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## WENET OPEN CALL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

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# 1.OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF THE OPEN CALL

## 1.1. THE WENET PROJECT

Diversity permeates our everyday life and covers many dimensions, such as competence, culture, gender or economics across humans and social relations. Technology has evolved to a point where humans from diverse backgrounds, cultures, and experiences have an unprecedented ability to connect with each other. Yet technology does not in-and-by-itself provide support for developing and maintaining the social relationships that transcend geographical and cultural backgrounds.

WeNet addresses this gap by providing a diversity-aware, machine-mediated paradigm of social relations. The goal is connecting people that can support each other, and the key is leveraging their diversity. The WeNet paradigm includes a family of computational diversity-aware models supporting human interaction. Learning models construct diversity profiles based on people's past behaviour and interactions. A diversity-aware search builds upon these profiles to connect the "right" people together. To support people's interactions, a diversity alignment mechanism lifts communication barriers to ensure that messages between humans are interpreted correctly, and a diversity-aware incentive mechanism generates incentives to motivate people to support each other. The entire paradigm is developed following an integrated ethics approach. This means taking into consideration ethical guidance from the start of the design process. The WeNet platform provides the technological infrastructure to set out a series of studies that will be carried out within universities worldwide with diverse student populations, and with the final goal of improving students' quality of life inside and outside the academic environment. Beyond universities, WeNet's innovative paradigm impacts human interactions in general, especially those that may benefit from a collaborative approach (creative industries, medical diagnosis, ...).

## 1.2. INFORMATIONS ABOUT THE WENET PLATFORM, APP AND DATASETS

### 1.2.1. The WeNet platform

The WeNet platform is a software framework that allows application developers, innovators and Web entrepreneurs to quickly and easily develop and deploy diversity-aware applications. By 'diversity-aware applications' we identify applications that both recognise and respect diversity in their underpinning data processing operations (in particular in terms of data protection and ethical usage of AI techniques) and that leverage diversity in their user base to provide valued-added services to individuals and communities.

The WeNet platform consists of a set of modular, interoperable, open software components providing the required functionality to enable the fast development and deployment of diversity-aware applications. The WeNet platform therefore supports a plurality of applications (be them mobile, web or chat apps), which can leverage the functionality exposed by the platform. Applications by registered developers interact with the platform through a set of purposeful APIs. Applications can also be used for connecting to third-party

services for collecting relevant data on user behaviour, including but not limited to, mobile phone sensors (through a mobile app), calendar applications, social media streams, open data portals etc. Data streams from said third-party services and applications are used - by means of advanced AI/ML methods and algorithms, to personalise the user experience and to properly account for diversity dimensions.

More details (including links to API specifications) can be found in Deliverable D6.3 (available through the project Website).

### 1.2.2. The WeNet Apps & Pilots

The WeNet Consortium has developed a number of apps, which interact with the WeNet platform via APIs. The ones relevant for the scope of the Open Call are:

- The Ask4Help chat application: Such an app allows WeNet users to ask questions to the community, answer open questions and approve the best provided answer for each question. The app uses the resources and functionality exposed by the platform to provide users with a personalised experience based on diversity dimensions. The app works on Telegram and has been piloted in Italy, Denmark, UK, Mongolia and Paraguay.
- The iLog context and behaviour monitoring app. Such an app monitors the user context and behaviour, by accessing datastreams from a number of mobile phone sensors and events. iLog is able to access, e.g., location data (GPS), accelerometer, audio feeds, WiFi/Bluetooth network readings etc. The data is fed to the WeNet platform and is available for the internal modules. iLog works on Android devices and is accessible on Google Play Store. ILog operates using an experiment code that links each data collection with precise configurations synchronized with GDPR compliant documents (e.g. informed consent and signed Data Processor Agreements).
- The diversity survey app has been designed to allow the construction of a diversity profile for WeNet users. The diversity survey app includes a large number of questions (100+), whose answers are processed to elaborate relevant dimensions of the user profile. The app is meant to collect first-hand data on WeNet users; it can be used together with iLog or stand-alone.

The WeNet project includes a significant number of empirical activities with users. At the moment, the following pilot studies have been carried out using WeNet technologies:

- Diversity measurement: focussed on university students as target population, used a purposeful survey to measure diversity into the target population. Coupled with iLog to obtain objective data on user behaviour. Run in Denmark, Italy, United Kingdom, Mongolia, China and Paraguay.
- Machine-mediated community interactions: focussed on university students as target population, used Ask4Help for managing community interactions and iLog for monitoring user behaviour. Run in Denmark, Italy, United Kingdom, Paraguay and Mongolia.
- Eating habits and diversity: focussed on university students as target population, used a purposeful diversity survey, iLog to monitor user behaviour and custom time diaries

to monitor eating habits. Run in Mexico.

### **1.2.3. The WeNet research infrastructure and available datasets**

The WeNet Research Infrastructure (RI) is both an e-infrastructure and a set of procedures and guidelines aimed at managing the full life-cycle (collection, processing, storage, access, analysis) of the data generated in the WeNet pilot experiments. Towards these goals, the RI encompasses materials and services related to the design, organization and implementation of experiments focused in collecting diversity relevant data from consenting participants. This is done so scientists are able to collect and access project relevant data with little effort but at the same time in compliance with the WeNet agreed ethical and legal principles. Finally the RI will also specify format and privacy requirements towards hosting and distributing of the datasets resulting from such experiments.

## **1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE OPEN CALL**

The main objective of the Open Call is to extend the impact of the WeNet project by involving additional institutions, by increasing the diversity in terms of communities of users and data collected, by collecting further data to feed the WeNet Research Infrastructure (RI), by exposing a larger number of individuals and communities to the WeNet vision and tool, by fostering the creation of a community of innovators around the WeNet platform, by collecting feedback from early adopters on the usability, usefulness, and ethical implications of the WeNet platform and RI.

At least five (5) project proposals will be founded within the scope of the WeNet Open Call.

## **1.4. DURATION OF THE PROJECTS**

Duration of eligible projects shall be no more than six (6) months.

Projects kick off is expected to be on February 1st, 2022.

## **1.5. WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE**

The WeNet Open Call is organised around three (3) tracks. Each track targets a different set of objectives, has a different budget and different project duration.

Track	Description	Requirements	Max duration
A (App)	Develop a new use case, a new app and run an experiment (collect data)	<p>Develop a new app/use case (i.e., a use case not already developed and tested within the WeNet project).</p> <p>Use the WeNet platform for app development: the proposed app must use the WeNet platform APIs to provide its functionality to end users.</p> <p>Bring a community of users (indicatively, for Track A, we do expect at least 50 new users to be brought by the applicant).</p> <p>Run a pilot experiment with said community of users.</p> <p>Collect experimental data, anonymize it and make it available for inclusion in the WeNet research infrastructure under a CC+ licence.</p>	6 months
B (Data)	Re-use an existing WeNet app and run an experiment (collect data)	<p>Reuse an existing WeNet app<sup>1</sup> and bring a community of users (indicatively at least 200 for quantitative studies and 20-50 for qualitative studies).</p> <p>Feed anonymized data into the research infrastructure under a CC+ licence in order to allow other community members (students/researchers) to learn more about diversity and for the WeNet team to improve its algorithms.</p>	4 months
C (Open Track)	This is a free track, where proposals that do not fit Track A or B, but are relevant for the Open Call scope, can be submitted.	The expected results should be relevant to the scope and goals of the WeNet project. No further requirements are foreseen for this track.	6 months

TABLE 1 : PROJECT TRACKS

<sup>1</sup> We will create a new instance of an existing WeNet app (or a plurality thereof), which you will be able to brand (name, logo, etc.), and which will be used just for your experimental activities.



Recommendations for a successful application:

- WeNet follows an integrated ethics approach and at the same time uses participatory and value sensitive approaches to ensure that the technology works for everyone in the community of users<sup>2</sup>. It is strongly recommended that applicants adopt an ethical perspective throughout their activities.
- The WeNet platform and the existing WeNet Apps will be provided to the selected Applicant by the relevant member of the WeNet Consortium, which will act as data processor. The applicant will act as data controller for any personal data being collected throughout experimental activities with users. Please consider this in the GDPR section of the proposal.
- Feeding the WeNet Research Infrastructure is a focal point of tracks A) and B). In order to do so, it is mandatory to spell out how the data collected will be anonymized in accordance with the GDPR principles and the latest guidelines and best practices.
- The CC+ licence under which collected data will be made available for inclusion in the WeNet research infrastructure denotes the combination of a CC official license (unmodified and verbatim) + another separate and independent agreement granting more permissions. The separate agreement shall include the right to adapt, remix, distribute the updated data and to impose additional or different terms or conditions to recipients when data are distributed through the research infrastructure.

## 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

All applicants will have to abide by all general requirements described in this section to be considered eligible for this Open Call. Proposals failing to comply with eligibility criteria will not be considered.

### 2.1. TYPES OF APPLICANTS

The Call is open to:

- Startups;
- Small and medium-sized enterprises;
- Large enterprises;
- Universities;
- Research centers;
- NGOs;

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<sup>2</sup> [WeNet privacy guidelines](#), [ACM Code of Ethics](#) and [EU Draft Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI](#)

- Foundations and other non-profit entities.

The participation is possible only for legal entities established in an eligible country (see section 2.2). Individuals cannot participate.

The person submitting the proposal must be empowered to represent and commit the applying legal entity according to the relevant law. In case of multiple submissions by different individuals on behalf of the same legal entity, only the proposal submitted by the person empowered to do so will be considered eligible.

In case of multiple submissions by different individuals all empowered to represent and commit the same legal entity, section 2.4 applies.

## 2.2. ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES

Only applicants legally established in any of the following countries (hereafter collectively identified as the “Eligible Countries”) are eligible:

- **Member States of the European Union**, including their overseas departments and outermost regions;
- **Associated Countries** according to the updated list published by the EC;
- **Third Countries** according to the updated list published by the EC;
- **United Kingdom** under the conditions set by the EC for H2020 participation at the time of the deadline of the Call.

## 2.3. LANGUAGE

English is the official language for this Open Call. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the project. This means any requested submission of deliverables will be done in English in order to be eligible.

## 2.4. MULTIPLE SUBMISSIONS

Only one proposal will be accepted per legal entity.

In the case of a multiple submission, only the last one received (timestamp of the system) will enter into the evaluation process, the rest being declared as non-eligible and thereby discarded.

If the last submitted proposal is declared then non-eligible or fails to reach the thresholds of the evaluation, the other proposals submitted earlier will not be considered for evaluation.

## 2.5. SUBMISSION SYSTEM

Only proposals submitted through the Open Call submission portal, on the dedicated section of the [WeNet website](#) and within the Call duration will be accepted. Proposals submitted by any other means will be discarded.

Only the documentation included in the application will be considered by evaluators.

## 2.6. DEADLINE

Only proposals submitted before the deadline will be accepted. After the Call closure, no additions or changes to received proposals will be taken into account. The deadline for this Call is **30th September 2021 at 12.00 CEST noon (midday)**.

Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including communications delays, automatically leads to rejection of the submission.

The time of receipt of the message, as recorded by the submission system, will be definitive.

## 2.7. ABSENCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Applicants, their legal representatives and share holders cannot be WeNet Consortium partners or affiliated entities nor their employees or co-operators under a contractual agreement.

Other cases of conflict of interest will be assessed case by case by the WeNet Consortium member in charge of the organisation of the Open Call and may lead to the proposal being discarded.

## 2.8. COMPLIANCE WITH THE GDPR

WeNet Consortium is committed to complying with Regulation (EU) 2016/679, General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in processing of personal data related to the WeNet Consortium including the Open Call applicants. In submitting a proposal, applicants agree to comply with the GDPR, regarding all personal data that might be included in the proposal or that might be used during the deployment of the project, in case of success of the proposal. In case of breach of the GDPR, the applicant will be the only liable party and no responsibilities will be on the WeNet Consortium.

## 2.9. DOUBLE FUNDING

The applicant's project cannot receive double funding. Synergies with other sources of funding, including other H2020 projects, are allowed as long as the grants are used for complementary, not overlapping purposes.

Each Applicant must declare that it has not received funding for exactly the same project from other projects or European Commission funding schemes.

## 2.10. OTHER

Each applicant must declare:

- it has not convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, unethical or illegal business practices;
- It is not under liquidation or an enterprise under difficulty according to the Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18.
- It has not been declared bankrupt or has initiated bankruptcy procedures;
- It is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority;
- It has the appropriate resources to implement the full set of tasks needed within the project. This means it is not allowed to subcontract key parts of the project.
- Its project is based on the original works and going forward any foreseen developments are free from third party rights, or they are clearly stated;

## 3. PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL

The documents that will be submitted are:

- **Application form:** online form available on the project website.
- **Proposal:** document in PDF format based on the Proposal Template containing the description of the project, to be uploaded in the project website.

The project proposals must strictly adhere to the template provided, which defines sections and the overall length. Participants are requested to carefully read and follow the instructions in the form. The guidance text of the proposal template must be considered as part of this guide for applicants.

Evaluators will be instructed not to consider extra material in the evaluation. Additional material, which has not been specifically requested in the online application form, will not be considered for the evaluation of the proposals.

## 4.EVALUATION PROCESS

The structure of the evaluation process is represented in the following figure:

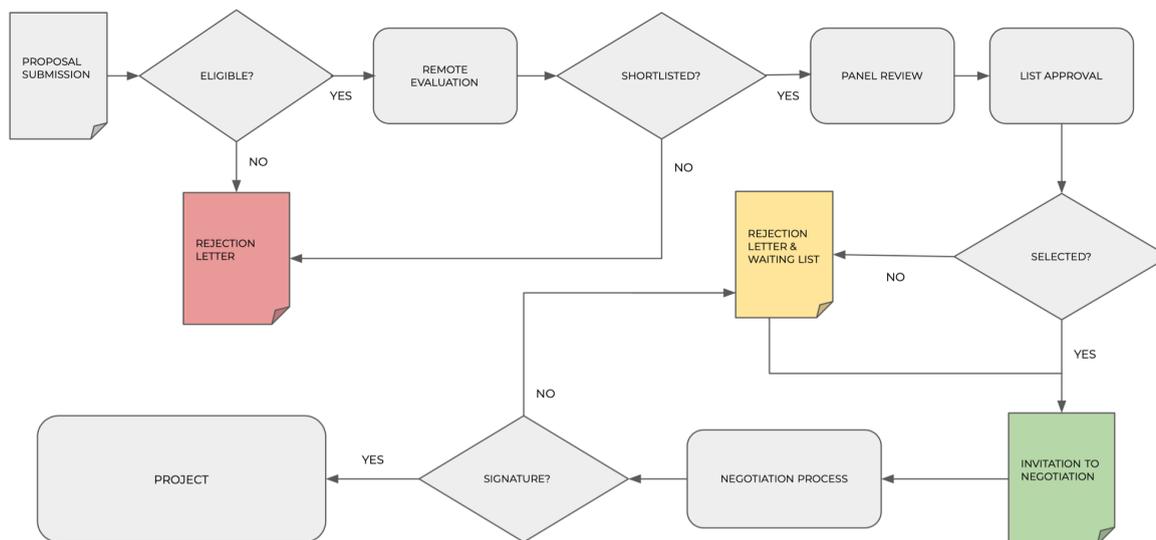


FIGURE 1: EVALUATION PROCESS

Each of the stages will have a set of criteria to access the next stage. The following paragraphs provide a detailed set of procedures and criteria at the time of evaluating and awarding the financial support.

### 4.1. EVALUATION PROCESS STAGES

- **Proposals submission:** via [WeNet website](#).
- **Eligibility check:** An eligibility check will be performed to verify the fulfillment of the eligibility criteria.
- **Remote evaluation:** After the eligibility check, the shortlist for evaluation will be created. Then, the proposals will be assigned to the external evaluators bound by confidentiality agreement. Every proposal will be evaluated by at least two different experts following the evaluation criteria described in section 4.2.

The evaluation will be based on the information provided in the application only. The result of this phase is a shortlist of proposals that score above the threshold of 3.5 out of 5, that will be presented for validation/final selection during the Panel review.

- **Panel review:** Following the individual evaluations, a meeting (or several) of the evaluation panel will be organised. During this meeting(s), a final ranking will be



agreed taking into account the evaluators’ final score and the similarity between use cases. Where necessary an additional review of projects for which there was a lack of consensus in terms of scoring by individual evaluators will be done. The evaluation Panel may include representatives of the Wenet Consortium and all or some of the external evaluators. The members of the Panel will be nominated by the WeNet Consortium.

- **Approval of the list:** the list of funded projects will be formally approved by the General Assembly of the WeNet Consortium.
- **Communication of Results:** the applicant will receive via email
  - An Evaluation Summary Report (ESR);
  - A letter informing of rejection or an invitation to negotiation and following steps.
- **Waiting list:** Any remaining shortlisted applicant will be put on a waiting list and entered as replacement in the case of withdrawals or failure of the negotiation process by a selected applicant.

## 4.2. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The criteria for evaluation will be:

Criteria	Description	Weighting
Clarity and methodology	<p>C&amp;M1: The applicants should clearly identify the problem they tackle with their proposal, and explain the relevance to the overall objectives of the WeNet project, explicitly addressing the focus on social interaction and diversity aware technologies.</p> <p>C&amp;M2: The applicants should clearly explain the approach underpinning their proposal (solution), and convincingly explain how their proposal goes beyond the state-of-the-art in the relevant field(s).</p>	30%



<p>Feasibility &amp; Implementation</p>	<p>F&amp;I1: The applicants should demonstrate the soundness of their approach and its scientific/technical as well as operational feasibility. If relevant, this should include aspects related to the ability to involve a significant number of participants in the experimental activities (pilots). If relevant, this should include aspects related to how they plan to integrate with the WeNet platform.</p> <p>F&amp;I2: The applicants should present a coherent work plan, clearly specifying which activities will be carried out and the associated timing and expected results.</p> <p>F&amp;I3: The applicants should provide a set of measurable control points (milestones), enabling them to timely monitor the progress of their work. The milestones should be clearly described and should be aligned with the overall scope and objectives of the project.</p>	<p>25%</p>
<p>Qualifications of the applicant</p>	<p>Q1: The applicant should demonstrate their excellence, in terms of expertise and experience in the relevant field, at the institutional level as well as at the level of the individuals that will be involved in the project.</p> <p>Q2: The applicants should have the skills and expertise required to carry out the proposed activities.</p> <p>Q3: The applicant should demonstrate how they represent a balanced, cross-functional and diverse team, integrating all the relevant competencies and skills.</p>	<p>15%</p>
<p>Complementarity with the existing WeNet pilots/activities</p>	<p>C1: The applicants should convincingly demonstrate that their proposed activities do not overlap with existing WeNet pilots/activities, but complement them in a diversity perspective.</p>	<p>10%</p>
<p>Ethical and data protection aspects</p>	<p>E1: The applicants should demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the ethical issues potentially arising from the proposed activities (with a specific focus on diversity-related aspects), and should provide a comprehensive approach for tackling them appropriately.</p> <p>E2: The applicants should provide a convincing approach to handle GDPR-related aspects. This includes a clear and sound description of the anonymization procedures to be applied to data</p>	<p>10%</p>



	collected through experimental activities with end users.	
Overall value for money	<p>V1: Resources should be adequate to fulfill the project objectives, while complying with the criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and economy.</p> <p>V2: Resources should be clearly detailed and justified, and it should be clear why any given budgetary item (personnel, travel, equipment, licenses etc.) is needed to fulfill the project objectives.</p>	10%

TABLE 2 : EVALUATION CRITERIA

The experts will score each award criterion on a scale from 0 to 5:

0 — The proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.

1 — Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 — Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 — Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 — Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 — Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are Minor.

### 4.3. APPEAL PROCEDURE

If, at any stage of the evaluation process, the applicant considers that there has been a shortcoming in the way the proposal has been evaluated that may affect the final decision on whether to fund it or not; or if the applicant believes the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect and have failed to comply with the rules of the Open Call and that its interests have been prejudiced as a result, the following appeal procedure is available.

This procedure is concerned with the evaluation process and/or the eligibility check. Evaluation criteria as well as Open Call rules cannot be subject to appeal.

The final score cannot be subject to appeal as it is the result of a scientific judgement of appropriately qualified experts.

The results following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive.

A complaint should be drawn up in English and submitted by email to: [opencall@internetofus.eu](mailto:opencall@internetofus.eu).

Any complaint made should include:

- contact details;
- the subject of the complaint;
- information and evidence regarding the alleged breach.

Anonymous complaints or those not providing the mentioned information will not be considered.

Complaints should also be made within five (calendar) days since the eligibility filter results and the evaluation results are sent to the applicants.

Only one request for appeal per proposal will be considered.

#### 4.4. NEGOTIATION PROCESS

Once a party is selected to perform the proposed experiment, it will be contracted as a Third Party receiving financial support.

The objective of the negotiations is fulfilling the legal requirements between the WeNet Consortium and selected applicants. The items covered will be:

- Legal existence. Company Register, Official Journal and so forth, showing the name of the organization, the legal address and registration number and, if applicable, a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
- Bank account information: The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via form signed by the entity and the bank.
- Sub-grantee funding agreement: Signed between the WeNet Consortium member in charge of Open Call management and the applicant. A template is provided as part of the application package: changes are not allowed during the negotiation process.
- The selected applicant will be required to adhere to the [WeNet privacy guidelines](#), especially 6.12 Ethics and Privacy and to the [ACM Code of Ethics](#) and the [EU Draft Ethics Guidelines for Trustworthy AI](#) (if applicable).

Requests of the above mentioned items will be done including deadlines.

Failing to meet any deadline will directly end the negotiation process.

## 5. FINANCIAL SUPPORT PROVIDED

This Open Call will provide a total of € 250.000,00 in funding.

Each application can be funded with:

Track	Maximum financial support
Track A	up to € 50,000
Track B	up to € 25,000
Track C	Up to € 50,000

TABLE 3 : FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Reporting the necessary effort and costs according to H2020 rules and management practices is a condition of funding. A template of cost report is provided as part of the application package. Indirect costs (e.g. overheads) will be covered if they are declared as flat-rate of 25% of the eligible costs.

We recommend that the winning applicants have a bank account in Euros (€) to avoid paying exchange rates that are not covered by the WeNet Open Call.

The payment will be released according to the Subgrant Agreement provisions.

## 6. SUPPORT DURING THE OPEN CALL APPLICATION PERIOD

**Helpdesk:** applicants can ask questions via email [opencall@internetofus.eu](mailto:opencall@internetofus.eu). Please consider that your question can be published as a FAQ unless you mark it as confidential.

**FAQ:** a list of FAQs will be published and updated during the application period. Applicants are required to read carefully the FAQs before submitting the application or before submitting any question to the helpdesk.

**Open Call Webinars:** two webinars will be organized during the application period. All information related to webinars will be provided on the WeNet website.

## 7. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS (IPR)

Applicants declare that each proposal presented is an original work and in no way violates, in whole or in part, the intellectual or industrial property rights of others and release the WeNet Consortium from any and all responsibility, liability, or request for compensation for damages that should be made by any third party.

Applicants acknowledge and agree that the WeNet Consortium or other participants or third parties may have developed or commissioned ideas, works or results which are similar to the proposal described in the application, or may develop something similar in the future.

The Sub-Grant Agreement will introduce provisions concerning IPR, please see the template provided.

## 8. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

The Legal Terms and Conditions and any dispute or claim (including non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with it or its subject matter or formation shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the law of Italy.

The applicant irrevocably agrees that the Tribunale di Trento (Italy) shall have exclusive jurisdiction to settle any dispute or claim (including non-contractual disputes or claims) arising out of or in connection with the WeNet Open Call.

## 9. SCHEDULE

Description	Indicative dates
Call Launch	12 July 2021
Submission Deadline	30 September 2021
End of the evaluation period	31 December 2021
End of the negotiation process	31 January 2022
Expected kick off of the projects	1 February 2022

TABLE 4 : SCHEDULE

## 10.REPORTING

Final technical and financial reports (templates can be found for download on the WeNet website) and dissemination material (a poster and a short video, which will be used for promotional and educational purposes) need to be submitted after conclusion of the project.

The reports will not only serve as an evaluation tool for the payment but also will serve as input to the WeNet sustainability plan.

The reports will also be used for the formal review by the European Commission.