inclusion (2)), a balanced geographical coverage will also be prioritised, based on the country of the Coordinator.

4.1.4 Proposal TRL requirements

The XR4ED – Open Call focuses on the development of projects that take advantage of the XR4ED solutions, validate them, and further contribute to enriching the XR4ED platform. With that in mind, and with the objective enabling solutions to be ready for the market, the open call will accept proposed solutions currently at a minimum TRL 4 and capable of scaling up to a minimum of TRL 6-7. The applicant must justify the start and end TRL in their proposal.

4.2 Proposal evaluation and selection

The evaluation of proposals is carried out by the XR4ED consortium with the support of independent external experts (Evaluation Panel). The XR4ED consortium ensures that the process is fair and in line with the principles outlined in the European Commission's rules on proposal submission and evaluation.

4.2.1 Step 1: Eligibility verification

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

- Submissions have been made ONLY through the F6S platform and by the defined deadline.
- The proposing entities are legal entities established in an eligible country and eligible for funding under Horizon Europe rules.
- The proposing consortia meets the consortium formation requirements.
- The proposal, including the F6S application form and all requested and mandatory information and documents, are fully completed (this includes a full technical proposal with all sections completed).
- Current and targeted TRL as defined in the F6S application form (only applies to the Call for Developers).
- Within the budget and defined budget rules, as provided in Annex 2.1.
- The proposal is written in the English Language.

A proposal is only considered eligible if its content corresponds to the objectives of the XR4ED – Open Call, including the specific eligibility conditions defined in the relevant sections of this Guidelines for Applicants. The eligibility check enables the creation of a shortlist of proposals to be evaluated in the next step of the evaluation process. Proposals marked as non-eligible will receive a rejection letter with a justification.

4.2.2 Step 2: External remote evaluation

Eligible proposals will advance to the external evaluation phase, which will be done remotely by expert evaluators.

The evaluators will be selected from a pool of experts established through a call for expressions of interest. The call will invite experts to provide their expertise in the domains addressed by the open call, as well as experience in evaluations. Expert profiles will be evaluated and a pool of evaluators will be established. The top-ranked experts will be invited to evaluate proposals.

Evaluators are required to be independent, impartial, and objective. All evaluators will sign a contract, which includes a declaration of confidentiality and the absence of conflicts of interest. Any known conflict

of interest will be immediately communicated to the XR4ED team. Evaluators will also be bound by strict confidentiality throughout the full evaluation process.

Two external evaluators will evaluate each proposal and will be distributed considering their domains of expertise and, whenever possible, country of origin.

The proposals will be scored based on the criteria in the table below. *Note that depending on the track, each criterion has a different weighting.*

Criterion	Specific criteria evaluated
1. Innovation *Weighting:* *Call for Developers: 30%* *Call for Pilots: 20%*	**General** ● Alignment of the proposal with the XR4ED project, specific track, and challenge area being addressed. ● Project objectives (general and specific), following the SMART criteria. ● Challenges that the proposed project will solve. ● Ethical or legal issues associated with the proposed project. **Specific to the Call for Developers** ● Description of the proposed solution and how it is novel or not yet widely deployed. ● Starting and target TRL, and respective rationale. **Specific to the Call for Pilots** ● Description of the proposed pilot and how it is novel or not yet widely deployed.
2. Impact *Weighting:* *Call for Developers: 30%* *Call for Pilots: 30%*	**General** ● Overall impact of the project and socio-economic benefits for the XR industry. ● Contribution to the XR4ED platform and the XR4ED technological and business objectives (see here). ● Quality and effectiveness of the proposed promotion and dissemination activities, and exploitation measures. **Specific to the Call for Developers** ● Contribution to the applicants business strategy and quality of the plan for the commercialisation of the solution. **Specific to the Call for Pilots** ● Description of how the XR methods developed and used can support learning processes.
3. Replicability *Weighting:* *Call for Developers: 20%* *Call for Pilots: 30%*	**General** ● Quality of the materials and other support mechanisms to ensure the replicability and uptake of the solution in other contexts.

Criterion	Specific criteria evaluated
	Specific to the Call for Developers ● Replicability of the XR-based digital learning solutions to other areas beyond the challenge area addressed. **Specific to the Call for Pilots** ● Replicability of the solution and educational programme in other contexts (different countries, age groups, schooling levels) beyond those covered in the pilot.
4. Implementation and capacity *Weighting:* *Call for Developers: 20%* *Call for Pilots: 20%*	**General** ● Quality and logic of the work plan, including proposed activities and outputs. ● Quality, relevance and achievability of proposed milestones and KPIs (XR4ED specific and project defined) ● Description of risks that might affect the work plan. ● Quality of the project team and capacity to deliver the project; specific roles of the partners (in the case of a consortium); quality of the gender balance. ● Rationale of the project costs and other resources.

For each criterion under examination, score values represent the rationale detailed in the table below.

Score	Rationale
1 - Poor	The proposal addresses the criterion in an inadequate manner or there are significant weaknesses.
2 - Fair	The proposal addresses the criterion broadly, but there are still several weaknesses.
3 - Good	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but improvements are necessary.
4 - Very Good	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but some improvements are still possible.
5 - Excellent	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Each criterion will be scored between 1 and 5. Half point scores are not given. The final score (including for each criterion) is calculated based on the average of the scores provided by the evaluators. Therefore,

final scores may be a decimal. The threshold for each criterion is three (3), therefore any criterion with a score less than three will disqualify the proposal.

Each evaluator will record their individual assessment of each proposal using an Individual Evaluation Report (ISR). A single Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) will be prepared by the Evaluation Panel, representing opinions and scores on which the evaluators agree.

4.2.3 Step 3: Ranking of proposals and selection

After the external remote evaluation process, all proposals will be ranked in a single list (according to the respective track). The primary rule for ranking proposals will be their overall score, based on the average scores of the evaluators. In the case there are proposals in the same position, priority will be given to the proposals with the highest score in specific criteria, considering the following order:

1. Criterion 2 - Impact (*both tracks*)
2. Criterion 1 - Innovation (Call for Developers) | Criterion 3 - Replicability (Call for Pilots)
3. Criterion 3 - Replicability (Call for Developers) | Criterion 1 - Innovation (Call for Pilots)
4. Criterion 4 - Implementation and capacity (*both tracks*)

After applying these tie-break rules, if there are still proposals in the same position, priority will be given to those with a share of women and men in the consortium that is closer to 50/50, following European guidelines on gender equality.

The ranking of proposals will also respect the conditions regarding the distribution per challenge area and a balanced geographical coverage, as defined in section 4.1.3.

Ten proposals will be selected for each track, and at least the minimum number of proposals per challenge (assuming they have met the threshold).

All applicants at all stages of the evaluation will be informed about the result of their evaluation along with an evaluation report.

4.2.4 Redress process

Within three (3) working days of receiving either (1) a rejection letter informing the proposal as non-eligible or (2) an ESR of non-acceptance, an applicant may submit a request for redress if they believe the results of the eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their proposal has been evaluated.

In such a case, an internal review committee from XR4ED will examine the applicant's request for a redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants. Requests for redress must:

- Only be related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.

- Clearly describe the complaint (in English).

- Sent by the entity's legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.

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

Please note:

- This procedure is concerned only with the general evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators provided through the evaluation report.

- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.

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

- All requests for redress will be treated in confidence and must be sent to the XR4ED team at: opencalls@cyens.org.cy.

5 Administrative check and contracting

After concluding the evaluation phase, representatives of the selected proposals will be invited to the contracting phase.

Contract preparation will run through an administrative and financial check (and potentially into technical or ethical/security negotiations) based on evaluators' comments. On a case-by-case basis, a phone call or teleconference may be required with a selected project to clarify specific questions.

The objective of the contract preparation is to fulfil the legal requirements between the XR4ED consortium and the sub-grantees of the open call. The items covered are presented in the table below.

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

Requirement	Description
Proof of Legal Existence	Company register, official journal or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
Specific to SMEs	Proof of the SME condition is required: ● If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the EC Participant Portal, the PIC number must be provided. ● Provision of the signed (with a valid e-signature) SME declaration (Annex 6): in the event the beneficiary declares being non-autonomous, the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organisations is required. A Status Information Form may be requested, which includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company. ● Supporting documents. In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified: any other supporting documents which demonstrate headcount and ownership such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional, association records, etc.
Declaration of Honour	One document per entity of the consortium, signed by the legal representative of the entity.
Consortium Declaration of Honour	One document for the consortium, signed by the legal representative of each entity of the consortium.
Bank Account information	The account where funds will be transferred will be indicated via a form signed by the entity, individuals, and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the entity/ individual. Provided using Annex 7.
Sub-grant agreement	Signed between the XR4ED consortium, represented by its coordinator (CYENS) and the beneficiary. The sub-grant agreement will also include the comments (if any) of the proposal's ESR to the work plan.

Note: the contract as provided to the sub-grantee is final and may not be changed, including the addition or removal of any articles or other content.

All documentation that requires a signature (e.g., Declaration of Honour, SME Declaration (if applicable), Bank Account, and sub-grant agreement must be signed using a valid electronic digital signature.

The request of the above listed documentation will be sent to the project representatives, including deadlines by which information and documentation should be sent. In general, the negotiation should be concluded within 2 weeks. An additional period may be provided by the XR4ED coordinator in case of a relevant reasoning. In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the proposal is automatically rejected and the next proposal in the reserve list is invited to initiate the contract preparation.

At the end of the contract preparation and negotiation phase, the sub-grant agreement (Annex 3) will be signed between the XR4ED consortium represented by its coordinator (CYENS) and the Lead Beneficiary.

Further guidance on the use of qualified signatures

XR4ED will only use and accept digital and qualified electronic signatures in all documents included in the proposal and in the subsequent sub-grant agreements. A qualified electronic signature is an advanced electronic signature which is additionally created by a qualified signature creation device (QSCD); and is based on a qualified certificate for electronic signatures. Applicants may use any Digital Signature Services that support qualified digital signatures. Scanned wet signatures (hand-written signatures) are not considered eligible.

The European Commission proposes a demo of DSS (Digital Signature Services), a tool that enables the signature of documents. More information about qualified digital signatures is available here.

6   Incubation and funding programme overview

After the finalisation and signing of the sub-grant agreement, the awarded sub-granted projects will move into the incubation and funding programme. This includes three main phases and stretches along the three stages and 12 months of the programme.

Phase	Activities & requirements
Phase 1 - Launch & bootcamp	**Activities** ● Participation in a 1-day kick-start bootcamp. ● Delivery of interactive workshops and fast-paced mentoring to enable the teams to refine and adapt their XR projects into scalable businesses/ programmes. **Requirements** ● Delivery of a detailed project implementation report associated with 1st payment (40%).
Phase 2 - Acceleration	**Activities** ● Participation in a design-led process to discuss principles such as ideation and prototyping. Mentors and growth coaches will collaborate with the teams to help them grow their projects in a user-centric way while maintaining business focus. Specific activities include: 　○ Discovery workshops 　○ Mentoring 　○ Growth coaching to increase acceleration 　○ Webinars **Requirements** ● Delivery of a progress report to unlock 2nd payment (40%). ● Participation in internal progress evaluation.
Phase 3 - DemoDay bootcamp	**Activities** ● Participation in a 1-day bootcamp where projects pitch their solution to a judging committee; one project per track will receive an award. ● Mentoring on investing in the XR business area. **Requirements** ● Delivery of a final report to unlock 3rd (final) payment (20%).

7 Additional considerations

The selected entities are indirectly beneficiaries of EC funding. Therefore, selected entities are responsible for the appropriate use of the funding and must comply with obligations under Horizon Europe specific requirements as described in Horizon Europe.

Specific details and guidelines related to all aspects of the responsibilities of the beneficiaries are provided in the sub-grant agreement.

7.1 Responsibilities of the beneficiaries

7.1.1 Conflict of interest

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

They must formally notify the XR4ED Coordinator without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interest and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The XR4ED Coordinator will verify if the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specific deadline.

If a sub-granted project consortium member breaches any of its obligations, the sub-grant agreement may be automatically terminated. Moreover, costs may be rejected.

7.1.2 Checks and reviews

The EC may, at any time during the implementation of the sub-project and up to five years after the end of the sub-project, arrange for a check and review to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves, including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC.

There will be no financial checks, reviews, or audits to check costs, since beneficiaries have no obligation to document the costs incurred for the action. Checks, reviews, and audits will focus on the technical implementation of the action.

7.1.3 Promoting the action and giving visibility to the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the sub-project, the XR4ED project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC.

7.2   Intellectual property rights

The results and Intellectual Property Rights developed during the sub-granted project implementation will be the exclusive property of the corresponding partner/consortium. The applicants are advised to include IPR issues and results dissemination generated from the project teams through XR4ED funding in their internal Consortium Agreement.

While the XR4ED project will support its beneficiaries in creating conditions for their solution to reach the market and have a commercial potential, it is also expected that the beneficiaries contribute with open results. Therefore, while the results and IPR remain the property of the beneficiaries, these should make available in open source all or parts of the code/ algorithms behind the solution.

Furthermore, all sub-granted projects will be required to make fully available and open access to at least three datasets generated during and as part of their project, respecting the FAIR principles.

7.3   Confidentiality and Data Protection

During the implementation of XR4Ed open call activities and for five years after the end of the programme activities, the beneficiary(ies) must keep confidential any data, documents, or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at sub-contract signature ('confidential information').

If a selected applicant requests, the EC and the XR4ED Consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial five years. This will be explicitly stated in the sub-grant agreement.

If the information has been identified as confidential during the XR4ED programme or only orally, it will be considered to be confidential only if this is accepted by the XR4ED coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the sub-grant agreement.

The selected beneficiary(ies) may disclose confidential information to the XR4ED Consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bounded by a specific non-disclosure agreement.

The final list of the awarded projects and beneficiaries will be made public, including the name of the projects, abstract, legal name of the entity, type of entity, country of origin, and projects' results, duration, and budget.

8 Contact information

The XR4ED consortium will provide information to the applicants primarily via https://www.f6s.com/xr4ed/about, so that all information (questions and answers) will be accessible to all potential applicants.

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

- More info about XR4ED at: https://xr4ed.eu/

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- Apply via:

  - **Call for Developers**: https://www.f6s.com/xr4ed-call-for-developers/

  - **Call for Pilots**: https://www.f6s.com/xr4ed-call-for-pilots

- Online Q&A and discussion forum:

  - **Call for Developers**: https://www.f6s.com/xr4ed-call-for-developers/discuss

  - **Call for Pilots**: https://www.f6s.com/xr4ed-call-for-pilots/discuss

- F6S support team (for platform issues during the application): support@f6s.com

- Other support: opencalls@cyens.org.cy