



Innovation and Capacity building

in Agricultural Environmental and Rural UAV Services



ICAERUS

D5.5: Open Call Plan & Monitoring Report Version B

**WP5: Ecosystem Building, Open Calls & Business and
Governance Modelling**

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Executive Summary

This **Open Call Plan and Monitoring Report** (Version B) provides a comprehensive update on the progress, achievements, and key outcomes of the ICAERUS Open Call scheme since its launch in April 2023. The Open Call scheme is a central component of ICAERUS, designed to promote the safe, effective, and sustainable use of drone technologies in rural areas by offering **Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)** for innovative sub-projects.

The ICAERUS Open Call scheme is structured around two streams: the **PUSH Open Calls for Innovation Development (ID)**, which target technology developers such as drone manufacturers, AI and IoT companies, and research institutes; and the **PULL Open Calls for Farming, Forestry, and Rural Challenges (FFRC)**, aimed at end-users working in agricultural production, environmental monitoring, and rural communities. Across four Open Calls (two PUSH and two PULL), the scheme has attracted **271 applications from 40 countries** and funded **20 sub-projects**, each receiving up to **€60,000 (PUSH)** or **€50,000 (PULL)**, with a total budget allocation of **€1,080,000**.

The Open Calls were managed via the Open Call Hub (OCH) platform, which served as the entry point for applications. An independent panel of external evaluators, selected through a public call, assessed the applications according to transparent procedures that included eligibility checks, a scoring system based on predefined criteria, and a redress mechanism. The evaluation criteria covered concept and feasibility, technology readiness, impact and exploitation, and organisational capacity. Discrepancies in scoring were resolved through consensus meetings. Key statistics across the Open Calls include:

- **PUSH 1** received 56 applications and funded 5 sub-projects.
- **PULL 1** received 38 applications and funded 4 sub-projects.
- **PUSH 2** received 90 applications and funded 3 sub-projects.
- **PULL 2** received 87 applications and funded 8 sub-projects.

Each sub-project is implemented over a **12-month period**, following a structured plan divided into three phases: **Design (2 months)**, **Development (7 months)**, and **Market (3 months)**. Sub-project progress is closely monitored through bi-monthly meetings, deliverable submissions, and a central tracking system that ensures alignment with broader ICAERUS work packages, such as contributions to the Drone Data Analytics Library (DDAL), dissemination and communication activities, and participation in value-added services (e.g., business coaching, stakeholder engagement, technical support, and capacity-building workshops, as detailed in Deliverable 4.4).

The **Applicant's Guides** have been iteratively updated based on the lessons learned from each call, with clarifications on eligibility criteria (such as VAT number requirements and tie-break procedures) and adjustments to the list of eligible countries. The Open Call scheme has also been actively promoted through targeted webinars—including proposal writing workshops—joint events with sister projects (such as SPADE, CHAMELEON, and FUTURAL), social media campaigns, newsletters, press releases, and blog posts that feature sub-project success stories. A dedicated Open Call section on the ICAERUS website provides detailed information on the sub-projects and their progress.

As of the time of writing, the first PUSH and PULL sub-projects have completed their activities, while the second PUSH and PULL cohorts are progressing through their implementation phases. The final Open Call Plan and Monitoring Report (Version C) will provide a complete analysis of the scheme's outcomes, impacts, and lessons learned, and is scheduled for submission in February 2026.

This report (Version B) builds upon the first iteration (Version A) and reflects the collective efforts of the ICAERUS consortium, evaluators, and sub-project teams in advancing the use of drones as innovative tools for rural sustainability and resilience.

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Abbreviations

AGA	Annotated Granted Agreement	COI	Conflict of Interest
CV	Curriculum vitae	D	Deliverable
DDAL	Drone Data Analytics Library	DoA	Description of Action
DoB	Declaration of Conducting Business	DoH	Declaration of Honour
EC	European Commission	EU	European Union
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions	FFRC	Farming Forestry and Rural Challenges
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties	GA	Grant Agreement
HE	Horizon Europe	ID	Innovation Development
M	Month	OC	Open Call
OCAB	Open Call Advisory Board	OCH	Open Call Hub
OCT	Overseas Countries and Territories	PO	Project Officer
SME	Small Medium Enterprise	UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
VAT	Value Added Tax	WP	Work Package

1 Introduction

The **Open Call Plan and Monitoring Report (B)** (Deliverable 5.5) is the second iteration of the deliverable and provides an update on the activities related to the ICAERUS Open Call, that have taken place since the launch of the 1st PUSH Open Call in April 2023.

The ICAERUS Open Call Scheme

The ICAERUS project aims to showcase and support, through application, the effective, efficient and safe deployment of drones as well as identify the risks and added value of their use in rural areas. To supplement the work conducted by the project's five (5) use cases, Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) is being used to fund **20** sub-projects across two (2) categories, the PUSH Open Calls for Innovation Development (ID) and the PULL Open Calls for Farming Forestry and Rural Challenges (FFRC) each category with two (2) launch dates. The total budget allocated is **1,080,000€** with **60,000€** allocated for each of the eight (8) selected PUSH Open Call sub-projects and **50,000€** for each of the **12** PULL sub-projects. Figure 1 provides a summary of the ICAERUS FSTP scheme.

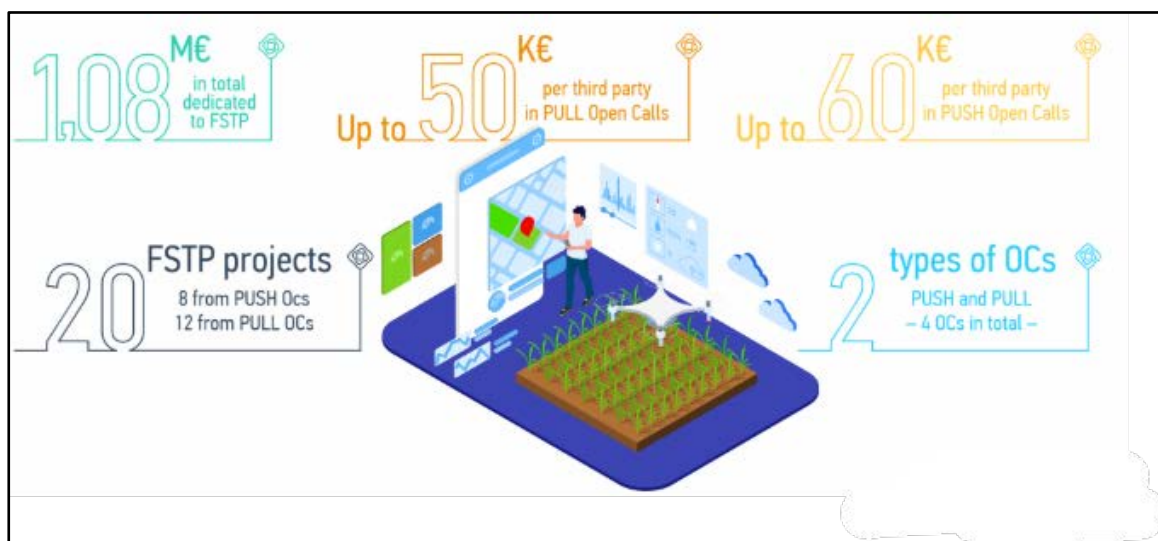


Figure 1 Summary of the ICAERUS FSTP scheme

Target applicants

The PUSH and PULL Open calls target different applicants and have different objectives but are complimentary in their broader aim of expanding and understanding the potential of drones in rural and agricultural settings. Table 1 provides an overview of the target applicants, objectives and timing for both open calls.

Table 1 Overview of the target applicants

	PUSH Open Call for ID	PULL Open Call for (FFRC)
Target applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drone manufacturers • AI and IoT companies • Research Institutes • Starts ups/SMEs 	End users in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agricultural production • Environmental monitoring • Rural communities
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery and exploitation of drone related data sets which allow the assessment of technical and/or non-technical hypotheses • Development of new ideas, concepts, prototypes which could be introduced to the 	Utilisation of drones and their services to address individual commercial needs (e.g., crop production, early warning systems) and/or community related issues (e.g., disaster risk reduction, wildlife conservation)

	market	
Who could apply?	SMEs or Research Institutes Single applicants Legal entity in HE country	End users Single applicants Legal entity in HE country
Call dates 1	April 13, 2023- July 11, 2023	October 17, 2023- January 16, 2024
Implementation 1	November 1, 2023- October 31, 2024	April 1, 2024- March 31, 2025
Call dates 2	February 2, 2024- May 7, 2024	July 8, 2024- October 16, 2024
Implementation 2	September 2, 2024- August 31, 2025	February 3, 2025- January 30, 2026

The duration of each selected PUSH and PULL sub-project is **12** months and is broken down into **3** phases:

- Phase 1: Design (**2** months)
- Phase 2: Development (**7** months)
- Phase 3: Market (**3** months)

To receive payment, sub-projects are required to submit deliverables at the end of each phase which are evaluated by the ICAERUS Open Call Advisory Board (OCAB) composed of AUA, WU, GS, RFF. The payment scheduled is as follows:

- **30%** funding released after acceptance of the first deliverable “Activity Plan” due at the end of Phase 1 (M2)
- **50%** funding released after the acceptance of the second deliverable “Results Demonstration” due at the end of Phase 2 (M9)
- **20%** funding released after the acceptance of the third deliverable “Report on Market Associated Activities” due on M12.

Payments follow the “General eligibility conditions for lump sum costs” according to the EU Grants: AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement: V2.0 DRAFT– 01.04.2025 and specifically Article 5.

2 Call and selection of evaluators

A call for independent evaluators for the ICAERUS Open Calls was launched on February 22, 2023, and remained open to additional evaluators. The purpose was to select the external experts to assess the quality of applications received for the ICAERUS PUSH and PULL Open Calls. The Call for evaluators found in [Appendix 1](#) includes the following information:

- Information about the ICAERUS project and Open Calls
- Details on the Open Call Hub (OCH) platform
- Evaluator profile
- Financial benefits
- Evaluation procedure
- Evaluator selection process
- Expression of interest with a link directly to the OCH
- Tentative timeline of activities
- Evaluator’s liability
- Admissibility (including conflict of interest and confidentiality)

2.1 Publication and promotion of call for evaluators

The Call for Evaluators was launched in parallel with the first PUSH Open Call for Innovation Development and was published on the ICAERUS website in 02/02/2023. Interested evaluators could submit their application and CV through the OCH platform (Figure 2).

The call was aimed at independent evaluators with expertise in drones, digital technology use in agriculture and rural communities.

To expand the pool of evaluators, the call remained opened for until the close of the 2nd PULL Open Call.

The OCH was the platform used for receiving both proposals and evaluators’ applications. It was a digital platform designed for open call management and was managed by the Open Call Manager [reframe.food](#) (RFF).

Evaluators were first asked to register on the platform by selecting the “evaluator” role (Figure 3).

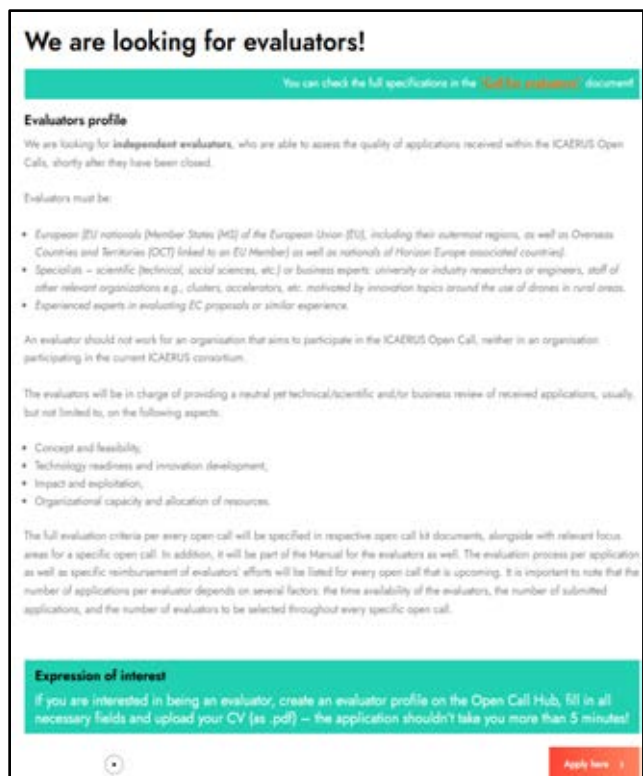


Figure 2 Call for Evaluators

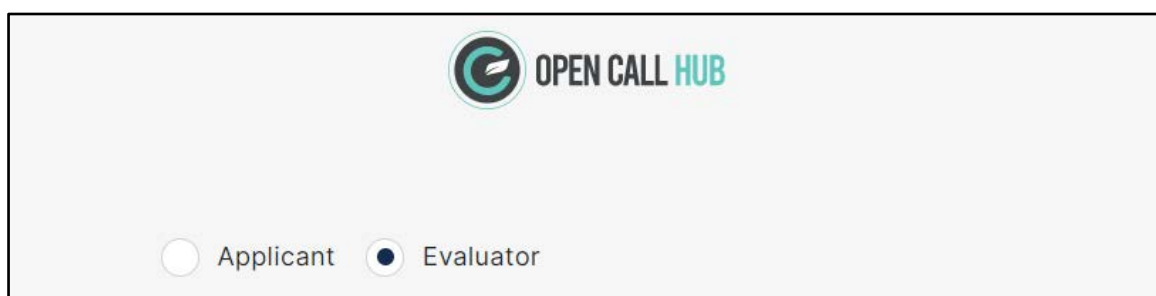


Figure 3 Open Call Platform

Applicants were then asked to create a profile, providing their name, email, phone number, address, country of residence and to upload their CV. An open-ended field was also included where they could describe their areas of expertise. In order to proceed they had to accept the terms.

In addition to the announcement on the Open Call page of the ICAERUS website the call for evaluators was promoted in a blog post, included the 2nd Newsletter sent April 28, 2023 (Figure 4) and promoted on social media (Figure 5).

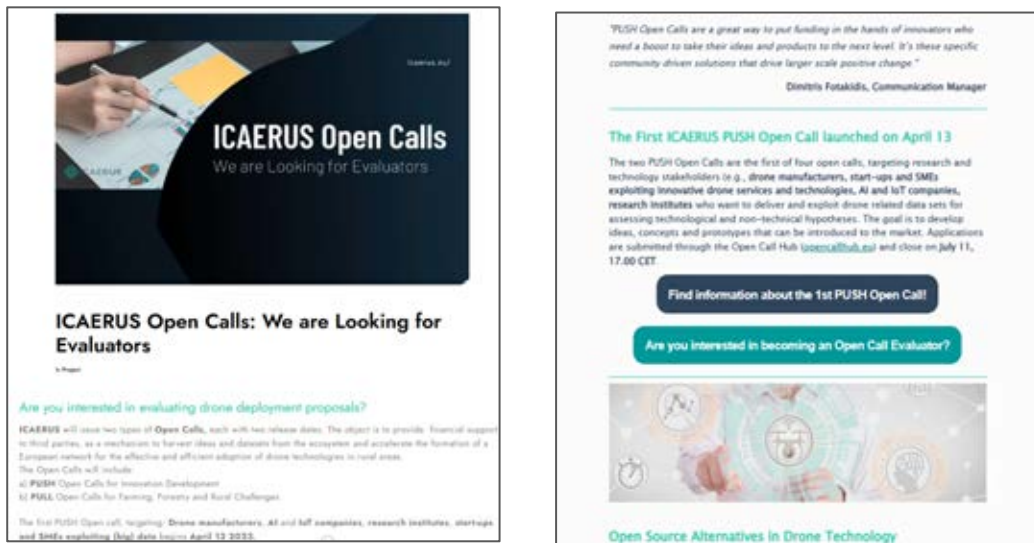


Figure 4 Website - Newsletter

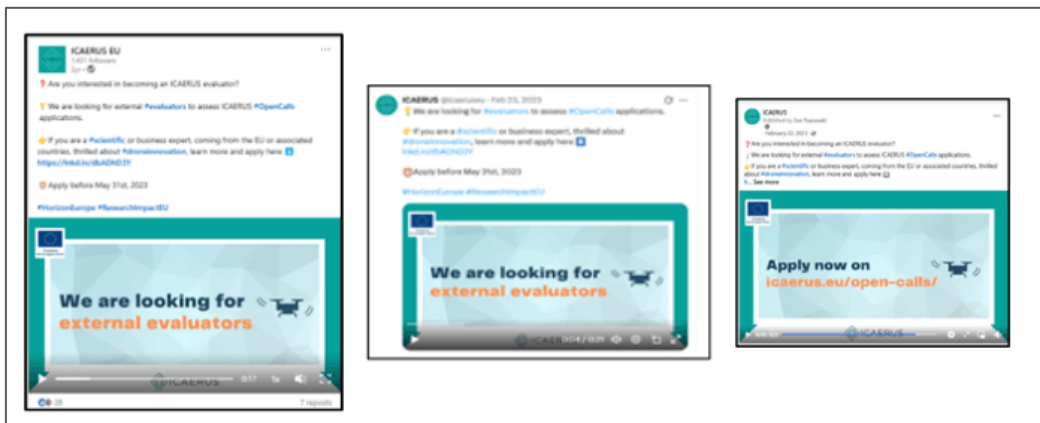


Figure 5 Social media

2.2 Evaluator selection and contracting

Using external evaluators to assess the applications guarantees a fair, balanced and credible selection process, as such the call sought experts that could provide a **neutral yet technical/scientific and/or business review of received applications**. Evaluators had to be:

- **European** (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to an EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries).
- **Specialists** – scientific (technical, social sciences, etc.) or business experts: university or industry researchers or engineers, staff of other relevant organisations e.g., clusters, accelerators, etc., motivated by innovation topics around the use of drones in rural areas.
- **Experienced experts** in evaluating EC proposals or with similar experience.

Selection of the external evaluators was led by the Open Call manager (RFF) and supported by the OCAB. During the selection process, preference was given to experts who have already evaluated EC proposals, and an equal gender balance was taken into consideration as well as geographical distribution. To ensure impartiality and prevent Conflicts of Interest (COI), external evaluators declared that they did not represent a company or country but rather acted in their own capacity and were external to the ICAERUS consortium and the Open Call (OC) applicants.

The evaluators were also expected to adhere to the guiding principles for independent experts set out by the EC including independence, impartiality, objectivity, accuracy and consistency. All external evaluators signed a confidentiality declaration certifying that they would not:

- a) Not discuss evaluation matters with anyone.
- b) Not contact consortium members or third parties.
- c) Not disclose names of fellow evaluators.
- d) Maintain confidentiality of all documents.

The COI rules are included in the Evaluator contract in [Appendix 2](#).

In addition, the country of the evaluators was taken into consideration during the selection of the evaluators, to ensure a wide distribution but also to avoid a coinciding of national interests in the proposals they were evaluating.

A series of communication was then initiated with selected evaluators in the following sequence:

1. **“Remote evaluation availability”**: A first email was sent to potential evaluators to confirm their interest and availability for evaluating the particular ICAERUS Open Call. The dates for evaluation were provided, and the following text was included “Please consider this email as our initiative for collecting the interests from potential evaluators, while the formal invitation with information about evaluation contracting and further steps will follow separately for selected evaluators.”
2. **“Remote evaluation”**: Once confirmation was received, a second email was sent providing information on the upcoming briefing meeting, the proposed payment schedule and notification that they will be contacted regarding contracting documents. The Guide for Evaluators was also shared. This document can be found in [Appendix 3](#).
3. **“Contracting”**: a third email was then sent to evaluators with instructions and a reminder regarding the payment process

The following table (Table 2) provides a summary of the number of evaluators, their countries, the number of proposals they evaluated and the total number of proposals for each open call.

Table 2 Summary of the number of evaluators

PUSH 1 55 proposals evaluated				PULL 1 38 proposals evaluated			
Evaluator	Gender	Country	No. proposals	Evaluator	Gender	Country	No. proposals
1	F	Croatia	7	1	F	Lithuania	8
2	F	Greece	7	2	M	Greece	8
3	M	Greece	7	3	M	Poland	8
4	M	Italy	7	4	M	Spain	7
5	M	Malta	6	5	F	Spain	8
6	F	Bulgaria	7	6	F	Serbia	7
7	F	Romania	7	7	M	Cyprus	8
8	M	Greece	7	8	F	Italy	7
9	M	Cyprus	7	9	F	Romania	8
10	F	Bulgaria	7	10	F	Greece	7
11	M	Ireland	7				
12	F	Italy	6				
13	F	Serbia	7				
14	F	Spain	7				
15	F	Spain	7				
16	M	Turkey	7				
PUSH 2				PULL 2			

90 proposals evaluated				87 proposals evaluated			
Evaluator	Gender	Country	No. proposals	Evaluator	Gender	Country	No. proposals
1	M	Spain	8	1	M	UK	10
2	M	Italy	8	2	M	Cyprus	13
3	M	Greece	7	3	F	Croatia	11
4	M	Greece	8	4	M	Greece	11
5	M	Italy	8	5	M	Ireland	11
6	M	Spain	8	6	M	Poland	13
7	F	Serbia	8	7	M	Italy	11
8	M	Greece	8	8	F	Romania	11
9	F	Greece	7	9	M	Greece	11
10	F	Germany	8	10	F	Italy	11
11	F	Albania	7	11	F	Serbia	11
12	F	Spain	8	12	M	Spain	11
13	M	Spain	7	13	M	Greece	13
14	M	Cyprus	8	14	M	Italy	13
15	M	France	8	15	F	Germany	13
16	M	Greece	9				
17	M	Poland	8				
18	M	Ireland	8				
19	F	Serbia	7				
20	F	Spain	8				
21	M	Spain	9				
22	F	Turkey	8				
23	F	Lithuania	7				

The overall gender balance, as shown in Figure 6, indicates a close distribution between male and female evaluators.

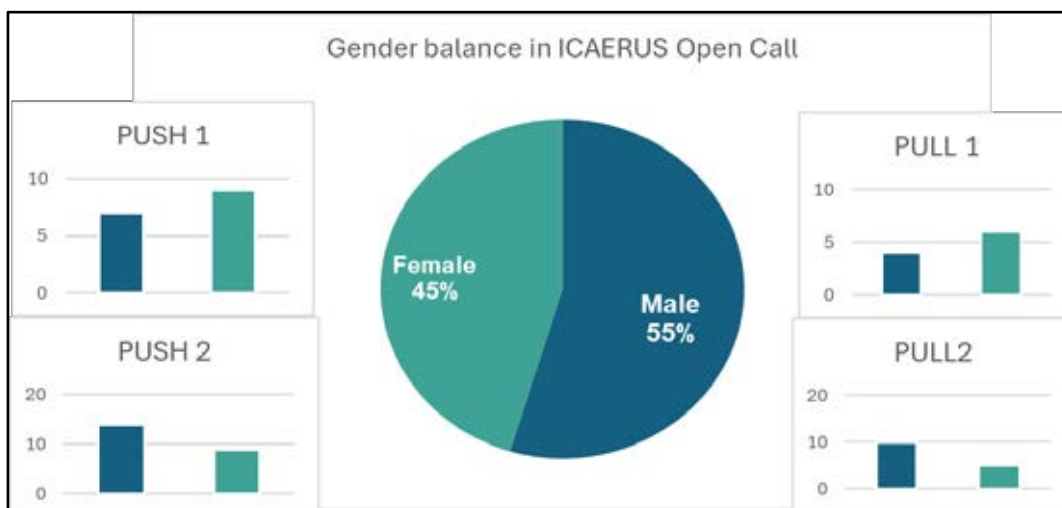


Figure 6 Gender balance between evaluators

Figure 7 shows the geographical distribution of the evaluators. The evaluators came from 17 different countries. Efforts were made to prevent overdistribution of evaluators from one country. In the case of the PULL 2 Open Call, 30% of evaluators were from Spain. This is likely due to the distribution within the pool of evaluators. By the PULL 2 Open Call evaluators were selected the pool had grown to 371 evaluators, 62 of which were from Spain (17%). It should also be noted that the area of expertise and experience of the evaluator was considered the primary criteria for selection.

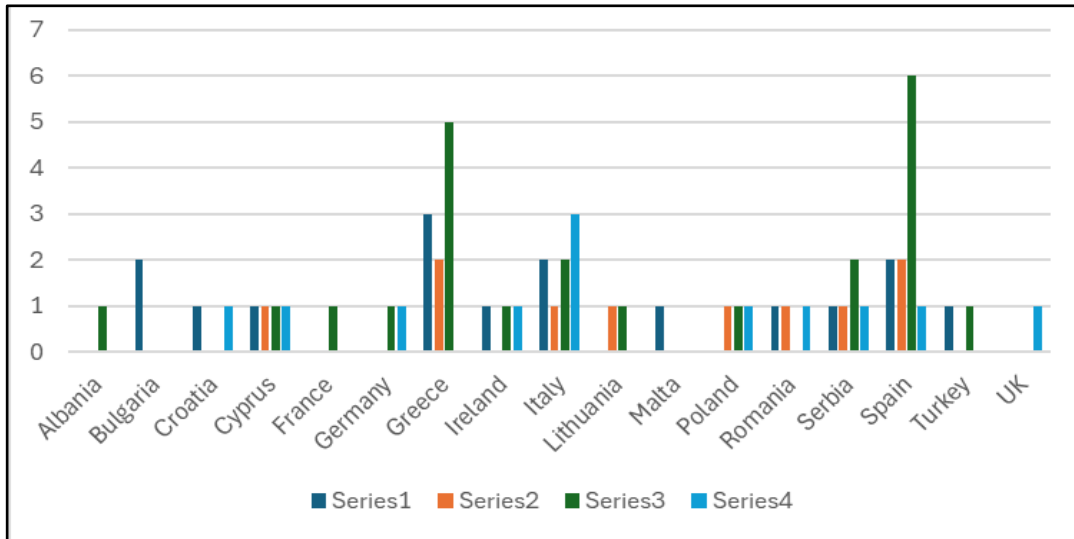


Figure 7 Geographical distribution of evaluators

2.2.1 Contracting

Following the email sent out with the contract, a deadline was set to sign and send hardcopies back to the Open Call manager/treasurer RFF prior the start of the evaluation. The Contract describes the rights and obligations applying to the Evaluator and the Contractor for the purpose of evaluating the proposals submitted to the ICAERUS Open Call (Appendix 2). All contracts were received on time and did not interfere with the start of the evaluation for any of the 4 Open Calls.

2.2.2 Briefing meeting

To initiate the evaluation process for each Open Call, RFF organised a briefing meeting to onboard the selected evaluators. Additional context for their evaluation was provided, and the expectations, processes and timelines were explained. These meetings also provided an opportunity for evaluators to ask questions and seek clarifications. The meetings were recorded (Figures 8,9) and made available to the evaluators along with the meeting presentation.

The ICAERUS Open Call team was available to the external evaluators during the whole evaluation process to answer questions and provide technical support for the OpenCall Hub (OCH).

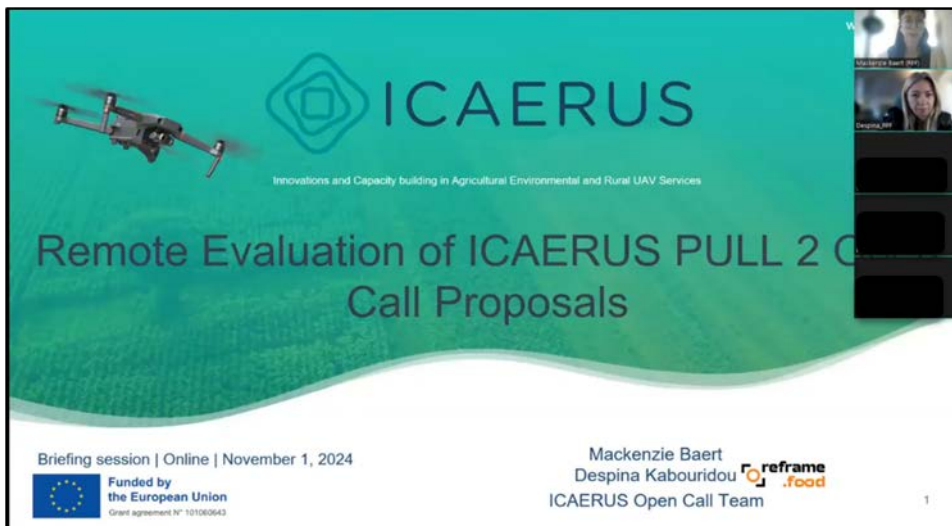


Figure 8 Example of Evaluator Briefing Meeting

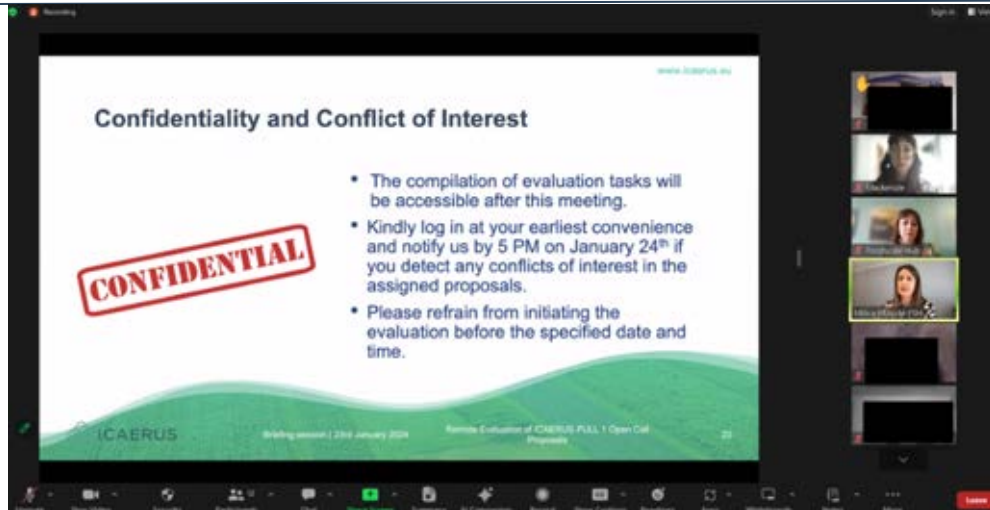


Figure 9 Example 2 of Evaluator Briefing Meeting

The entire evaluation took place through the OCH. Evaluators were asked to provide a score and comments for four (4) evaluation criteria. Discrepancies between scores greater than two (2) points for any given criteria were flagged, and the evaluators were contacted to arrange a consensus meeting. The final week of the evaluation period was reserved for such meetings. The purpose was to align evaluation reports and reach a mutual agreement on the proposal’s merits, as such evaluators also had to make sure that their comments aligned with the scores they provided.

The scores and comments were consolidated into an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) to share with the applicants. Once the ESRs were submitted and the five (5) day redress period had passed, an email was sent with instructions for receiving payment and attached the request for payment ([Appendix 4](#)) which had to be signed and sent electronically and then by mail to RFF.

3 Open Call Publication

The ICAERUS Open Call followed the requirements of the European Commission (Figure 10) and published each of the calls on the Cascade Funding page of the Funding and Tenders portal after being approved by the Project Officer (PO).

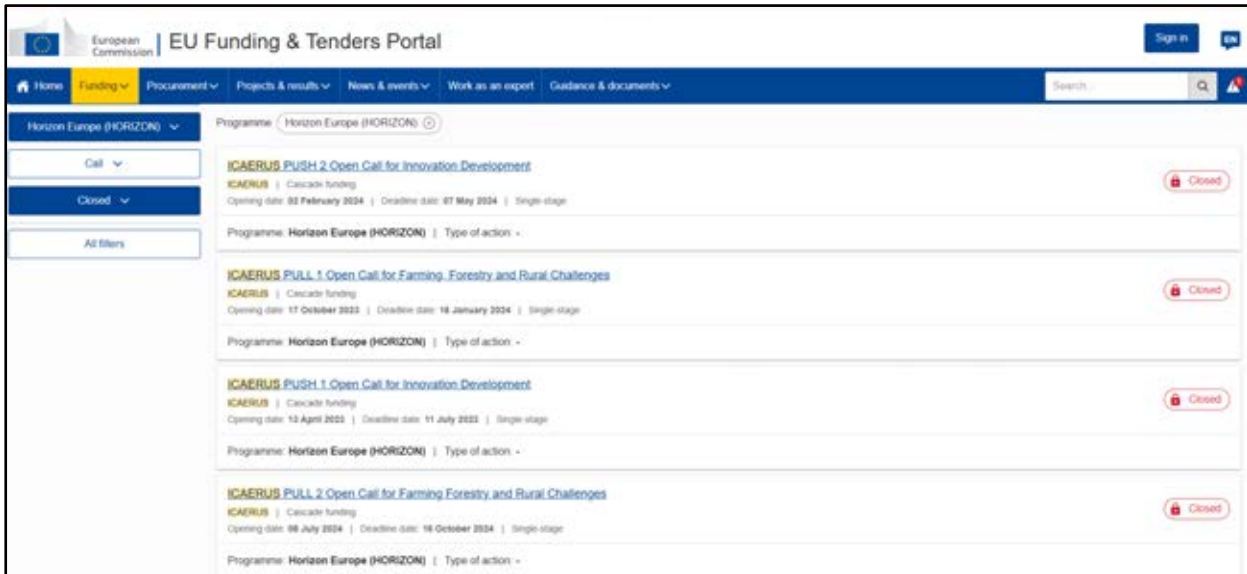


Figure 10 EU Funding and Tenders portal

The calls were also published on the ICAERUS website, with a summary of the respective call and the following documents for each call:

- Open Call text
- Applicant's Guide
- Proposal Template
- Declaration of Honour (DoH)
- Declaration of Conducting Business
- Bank Account information
- Model Sub-Grant Agreement

These documents were updated for each call and only available for the call that was open with a message indicating when call was closed, as shown in Figure 11.



Figure 11 Open Call Hub logo

In addition to the call information and text a button "**Apply Here**" directing interested applicants to the Open Call Hub was included.

The entry point for submitting proposals for all of the ICAERUS Open Calls was the Open Call Hub (<http://opencallhub.eu>) (Figure 12). The link to the platform was also provided in the Applicants' Guides, along with the specific submission procedures.



Figure 12 Message for the close of the ICAERUS Pull Open Call

It was clearly stated that applications submitted through any other channel would be automatically discarded. No applications were submitted through other channels for any of the open calls. Each Open Call was also visible on the home page of the Open Call Hub and indicated the opening and closing dates of the call as shown in Figure 13.

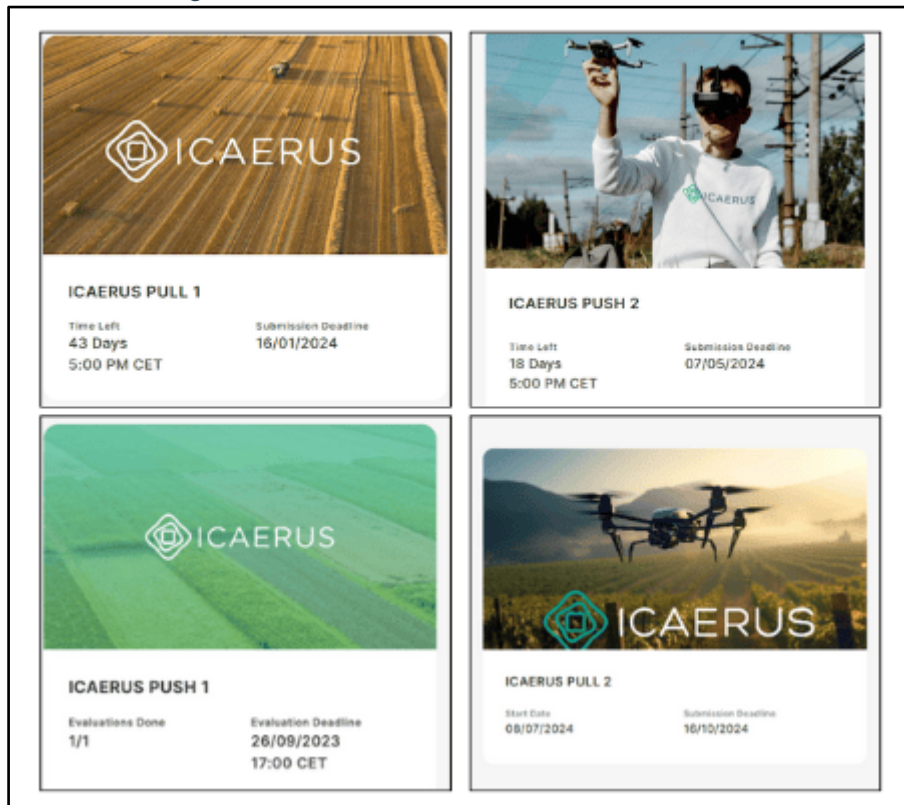


Figure 13 Open Call Hub

In order to submit an application, it was first necessary to register on the platform (Figure 14). Once a profile was created, users could start an application for any of the available open calls. The application form was the same for each of the ICAERUS calls and requested:

- Proposal title
- Proposal acronym
- Country of registration
- Organisation/company name
- Town/City
- Address
- VAT number or registration number
- Phone number
- Email address
- Sector
- Type of applicant
- Requirement to upload the proposal template, DoH and declaration of conducting business



Figure 14 Registration in platform

Once registered, applicants had the opportunity to ask questions through the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Open Call Hub as well as via email (icaerus@opencallhub.eu). Questions received through email were also added to the FAQ and answers were posted. Only questions that were not asked in English, were not replied to. In such cases, the applicant was contacted to request clarification. The questions and answers posted in the FAQs for each open call are included in [Appendix 5](#). A total of 47 questions were answered and the breakdown per OC is as follows:

- PUSH 1: 14
- PULL 1: 6
- PUSH 2: 11
- PULL 2: 16

4 Open Call Promotion

Promotion of the ICAERUS Open Calls is led by RFF, who, besides being Open Call Manager/treasurer leads T5.1: Dissemination, Exploitation & Communication Plan and its implementation carried out through T5.2 Ecosystem Building and Engagement. The ICAERUS consortium collectively plays a significant role in the translation of materials and active promotion across social media and their networks. Several tools were deployed to promote the Open Calls during their launch and implementation.

4.1 Open Call Presentation

The presentation covered the main information about the project and the call, including the total amount to be granted, the amount to be granted per sub-project, the budget that each applicant could acquire, the timeline for the submission of the proposals, as well as the timeline for the implementation of the sub-projects, the eligibility criteria, and the application process. The presentation was adapted and tailored for each PUSH and PULL OC and for each event.

4.1.1 Open Call webinars

For each Open Call launch a webinar on successful proposal writing was organised to provide additional information on the ICAERUS project and details around the particular open call. These informative sessions are open to the public and widely promoted **across** social media. The topics include:

- An overview of the ICAERUS project to provide the necessary context
- A description of the Open Calls (timelines, who can apply, basic eligibility criteria)
- Detailed map of the application and evaluation process
- Breakdown of the application including the budget
- Additional practical information and relevant Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs).
- Time is also allocated for answering questions.
- Each presentation following the PUSH1, included submission statistics and selected sub projects of the previous call(s)

1st Open Call Preparation Webinar, launched in June 2023



As part of its targeted communication and stakeholder engagement strategy, ICAERUS organised the 1st Open Call Preparation Webinar on June 9, 2023 (Figure 15). The event was co-hosted by the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) and reframe.food (formerly Foodscale Hub). The webinar recording is available on the ICAERUS YouTube channel and can be accessed via the following link [Open Call Preparation Webinar](#).

Figure 15 1st Open Call Preparation Webinar,

Sploro Cascade Funding Webinar Series – Sixth Edition

On 31 October 2023 at 10:00 CET, ICAERUS participated in the sixth edition of the Sploro Cascade [Funding Webinar Series](#) (Figure 16).



Figure 16 Participation in the Sploro Cascade Funding

Funding opportunities available through HE ICAERUS and TITAN Open Calls

A joint webinar with the Horizon Europe TITAN project (Figure 17) was organised on November 8, 2023, to provide information on both calls. Cooperating with other projects to promote the ICAERUS calls was an important strategy to attract applicants from different ecosystems. The recording of the webinar is available on the ICAERUS YouTube channel and can be accessed via the following link [Funding opportunities through ICAERUS & TITAN Open Calls](#)



Figure 17 Joint ICAERUS- Titan webinar

Joint Open Call Preparation Webinar – "How to Write a Successful Proposal"

Further collaborative promotions took place with the Horizon Europe sister projects ICAERUS, CHAMELEON, and SPADE through the co-organised an Open Call Preparation Webinar entitled "How to Write a Successful Proposal", held on 4 April 2024 (Figure 18). The recording of the session is available on the ICAERUS YouTube channel and can be accessed via the following link: [Open Call Preparation Webinar: "How to Write a Successful Proposal"](#)



Figure 18 Joint Webinar ICAERUS - CHAMELEON -SPADE

ICAERUS - FUTURAL Open Call Preparation Webinar

On 5 September 2024, ICAERUS co-organised a joint webinar with Horizon Europe FUTURAL (Figure 19) to support the successful preparation of the PULL2 Open Call.

The webinar recording is available on the ICAERUS YouTube channel via the following link [ICAERUS - FUTURAL Open Call Preparation Webinar](#)



Figure 19 Joint webinar with HE FUTURAL project

Funding Opportunities for the Agri-food Sector Webinar

On April 2, 2024 ICAERUS presented the PULL 2 Open Call during the e webinar “Oportunidades de financiación en cascada para el sector agroalimentario” (**Funding Opportunities for the Agri-food Sector**), organised by Andalucía Agrotech DIH partners CTA (Technological Corporation of Andalusia) and CT aqua Aquaculture Technological Centre (Figure 20).



Figure 20 Funding opportunities for the Agri-Food sector webinar

4.1.2 Events

The ICAERUS Open Calls were presented at a number of events, including the following:

- **SmartAgriHubs Final Event** (Figure 21a), which took place in Lisbon, Portugal, from 26 to 28 September 2022.
- **Transnational Conference on Territorial Cross-Border Cooperation** in Southeast Europe (Figure 21b). The conference which was held in February 2023, in Sofia Bulgaria attracted public sector stakeholders and was centered around Institutional Vesting and the Role of Financial Incentives.
- **Event [Startup Village Networking Event](#)** organised by AgriFood Lithuania in February, 2023.
- **BEYOND Expo** (Figure 21c), on May 26, 2023 in Thessaloniki, Greece. On 4–5 October 2023, during the

- **Synergy Days 2023** (Figure 21d) event held in Thessaloniki, Greece. The Open Calls were featured at the ICAERUS booth, and during two workshops. The first, with the sister projects SPADE and CHAMELEON, the second about FSTP opportunities.
- **1st Automation & Robotics EXPO** held in Athens, Greece on April 14th, 2024 (Figure 21e)
- **EU Agri-Food Days** on December 12, 2024 (Figure 21f) in Brussels, at the stand and during the session focused on “Empowering Farmers Through Digitalisation and Data Sharing”.



Figure 21 Open Call promotion and different events

4.2 ICAERUS website

The ICAERUS website hosts all relevant information about the ICAERUS Open Calls. Open Call Tab

A dedicated “Open Call” tab was created from the start of the project to provide information on the open calls. The basic information about both PUSH and PULL calls was uploaded from the time of the website launch (Figure 22). Once the call launched, detailed information was added along with clickable links for all of the documents in the open call kit and a link to the Open Call Hub. Once the call closed, this information was replaced with a message thanking applicants. and additional text was added once the sub-projects were selected to visit their page on the website.

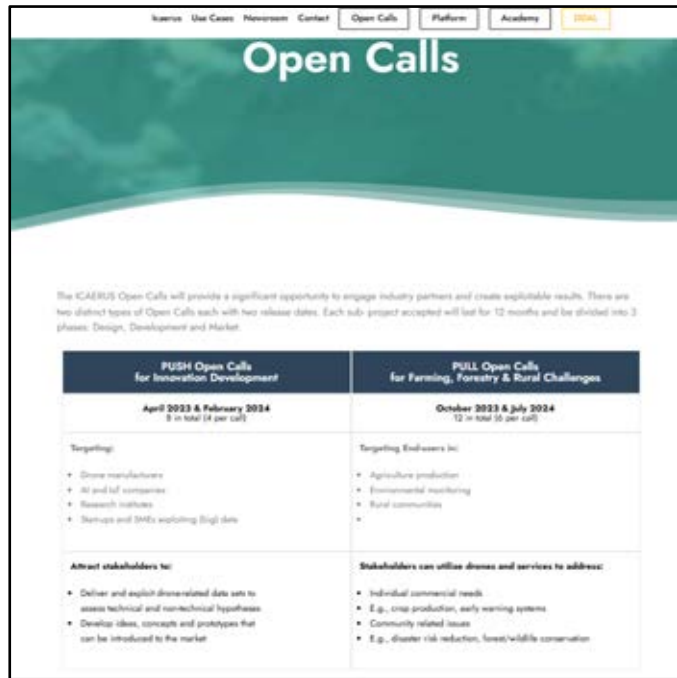


Figure 22 Open Call tab of the website

4.2.1.1 Presentation of the selected sub-projects

A dedicated page was created for each of the selected sub-project featuring details about their activities and their organisations. For easy navigation a new category “[Open Call Trials](#)” was added to the drop-down menu of the Open Call Tab. The Open Call Trials page provides an overview of each Open Call (implementation period, number of projects funded, total budget) and clickable links to the sub-project pages.

To present the selected sub-projects a drop-down menu was added to the Open Call tab. This page provides a summary of the Open Call scheme and is further broken down into each of the four (4) Open Calls (Figures 23-26). Within each call, it is possible to click on individual sub-projects to be directed to their dedicated page which summarises the project, objectives and the organisation that is running it. Sub-projects are able to provide updates and changes to their pages as they arise.

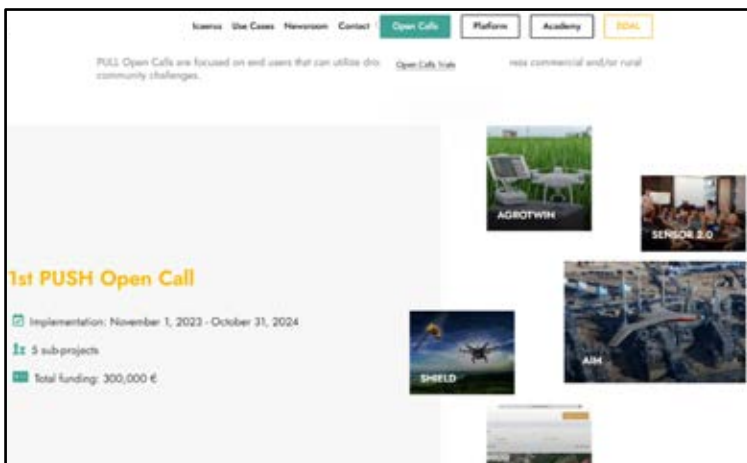


Figure 23 1st PUSH Open Call page

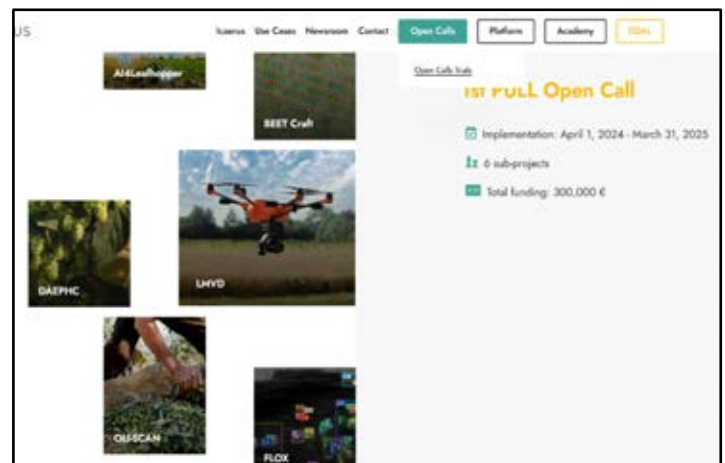
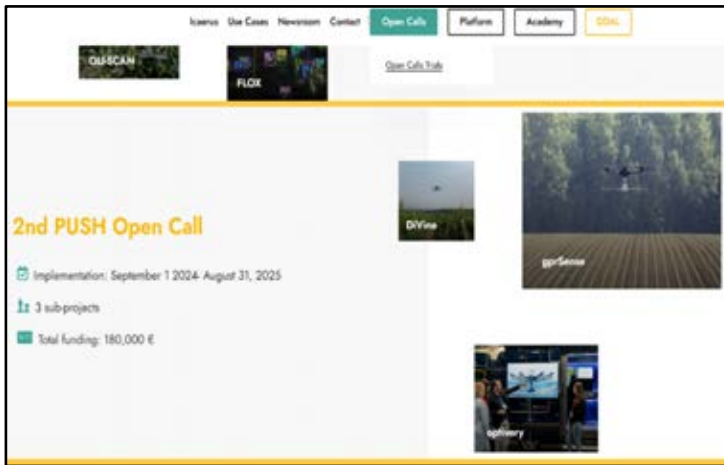
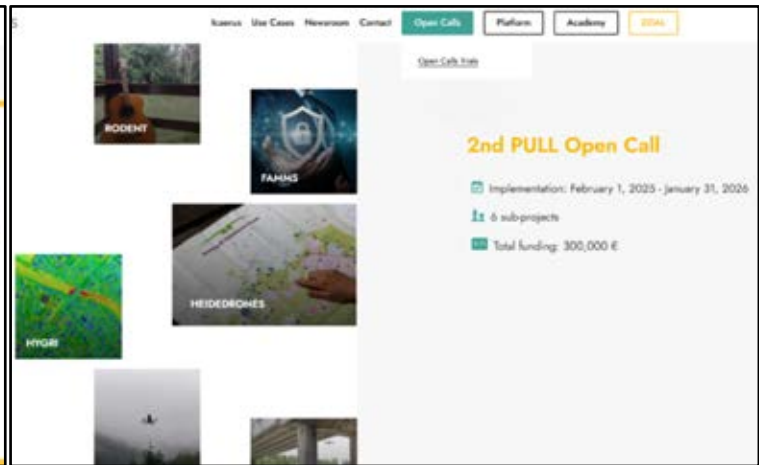


Figure 24 1st PULL Open Call page


 Figure 25 2nd PUSH Open Call page

 Figure 26 2nd PULL Open Call page

4.2.2 Blog posts

Blog posts are another ongoing channel for promoting the ICAERUS Open Calls and follow a particular order:

1. Call launch

Once the call launched a blog post was published to provide another channel for obtaining information on each call (Figure 27).



Figure 27 Call launch blog posts

2. Call statistics

After the close of each call and the completion of the eligibility check a blog post and complementary social media post were published (Figure 28) featuring key statistics of the call including the number of applications, the number of countries and the most frequent applicant country.



Figure 28 Call statistics blog post

3. Introduction to sub-projects

Once the sub-project kicks off their implementation, an introductory blog post (Figure 29) provided an overview of each project and the organisation running it.



Figure 29 Blog post introducing the sub-projects

4. Sub-project success stories

To showcase the work being conducted by the sub-projects once they start their implementation a dedicated series called “sub-project success stories” was created (Figure 30). These posts feature contributions from the sub-projects themselves about their results or areas of expertise.



Figure 30 Sub-project success stories

4.3 Press releases

Four press release (one launched July for each OC launch) (Figure 31) were prepared and shared with local and national media outlets (e.g., itspossible.gr, theseeconomy.gr). Each press release was translated into the ICAERUS partner languages which include Greek, Lithuanian, North Macedonian, Spanish, Catalan, and French.

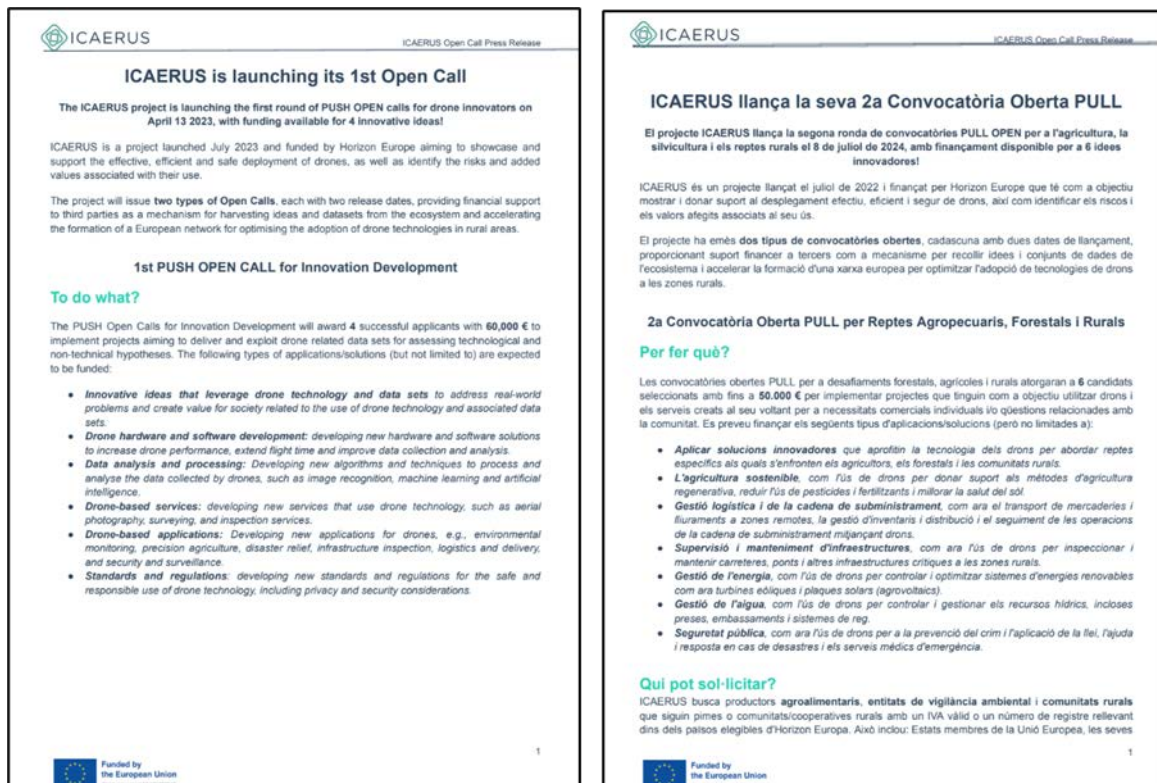


Figure 31 Example of Open Call press releases

4.4 Newsletters

The ICAERUS newsletters which are distributed quarterly provide relevant updates about the open calls, including call launches, the start of implementation or new results. To date, the Open Calls have been featured in Newsletters 2, 4, 5, 7 (Figure 32).

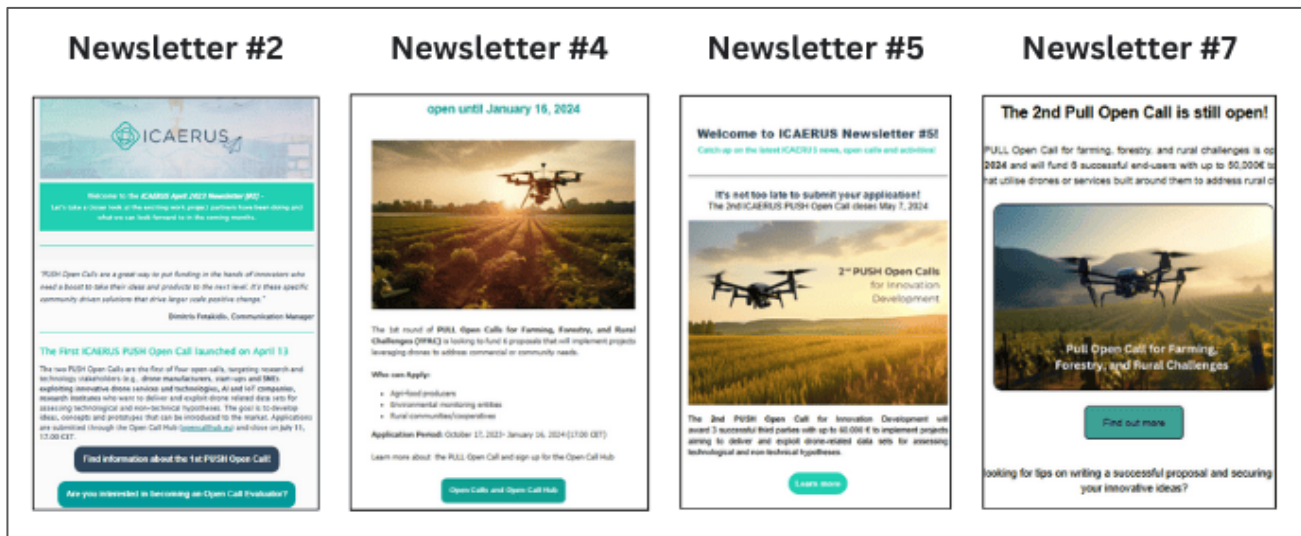


Figure 32 Newsletters

4.5 Social media

All of the project’s social media channels (LinkedIn, Facebook, X, YouTube) are actively used for the ongoing promotion of the open calls.

- **Call launch:** the launch of each call was promoted on social media along with reminders of the deadlines as they approached. Posts were also made to indicate when a call had closed.
- **Event promotion:** LinkedIn events were created for each of the webinars organised by RFF and promoted on across all channels. These webinars were also recorded and uploaded to the ICAERUS YouTube channel.
- **Sub-project promotion:** in addition to a post about the open call statistics once implementation started a series of posts introducing the sub-projects was also made. Sub-projects were encouraged from the beginning to tag ICAERUS and send material they would like promoted through the ICAERUS channels. This has ensured and is still ensuring ongoing updates of their work.

Spotlight on: For the 2nd PULL Open a [blog post](#) featuring the frequently asked questions from the OpenCall Hub was prepared and promoted on social media channels (Figure 33).



Figure 33 Q&A social media post

4.6 Printed and digital materials

A series of interchangeable posters (Figure 34) were produced to promote the open calls at events depending on which call launch was open. The PUSH and PULL posters provide an overview of each call, the eligibility and the expected projects.

At the 2023 Synergy days in Thessaloniki, Greece, the 2nd PUSH call had recently closed but the winners had not been announced, and the 2nd PULL was about to be launched. For this event, a poster featuring the statistics of the PUSH 2 was prepared and a “coming soon” poster with a large QR code linking to the Open Call page of the website was also created (Figure 35).



Figure 34 Open Call Posters



Figure 35 Synergy Days posters

For the 2nd PUSH Open Call, a cartolino with the QR was also prepared for events where it was not possible to display the posters (Figure 36).



Figure 36 Open Call Cartolino

5 Evaluation and Selection Process

The same evaluation and selection process was followed for all four (4) Open calls.

5.1 Eligibility check

Once the call closed, an eligibility check was carried out to confirm that applications adhered to the following eligibility criteria:

- alignment with the Open Calls' objectives,
- address of challenges in rural areas,
- eligible legal entity in eligible HE country,
- proposal not pre-submitted in the other open calls,
- proposed work to be carried out after the selection process,
- all required documents are correctly submitted,
- timely and in accordance with the rules, submission.

The above eligibility criteria were explicitly stated in Section 3.5 of the Applicant's Guide During the eligibility check, applicants were notified by email if additional documents were required, the most common exchanges related to the following:

- Not including the stamp or proper justification for the stamp
- Forgetting to sign a page of one of the supporting documents
- Uploading two (2) of the same supporting documents (e.g., 2 DoHs and no DoB)

All applicants contacted provided the necessary documentation promptly and were able to move on to the remote evaluation stage. Only in the most extreme cases were applicants rejected at the eligibility stage due to the following circumstances:

- Proposal template was blank or provided so little information it was impossible to evaluate
- Applicant uploaded only a CV and did not include the proposal template
- Applicants uploaded a completely different and/or irrelevant template
- A proposal did not include drones or UAVs in any capacity in their proposal.

5.2 Evaluations

The same evaluation process was followed for each Open Call. Each proposal was evaluated by a pair of evaluators ([Section 2](#)), who evaluated each proposal based upon the evaluation criteria in Table 3.

Table 3 Evaluation criteria.

Criteria	PUSH		PULL	
	Weight	Maximum points	Weight	Maximum points
Concept and feasibility	30%	6	30%	6
Technology readiness and innovation development	30%	6	20%	4
Impact and exploitation	20%	4	30%	6
Organisation capacity, sufficiency in the applicant's background and allocation of resources	20%	4	20%	4

Each criterion was scored between 1 and 5. To account for the weighting, a score of:

- 1 corresponds to 0.2 times the maximum points for the criterion,
- 2 corresponds to 0.4 times the maximum points,
- 3 corresponds to 0.6 times the maximum points,
- 4 corresponds to 0.8 times the maximum points, and
- 5 corresponds to the maximum points allocated for the given criterion.

The threshold for each criterion was 3, with a total threshold of 12.

The following information was provided to the evaluators in the evaluation guide, to clarify the expectations for each criterion:

- **Concept and Feasibility:** consider whether the proposal aligns with the Open Call and the ICAERUS project as well as its potential to be fully executed.

- **Technology Readiness and Innovation Development:** consider whether the progress seems logical, feasible and aligns with the aim of the call. No specific TRL was requested.
- **Impact and Exploitation:** consider the potential benefit to end-users and rural communities, evaluate the strategies proposed for leveraging the project's results., assess the lasting impact of the project and the potential for sustainable value creation.
- **Organisational Capacity, Sufficiency in the Applicant's Background, and Allocation of Resources:** assess the coherence and effectiveness of the work plan, consider whether the organisation has the capacity to successfully complete the project, this could also include demonstrating viable means for acquiring necessary skills/knowledge. Ensure the allocation of resources is appropriate. This includes proper justification of sub-contracting.

In addition to the points, evaluators were also expected to include relevant comments to justify the scores that they provided. Once the evaluation period closed, each proposal evaluation was reviewed to ensure:

- a) No difference greater than **2** points for any given criterion
- b) The comments provided aligned with the score (e.g., the evaluator indicated that everything was excellent, no shortcoming and gave a score of **2**)

In the second case, evaluators were notified and requested to review their scores and comments to ensure they were aligned.

In the case of differences of scores between the evaluators, consensus meetings were arranged to resolve the differences and to reach a mutual agreement.

5.3 Redress period

5.3.1 PUSH 1 Open Call

One redress request was made for the PUSH 1 Open Call. The following concerns were raised:

- The applicant disagreed with the score provided for Criterion **4**, arguing that the positive feedback did not align with the score particularly because the evaluator considered Sections 6.3-6.7 outside of the page limit.

The redress request was brought forward to the Open Call Advisory Board and was unanimously rejected since the instructions and page limit of the application were not met. The following explanation was also provided:

- Reiteration of the redress procedure as described in Section 3.5.4 of the PUSH 1 Applicant's Guide. In the case of this application, procedural activities were not the cause of disqualification. Despite exceeding the page limit, the proposal proceeded from the eligibility check to the evaluation phase.
- Clear formatting instructions were provided in the proposal template and reiterated through the FAQ and on the Open Call Hub platform.
- It was also clearly stated in the same instruction field of the proposal template that evaluators would be instructed to dismiss anything after the 10th page.

The rejection letter that was sent to the applicant is included in [Appendix 6](#).

5.3.2 PUSH 2 Open Call

The PUSH 2 Open Call received 90 eligible applications. Of those 90, 3 made redress requests which is 3.3% for this call. The threshold for the selection was **18.8**. The applicants were notified that the request had been received and brought forward to the advisory board. A meeting was held online on July 25 (Figure 37), to present each case. In addition to the presentation, meeting minutes were circulated. The agenda was as follows:

- Review of the redress request procedures
- Presentation of redress requests
 - The request
 - Comments and scores in question
 - Score thresholds
- Are there grounds for re-evaluation?

- Final decision

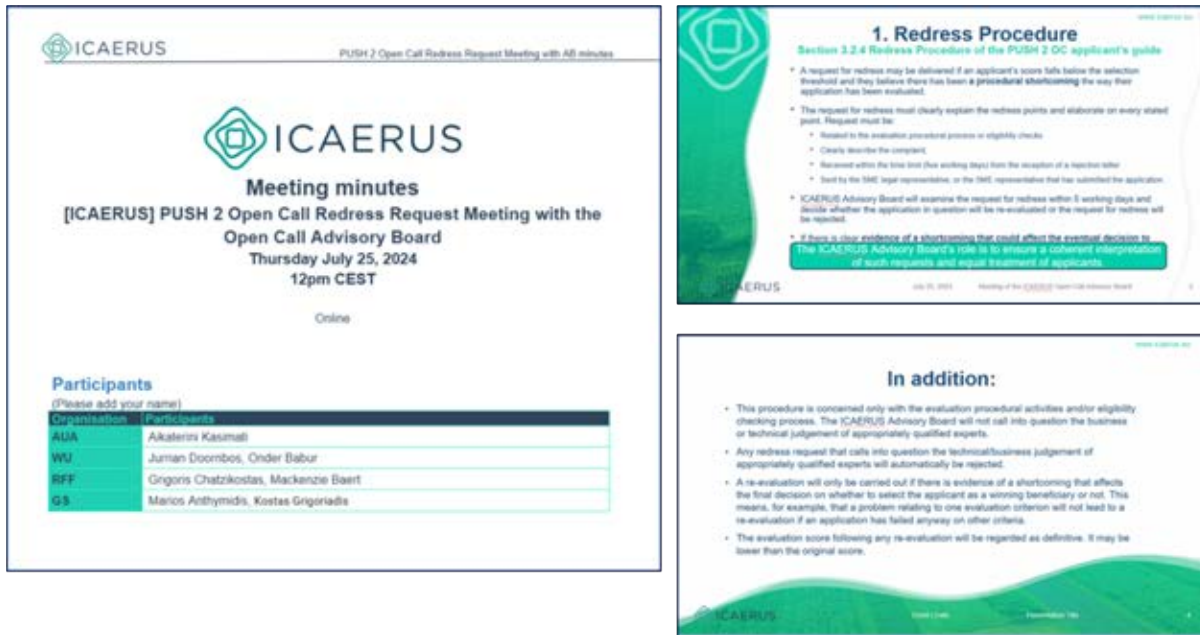


Figure 37 Minutes of meeting

5.3.2.1 Redress Request 1

The first redress request raised the concern that Evaluator 2 did not seem professionally sound. No additional information was provided, and since the request questioned the judgement of appropriately qualified experts, it was unanimously rejected.

5.3.2.2 Redress Request 2

The second redress request was based upon the negative comments provided for criteria 1 and 2, which the applicant felt did not align with the open call description. Extensive details were provided by the applicant for each criterion, as summarised below:

- **Criterion 1:** Evaluator 1 indicated that the relation to the agrifood sector is minor and indirect. The applicant pointed out that the call did not target the agrifood sector exclusively stating examples within the applicants guide
- **Criterion 1:** Evaluator 1 implies a lack of connection to the ICAERUS platform. The applicant argued it was not a requirement.
- **Criterion 1:** Evaluator 2 mentions doubt around satellite imagery, which the applicant argued was only meant as supplementary data as their proposal was focused on drones.
- **Criterion 2:** Evaluator 2 indicates that the final TRL of 7 is low for such a project. The applicant argues that given the 12-month implementation period it is appropriate, evaluator 1 did not comment on the TRL and the target of the ICAERUS project is only 4-5.
- **Criterion 2:** Evaluator 2 describes a shortcoming as the lack of detail on long term data collection, analysis and how it will support authorities. The applicants argued that their entire proposal is centred around aligning and comparing maps over different time periods thus revolving around long-term data collection, comparison and analysis

To determine whether the scores in question prevented the applicant from reaching the selection threshold, the original scores were compared to a scenario where the 'problem' scores were given full marks (Figure 38).

Original scores					Alternative scenario- if problem scores were perfect				
	E1	E2	Ave	Ave points		E1	E2	Ave	Ave points
C1	3	4	3.5	4.2	C1	5	5	5	6
C2	3	4	3.5	4.2	C2	3	5	4	5.4
C3	4	4	4	3.2	C3	4	4	4	3.2
C4	5	5	5	4	C4	4	5	5	4
			TOTAL	15.6				TOTAL	18.6

Figure 38 Scoring scenarios redress request 2

It was determined that even with perfect scores in the criteria in question, the proposal would not have met the threshold for selection.

The following points were agreed upon within the advisory board:

- The comment regarding agrifood (C1, E1) was valid
- There is a section in the Applicant's guide describing the platform, Section 5.11 ICAERUS platform and sub-project's interaction "The Open Call Trials will connect with the ICAERUS platform...".
- It is unclear if the satellite comments was a real shortcoming that lowered the score
- The unanimous decision to reject the redress request, based upon the following rationale (based upon the PUSH 2 Applicant's Guide)
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to select the applicant as a winning beneficiary or not
- If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual decision to select an applicant as a winning beneficiary of the Open Call, it is possible that all or part of the application will be re-evaluated.

5.3.2.3 Redress Request 3

The third redress request was based upon a perceived lack of understanding of the scope of the open call by Evaluator 1 in two criteria as summarised below:

- **Criteria 1:** the evaluator stated that the proposal has no connection with the agriculture sector. The applicant argued that their work in rural areas falls with the scope of the call
- **Criteria 4:** the evaluator indicated that the applicant's background did not include farming expertise. The applicant agreed, but that such expertise was not necessary.

To determine whether the scores in question prevented the applicant from reaching the selection threshold, the original scores were compared to a scenario where the 'problem' scores were given full marks (Figure 39).

Original scores					Alternative scenario- if problem scores were perfect				
	E1	E2	Ave	Ave points		E1	E2	Ave	Ave points
C1	3	5	4	4.8	C1	5	5	5	6
C2	4	5	4.5	5.4	C2	4	5	4.5	5.4
C3	5	3	4	3.2	C3	5	3	4	3.2
C4	4	4	4	3.2	C4	5	4	4.5	3.6
			TOTAL	16.6				TOTAL	18.2

Figure 39 Scoring scenarios redress request 3

It was determined that even with perfect scores in the criteria in question, the proposal would not have met the threshold for selection.

The following points were agreed upon within the advisory board:

- Valid comments regarding agrifood, however the evaluator also indicated that the proposal concept is feasible and in line with the call

- Valid comment regarding the lack of farming system expertise but with a score of 4, unclear if it is a shortcoming
- Also states that the organisational capacities and allocation of resources are done properly. 4
- Given the other scores and comments, it does not seem as though the evaluator's association with the agri-food/farming sector affected the entire evaluation.

The unanimous decision to reject the redress request, based upon the following rationale (based upon the PUSH 2 Applicant's Guide)

- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to select the applicant as a winning beneficiary or not
- If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual decision to select an applicant as a winning beneficiary of the Open Call, it is possible that all or part of the application will be re-evaluated.

The rejection letters sent to the applicants are included in [Appendix 6](#).

Key Takeaway: Based on the unnecessary association to the agrifood sector made by two of the evaluators it was agreed that additional emphasis will be made during the briefing with evaluators to ensure they completely understand the scope of the next open call (PULL 2).

5.4 Contracting

After the redress period closed, the contract preparation phase was initiated. This included administrative and financial checking.

The objective of the contract preparation was to fulfill the legal requirements between the ICAERUS consortium and each open call beneficiary. To validate the information provided by applicants during the proposal submission stage, the following documents were required from all selected applicants:

- **Legal existence:** Company Register, Official Gazette 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).
- **Legal proof** that the applicant's organisation was not under liquidation or has filed for bankruptcy.
- **Bank Account Information:** The account to which the funds would be transferred are indicated on a form signed by the legal representative and the bank representative. The account must be a business bank account of each beneficiary. The financial information should not be older than three months.

The Subgrantee assumes full responsibility for the bank account info they provide through the Bank account information. For instance, if they provide a wrong IBAN, and the ICAERUS team proceeds with the transfer to that account, the subgrantees assume any costs related to the transfer (expenses with the return of the amount from the wrong bank account and/or expenses with the new transfer will be deducted from their grant transfer). Ultimately, in a worst-case scenario, if the ICAERUS team does not manage to recover the amount transferred to the wrong bank account, the beneficiary who provided a wrong IBAN will not be able to claim that payment.

The sub-grant agreement was sent to all successful applicants. All physical copies were signed by the Open Call manager/treasurer reframe.food and the legal representative of the 20 sub-grantees. Each party received a copy.

6 Open Call Results and Statistics

The ICAERUS Open Calls are funding **20 sub-projects** spread across the **4 calls** (12 PULL sub-projects, 8 PUSH sub-projects). Altogether the ICAERUS Open Calls received 271 unique applicants from 40 different countries. Figure 40 shows the percentage breakdown of countries the most applications came from 17% of applications came from Spain (47), 14% from Italy (39), 11% from Greece (30) and 10% from Ukraine (27). Despite the dominant presence of these countries, applicants were far reaching including Nigeria, Kenya, Lebanon, Jamaica, Uganda, Pakistan, Ghana and Argentina.

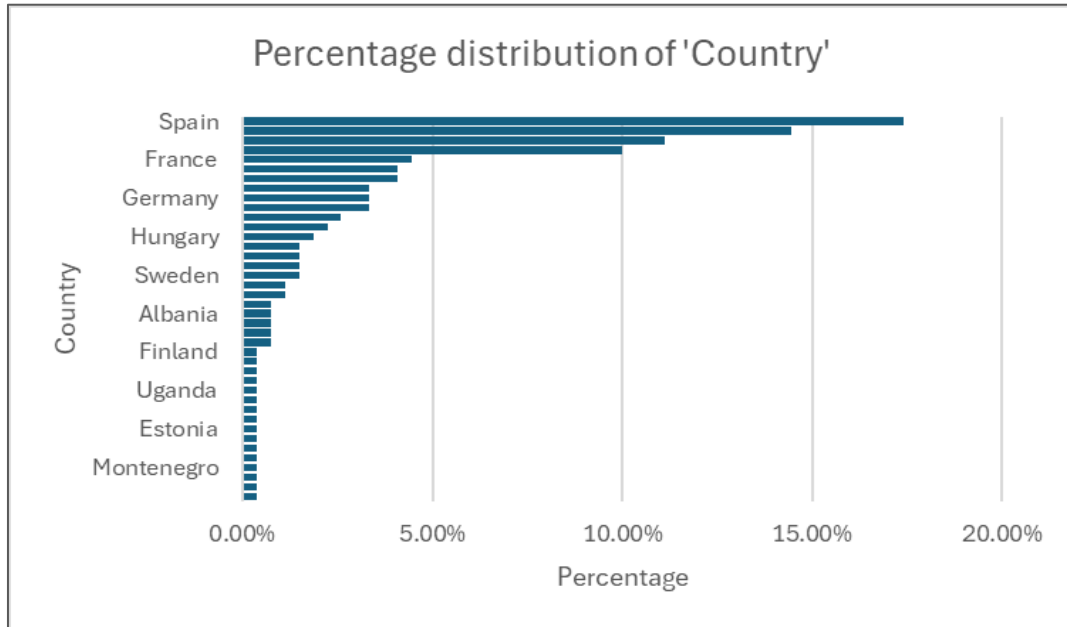


Figure 40 Percentage breakdown of applicant's countries across all applicants

6.1 PUSH 1 Open Call

The 1st PUSH Open Call attracted **56** unique applicants from 17 different countries (Figure 41). Only 4 sub-projects were supposed to be selected, however due to a tie 5 were selected for the 1st PUSH OC, with the intention of only selecting 3 in the 2nd PUSH OC (Table 4).



Figure 41 Types of applicants and Applicants / countries

Table 4 Selected sub-projects of the 1st PUSH Open Call

Name	Country	Organisation	Description
AGROTWIN	Italy	<u>Agrobit s.r.l</u>	Create a drone based agronomic Decision Support System to create and analyse vineyards digital twins and optimise pesticide treatments
SHIELD	Portugal	<u>Obsidian Innovation Institute</u>	Develop an advanced drone system component, powered by the European Global Navigation Satellite System (EGNSS) to enhance security, reliability, and precision.
AIM	Germany	<u>Schweitzer Ingenieurgesellschaft mbH (SI)</u>	Demonstrate the applicability of an AI-boosted gas camera system operated from a fixed-wing drone to detect methane gas leakages and inspect pipelines.
SENSOR 2.0	Italy	<u>TAAL s.r.l</u>	Combine Computer Vision (CV) technology and drones to develop a plant recognition system capable of identifying plant types, assessing their current state, and detecting any potential diseases
SKYFAR	Romania	<u>AGRICLOUD</u>	A cross-cutting training program on drone piloting and management of data developed by drones

6.2 PULL 1 Open Call

The 1st PULL Open Call attracted 38 unique applicants from 17 countries with 22 applicants' self-described as environmental monitoring entities (Figure 42), 6 subprojects were selected (Table 5).

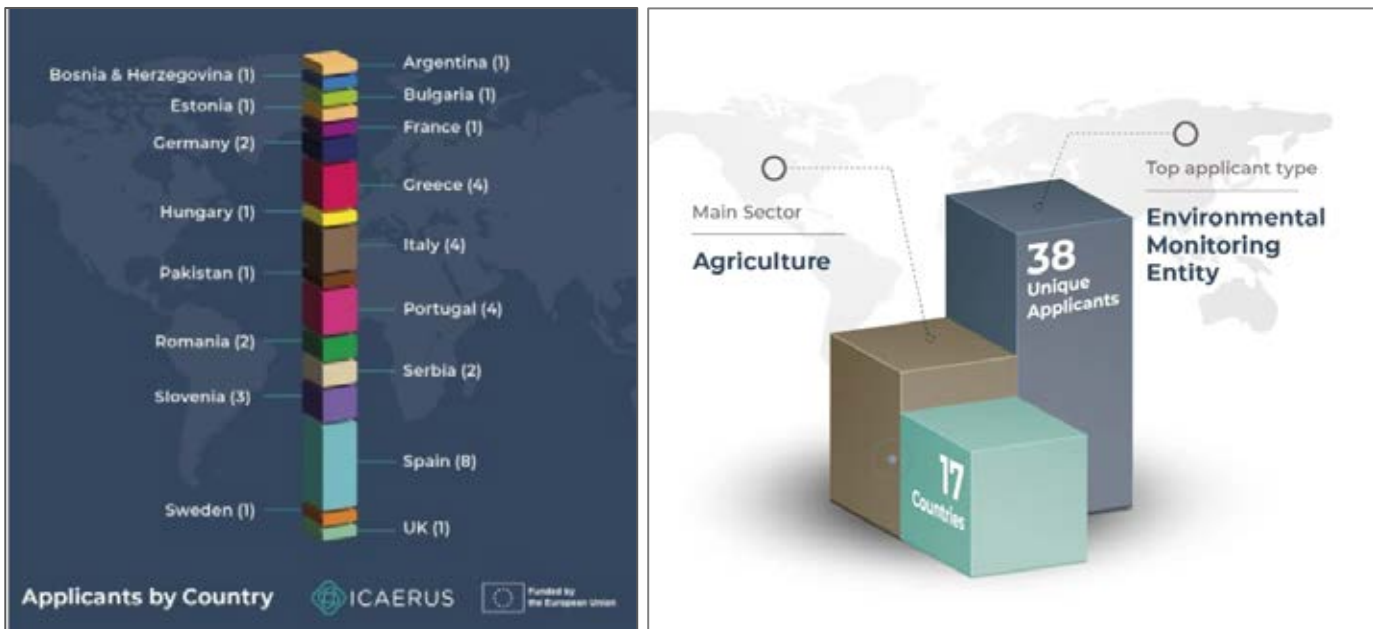


Figure 42 1st Pull Open Call statistics

Table 5 Selected sub-projects of the 1st Pull Open Call

Name	Country	Organisation	Description
BEETCraft-AID	Germany	Pheno-Inspect GmbH	Develop tools leverage low-cost accessible drone technology combined with AI-enhanced phenotyping analysis to enable efficient and scalable monitoring of SBR affected crops
OLI-SCAN	Italy	Tenute Librandi Pascale Societa Agricola. s.s	Use drones equipped with thermal cameras to evaluate and monitor water stress in olive groves.
DAEPHC	Slovenia	Hmezad exmin d.o.o	Develop an efficient service for plant health control in hop fields, by determining which sensor placed on the drone can best identify infected hop plants.
AI4Leafhopper	Portugal	InnovPlantProtect	Develop the leafhopper symptom early detection pipeline using drone-acquired multispectral data to automatically detect and classify symptom severity.
LMDV	UK	Low Altitude Ltd	Introduce established LIDAR and thermography technology to the vineyard in order to identify further areas for improvement and test how applications.
FLOX System	Sweden	FLOX Robotics	Develop and test a semi-automated AI and robotics drone system for wildlife management in agriculture.

6.3 PUSH 2 Open Call

The 2nd PUSH Open Call attracted **90** unique applicants from **22** different countries. Spain, Italy and Greece were the countries with greatest number of applicants (Figure 43) while **57** identified themselves as SMEs/Start-ups exploiting innovative drone services. **3** subprojects were selected (Table 6).

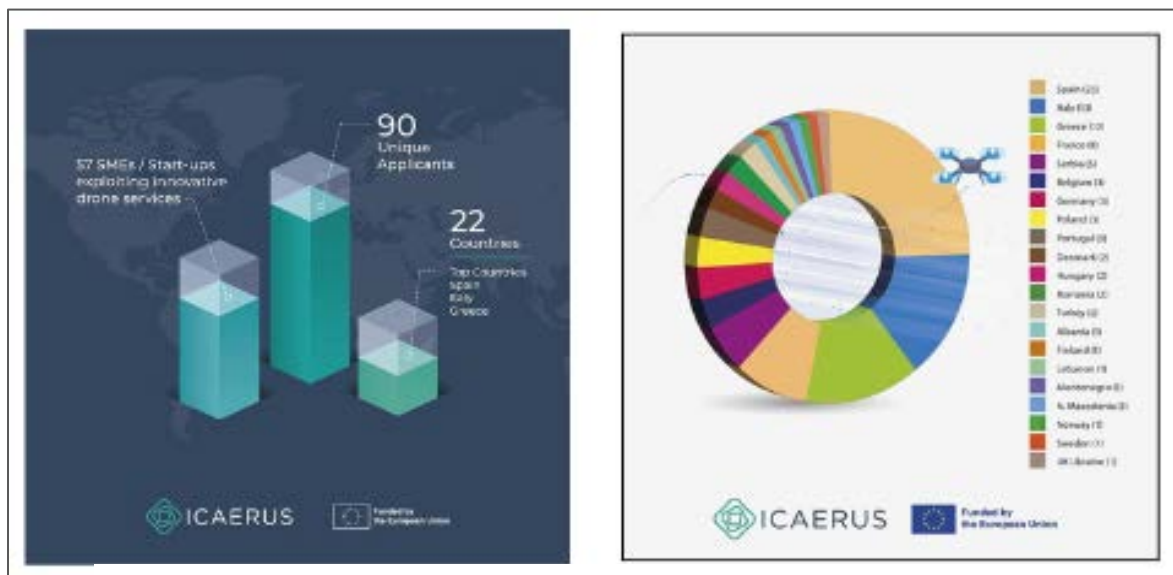


Figure 43 2nd PUSH Open Call statistics

Table 6 Selected sub-projects of the 2nd Push Open Call

Name	Country	Organisation	Description
DiVine	Serbia	VelesSense	Create more detailed digital vineyard maps that can distinctly identify areas likely affected by disease from those suffering from nutritional deficiency.
gprSense	Belgium	Sensar Consulting	Develop a new drone-borne ground-penetrating radar (GPR) system to provide high resolution, real-time mapping of soil moisture and electrical conductivity at root-zone levels, which are critical for optimising water usage and soil management in agricultural practices.
OPTIVERY	Spain	Fundación Instituto Tecnológico de Galicia	Develop a multi-stop route optimisation algorithm and validate it in a drone-based delivery system for transporting these medications directly to rural healthcare centres, reducing delivery time, costs, and environmental impact in the logistics of medicines transport.

6.4 PULL 2 Open Call

The 2nd PULL Open Call attracted **87** unique applicants from **22** countries. The top applying countries were Ukraine, Italy, Greece and Türkiye (Figure 44). **6** subprojects were selected (Table 7).

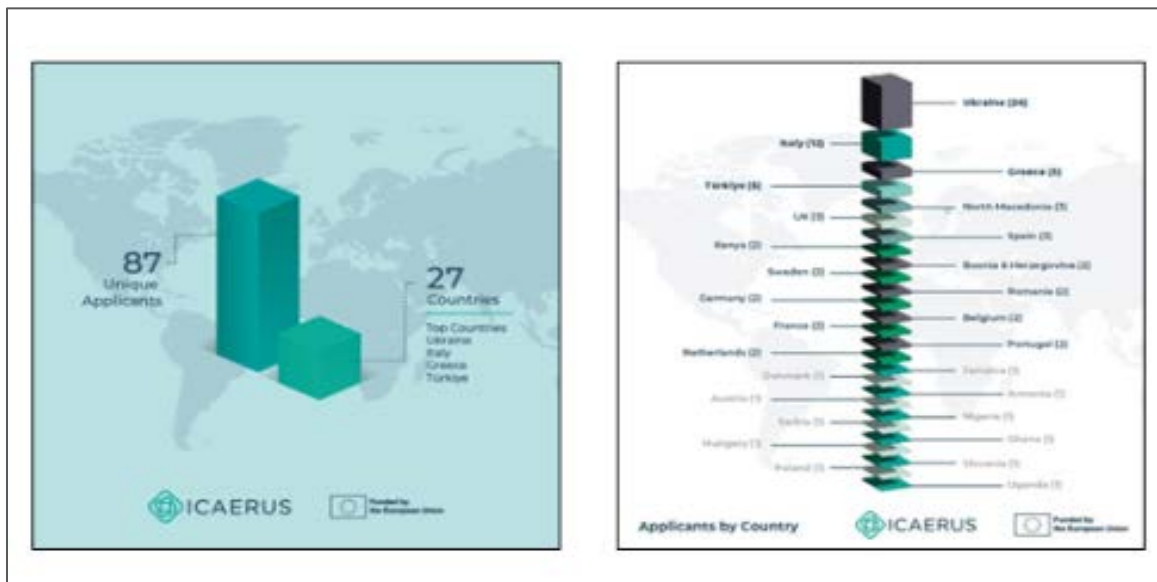


Figure 44 Pull 2 Open Call statistics

Table 7 Selected sub-projects of the 2nd Pull Open Call

Name	Country	Organisation	Description
ISFF Forest Guard	Slovenia	Institute for Security and Strategic Research	Develop an innovative drones service for safeguarding forests from illegal dumping and logging.
HYGRI	Italy	AVT Airborne	Use UAV-based hyperspectral images to

		Sensing	monitor and detect plant pathogens in fruit trees and to visualise the information in a user-friendly decision support system.
RODENT	Serbia	Šumski Mir	Develop an innovative, non-invasive pest management solution that utilises drones equipped with ultrasound speakers and thermal cameras, to deter rodents effectively without relying on harmful chemicals.
Heidedrones	Belgium	Grenspark Kalmthoustse Heide	Establish a cost-effective and replicable framework for drone-based environmental monitoring for conservation management at Grenspark Kalmthoutse Heide
UAIInSPECT	Italy	EUCENTRE	Develop a UAS AI-based inspection service for bridge infrastructure in order to optimise the damage assessment for both routine surveys and/or disaster response.
FAMMS	Italy	Ordine & Sicurezza Drl	Integrating AI algorithms with drone technology and cadastral data to create a Decision Support System (DSS) powered by Geographic Information Systems (GIS) that can significantly enhance the monitoring and management of illegal logging

7 Sub-project implementation

7.1 Implementation phases

The implementation period of the sub-projects last for 12 months are divided into **3** phases:

1. Phase 1: Design (2 months)- Deliver an Activity Plan
2. Phase 2: Development (7 months)- Deliver Results demonstration
3. Phase 3: Market (3 months)- Deliver a Report on market associated activities

Each phase ends with the submission of a deliverable, and upon its acceptance by the OCAB, funding is released as shown in Figure 45.

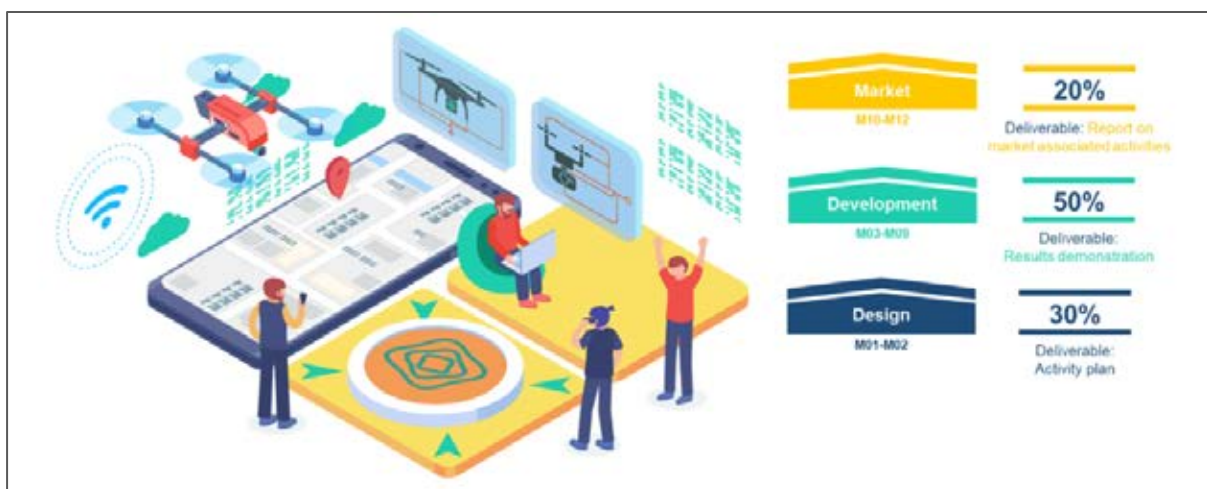


Figure 45 Subproject' implementation phases

7.1.1 Pitch event

The Design phase of Implementation is initiated with a pitch meeting schedule shortly after the signing of the sub-grant agreements with the OC beneficiaries. It is an opportunity for introductions between the consortium and the sub-projects, share the first deliverable "Activity Plan" template, and provide

explanations of expectations for deliverable submission (Article 6 of the sub-grant agreement) as well as project interactions. To prepare the beneficiaries a welcome email was sent prior to the start of implementation detailing the following:

- **Website promotion:** a template ([Appendix 7](#)) for sub-projects to complete, providing information on the organisation and a description of their work. The information was used to create the dedicated website pages, preliminary social media and blog posts.
- **Pitch event invitation** (Figure 46): detailing the agenda of the event. A blank ppt template was also shared ([Appendix 8](#)). A calendar invite followed.

All beneficiaries as well as all members of the OCAB were expected to attend the pitch event, although invitations were shared with the rest of the consortium as well. WP leaders were given the choice to present their work packages. The objective of the pitch event was to introduce both the sub-projects to the ICAERUS consortium and each other, as well as provide context for their work by better understanding the project. It also provided an opportunity to establish the expectations for the sub-projects as well as understand what they hoped to gain through the experience.



Figure 46 Pitch event presentation and agenda

7.2 Open Call Monitoring Hub

The monitoring of the open calls falls under T5.4 Evaluation, selection and technical monitoring, and is led by AUA.

7.2.1 Tracking

In order to manage the simultaneous implementation of multiple open call sub-projects, a detailed tracking sheet has been developed. The spreadsheet is split into four (4) sections with check boxes to indicate when a task has been completed. Notes are also used when there is an issue pending and partners, particularly the OCAB can be directly tagged in the document. The following sections are used:

7.2.1.1 Section 1: Contact list

The first is a contact list, and includes the sub-project name, organisation, country, contact point including email and phone and any deputy contacts (Table 8).

Table 8 Indicate contact list table for the OCTs

Open Call								
No	Open Call Title	By	Region/Country	Leader/contact point	email	phone	Deputy	email

7.2.1.2 Section 2: Deliverable tracking

A set of tables is used to track the submission of deliverables (Figure 47).

Deliverables PUSH 1		
Activity Plan	Results & Demonstration	Report on market associated activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Deliverables PUSH 2		
Activity Plan	Results & Demonstration	Report on market associated activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Deliverables PULL 1		
Activity Plan	Results & Demonstration	Report on market associated activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Deliverables PULL 2		
Activity Plan	Results & Demonstration	Report on market associated activities
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Figure 47 Section 2: Deliverable tracking

7.2.1.3 Section 3: Task tracking

The third section tracks (Figure 48) the tasks related to the other work packages. Beneficiaries are expected to contribute to the Drone Data Analytics Library (DDAL) (WP2) and to promote their activities (WP5), however contributions to the other tasks are strongly encouraged.

Tasks PUSH 1							
Stakeholders' analysis (WP1)	Drone Data Analytics Models (WP2)	Drone datasets (WP2)	Demo events (WP3)	Dissemination activities (WP5)	Input on Business and Governance Models (WP4&5)	ICAERUS Academy and Platform (WP4&6)	Final Presentation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TRUE (blog post)	TRUE (through deliverable on market activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	FALSE (blog post)	TRUE (through deliverable on market activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRUE (blog post)	TRUE (through deliverable on market activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	TRUE (blog post)	TRUE (through deliverable on market activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	FALSE	TRUE (through deliverable on market activities)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Tasks PULL 1							
Stakeholders' analysis (WP1)	Drone Data Analytics Models (WP2)	Drone datasets (WP2)	Demo events (WP3)	Dissemination activities (WP5)	Input on Business and Governance Models & the ICAERUS Academy (WP4&5)		Final Presentation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Tasks PUSH 2							
Stakeholders' analysis (WP1)	Drone Data Analytics Models (WP2)	Drone datasets (WP2)	Demo events (WP3)	Dissemination activities (WP5)	Input on Business and Governance Models & the ICAERUS Academy (WP4&5)		Final Presentation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Tasks PULL 2							
Stakeholders' analysis (WP1)	Drone Data Analytics Models (WP2)	Drone datasets (WP2)	Demo events (WP3)	Dissemination activities (WP5)	Input on Business and Governance Models & the ICAERUS Academy (WP4&5)		Final Presentation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

Figure 48 Section 3: Task tracking

7.2.1.4 Section 4: Implementation timeline

The final section tracks the implementation phases from the signing of the contracts to the receipt of each deliverable and subsequent payments. It was also determined that M9-M10 of implementation would be the most appropriate timing to request models and datasets for the DDAL and that the final presentation would take place one month after the end of the sub- projects (Figure 49).

7.2.2 Bi-monthly meetings

During the pitch event the dates were set for bi-monthly follow up meetings. These dates and times remain consistent across their implementation and last 1-1.5 hours depending on the number of projects. Sub-projects are not expected to prepare a presentation, however a meeting minutes document in advance to guide the discussion. Gaps may be filled in during or after the meeting (Figure 49). The agenda for each meeting is shown in Table 9. These meetings have also provided a space for discussion among the sub-projects, who have been eager to ask questions and offer guidance around technical blocking issues.



Figure 49 Minutes of meeting

Table 9 Meeting Agenda

Time	Session	Leading Partners
10:00 - 10:10	Intro Agenda, process, rules (5')	AUA
10:10 - 10:20	Alignment round One achievement in my project work during the past month (1' each)	All OCTs leaders
10:20 - 10:25	Main priorities Progress update per priority (5')	AUA/RFF
10:25 - 10:45	Progress per OCT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> OCTs update and how we have progressed up until today since our last meeting What are the next steps Blocking issues 	All OCTs leaders
10:45 - 10:50	Buffer to discuss critical/blocking issues (5')	All OCTs leaders
10:50 - 11:00	Closing round	All OCTs leaders
Next meeting:		

7.2.3 Deliverables

Each sub-project participating in the ICAERUS Open Call Trials (OCTs) is required to submit three deliverables, aligned with the corresponding implementation phases of the trials. These deliverables are designed to ensure structured reporting, facilitate monitoring, and guide the OCTs toward successful outcomes.

The **first deliverable** is the *Activity Plan*, submitted at the end of Phase 1 (Design). This document captures the initial project vision, objectives, methodology, and key activities. It outlines the trial's scope, challenges, expected outcomes, technical requirements, data collection plans, ethical considerations,

and a promotional strategy. The Activity Plan serves as a roadmap for the OCT implementation, ensuring alignment with ICAERUS objectives and compliance with Horizon Europe requirements.

The **second deliverable** is the *Results Demonstration*, submitted at the end of Phase 2 (Development). This report documents the experimental work, data collection, and key results achieved during the trial. It includes sections for evaluating objectives, reporting achievements and shortcomings, tracking key activities, describing deployed components, summarising gathered datasets, and assessing replicability and scalability. Additionally, it provides insights into the socio-economic and environmental impacts of the trial, offering a foundation for further work and dissemination.

The **third deliverable** is the *Report on Market-Associated Activities*, submitted at the end of Phase 3 (Market). This deliverable focuses on the market context, competitive landscape, business model development, and market strategy for the OCT. It incorporates market analysis tools such as TAM-SAM-SOM, PESTLE, SWOT, Porter's Five Forces, and the Three-Layer Business Model Canvas. The aim is to support beneficiaries in identifying market opportunities, preparing for scalability, and effectively positioning their solutions within the drone sector and related markets.

7.2.3.1 Review and Feedback Process

Once all sub-projects within a specific phase (e.g., PULL1 Phase 2 Results Demonstration) submit their deliverables, these are distributed to the ICAERUS Open Call Advisory Board (OCAB)—comprising AUA, WU, GS, and RFF—for review and feedback. This collaborative process ensures consistency, fairness, and alignment with ICAERUS objectives.

The OCAB provides structured feedback to the sub-projects, assessing each deliverable's alignment with objectives and expected outcomes, the quality and clarity of content, its contribution to ICAERUS goals (including links to other work packages), and any gaps or issues identified. The feedback includes concrete suggestions for improvement and follow-up actions, helping sub-projects refine their work as needed.

Once feedback is compiled by AUA, a summary report is prepared, recommending either acceptance of the deliverable or outlining revisions required. This report is then communicated back to the OCTs, detailing specific comments and clarifications. If a deliverable is accepted, the Treasurer (RFF) processes the corresponding lump sum payment for that phase, in line with the General Eligibility Conditions for Lump Sum Costs under the EU Grant Agreement (AGA Article 5). If further clarification or refinements are necessary, the OCTs are expected to address these within a specified timeframe before the deliverable can be accepted and the associated payment released. This process ensures a structured and transparent system of feedback, learning, and continuous improvement across all ICAERUS Open Call Trials.

7.2.3.2 Summary of ICAERUS Open Call Deliverables Review and Funding Decisions

Following a comprehensive review process led by the OCAB, all submitted deliverables across the PUSH1, PULL1, and PUSH2 OCTs have been assessed, and payments have been released in line with the lump-sum funding structure outlined in the Sub-Grant Agreements.

For the **PUSH1 OCTs**, all five sub-projects submitted their Phase 1 deliverables (Activity Plans), which were reviewed, accepted, and approved for the release of the first payment (30% of the total grant). In Phase 2, four sub-projects—AGROTWIN, AIM, SENSOR 2.0, and SHIELD—had their Results Demonstration deliverables fully accepted, triggering the second payment (50%). The deliverable from SKYFAR required revisions, with feedback provided to guide improvements. In Phase 3, the final deliverables for AGROTWIN, AIM, SENSOR 2.0, and SHIELD were accepted, and the final payment (20%) was released. For SKYFAR, further clarifications were required before acceptance, but the process for funding release was aligned with the agreed terms.

For the **PULL1 OCTs**, all six sub-projects submitted their Phase 1 deliverables, which were accepted with minor comments. The first payment (30%) was released for each. In Phase 2, the Results Demonstration deliverables were accepted, with DAEPHC receiving conditional acceptance pending

updates to the final modelling results. Following the acceptance of all Phase 3 Market-Related Activities Reports, the final payment (20%) was released. For DAEPHC and FLOX, conditional acceptance was again granted, with specific feedback provided, but this did not delay the final payments.

For the **PUSH2 OCTs**, all sub-projects submitted their Phase 1 deliverables (Activity Plans). DiVine and gprSense deliverables were fully accepted, while OPTIVERY received conditional acceptance, with recommendations for improvement, particularly on regulatory approvals, safety protocols, and feasibility. The first payments (30%) were released accordingly. The remaining PUSH2 sub-projects—FAMMS, ForestGuard, Heidedrones, HYGRI, RODENT, and U-ALnSPECT—also received acceptance for their Phase 1 deliverables, with FAMMS conditionally accepted, subject to addressing feedback. Payments for these sub-projects were released as per the agreement.

Across all OCTs, the Advisory Board has maintained a consistent approach: reviewing deliverables, providing detailed feedback, recommending acceptance or revision, and supporting sub-projects in integrating feedback into their work. AUA has coordinated the process, ensuring timely communication, transparent procedures, and the release of payments in alignment with Horizon Europe rules.

In summary, all sub-projects have successfully received their allocated funding across the respective phases, and the Advisory Board continues to guide and support the ongoing implementation of the OCTs in pursuit of the ICAERUS objectives.

7.3 Interactions with other work packages

The open call beneficiaries have been actively involved in the ICAERUS project through various means

7.3.1 WP1 Drone Landscape Analysis

All sub-projects contributed to the work of T1.1 Understanding the drone market landscape by completing surveys developed by WP1 Leader – NSW. The objective of this analysis was to identify the most valuable interactions between key stakeholders across five use cases by examining their specific needs and preferred sources of fulfillment. Open call beneficiaries were asked to complete a survey as external industry experts utilising their local expertise from the UAV-market in their respected country. Generally, the survey participants were asked to put themselves into the shoes of various stakeholder groups—such as academia, a farm association, a drone operator, or a policymaker—and to assess the intensity and importance of various needs and evaluate the value of different sources that can fulfil their needs.

During the pitch event, beneficiaries were provided with details about the work package as a whole, the survey process and instructions. After the meeting, each OCT was assigned a survey corresponding to the most relevant Use Case. This document (Figure 50) included:

- Consent form
- Detailed instructions
- Participant information
- Survey

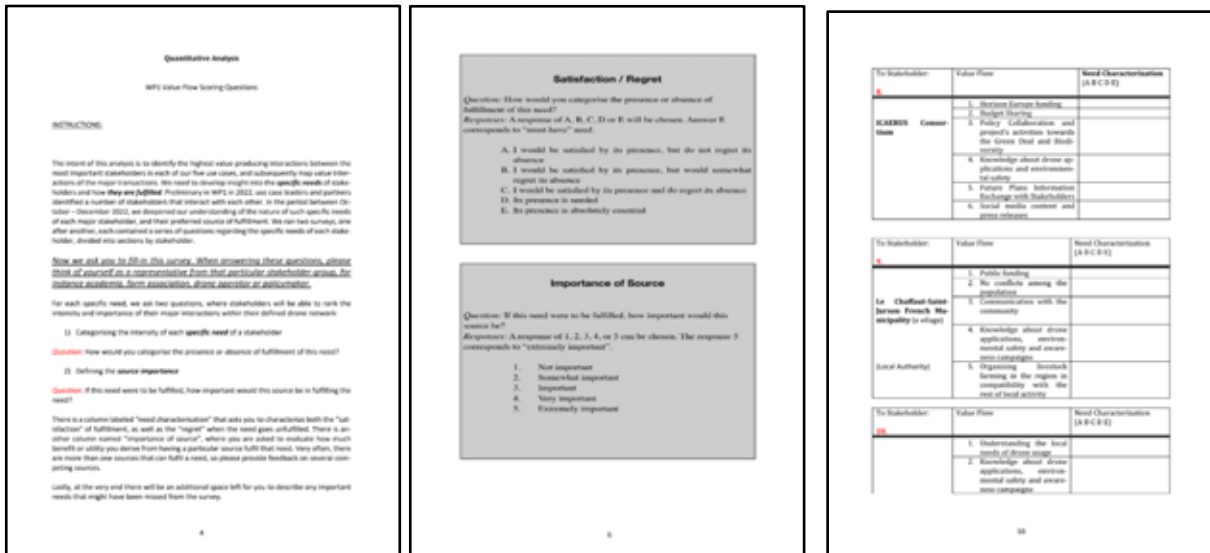


Figure 50 Survey's documents

The outcomes of the survey will be analysed and fall within the scope of the final version of D1.1 European Landscape of Drone Innovations and Technologies due in M42.

7.3.2 WP2 Drone Data Analytics Library

The main expectation for the OCTs is to contribute to the Drone Data Analytics Library (DDAL). This WP is led by Wageningen University and Research, who is also a member of the OCAB. The following process for acquiring DDAL contributions was established to simplify the engagement of the OCTs and ensure the most relevant models and datasets are shared:

- **Step 1:** Pitch event- During the pitch event, the objectives and structure of the DDAL were explained and the expectations for the OCTs were outlined.
- **Step 2-** WR reviewed the materials presented during the pitch event and scanned the activity plan deliverable to find the models and datasets that the OCTs were planning to create
- **Step 3:** The proposed models and datasets were included in a Contribution Overview document which structures each contribution within a detailed table that includes the following information:
 - Contribution title
 - Content
 - File structure
- **Step 4:** During the bi-monthly meeting following the pitch event, the OCTs were asked to review the Contribution Overview contents to ensure they align with their objectives and make updates, the most common topics for discussion have been around Open Source Licensing options and refining the scope of their contributions

These three steps ensure that the OCTs are aware of their role towards the Drone Data Analytics Library as contributors.

Over the course of implementation, particularly during the bi-monthly meetings, OCTs are asked to provide updates on the status of their contributions. They are also directly in contact with WR to provide their inputs.

Once an OCT has developed models and datasets to be uploaded, detailed guidelines are provided in the Github Tutorial (Figure 51). When uploaded datasets and models, the .json files are designated with OCT-xxx and each contribution is enclosed in its own set of brackets, whereby ‘name’ refers to the title of their contribution.

All contributions are reviewed to verify that the files are available, documentation is clear and licensing is available.

Figure 52 provides an example of a model while Figure 53 shows a dataset.



Figure 51 ICAERUS Github

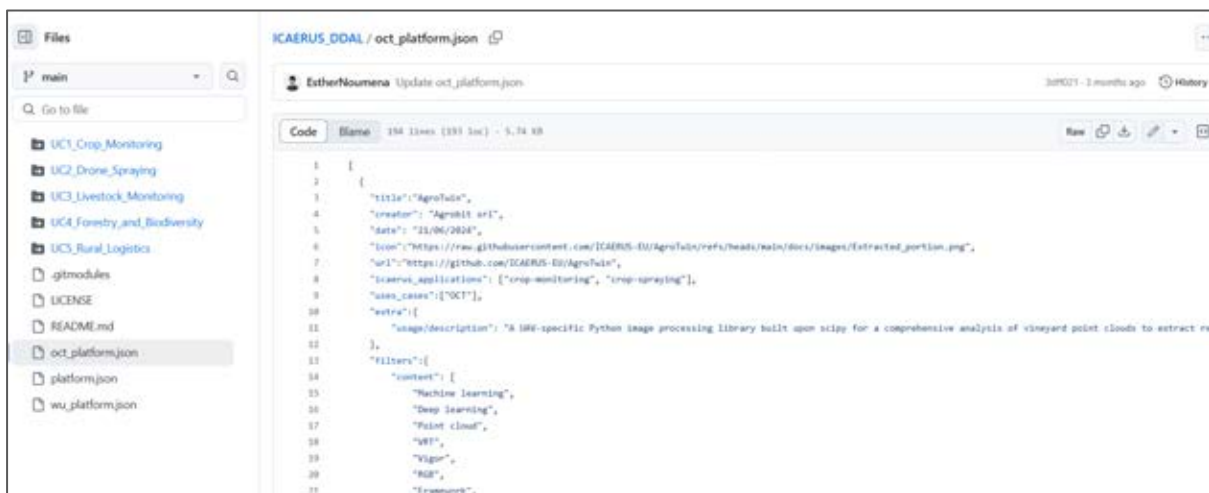


Figure 52 ICAERUS OC models on Github

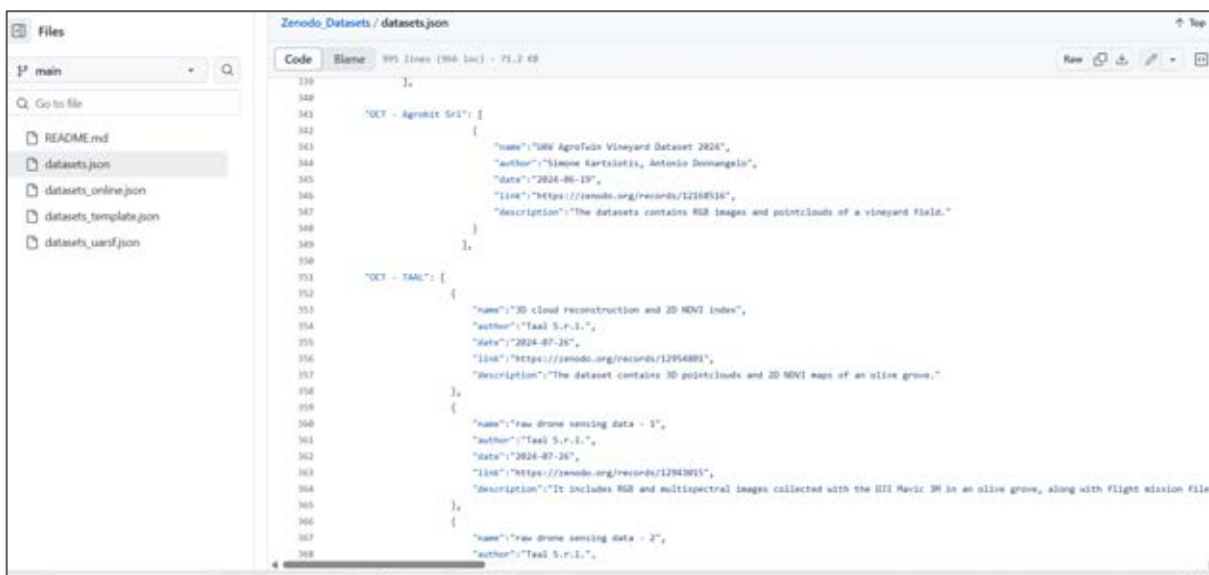


Figure 53 ICAERUS OC datasets

Table 10 summarises the status of contributions by the sub-projects. Given the timing of the second PUSH and PULL OC, contributions were not expected at the time of writing.

Table 10 Current status of contributions by the OCTs

OCT	Model	Dataset
PUSH 1	2	8
PULL 1	4	17
PUSH 2	TBD	TBD
PULL 2	TBD	TBD

During the entire implementation the WP leader WR has been available to provide support not only for the DDAL, but for other technical challenges faced by the OCTs.

Extensive details on the DDAL falls within the scope of Data Analytics Optimisation, Expansion & Scale-up Report (A).

7.3.3 WP3 ICAERUS Use Cases and Demonstration Activities

WP3 is focused on the ICAERUS Use Cases and their demo events. OCTs were made aware of the ongoing demo events being planned by the Use Cases and invited to attend. Attendance was not required or expected because the demo events are in local languages and none of the OCTs take place in the Use Case countries.

Interactions with UC leaders are being facilitated through the working groups developed in WP4 and the value-added services.

7.3.4 WP4 Capacity Building & Value-added Services

The development and delivery of value-added services fall within T4.4 Value added services for Open Call Beneficiaries and are designed to provide practical, hands-on knowledge exchange to the open call beneficiaries. The details of the value-added services fall within the scope of D4.4 Onsite learning and value-added services. Three (3) types of complimentary services will be offered:

1. **Working group access:** bringing together projects from all the different PUSH and PULL Open Calls, the ICAERUS Use Cases and the pilots from sister projects SPADE and CHAMLEON, that are focused on addressing similar challenges. The first working group meetings took place the first week of May and offered participants an opportunity to introduce themselves and the work they have done/are doing. Table 11 shows the breakdown of the 5 working groups.

Table 11 Breakdown of the 5 working groups

Crop Monitoring Disease detection, stress identification, and weed monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ICAERUS UC1: crop monitoring ● AgroTwin ● Sensor2.0 ● AI4Leafhopper ● BeetCraft-AID ● DAEPHC ● HYGRI ● CHAMELEON pilot ● SPADE pilot
---	--

Resource Conservation Crop health, soil and water management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ICAERUS UC2: drone spraying ● LMDV ● OliScan ● DiVine ● gprSense
Livestock monitoring and wildlife management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ICAERUS UC3: livestock monitoring ● Flox ● RODENT ● CHAMELEON Livestock pilot ● SPADE livestock pilot
Forestry, environmental and biodiversity monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ICAERUS UC: forestry and biodiversity monitoring ● FAMMS ● ForestGuard ● Heidedrones ● CHAMELEON Forestry pilot ● CHAMLEON Forest fire pilot ● SPADE Forestry pilot 1 ● SPADE Forestry pilot 2
Rural logistics, infrastructure, and cross-cutting technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ICAERUS UC5: rural logistics ● OPTIVERY ● UAInspect ● SHIELD ● SKYFAR ● AIM

2. **Workshops:** a series of workshops on:
 - a. Market Analysis (1 workshop, including all Groups)
 - b. Triple Layered Business Model Canvas (a series of workshops, 1 per Group)
 - c. Intellectual Property and Asset Management (1 workshop, including all Groups)
3. **Online digital tools:** a set of basic indicators accessible on the platform.
 - a. Market concentration calculator
 - b. Business model wizard
 - c. IP checklist
 - d. Templates (e.g., SWOT)

To overcome the challenges around the varied timing of the OCTs, and the strong dependence on the UC business models, it was decided that the value-added services would be offered to the open call beneficiaries within the duration of the ICAERUS project even if their specific sub-project was already completed. The additional benefit is that workshops will be organised thematically as opposed to chronologically which will offer more tailored content and initiate more relevant discussions.

7.3.5 WP5 Ecosystem Building, Open Calls & Business and Governance Modelling

OCTs are expected to promote their sub-projects within the context of ICAERUS. To ensure the inclusion of ICAERUS in their promotional material a folder was shared after the pitch event that included:

- ICAERUS logos
- Brochures
- Banners
- Posters

The Open Call Trial tab (Section 4.2.1) provides details about the sub-projects and the organisations running them, with updates provided as needed. Beneficiaries are also requested to inform RFF of any events or updates they would like posted on the ICAERUS social media channels and to provide content for blog posts.

7.3.6 WP6 ICAERUS Platform

The ICAERUS platform (Figure 54) is the interactive central hub for all of the project’s results and outcomes. Together with the UCS, the OCTs make up one of the six focus areas of the platform.

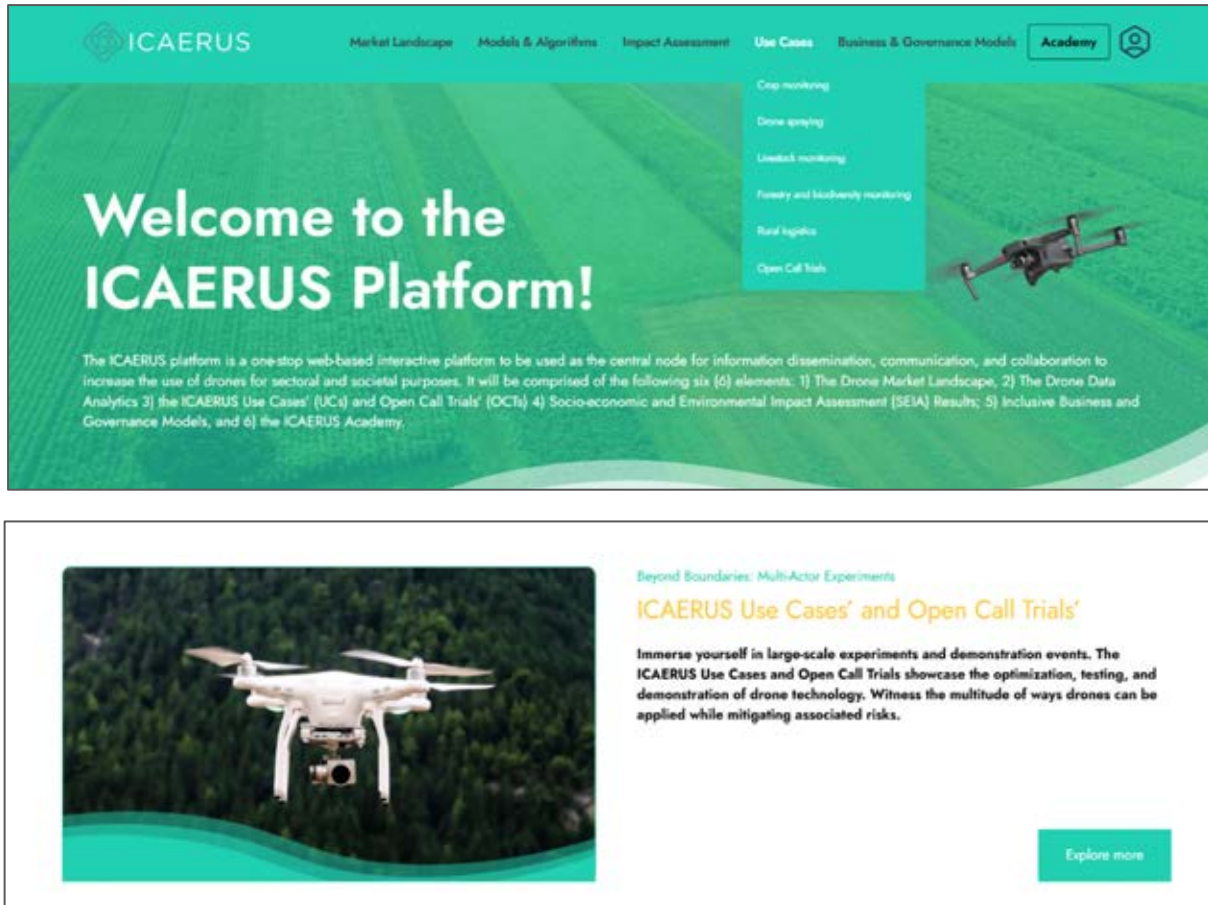


Figure 54 ICAERUS platform

To collect data, WP leader (AUA) reviews the presentations, and the first two (2) deliverables submitted to populate a table with the following information for each OCT:

- OCT name
- Description
- Objectives
- Platforms
- Mounted technical components
- Technologies Used
- Outcomes
- Challenges faced
- Impact (socio-economic and environmental)
- Replicability

This information is used to populate the individual pages on the platform which are structured in the same way as the Use Cases for consistent navigation.

7.4 Open Call deviations from DoA

Deviations from the DoA occurred, however they did not negatively impact the OCTs.

7.4.1 Evaluator budget

A shift on the budget categories was needed to accommodate the high interest received for each of the 4 Open Calls and the subsequent evaluation of their proposals. It was anticipated during the drafting of the ICAERUS proposal, that **80** applications would be received for each type of call (total **160**). This, however, was greatly exceeded as the total reached **270** proposals (**145** for the PUSH and **125** for the PULL).

During the evaluation each proposal is evaluated by 2 external expert evaluators, which means that calculating the number of evaluations involves doubling the number of applications. The ICAERUS Open Call also adhered to the maximum rate for proposal evaluation, of **450.00 €** per day. In the GA and subsequent call documents it was stated that the projected capacity of evaluations would be **2** per day, however given the volume of applications it was necessary to increase the number of proposals evaluated per day to **3** for the final two open calls. Even though this reduced the rate per proposal from **225.00 €** to **150.00 €**, the budget for these final two calls both exceeded **26,00.00 €** and the total budget for evaluators reached **95,817.00 €**. Table 12 provides the breakdown of resources allocated for the evaluation of each call.

Table 12 Breakdown of resources allocated for the evaluation of each call.

	PUSH 1	PULL 1	PUSH 2	PULL 2
Number of evaluated applications	55	38	90	87
Number of evaluations	110	76	180	174
Number of evaluators	16	10	23	15
Evaluator rate² (per proposal)	225.00 €	225.00 €	150.00 €	150.00 €
Total cost	25,191.00 €	17,100.00 €	27,426.00 €	26,100.00 €
FINAL COST				95,817.00 €

This deviation from the DoA was included in the 2nd amendment request.

7.4.2 Distribution of PUSH sub-projects

It is stated in the DoA and open call documents, that PUSH open calls would fund **4** projects each. The final ranking of the first PUSH presented a tie for the 4th position, two projects received a total score of 18.6. Since a second launch was planned, it was decided upon consultation with the OCAB, coordinator and the PO to fund five (5) projects for the 1st PUSH OCT and only select 3 in the second round.

7.4.3 Launch timing

The 1st PUSH Open Call was planned to launch April 1- June 30, but had a small delay, launching April 13- July 11 in order to ensure the most current and accurate information on eligibility were included.

² For evaluators from Greece issuing an invoice, it is necessary to use the following formula to comply with Greek law. [Total evaluation fee x 1.24] - [Total evaluation fee x 0.20] = Final fee paid to Greek evaluators

The 1st PULL Open Call was also expected to launch September 1- November 30 but instead was open from October 17- January 16 to allow time for updates to be validated and approved.

The delayed launches did not affect the timing of the other of the rest of the launch dates. The PUSH open call still began implementation November 1st as planned, and the 1st PULL Open will begin in April as was planned. Furthermore, they both exceeded the number of expected applicants.

7.5 Update to the Applicant's Guide

Updates were made to each Applicant's Guides based on experience from the previous launches and to update the list of HE eligible countries.

7.5.1 Updates for the PULL 1 kit

During the preparation of the PULL 1 launch, the following additions were made to improve the OC kit, based upon the experience of the PUSH 1:

- Open Call text
 - **Section 2.3 Eligibility Criteria:** "However, in case having VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided"
- Proposal template
 - **Applicant details:** "VAT/registration number" along with a footnote stating "In case VAT is not eligible according to the national legislation, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided.
- Applicant's Guide
 - **Section 2.3 Eligibility Criteria:** However, in case having VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided.
 - **Section 2.3 Eligibility Criteria:** Note: ICAERUS consortium reserves the right to ask for additional explanations from the applicants during the eligibility check.
 - **Section 3.5.1 Eligibility check:**" additional explanation/supplementary documents in case VAT is not mandatory according to the national legislation".

7.5.2 Updates for the PUSH 2 kit

During the preparation of the PUSH 2 launch, the following additions were included:

- Sub-grant agreement
 - **Article 6: Confidentiality:** The sub-grant agreement will remain confidential, however deliverables and other information produced during implementation and funded by ICAERUS will be shared with the ICAERUS consortium. Results will be openly available and demonstrated.
- Applicant's Guide
 - **3.2.3 Eligible counties:** updated
 - **3.5.3 Key points for evaluation:** elaboration of the tie process
 - The sub-grant agreement will remain confidential
- 4.11 Implementation timeline and activities
 - The Design phase of Implementation will begin with a pitch meeting schedule shortly after beneficiary selection to introduce sub-projects, the consortium, and provide the initial deliverable "Activity Plan" template, along with explanations of expectations and the deliverable process (Article 6 of the sub-grant agreement).
 - **5.11 ICAERUS platform and sub-project interactions**

- Enhancing the Drone Data Analytics Library - Models to our GitHub and Datasets on Zenodo (WP2)
 - Participation in Demo events & presentation of OCT results (WP3)
 - Engaging in dissemination activities (WP5)
 - Completion of a Stakeholders Analysis Survey for understanding the Drone Market (WP1)
 - Providing input on Business and Governance Models & participation in the ICAERUS Academy (WP4&5)
 - **5.11.1 What the Open Call Trials can expect from the ICAERUS project**
 - Promotion across ICAERUS communication channels (website, social media, newsletter, demo events)
 - Access to a series of applied, value-added services dedicated to providing knowledge and mentoring to Open Call beneficiaries and may include*:
 - Development of simple economic tools (e.g., ROI calculators)
 - How to efficiently and effectively execute business plans and remain competitive in the marketplace
- * coaching sessions will be agreed upon with the beneficiaries

7.5.3 Updates for the PULL 2 kit

During the preparation of the PULL 2 launch, the list of HE eligible countries was updated, and all texts were reviewed, the following text was also added to the Applicant's Guide:

- **3. Proposal submission and selection:** As a rule, all documents that require to bear stamps and signatures must be signed by the legal representatives of the consortia parties. In the case of parties coming from a country where the use of stamps is not mandatory, it is required to provide relevant justification documents in English. E-signatures are also acceptable and in this case the existence of stamps is not required. PadES and CadES are acceptable e-signature formats for the ICAERUS OC.

8 Conclusion and next steps

The ICAERUS Open Call funded a total of 20 sub-projects and attracted a total of 271 applicants spanning 40 countries across the four (4) launches. This strong interest was enabled by an expansive promotional campaign started by the posting of the calls on both the Funding and Tender's portal and the ICAERUS website, and continued with social media, webinars, event participation and coordinated efforts with other EU projects.

The four-launch structure has provided a dynamic opportunity to refine the call documents over the duration of the project and draw from an expanded pool of evaluators for each round of evaluation.

Regular bi-monthly meetings, structured deliverables and tracking templates have been used to effectively monitor the OCTs. During their implementation, sub-projects have actively contributed to the ICAERUS project by completing the Drone market landscape survey (WP1), providing datasets and models to the DDAL (WP2) and actively promoting their work and the ICAERUS project (WP5).

At the time of deliverable preparation, the first rounds of the PUSH and PULL Open Call have concluded, as such focus will remain on promoting the implementation activities of the second round of OCTs. More specifically:

- Ongoing monitoring through bi-monthly meetings and careful review of deliverables
- Timely release of funding based upon the acceptance of deliverables
- Increased promotion of activities through social media posts and blog posts, newsletter
- Enable knowledge transfer through the working groups
- Promote the value-added services
- Facilitate contributions to the DDAL and updates to the ICAERUS platform

The final iteration of this deliverable D5.6 Open Call Plan & Monitoring Report (C update), will report on the outcomes and results of the Open Call Trials and will be submitted in February 2026 (M44).

Appendix 1: Call for evaluators

Blog Post on website: “ICAERUS Open Calls: We are Looking for Evaluators”
<https://icaerus.eu/icaerus-open-calls-we-are-looking-for-evaluators/> (22/02/2023):



CALL FOR EVALUATORS



**Funded by
the European Union**

Grant agreement N° 101060643

About ICAERUS project



Drones are an efficient, flexible digital technology that can perform increasingly complex tasks without damaging the environment, however their widespread adoption across the agri-food sector has been limited by costs, knowledge gaps, regulatory and safety restrictions.

ICAERUS aims to tackle these challenges by **supporting and showcasing the effective, efficient, and safe deployment of drones in applicable settings** and to **identify risks and added values associated with their use**. The ICAERUS vision is to explore drone-based opportunities and provide a more complete and interconnected account of their potential and impacts as multi-purpose vehicles in EU agriculture, forestry and rural areas.

ICAERUS will utilise an **application-oriented approach** to explore multi-purpose drone use in 5 specific drone applications, representing the most important sectoral and societal drone usage purposes in Europe. ICAERUS also plans to use **research, technology optimisation, demonstration, and drone education** to create an efficient, trusted, and safe environment for the **EU drone service market** to flourish contributing to the achievement of the EU's decarbonisation, digitalisation and resilience. ICAERUS will also produce several exploitable results that will offer extensive positive impact including the ICAERUS platform.

ICAERUS Open Calls

ICAERUS will issue and promote two (2) types of Open Calls (PUSH/PULL) providing financial support to third parties, as a **mechanism to harvest ideas** and datasets from the ecosystem and **accelerate the formation of a European network** for the effective and efficient adoption of drone technologies in rural areas. The Open Calls will include:

- a) PUSH Open Calls for Innovation Development (ID) and
- b) PULL Open Calls for Farming, Forestry and Rural Challenges (FFRC)

Both types of the Open Calls will have two release dates. In total, a budget of **1,080,000 €** is allocated on financial support to third parties. The Open Calls will result in **8 PUSH Open Calls** (480,000 € for ID – up to 60,000 € for each third party) and **12 PULL Open Calls** (600,000 € for FFRC - up to 50,000 € for each third party). Each sub-project accepted will last for **12 months** and be divided into 3 phases: Design, Development and Market.

Open Call Hub platform



Open Call Hub (OCH) is a digital platform for application management for financial support to third parties and accelerator programs, developed and maintained by Foodscale Hub. All 4 ICAERUS open calls for financial support to third parties (FSTP) will be published through Open Call Hub.

We are looking for evaluators!

Evaluators profile

We are looking for independent evaluators, who are able to assess the quality of applications received within the ICAERUS Open Calls, shortly after they have been closed. Evaluators must be:

- European (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to an EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list [HERE](#)).
- Specialists – **scientific** (technical, social sciences, etc.) or **business** experts: university or industry researchers or engineers, staff of other relevant organisations e.g., clusters, accelerators, etc. motivated by innovation topics around the **use of drones in rural areas**.
- Experienced experts in evaluating EC proposals or similar experience.

An evaluator should not work for an organisation that aims to participate in the ICAERUS Open Call, neither in an organisation participating in the current ICAERUS consortium.

The evaluators will be in charge of providing a neutral yet technical/scientific and/or business review of received applications, usually, but not limited to, on the following aspects:

- Concept and feasibility,
- Technology readiness and innovation development,
- Impact and exploitation,
- Organisational capacity and allocation of resources.

The full evaluation criteria per every open call will be specified in respective open call kit documents, alongside with relevant focus areas for a specific open call. In addition, it will be part of the Manual for the evaluators as well. The evaluation process per application as well as specific reimbursement of evaluators' efforts will be listed for every open call that is upcoming. It is important to note that the number of applications per evaluator depends on several factors: the time availability of the evaluators, the number of submitted applications, and the number of evaluators to be selected throughout every specific open call.

Financial Benefits

In case of ICAERUS project and all 4 Open Calls within it, evaluators will receive a compensation per working day, where daily rate amounts to **450€** with projected capacity of **2 proposals' evaluations per day**. Payment will be done in Euros by bank transfer on the personal account of the evaluators, up to 60 days after submission of the evaluations and reception of an invoice from the evaluator.

The minimum and maximum number of days per evaluator will depend on the number of applications received, and other factors such availability of the evaluator throughout the process etc.

Evaluation procedure

All the activities will be performed individually on the Open Call Hub (OCH) platform; no physical meetings are planned. The evaluation process will start with a short briefing telco about the evaluation procedure with a special focus on the evaluation criteria. Then each proposal will be assigned to 2 evaluators and therefore for each proposal 2 individual evaluation reports will be written. Some specific cases might

require the organisation of remote (online) consensus meetings between the evaluators in order to align evaluation reports (i.e., in case of large discrepancies between the marks given by the evaluators, or similar).

In case consensus is not reached after the remote evaluation by external experts, an interview of the applicant by the Advisory Board will be conducted. The following weighted criteria are to be evaluated: a) confirmation of proposed targets/technology (40%); b) viability of proposed business model (30%); c) reliability to reach exploitation milestones (30%).

Evaluators selection process

Evaluators will be selected by the ICAERUS Advisory Board based on their competences and needs for each open call.

Expression of interest

If you are interested in being an evaluator, create an evaluator profile on the Open Call Hub, fill in all necessary fields and upload your CV (as .pdf) - the application shouldn't take you more than 5 minutes!

Apply here: [LINK](#)

If you know someone else who might be qualified for this task and might be interested, please forward this to him or her. By applying to ICAERUS Call for Evaluators, applicant automatically accepts all the rules and conditions described below.

Tentative timeline of activities for PUSH OC 1

ICAERUS PUSH Open Call 1 duration: April 1st – June 30th, 2023.

Eligibility check of the received applications: July 1st – July 20th, 2023.

Contracting with selected evaluators: July 1st – July 20th, 2023.

Evaluation: August 21st – September 30th, 2023.

Evaluators' liability

All evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and non-disclosure agreement with the ICAERUS consortium prior to the evaluation start.

By applying to the ICAERUS Call for evaluators and registration to the Open Call Hub platform, the expert:

- understands that submitting an application (registration) does not guarantee his/her selection as an evaluator for any of the open calls.
- understands that he/she will have to provide a signed Code of Conduct and Declaration of Honor (DoH) along with any other requested documents if he/she is selected to serve as an evaluator for a specific open call published on the OCH platform.
- confirms that team in charge for each Open Call will ask him/her on an open call basis about time availability to accomplish the evaluation within the specified time frame for the given open call, to
- attend a briefing session (if required) and a debriefing session after the selection (if required). Timing



- confirms the interest to be informed about the future opportunities to act as an evaluator on ongoing and upcoming open calls that will be conducted on OCH.
- assures that he/she will only evaluate the applications of applicants for whom she/he does not have a Conflict of Interest (Col).

Admissibility

The applicant must be a European (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list [HERE](#)) (Note: if you are not a citizen of these countries, but a resident/taxpayer in one of these countries, you are still eligible to become an evaluator).

Applications can be submitted at any time starting from February 22nd, 2023, and for the first open call they should be submitted before the May 31st, 2023.

- Applications must be submitted electronically via Open Call Hub electronic submission system as indicated in this call, using the form provided inside OCH, and a CV, as .pdf, must be attached as part of the application. Paper or email submissions are NOT possible.
- Applications must be complete for all parts, and CV should be readable, accessible and printable.

If the admissibility criteria are respected, then the evaluation of the expert will be performed by the Advisory Board or expert team of each project whose Open Call is conducted via OCH platform. To formalise the collaboration, if not specified differently, a service contract will be signed between Foodscale Hub (with and the evaluators.

All selected evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and non-disclosure agreement with the representative of each project (coordinator, treasurer, etc.) prior to the evaluation start.

Conflict of interest

Evaluators must not have a conflict of interest at the time of their appointment and must sign a contract with a declaration that no such conflict exists. They also must inform the consortium should such a conflict arise in any of the applications they have been assigned. When a potential conflict of interest is reported by the evaluator or brought to the attention of the consortium by any means, the project consortium will analyze the circumstances and any objective elements of information available. If the consortium concludes that there is conflict of interest, the evaluator will be excluded from the evaluation of that application. All potential conflicts of interest will be assessed carefully. Please see more info [HERE](#).

Confidentiality

Evaluators are bound by confidentiality, as all information relating to the assessment process is strictly confidential. They are not allowed to disclose any information about the applications submitted and results of the assessment and selection to anyone. They are also not allowed to use the ideas of the application for own purposes.

**Good luck and thank you for your interest.
We are looking forward to collaborating with you!**

ICAERUS team

Appendix 2: Contract for evaluators

Contracting parties

REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIREIA, having its registered office at L.SOFOU 20, THERMI, THESSALONIKI, p.o. box 57001, GREECE, VAT: 997017380, acting as the treasurer and duly represented for the purposes of signing the contract for evaluators by Mr Grigoris Chatzikostas, Manager,

hereinafter referred as the “Contractor”

On the other part

[Name of the Expert], with VAT³ [xxxxxxx], home address [full address, post code, city, country], with Passport/ID number [xxxxxxx],

{or

[Name of a company], with VAT Number [xxxxxxx], established at [full address, post code, city, country], and employee [Name of the Expert], with Passport/ID Number [xxxxxxxxxx]

hereinafter referred as the “Evaluator”.

The Contracting Parties have agreed to enter into this Contract under the terms and conditions below. By signing this Contract, the Evaluator confirms that she/he has read, understood and accepted the Contract and all its obligations and conditions, including the Code of Conduct set out in Annex 1 and the provisions set out in Annex 2 which form an integral part of this Contract.

The Contract is composed by the following documents:

- Annex 1: Code of Conduct,
- Annex 2: Declaration of honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest.

General provisions

The European Commission (hereinafter referred as the “EC”) and the Contractor on behalf of the consortium have signed the Grant Agreement no 101060643 for the implementation of the ICAERUS: Innovations and Capacity building in Agricultural Environmental and Rural UAV Services within the framework of the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme, HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01.

The Contractor, following the selection procedure has chosen the Evaluator to be part of the evaluation team of ICAERUS project.

This Contract sets out the rights and obligations applying to the Evaluator and the Contractor for the purpose of evaluating the proposals submitted to ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call for Farming, Forestry and Rural Challenges (FFRC) from November 4, 2024, to November 30, 2024.

Article 1 – Entry into force of the contract and Termination

This Contract shall enter into force on the day of its signature by the Contracting Party. The termination of the Contract will be subject to the terms and conditions set out in Article 10.

Article 2 – Tasks of the evaluator

The ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call for Farming, Forestry and Rural Challenges was launched on July 8, 2024, with a closing date on October 16, 2024. More information and the Call material can be found on:

³ If applicable.

<https://icaerus.eu/open-calls/>. The evaluation will take place remotely, using an electronic tool available on <https://opencallhub.eu/Identity/Account/Login> and the activities will be performed individually. No physical meetings are planned.

The procedure will start with a short briefing telco about the evaluation procedure with a special focus on the evaluation criteria. In addition, a document with detailed Instructions will be provided. Then each proposal will be assigned to 2 external evaluators where each of them will possess specific technical and/or business expertise related to the topics of the call.

Online remote evaluation will take place from November 4, 2024, to November 30th, 2024, 17.00 CET. The evaluation form will remain accessible until the deadline, allowing you to modify your scores and comments as needed until the specified date.

Besides providing marks for each criterion, the evaluator will need to provide a comment explaining the rationale behind the assigned score. While concise comments are acceptable, more detailed explanations are highly appreciated and will aid in the selection process. After completing their evaluation, each pair of evaluators will have to consolidate their evaluations in one report ensuring that they reach a mutual agreement on the proposal's merits. This collaborative process ensures consistency in judgement and guards against bias, ultimately leading to the selection of the most deserving proposals

If there are significant discrepancies between the scores given by the evaluators or similar cases, remote (online) consensus meetings may be organised within the last week of November 2024. The purpose is to align evaluation reports and reach a mutual agreement on the proposal's merits.

Each evaluator will evaluate at least 9 (nine) proposals, and, if applicable, take part in consensus meetings. This will be compensated with a payment of 150 EUR per evaluator, per proposal.

Article 3 – Performance of the contract

The Evaluator must perform the Contract in compliance with its provisions and all legal obligations under applicable EU, international and national law.

The Evaluator must do so fully, within the set deadlines and to the highest professional standards.

The Evaluator must, in particular, ensure compliance with:

- The Code of Conduct (see Annex 1);
- The terms and conditions of this Contract do not constitute an employment agreement with the Contractor.

In the event the Evaluator cannot fulfil their obligations, s/he must immediately inform the Contractor.

Article 4 – Keeping records. Supporting documentation

The Evaluator must keep records and other supporting documentation (original supporting documents) as evidence that the Contract is performed correctly, and the expenses were actually incurred. These must be available for review upon the Contractor's request. The Contractor and the EC are entitled to analyse the evidence in order to determine whether the Contract has been duly performed.

The Evaluator must keep all records and supporting documentation for two years starting from the date of the last payment. If there are on-going checks, audits, investigations, appeals, litigation or pursuit of claims, the Evaluator must keep the records and supporting documents until these procedures end.

Article 5 – Price of the Contract and Payments

5.1. Price

The Evaluator will send a request for payment with the amount based on the number of evaluated proposals. The unit price is 150 EURO NET per evaluator, per proposal.

All the taxes and other costs related to the evaluation process go to the expenses of the evaluators.

5.2. Payments schedule

The payment to the total gross amount will be paid after receiving the complete documentation for payment.

Payments are subject to the Contractor's approval of report(s), and of the payment request(s).

Approval does not mean recognition of compliance, authenticity, completeness or correctness of content.

5.3. Request for payment

The Evaluator must make a request for payment to obtain their fees.

To do this, the Evaluator shall issue the payment request using the template provided by ICAERUS Consortium.

The payment request shall be denominated in Euros (EUR) and the payments will be made by bank transfer 30 days from receipt of the payment request, provided that the payment requirements are met.

The payment request shall include:

- Concept: [Name of the evaluator/Company] – Evaluator for ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call
- Recipient: REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIREIA
LEONTOS SOFOU 20, p.o box 570 01, THERMI THESSALONIKI, GREECE
VAT: EL997017380

- The Amount requested:
- VAT number of the organisation (if applicable):
- Name of the account holder to which the transfer is to be made:
- IBAN:
- SWIFT:

The above information is not to be filled in during the signature of this contract. It will be provided by the evaluator upon completion of the evaluation phase.

The Contracting authority can ask for additional documentation if needed for the payment realisation.

The evaluator agrees that if they do not get any proposal for evaluation, they will not have any financial claims towards the Contractor.

The Contractor accepts no responsibility for delays in payments incurred by failure of the Evaluator to provide any of the above information a payment request submitted.

The Evaluator will be liable for all bank charges incurred due to incomplete information they might provide.

The Evaluator will be liable for the postal charges incurred for the receipt of one copy of the contract (in hard copy) that will be sent to him/her by RFF after it is signed by both parties.

Article 6 – Confidentiality

6.1. Principles

With respect to all information of whatever nature or form is disclosed to the Evaluator in the framework of the Contract and identified in writing as confidential, the terms of this Article shall apply.

6.2. Obligations

The Evaluator agrees that such information is communicated on a confidential basis and its disclosure may be prejudicial to the owner of the information, and undertakes that:

- i) it will not, during the term of the Project and for a period of five (5) years from the expiration date of the Contract; use any such information for any purpose other than in accordance with the terms of the Contract.
- ii) it will, during the term of the Contract and for a period of five (5) years from the expiration date of the Contract, treat the same as (and to procure that the same be kept) confidential provided always that such agreement and undertaking shall not extend to any information which the Evaluator can show:
 - was, at the time of disclosure to the Evaluator, published or otherwise generally available to the public, or
 - has, after disclosure to the Evaluator, been published or become generally available to the public otherwise than through any act or omission on the part of the Evaluator, or
 - was already in the possession of the Evaluator, without any restrictions on disclosure, at the time of disclosure to the Evaluator, or
 - was rightfully acquired from others without any undertaking of confidentiality; or
 - is subsequently independently developed by the Evaluator without use of the information provided by the Contractor.

In case of breach of the confidential rules hereinabove set, the Evaluator will remain solely liable towards possible claims.

6.3 Return of the confidential information

Upon request at any time by the Contractor, the Evaluator shall promptly return or at the option of the Contractor, destroy all confidential information furnished to him/her that is in tangible form (including, without limitation, confidential information contained on computer disks or other electronic media), together with any copies or extracts thereof save to the extent that the Evaluator is required to retain any confidential information by any applicable law, rule or regulation or by any competent judicial, governmental, supervisory or regulatory body or to the extent that such confidential information is incorporated into organisational records which the respective Party is required to retain by law or in accordance with internal policies regarding the keeping of records generally, in which case the Evaluator will take appropriate measures to preserve its continuing confidentiality.

Any destruction of materials shall be confirmed by the Evaluator to the Contractor if so requested in writing.

Any Confidential Information that is not returned or destroyed, including without limitation any oral confidential information, shall remain subject to the confidentiality obligations set forth in this Contract.

Article 7 – Check, Audits and Investigations

The European Commission may - during the implementation of the action or afterwards - carry out checks and audits to ascertain compliance with the proper implementation of the tasks (including assessment of deliverables and reports) under this Contract and whether the Evaluator is meeting their obligations.

It may do so throughout the Contract's validity and up to two years after the payment is made. The Evaluator must provide - within the deadline requested - any information and data in addition to reports already submitted. The Evaluator must allow access to sites and premises on which the tasks specified in this Contract are performed.

The EC has the right of access for the purpose of checks and audits.

Findings in checks, audits or investigations may lead to the reduction or rejection of fees, rejection of claims for allowances and expenses, or recovery of undue amounts.

Moreover, findings arising from an OLAF investigation may lead to criminal prosecution under national law.

Article 8 – Effects of Breaching Contractual Obligations

8.1. Suspension of the Payment Deadline

1. The Contractor may at any point suspend the payment deadline if a request for payment cannot be processed because it does not comply with the Contract's provisions.
2. The Contractor must formally notify the Evaluator of the suspension and the reasons for it.
3. The suspension takes effect on the date the notification is sent by the Contractor.
4. If the condition for suspending the payment deadline as referred to above is no longer met, the suspension will be lifted - and the remaining period will resume.
5. If the suspension exceeds two months, the Evaluator may ask the Contractor if the suspension will continue.
6. If the payment deadline has been suspended due to the non-compliance of the reports (see Article 3) and the revised report or deliverables or payment request is not submitted or was submitted but is also rejected, the Contracting Party may also terminate the Contract (see Article 10).

8.2. Reduction or rejection of fees

1. The Contractor may reject (parts of) the fees if they do not fulfil the conditions set out in Article 3.
 2. The Contractor may reduce the fee if the Evaluator is in breach of any of their other obligations under the Contract (including the obligations set out in the Code of Conduct).
 3. The Contractor must formally notify the Evaluator of its intention, include the reasons why, and invite him/her to submit any observations within 30 days of receiving notification.
- If the Contractor does not accept these observations, it will formally notify confirmation of the rejection or reduction.

Article 9 – Suspension of the Contract

1. The Contractor may suspend implementation of the Contract or any part of it, if the Evaluator is not able to fulfil their obligation to carry out the work required.
2. The Contractor must formally notify the Evaluator of its intention, include the reasons why and invite him/her to submit any observations within seven days of receiving notification.
3. If the Contractor does not accept these observations, it will formally notify confirmation of the suspension.
4. The suspension will take effect on the date the notification is sent by the Contractor.
5. If the reasons for suspending implementation of the Contract are no longer valid, the suspension may be lifted, and implementation may be resumed. The Contractor will formally notify the Evaluator if the suspension is lifted and the Contract will be amended, if necessary (see Article 14), unless it has been terminated (see Article 10).

Article 10 – Termination of the Contract

1. The Contractor may at any moment terminate the Contract if the Evaluator:
is not performing their tasks or is performing them poorly; or
has committed substantial errors, irregularities or fraud, or is in serious breach of their obligations under the selection procedure or under the Contract, including false declarations and obligations relating to the Code of Conduct.
2. The Contractor must formally notify the Evaluator of its intention, include the reasons why and invite him/her to submit any observations within 30 days of receiving notification. If the Contractor does not accept these observations, it will formally notify confirmation of the termination.
3. The termination will take effect on the date the notification is sent by the Contractor.

4. The Evaluator may at any moment terminate the Contract if s/he is not able to fulfil their obligations in carrying out the work required.
5. The Evaluator must formally notify the Contractor and include the reasons why by giving 15 days' notice.
6. The termination will take effect on the date the Contractor will formally notify confirmation of the termination.
7. Only fees for days actually worked before termination may be paid.
8. The Evaluator must submit the payment request for the tasks already executed on the date of termination within 30 days from the date of termination.
9. On termination of the Contract, the Contractor may hire another Evaluator to carry out or finish the work. It may claim from the Evaluator all extra costs incurred while doing this, without prejudice to any other rights or guarantees it may have under the Contract.

Article 11 – Liability for damages

The Contractor cannot be held liable for any damage caused or sustained by the Evaluator during or as a consequence of performing the Contract, except in the event of the Contractor's wilful misconduct or gross negligence.

Article 11 – Force Majeure

1. 'Force majeure' means any situation or event that:
 - prevents either party from fulfilling their obligations under the Contract;
 - was unforeseeable, exceptional and beyond the parties' control;
 - was not due to error or negligence on their part or on the part of third parties involved in implementing the action, and
 - proves to be inevitable in spite of exercising due diligence.
2. A force majeure must be immediately and formally notified to the other Party. Notification must include details of the situation's nature, likely duration and expected effects.
3. The Party faced with a force majeure will not be held in breach of its contractual obligations if the force majeure has prevented it from fulfilling them.

Article 13 – Amendments to the Contract

1. In justified cases - and provided that the amendment does not entail changes to the Contract which would call into question the selection procedure - any party may request an amendment.
2. Amendments must be made before new contractual obligations are enforced.
3. The party requesting an amendment must formally notify the other party the requested amendment in writing with the reasons why.
4. Any amendment to this Contract shall be done in writing and shall be duly signed by both Contracting parties.

Article 14 – Applicable Law and Dispute of settlements

This Contract shall be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of Belgium.

Disputes concerning the Contract's interpretation, application or validity that cannot be settled amicably must be brought before the courts of Brussels.

AS WITNESS:

The Contracting Parties have caused this Contract to be duly signed by the undersigned authorised representatives **in two (2) copies** the day and year first above written:

<p>For <i>[legal entity, if any]</i> <i>[name of the evaluator]</i> <i>[position in legal entity, if any]</i> Signature</p> <p>Done at <i>[city]</i>, <i>[country]</i> on / /2024</p>	<p>For REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIREIA, acting as the treasurer Mr. Grigorios Chatzikostas, Manager Signature</p> <p>Done at Thessaloniki, Greece on / /2024</p>
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Annex 1: Code of Conduct for external evaluators

Article 1. Performance of the Contract

1. The Evaluator works independently, in a personal capacity and not on behalf of any organisation.
2. The Evaluator must:
 - a) Evaluate each proposal in a confidential and fair way, in accordance with the ICAERUS PULL 2 Applicant's guide and the evaluation documents provided by the Contracting Party (being reframe.food and, where applicable, a relevant cascading funding coordinator).
 - b) Assist the Contracting Party to the best of their abilities, professional skills, knowledge and applying the highest ethical and moral standards.
 - c) Follow any instructions and time-schedules given by the Contracting Party and deliver consistently high-quality work.
3. The Evaluator may not delegate another person to carry out the work or be replaced by any other person.
4. If a legal entity involved in a proposal approaches the Evaluator during the evaluation of this proposal, s/he must immediately inform the Contracting Party.

Article 2. Obligations of impartiality

1. The Evaluator must perform their work impartially. To this end, the Evaluator is required to:
 - a) Inform the Contracting Party of any conflicts of interest arising in the course of their work. For more information on conflict of interest, please consult the following [link](#).
 - b) Confirm in a specific Open Call evaluation case that there is no conflict of interest for each proposal s/he is evaluating by signing a Declaration of Honour included in Annex 2.
2. Definition of the conflict of interest: for a given proposal, a conflict of interest exists if an Evaluator (but not limited to):
 - a) was involved in the preparation of the proposal.
 - b) stands to benefit directly or indirectly if the proposal is accepted.
 - c) has a close family or personal relationship with any person representing an applicant legal entity.
 - d) is a director, trustee or partner or is in any way involved in the management of an applicant legal entity.
 - e) is employed or contracted by one of the applicant legal entities.
 - f) is a member of any of the Beneficiaries of the Consortium/Project Team within which an Open Call is being conducted.

In the following situations the Contracting Party will decide whether a conflict of interest exists, taking account of the objective circumstances, available information and related risks when an Evaluator:

- I. was employed by one of the applicant legal entities in the last three years.
 - II. is involved in a contract or grant agreement, grant decision or membership of management structures (e.g., member of management or advisory board etc.) or research collaboration with an applicant legal entity or the fellow researcher or had been so in the last three years.
 - III. is in any other situation that could cast doubt on their ability to participate in the evaluation of the proposal impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party.
3. Consequences of conflicts of interest:
 - a) If a conflict of interest is reported by the Evaluator or established by the Contracting Party, the Evaluator must not evaluate the proposal concerned and shall immediately inform the Contracting Party about the situation.
 - b) If a conflict becomes apparent at any stage of the evaluation, the Evaluator must immediately inform the Contracting Party. If a conflict is confirmed, the Evaluator must stop evaluating the proposal concerned. Any comments and scores already given by the Evaluator will be discounted. If necessary, the Evaluator will be replaced.

If it is revealed during an evaluation that an Evaluator has knowingly concealed a conflict of interest, the Evaluator will be immediately excluded, and sanctions will apply, subject to a separate decision.

Article 3. Obligations of Confidentiality

1. The Contracting Party and the Evaluator must treat confidentially any information and documents, in any form (i.e., paper or electronic), disclosed in writing or orally in relation to the performance of the Contract.
2. The Evaluator undertakes to observe strict confidentiality in relation to their work. To this end, the Evaluator:
 - a) must not use confidential information or documents for any purpose other than fulfilling their obligations under the Contract without prior written approval of the Contracting Party
 - b) must not disclose, directly or indirectly, confidential information or documents relating to proposals or applicants, without prior written approval of the Contracting Party.In particular, the Evaluator:
 - I. must not discuss any proposal with others, including other Evaluators, the Contracting Party or any other entity involved in any form on the given Open Call activity, not directly involved in evaluating the proposal, except during the formal discussion at the meetings moderated by or with the knowledge and approval of the Contracting Party to this purpose.
 - II. must not disclose:
 - any detail of the evaluation process and its outcomes or of any proposal submitted for evaluation for any purpose other than fulfilling their obligations under the Contract without prior written approval of the Contracting Party
 - their advice to the Contracting Party or relevant service on any proposal to the applicants or to any other person (including colleagues, students, etc.)
 - the names of other Evaluators participating in the evaluation.
 - III. must not communicate with applicants on any proposal during the evaluation.
3. the Evaluator will be held personally responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of any documents or electronic files sent, and for returning, erasing, or destroying all confidential documents or files upon completing the evaluation as instructed.
4. If the Evaluator seeks further information (for example through the internet, specialised databases, etc.) to complete their examination of the proposals, s/he:
 - a) must respect the overall rules for confidentiality for obtaining such information,
 - b) must not contact applicants,
 - c) must not contact third parties without prior written approval of the Contracting Party

Annex 2: Declaration of Honour

The undersigned **Name Surname** in **his/her** own name:

1. Declares that she is not in one of the following situations:
 - a) is in bankrupt or being wound up, is having his/her affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
 - b) he/she has been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
 - c) he/she has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
 - d) he/she is not in compliance with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;

- e) he/she has been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union’s financial interests.
2. Declares that he/she:
- is not subject to a conflict of interest as per Article 2 of Annex1: Code of Conduct for Evaluators;
 - has not made false declarations in supplying the information required as a condition of being eligible as Evaluator for the review of the applications received during the open call(s) or does not fail to supply this information;
 - is not in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in the abovementioned point a);
 - either European (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, or is a resident/taxpayer in one of these countries.

Full name: Passport or ID number:	Signature
Done at _____ on _____	

Appendix 3: Remote evaluation instructions



Innovation and Capacity building

in Agricultural Environmental and Rural UAV Services



ICAERUS

**PULL 2 Open Call for Farming Forestry and
Rural Challenges (FFRC)**

**Remote Evaluation of Proposals
Instructions for Evaluators**



Funded by
the European Union

Dear Evaluator,

Thank you for participating in the evaluation process for the ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call. Your expertise and thorough assessment will play a critical role in selecting the most promising projects. To ensure a fair and consistent evaluation, please follow the guidelines outlined below:

Evaluation Schedule

- The remote evaluation period is from **November 4 until November 30, 2024, 17:00CET, with the final 5 business days reserved for consensus meetings if needed.**
- Ensure that you complete your evaluations within this timeframe.
- The evaluation form will remain accessible until the deadline, allowing you to modify your scores and comments as needed until the specified date.

Evaluation Method

- Each proposal will be reviewed by two different expert evaluators.
- Evaluators will possess specific technical and/or business expertise related to the topics of the Call

Evaluation Criteria

- Evaluate each proposal against the key award criteria specified in the *Applicant's Guide*:

i. Concept and Feasibility – 30%

- a. Consider whether the proposal aligns with the PULL 2 Open Call and the ICAERUS project as well as its potential to be fully executed.

ii. Technology Readiness and Innovation Development – 20%

- a. Please note, a specific final TRL has not been requested, however the proposal requires a description of the starting and target TRL. Please consider whether progress seems logical, feasible and aligns with the aims of the call.
- b. Please keep in mind that end user adoption is the priority of this call rather than the specific development of products as was the aim of the PUSH OCs.

iii. Impact and Exploitation – 30%

- a. Consider the potential benefit to end-users and rural communities
- b. Evaluate the strategies proposed for leveraging the project's results.
- c. Assess the lasting impact of the project and the potential for sustainable value creation.

iv. Organisational Capacity, Sufficiency in the Applicant's Background, and Allocation of Resources – 20%

- o Assess the coherence and effectiveness of the work plan
 - o Consider whether the organisation has the capacity to successfully complete the project, this could also include demonstrating viable means for acquiring necessary skills/knowledge.
 - o Ensure the allocation of resources is appropriate. This includes proper justification of sub-contracting.
- Use the scoring scale from 1 to 5 for each criterion, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest score

Comments:

- Provide clear, concise comments for each criterion, explaining the rationale behind your assigned score.
 - o E.g. "The proposed solution creates an impact on target stakeholders and demonstrates a robust framework for engaging citizens and civil society, with clear strategies for

collaboration. However, there is a lack of specific metrics (KPIs) for measuring this impact”.

The comments should align with and justify the scores given, ensuring consistency and clarity in the evaluation process. Ensure that comments and scores are well aligned, particularly when using terms such as “this is a shortcoming”.

- E.g., For a score of 2 “The work plan demonstrates a reasonable level of coherence, outlining key milestones and tasks clearly”, would not be appropriate since the comment does not align with the low score.
- E.g., For a score of 5 “The work plan demonstrates a reasonable level of coherence, but the tasks are not clearly described”, would not be appropriate since the comment does not align with the high score.
- Avoid simply restating elements of the proposal.
- While concise comments are acceptable, more detailed explanations are highly appreciated and will aid in the selection process.

After completing their evaluation, each pair of evaluators will have to consolidate their evaluations in one report ensuring that they reach a mutual agreement on the proposal’s merits. This collaborative process ensures consistency in judgement and guards against bias, ultimately leading to the selection of the most deserving proposals.

The scores and comments provided will be consolidated into a Evaluations Summary Report (ESR) that will be shared with the applicants.

Proposal Length Limit:

- The total length of each proposal, including the cover page and tables on Costs justification and funding (paragraph 6), **must not** exceed 10 pages. Refer to the ICAERUS Proposal Template
- Explanatory text located below the paragraph sub-titles may be removed if it helps to meet the page limit.
- Applicants are not allowed to delete any page, including the cover page and table of contents
- Any content beyond the 10th page **SHOULD NOT** be evaluated.

Evaluation Focus:

- The aim of the PULL 2 OC is to attract end-users to utilise drones and services built around them for individual commercial needs and/or community-related issues
- The ICAERUS project is working to explore drone based opportunities and provide a more complete and interconnected account of their potential and impacts as multi-purpose vehicles in EU agriculture, forestry and rural areas.
- Other important considerations:
 - The call is NOT restricted to farming, but rather addressing **rural challenges**
 - The call does not explicitly require drones to be aerial, therefore land and water drones are eligible.

Fair and Impartial Assessment

- Maintain objectivity and impartiality throughout the evaluation process.
- Refrain from any bias or personal prejudice that may influence your judgment
- Review the Applicant’s guide and proposal template to ensure a solid understanding of the call requirements.

Consensus between evaluators

- If there is a discrepancy of >2 points for any given criterion a consensus meeting may be organised between the 2 evaluators between **November 25 and November 29, 2024**.
- The aim is to align evaluation reports and reach a mutual agreement on the proposal’s merits.

Confidentiality

- All information related to the proposals and the evaluation process is strictly confidential.
- Do not disclose any details about the proposals or the evaluation to unauthorized parties.

Conflict of Interest

- If you have any conflicts of interest with a particular proposal, immediately notify the evaluation team.
- Remove yourself from evaluating any proposal with which you have a conflict.

Communication

- If you have any questions or need clarification on the evaluation process, contact the evaluation team promptly.

Thank you for your valuable contribution to the evaluation process. Your thorough and impartial assessment will help identify the most deserving projects.

Contact email address: *icaerus@opencallhub*.

The ICAERUS Open Call Team

Appendix 4: Payment request form

Reframe Food
 20 Leontos Sofou, Themi,
 57001 Thessaloniki, Greece

Request for the payment

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PAYMENT FOR “PHASE X – PHASE TITLE” OF THE XXX OPEN CALL IN THE FRAMEWORK OF PROJECT ICAERUS (GA No 101060643)

In accordance with the **GRANT AGREEMENT No 101060643** and the **SUB-GRANT AGREEMENT** between **REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIRIA (RFF)** and

[COMPANY NAME], [ADDRESS], [CITY], [VAT NUMBER],

the payment for “**Phase X – Phase title**” of the XXX Open Call of ICAERUS shall be executed in the total net amount of 10,000.00 EUR.

Amount for the payment	XXX EUR
IBAN	
Bank	
Swift code	
Account holder’s name	

The Subgrantee

DULY SIGNED

DD / MM / 2025

Appendix 5: Open Call Hub FAQs

PUSH 1		
	Question	Answer
1	Hello, where can I find more details on the Open Call? Any Guide for applicants?	ICAERUS PUSH 1 Open Call Kit (with all relevant documents and instructions) can be found on the ICAERUS project website: https://icaerus.eu/open-calls/
2	Are organisations established in the UK eligible for participating in the ICAERUS Open Call?	Participants established in the UK are eligible to apply to the ICAERUS open call. However, in order for open call participants who are established in the UK to sign the contract with the ICAERUS consortium and receive funds through the open call (if among winners), the UK should have first signed the association agreement and be considered as an associated country to Horizon Europe. If at the moment of the signature of the contract between the open call winner and the ICAERUS consortium, the UK is not yet an associated country, the open call winner who is established in the UK will not be eligible for receiving funds from ICAERUS open call.
3	Are consortia eligible to apply? Or is this call for single applicants only?	For the ICAERUS PUSH 1 Open Call, only single applicants are eligible to apply. Consortia are not eligible.
4	How many applications can one entity submit? And how many of them can be selected for funding?	According to Section 3.2 of our Applicants' Guide, only one proposal per applicant can be selected for funding. Applicants that receive funding within one Open Call are not eligible to apply for additional funding in other ICAERUS Open Calls. In case an applicant submits more than one proposal within the same call and both (all) of them are shortlisted for funding, only the one with the highest score can be selected. However, if multiple versions of the same application are submitted, only the last version will be evaluated.
5	Could you please clarify what does phase 3 market entail? It is the preparation of a business plan/strategy or is it a more direct attempt to place on the market what is defined and developed in phases 1 and 2?	Phase 3 Market needs to focus on the detailed preparation of a business plan and strategy for paving the way to getting the actions of phases 1 and 2 ready to be commercialised. However, please keep in mind that those plans have to aim at actual market exploitation.
6	Is being a registered entity and having a VAT number mandatory to apply?	In order to apply and to be eligible for the ICAERUS Open Call, an entity has to be registered and have a valid VAT number (officially obtained which could be found in the business registry (or other institution) of a country).
7	Is co-funding by the applicant required or is the budget fully covered?	The whole requested budget (within limits set in the ICAERUS Open Call Kit) is fully covered by the ICAERUS Open Call, so there is no need for co-funding. However, the additional commitment of own funds (or other funds, public or private) is a positive signal of the commitment of the applicant towards the sustainability of project results and it will be assessed by evaluators.
8	Is there a minimum TRL level	There is no minimum TRL expected at the application

	required at the beginning and at the end of the project?	stage. However, please keep in mind that, according to the ICAERUS PUSH Applicants' guide, Section 3.5.3 Key points for evaluation, the first two criteria (Concept and feasibility and Technology readiness and innovation development) are participating with 60% of the total final evaluation results (30% each of them). This means that applications with more developed solutions and higher TRL (closer to market) might have better chances to be selected for funding.
9	During the interim reports/evaluations will we need to present timesheets for the personnel?	In ICAERUS, we follow lump-sum approach, payments are released with the acceptance of deliverables, however, all sub-grantees are strongly advised to keep detailed financial records for at least 5 years after the completion of ICAERUS project, in case of audits by competent EC authorities.
10	Do the cover and table of contents count in the total of 10 pages limit for the proposal?	The cover page and table of content are within the 10 pages limit. The information included in the table of content needs to remain, however the applicants may find ways to reduce the space needed for this information (while maintaining generic format requirements, in terms of fonts, margins etc) in order to elaborate more within the 10 pages limit.
11	To be able to do a pilot, do we need to include the place in our proposal or can we pilot it in one of the ICAERUS use cases?	ICAERUS Open Calls are for single applicants, so consortia are not eligible. However, in case you provide the information (Letter of Intent, for example) that you will have a pilot spot, this could be better perceived by the external evaluators. ICAREUS use cases have been established with technologies already embedded to them so unfortunately they cannot host additional pilots in the course of ICAERUS resources. However this does not rule out the possibility that existing ICAERUS use cases might want to test technologies from successful applicants in the future.
12	This is a question regarding the user profile in opencallhub.eu platform. The field 'VAT number' is related to the company represented by the user or is it meant to be the user's personal ID/VAT number?	Field VAT number is related to the legal entity applying to the Open Call (start-up, SME, research institute, etc.).
13	Due to the limited number of document uploads allowed in the application (only three documents, including My proposal, Declaration of Honour signed by Legal Representative, and Declaration of Conducting Business signed by Legal Representative) should the Bank Account Information PDF document not be uploaded?	Bank Account Information document is needed only for the applicants that are selected for funding, during the contracting phase (along with other relevant documents).
14	After the submission, should we receive a relevant mail?	There is no confirmation email after the submission of the application. Once you submit your application, it becomes visible under "Submitted Open Call events" and there you can see the status (currently all submitted applications have status "Pending").

PULL 1		
	Question	Answer
1	Can a non-profit entities apply to PULL 1 Open Call?	As stated in Section 3.2 Eligibility criteria of PULL 1 Applicants Guide, ICAERUS PULL 1 Open Call is aimed at (but not limited to) European agri-food producers, environmental monitoring entities and rural communities/cooperatives. Based on this, your non-for-profit association is eligible for applying as long as you fulfill all the other requirements of the ICAERUS PULL 1 Open Call.
2	Can a single SME submit two applications for the PULL open call? I would like to clarify the funding model, specifically whether it is fully funded (100%) or if the companies are required to cover a portion of the costs.	According to the Section 3.2 Eligibility criteria of the ICAERUS PULL 1 Applicants guide (page 9): <i>Only one proposal per applicant can be selected for funding. SMEs that receive funding within one Open Call are not eligible to apply for additional funding in other ICAERUS Open Calls. In case an applicant submits more than one proposal and both (all) of them are shortlisted for funding, only the one with the highest score could be selected.</i> However, if multiple versions of the same application are submitted, only the last version will be evaluated. With respect to the funding model, the whole requested budget (within limits set in the ICAERUS PULL 1 Open Call Kit) is fully covered by the ICAERUS Open Call, so there is no need for co-funding. However, the additional commitment of own funds (or other funds, public or private) is a positive signal of the commitment of the applicant towards the sustainability of project results and it will be assessed by evaluators.
3	In case an SME belongs to a group of companies owned by a mother company, are we still able to apply to PULL Open Call?	For the ICAERUS PULL 1 Open Call SMEs are eligible to apply, if they are in compliance with the Commission's recommendation concerning the definition of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/79c0ce87-f4dc-11e6-8a35-01aa75ed71a1), regardless of the fact whether they are autonomous, partner or linked enterprises.
4	Are entities from Hungary, not affected by the EC directive, eligible to apply?	ICAERUS project follows the EC directive in its full capacity. As stated in the following link and FAQ (https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/support/faq/21511?type=0,1;categories=;tenders=;programme=null;keyword=;freeTextSearchKeyword=Hungarian%20university;matchWholeText=true;period=null;status=0;sortQuery=relevance;orderBy=desc;faqListKey=faqSearchTablePageState): Important to note that only public interest trusts established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 and entities maintained by them are concerned by the Council measures. Based on this, if you do not follow under the affected public entities, you are eligible to apply.
5	We are a limited company	Although having a valid VAT number is mandatory

	<p>established in the UK, but do not need to be VAT registered. Can we apply without having a VAT number?</p>	<p>for applying, we are aware that in some cases and countries start-ups are exempted from VAT. In this case, in order to secure that your application meets all mandatory requirements, we would kindly ask you to provide the following documents in order to prove the legal existence of your start-up:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An official document for proof of VAT registration exemption 2. An official document with your national registration number (e.g. from the business registry) <p>Please merge these documents with the Declaration of conducting business and upload them as a single pdf document in the field dedicated to the Declaration of conducting business.</p>
6	<p>Can Latin American countries participate in the call?</p>	<p>In case a country from Latin America is eligible to apply to Horizon Europe programme, full list can be found on the following link: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf, it is eligible to apply to the ICAERUS Open Call. However, please keep in mind that the proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the benefits it can bring about to European rural areas.</p>

		PUSH 2	
	Question	Answer	
1	<p>I would like to know how I can see the history of my applications to the Icaerus open call. Last year, we were applying for the PUSH Open Call for ID Type of applicant: start-ups and SME exploiting innovative drone services and technologies. Can you tell me how to find the application ID?</p>	<p>Once submitted, the confirmation is received via email and there you can see the ID of your application. In addition, all the applicants who have submitted their proposals can access them by logging into the Open Call Hub Platform, navigating to the "Submitted Open Call Events" section, and selecting the particular open call card.</p>	
2	<p>In which part of the Applicant's Guide can I find the precise requirements for the project you mentioned in your previous e-mail? Also is it possible for this project or present several themes to which our solution responds, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Surveillance of sensitive sites: such as airports, power stations/nuclear power plans - Animal monitoring and counting - Plant disease monitoring and detection <p>Or do we only need to respond to one of the topics listed above</p>	<p>All necessary requirements to apply to the ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call you may find in the Applicants guide and Open Call kit: https://icaerus.eu/open-calls/</p> <p>As for the multiple problems, It is up to the applicant to decide the scope and the orientation of their proposal. However, according to our experience and to the best of our knowledge, evaluators usually appreciate proposals with concrete and focused objectives and impacts.</p>	
3	<p>Is a VSE (very small enterprise) an SME?</p>	<p>For exact definition of SME, we are following the guideline of the European Commission, please check here: https://ec.europa.eu/docsroom/documents/42921/attachments/1/translations/en/renditions/n</p>	
4	<p>Is it possible to make a proposal with several issues? For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animal counting - Plant disease detection, monitoring crop growth and health - Monitoring large industrial sites (airports, nuclear power plants, etc.) <p>These are just some of the issues our drones solution can address. Do these issues fall within the scope of your open call PUSH 2?</p>	<p>All necessary requirements to apply to the ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call you may find in the Applicants guide and Open Call kit: https://icaerus.eu/open-calls/</p> <p>As for the multiple problems, it is up to the applicant to decide the scope and the orientation of their proposal. However, according to our experience and to the best of our knowledge, evaluators usually appreciate proposals with concrete and focused objectives and impacts.</p> <p>Proposals addressing several challenges are eligible within ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call. Please make sure you elaborate on how your business model will address these challenges within the given page limit. In addition, please make sure all suggested challenges are within PUSH 2 scope and addressing rural areas, but also in line with other eligibility criteria.</p>	

5	<p>Can you tell me if the ICAERUS PUSH 2 project only concerns problems in rural areas? Or can we also meet the need for drones in airports and seaports?</p>	<p>In case you plan to address other sectors and not agrifood in your proposal, you should explain in your proposal which sector(s) you are addressing and how the proposal addresses the sustainability impact and the multi-actor involvement in the selected sector(s).</p>
6	<p>Is kite-balloon technology eligible for the PUSH 2 Open Call for ID?</p>	<p>Unfortunately, kite-balloons are not eligible for ICAERUS Open Calls.</p>
7	<p>In part 6.1 (sustainability impact) of the proposal template it says “sustainability impacts of innovation development in the agri-food sector” and in part 6.4 (multi-actor involvement), it says “the different actors of the agri-food chain”. But I don’t see the link between agrifood and our ICAERUS PUSH 2 open call on drone innovation. Could you please explain? What should I indicate in these sections?</p>	<p>In case you plan to address other sectors and not agrifood in your proposal, you should explain in your proposal which sector(s) you are addressing and how the proposal addresses the sustainability impact and the multi-actor involvement in the selected sector(s).</p>
8	<p>1. In the point 7.1 Deliverables list should we only fill in the column “overall cost”, without further explanations of those costs in the space below/above the table? 2. In the point 7.2 budget and cost justification should we write an explanation/justification for every item in the table in the space below the table? Maybe it’s a strange question but for other points it clearly states “describe” when we need to write about some topic but in points 7.1 and 7.2 there are just tables without instructions to write a justification for costs. 3. In the point 7.2 budget and cost justification table in the row “personnel costs” should we just put the salary of people employed full time within the company that would work on this project, or we can also put salaries of people that work in a start up as an additional job? For example, some of the cofounders in our startup also work in other companies, but work for our startup as an additional job.</p>	<p>For the personnel, you need to calculate the cost of the personnel that would be involved in the project, the ones that will be executing the project. This personnel can be either full-time or part-time (per project) basis as long as they are hired according to your national legislation.</p>
9	<p>This is to kindly inquire whether participants from the American University in Beirut registered in Lebanon are considered eligible to submit a proposal under the upcoming PUSH Open Calls for ID</p>	<p>Based on the official document of the EU (EU Grants: List of participating countries (HE): V2.9 – 21.03.2024), Lebanon is among the countries eligible for Horizon Europe funding: https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf</p>

	due May 7, 2024?	However, please keep in mind that the proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the added value/ benefits it can bring to European rural areas.
10	What can we do if our solution exceeds the 60k budget?	For ICAERUSH PUSH 2 call, 60,000 EUR is maximum funding amount an applicant can opt for. If applicant wants, the remaining amount could be secured via own funding
11	So, if the cost of my solution is over €60,000, do I fill in the budget justification table with the total cost as €60,000 (since that's the maximum amount) or do I put in the actual amount (what it is really costing us, even though we will have to pay the difference)?	It's important to accurately reflect the actual cost of your solution in the budget justification table. However, if your total cost exceeds €60,000, you should still enter the full amount. Please clarify that while the project's total cost surpasses the funding limit, you're requesting €60,000 from this particular funding source. Providing this transparency ensures clarity for reviewers regarding your budget allocation strategy.

PULL 2		
	Question	Answer
1	Is it possible to apply as a consortium of two SMEs? We will be applying and would like to collaborate with a company that is specialised in the development of drone technologies. Can we apply as partners or do we have to list them as sub-contractors?	No it is not possible to apply as a consortium. The ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call only accepts individual applicants. It is possible to use sub-contracting to engage the service of other parties. For more details please see Section 3.1 Eligible costs, bullet point 5. Subcontracting (pg 14) of the PULL OC Applicant's Guide.
2	Is it encouraged to propose a project that addresses several of the topics from the open call? For example, our project would fall under Applying innovative solutions, Logistics and supply management and Public safety. Or should we focus on a singular topic?	The examples provided in Section 2.2 topics for FFRC (page 7-8) are indicative of the types of sub-projects that are expected to be funded but are not limited to those listed. In order to be eligible however, proposals need to address challenges in rural areas (pg8). Furthermore, proposals will be evaluated on the 4 criteria listed in section 3.5.3 Key points for evaluation (pg 16) of the applicant's guide. It would be best to consider how such a decision might affect each criteria.
3	Are there any merits known for the deliverable of the Phase 2 (Development)? Is there a suggested or expected Technology Readiness Level?	The phase 2 deliverable is part of the implementation of selected projects and its successful submission is tied to the release of 50% of the funding (see section 4.1 Implementation timeline and activities). In the proposal phase it should be mentioned within the work plan which can be found in the proposal template under section 3.4 work plan (pg 4). With regards to the TRL, the proposal template Section 5.3 Technology Readiness Level requests a description of the starting and the target TRL. It is also a criteria for evaluation (technology readiness and innovation development 20%), however no mandatory TRL target is specified.
4	In the open call document, there are use cases already listed. Are those	The 5 Uses Cases described are part of ICAERUS project not the open call component. They are provided

	<p>use cases from the previous open calls, or are those suggested use cases for this open call? Forest for example has: Forestry and Biodiversity UC (Lithuania): a) Monitor first tree health through the use of drones, satellites and data science; b) identify and inspect areas pg potentially high fire risk; c) monitor ecosystems and assess biodiversity and wildlife populations; d) evaluate the capacity of drones to manage or prevent the expansion of infectious diseases affecting both feral and domestic animals. Is this the scope for the forestry part, or can we apply on broader topics as described in 2.2. Part of the Open Call Tex document?</p>	<p>in the open call document to give applicants some context around the project. The partners leading those use cases are all members of the ICAERUS consortium.</p>
5	<p>As we perform environmental monitoring BUT we are not a business entity, can we apply for the current ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As a single partner - As a lead partner or - As a (simple) partner of a consortium, considering we are not a business oriented and we are public 	<p>The Open Call accepts proposals from environmental monitoring entities, which includes public bodies. Only individual applicants (not consortia) are eligible.</p>
6	<p>Are the end-users from the agricultural sector targeted as well by the call? Since the title mentions farming but the call is specifically mentioning agri-food producers, I am wondering whether plant growers are still eligible?</p>	<p>End-users are not restricted to farmers, any end user with the agri-food sector or rural community would be suitable. The most important aspect is addressing rural challenges.</p>
7	<p>Are you expecting collaborative or individual projects? When the call states that each winner may ask 50k euros, is it referring to a project or one singular applicant?</p>	<p>'Winner' refers to each sub-project, but we are only accepting single applicants for this open call.</p>
8	<p>Is it expected that the drones/solutions adopted by end-users in France are related to the sectoral drone usage identified in the use cases (livestock monitoring UC) or can they be related to other use cases?</p>	<p>The end -users are not required to have any connection to the use cases in the given country. They are also not restricted to the 5 categories of the use cases.</p>
9	<p>Can the applicants only be SMEs or also research/academic partners?</p>	<p>The PULL Open Call is targeting SMEs and rural communities/cooperatives. Please refer to Section 2.3.1 of the Applicant's guide for more information on the definition of SME. 3.2.1 Definition of an SME eligible for ICAERUS Open</p>

		<p>Calls An SME is considered as such if it complies with the European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC 1 , and the SME user guide . In summary, the criteria which define an SME are the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent, partner or linked enterprises, with financial and staff figures calculated in accordance with instructions given by Recommendation 2003/361/EC 3 . • It is a legal entity established and based in one of the EU Member States or an HE Associated country as defined in HE rules for participation 4 (see section 3.2.3). • Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 500. • Annual turnover less or equal to €100 million. If applicants are not sure whether they comply with the SME criteria, an online SME self-assessment questionnaire is provided by the EC, for these purposes, on this link: SME self-assessment questionnaire.
10	<p>Can we apply for participation if we are not end users, because we are a company the provides field processing services with agrodrones in Ukraine, and we also plan to scale to other countries</p>	<p>In order to be eligible applicants need to be either an SME or rural community/cooperative (see 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of Applicant's Guide). The aim of the PULL 2 Open Call is to attract end-users (agri-food producers, environmental monitoring entities and rural communities) to utilise drones and services built around them for individual commercial needs and/or community-related issues. This is in contrast to the PUSH Open Calls which were targeting drone innovators to develop ideas/concepts/prototypes. This means the end user and meeting the needs of the end user should be at the center of the sub-project rather than the enhancement of products themselves.</p>
11	<p>I have seen ICAERUS PULL 2 Open Call and wanted to ask if its only limited to air drones or land drones are also of interest? Can you shortly elaborate please?</p>	<p>The ICAERUS project itself stands for "Innovation and Capacity building in Agricultural, Environmental and Rural UAV services" so the project focus is on UAVs. The PULL2 Open Call text however has not explicitly required the drones be only UAVs, so as long as the needs of rural areas are met and the proposal aims "attracts end-users to utilise drones and services built around them for individual commercial needs and/or community-related issues ", they would be eligible.</p>
12	<p>What kind of output do you expect to see in the applicant's projects?</p>	<p>Besides the deliverables (a series of reports), the specific outputs will depend on the nature of the drone-based solution you are working with. All sub-projects will be expected to contribute to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancing the Drone Data Analytics Library - Datasets on Zenodo and Models to our GitHub - Participate in Demo events & present your OCT results (when possible) - Dissemination activities - Complete a stakeholder analysis survey to help Understand the Drone Market - Provide input on Business and Governance Models & the ICAERUS Academy (when relevant and possible)
13	<p>Will the selected applications benefit of the ICAERUS know-how (technological support) and platform?</p>	<p>Yes, there will be a strong connection with the drone data analytics library and the platform. We also offer value-added services that will focus on the business aspect of the sub-project solutions. The technical partners also</p>

		offer support, when possible.
14	Would there be any problem, if in the frame of our project we would use one of the Drones service provider companies from the ICAERUS consortium as a subcontractor (for ex, Noumena, Geosense)? Could you advise us on any drone service provider that we could use in the frame of our project in the technological scope of irrigation, agronomy data, fertility, crop protection/pest identification/focused pesticide?	No, it is not allowed to involve members of the ICAERUS consortium.
15	Is there any specific security/safety issues that is a priority for ICAERUS?	Safe drone operation and adherence to all national and EU regulations related to drones and their services are priorities for ICAERUS.

Appendix 6: Redress request rejection letters

Letter (PUSH 1)

Dear Applicant,

Following your request, ICAERUS Open Call Advisory Board organised a meeting and please find below the unanimous decision. The redress request is rejected due to the fact that the instructions and page limit of the applications were not met in your application. Explanation:

1. According to the 3.5.4 Redress procedure of the ICAERUS PUSH 1 Applicant's Guide (page 13): *The redress may address the eligibility check and/or evaluation procedural activity of the application. (...) It is important to note this procedure is concerned only with the evaluation procedural activities and/or eligibility checking process. The ICAERUS Open Call Advisory Board will not call into question the business or technical judgement of appropriately qualified experts. (...).* In the case of the application in question, there were no procedural activities that led to the disqualifying of the application. Eligibility check was performed and, regardless of the fact that the application had an excess number of pages, it proceeded to the evaluation phase.

2. A clear guidance was given in the ICAERUS PUSH 1 Proposal template, at the beginning of the Section 3. Proposal description (page 3 - blue box) *"(...) The total length of the entire proposal, including the tables on Costs justification and funding (paragraph 6), must not be more than 10 pages. Removing explanatory text in the proposal template, located below the paragraph sub-titles is allowed. External evaluators are instructed to dismiss the pages after the 10th page from the evaluation."* This information was communicated to all applicants, both in proposal template and via all other communication channels (FAQ of the ICAERUS PUSH Open Call on the Open Call Hub platform).

3. As stated in the same instruction field in the ICAERUS PUSH 1 Proposal template, at the beginning of the Section 3. Proposal description (page 3 - blue box) all the applicants were aware of the fact that the evaluators are instructed to dismiss the pages after the 10th page from the evaluation.

We encourage you to go through the comments received and we look forward to receiving your enhanced application in the ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call, which is planned for next year.

Best regards,

ICAERUS Open Call team

Letter A (PUSH2)

Dear applicant,

We would like to inform you that your redress request was brought forward to the Open Call Advisory board for review and was unanimously rejected based upon the guidelines established in the **PUSH 2 Open Call Applicant's Guide Section 3.5.4 Redress procedure** (page 14) which states that:

An applicant may submit a request for redress to the ICAERUS Advisory Board if they believe there has been a procedural shortcoming in the way their application has been evaluated. The request for redress must clearly explain the redress points and elaborate on every stated point. Request must be:

- *Related to the evaluation procedural process or eligibility checks*
- *Clearly describing the complaint*

Any redress request that calls into question the technical/business judgement of appropriately qualified experts will automatically be rejected (page 15).

Your redress request was based on the fact that "evaluator 2 doesn't seem professionally sound" which calls into the questions the judgment of the evaluator and therefore must be rejected.

We would also like to kindly draw your attention to **Bullet 2. of The Signed Declaration of Honor** which states that the applicant and business entity that they legally represent "are fully aware and duly accept all rules and conditions as expressed in the documents related to ICAERUS PUSH 2

Open Call for Innovation Development (ID) and all Annexes and will fully respect any evaluation decision and application selection under ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call for Innovation Development (ID)".

We thank you for your application, and which you all the best in your future endeavours.

Kind regards,

The ICAERUS Open Call Team

Letter B (PUSH2)

Dear applicant,

We would like to inform you that your redress request was brought forward to the Open Call Advisory board and after extensive discussion the request for re-evaluation was unanimously rejected.

This decision was based upon the guidelines set out in the **PUSH 2 Open Call Applicant's Guide Section 3.5.4 Redress procedure (page 15)** which states that "a re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to select the applicant as a winning beneficiary or not".

It was determined that even if maximum scores had been given by the evaluators called into question for the criteria indicated in your redress request, your proposal would still not have reached the funding selection threshold.

We would also like to kindly draw your attention to **Bullet 2.** of the **Signed Declaration of Honor** which states that the applicant and business entity that they legally represent "are fully aware and duly accept all rules and conditions as expressed in the documents related to ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call for Innovation Development (ID) and all Annexes and will fully respect any evaluation decision and application selection under ICAERUS PUSH 2 Open Call for Innovation Development (ID)".

We thank you for your application, and which you all the best in your future endeavours.

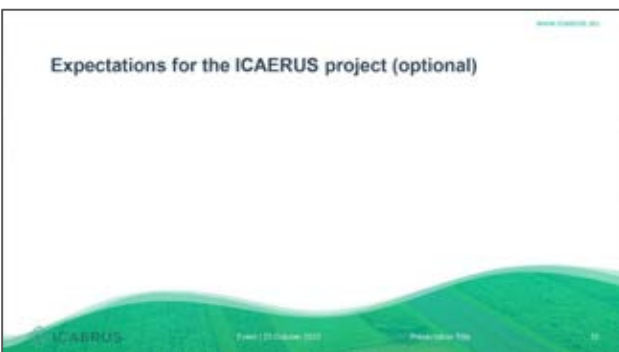
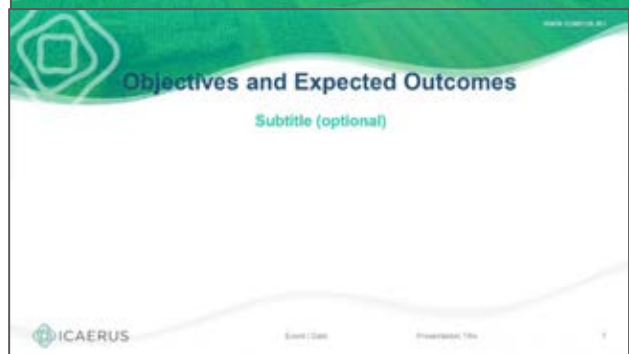
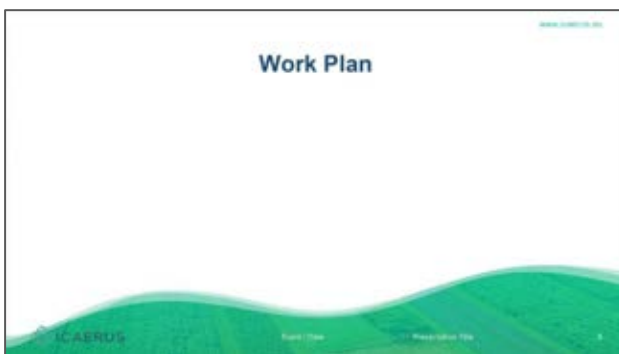
Kind regards,

The ICAERUS Open Call Team

Appendix 7: Website information template

Insert project name OCT	
Name of the sub-project	
Location of the sub-project	
Responsible organisation	
Description of organisation	
Contact person	Additional contact (optional)
Sub-project objectives	
Challenges and how they will be addressed	
Tech components and data	
Expected outcomes	
Website	
Social media (include links for all that apply)	LinkedIn: Facebook: X: Youtube:
Organisation logo	
Sub-project logo (if available)	Please attach to email in high quality vector format

Appendix 8: Pitch event presentation



END OF DOCUMENT