OSCARS
Open Science Clusters' Action for Research & Society

OSCARS 2 - 1st Proposal Preparation meeting

23 January 2026, Paris

Funded by the European Union

Introduction

HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01 (Call text available here, page 42)

Call deadline: **16 June 2026**

Building on the **Science Cluster approach and OSCARS** (since 2019)

Coordinator: **CNRS**-LAPP tbc

15 partners tbd, **2-3** representing each Science Cluster plus Management/Event support

Duration: **4 years (May 2027 – April 2031)**

EC funding: **40 M€**

- Presentations today
  - Call text and analysis
  - Timelines, management budget and potential formal eligibility criteria
  - Input from all SCs for
    - Priorities “consolidation” part
    - Scope Open Calls
- Expected outcomes
  - Ranked lists of common and separate priorities and scopes
  - Agreement on a basic framework for OSCARS 2 (timelines, management budget,...)

About OSCARS II (HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01)

G. Lamanna

Science Clusters' proposal kick-off meeting

Paris, 23 /01/2026

Call text and analysis

HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01: Uptake of FAIR data management practices and of EOSC by research communities and research infrastructures (EOSC Partnership)

Call: Research Infrastructures 2026	
Specific conditions	
Expected EU contribution per project	The Commission estimates that an EU contribution of around EUR 40.00 million would allow these outcomes to be addressed appropriately. Nonetheless, this does not preclude submission and selection of a proposal requesting different amounts.
Indicative budget	The total indicative budget for the topic is EUR 40.00 million.
Type of Action	Research and Innovation Actions
Award criteria	The criteria are described in General Annex D. The following exceptions apply: The following additions to the general award criteria apply: For the 'Impact' criterion, the following aspects will also be taken into account: The extent to which the proposed work incorporates the necessary coordination efforts and resources with other relevant projects and the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) governance structure in the context of the EOSC Partnership.
Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements	The rules are described in General Annex G. The following exceptions apply: Beneficiaries may provide financial support to third parties. The support to third parties can only be provided in the form of grants. Given that the financial support to third parties is one of the primary aims of the action and taking into account the nature of the work to be supported and the cross-RI, cross-domain nature of the intended open science projects and services, the maximum amount to be granted to each third party is EUR 750 000. The selection of the third parties to be supported will be based on an external independent peer review of their proposed work. Research infrastructures which are beneficiaries/affiliated entities of the consortium awarded may exceptionally also be recipients of financial support to third parties. Proposals must explain how they will ensure that such beneficiaries/affiliated entities are not involved in the drafting and selection procedure of the calls, and explain measures, in order to avoid conflicts of interest and equal treatment of applicants and to maintain

Expected Outcome:

- Increased adoption of open science and research data management practices in line with the FAIR principles by researchers and across research infrastructures (RIs) in Europe.
  → Adoption of open science could be meant in a very large meaning from innovation for open hardware to citizen science or outreach schemes. Research data management practices would be more aligned with standards and services.
- Increased uptake of the EOSC Federation by researchers through the long-term sustainable provision in the Federation of scientific services and high-quality, FAIR research data, and their integration in scientific workflows addressing current gaps and needs of research communities.
  → Increased uptake of the EOSC Federation by researchers implies our commitment in expanding and strengthening the Federation. Scientific workflows current gaps and needs deserve domain-based survey and imply to reach out to more RIs.
- Research communities, as well as ESFRI and other European research infrastructures increase their alignment with EOSC standards and policies, and their capacity to integrate in the EOSC Federation.
  → Confirm the special attention given to supporting ESFRIs (and their CCs), which is the mission of the SCLs. Include in the project the Federation's thematic nodes that are linked to the SCLs, and open up to certain cross-cutting nodes.

-> All of the above EO should be considered as general objectives of any cascade grant proposal.

Scope:

This topic aims to further increase across Europe the adoption of open science and research data management practices in line with the FAIR principles, and **to support the development of a user-focused and science-driven EOSC Federation**.

It capitalises on the previous work by Science Clusters in enabling open science practices, FAIR implementation and managing open calls for multi-disciplinary science projects. **It also builds on the experience by several RIs and other organisations** as active participants in building the EOSC Federation, either through the establishment of EOSC nodes or the onboarding of resources to EOSC nodes, to support the **engagement of underrepresented RIs** and research communities into the EOSC ecosystem.

Not to exclude the formal participation of RIs and organisations that bring added value to the Federation.
Carry out a survey of under-represented RIs and extend SCL participation to new RIs.

Activities:

1) Accelerate FAIR adoption and the contribution to and use of EOSC resources by multiple research communities through **open science projects**.

This activity should be implemented through open calls that provide grants to third parties for **open science projects** through a cascading grant mechanism. The open calls should encourage, where applicable, **cross-RI** and/or **cross-domain** collaborations**, including for data access, use and reuse**.

Open science projects should address questions of **high scientific impact**, adopting **best practices** for FAIR data and service management and **demonstrating their benefits**. Their activities may include developing, annotating, curating and making FAIR high-value datasets, developing direct pipelines to integrate large-scale experimental data in repositories federated in EOSC, operationalising data access for AI-based applications, reusing existing datasets, enhancing existing and developing new vocabularies, data standards, metadata mappings and crosswalks, developing software, tools and services, or supporting open science community building.

They should cover a broad range of (academic and/or industrial) research communities and scientific disciplines, **including those less represented** in the EOSC Federation. They should make use of resources available in the **EOSC Federation** and adopt existing EOSC policies and standards, **where possible**. **Projects should strive to ensure the sustained, beyond the projects' duration, integration, deployment and operation of relevant outcomes in the EOSC Federation.**

At least EUR 29 million of the EU contribution to this topic should be used in this activity. The financial support to third parties for the open science projects must be provided in the form of grants that should be between EUR 100 000 and 250 000 per grant for a duration of 12 to 24 months. **The consortium shall put in place adequate measures to support the integration of the open science projects' results into the EOSC Federation**. These could include **mentoring, training and any other activities** providing effective linkage to the EOSC Federation and EOSC Nodes, as needed for the specific nature of each project.

As described in the EOSC Federation Handbook and other relevant documentation potentially adopted by the EOSC Federation.
Including reasonable administrative and management costs related to the open calls for the financial support to third parties.

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Activities:

2) Support the **integration of thematic research and RI communities** in the EOSC Federation

The following activities should be included:

2.1 Coordinating, aligning and networking **existing community-based competence centres** on FAIR and open science practices **developed within the EOSC ecosystem**.

→ SCLs' CCC must guarantee domain-based high-impact solutions (see also next slide) from one side and should aim at the cross-fertilisation by inter-SCL synergies and where applicable with other EOSC CCCs

2.2 Developing **training programmes**, modules and material on FAIR and open science practices tailored to the specific needs of different thematic research communities. This activity should include **feedback mechanisms** to ensure that the training services are responsive to the evolving needs of EOSC user communities.

→ It is more pragmatic to join and integrate FAIR data management training programmes when they are EOSC-based and cross-functional. On the other hand, for programmes based on a specific domain, it is necessary, on the one hand, to continue to support the effective SCL training programme and, on the other hand, to be more ambitious in terms of synergy between the SCLs, for example by launching the Virtual Institute for Research Software.

Activities:

2.3 Developing frameworks for the **provision and continuous evolution** of **high-impact** services and data repositories **onboarded** to the EOSC Federation, **fostering** interoperability and integration of data and resources from diverse scientific domains and promoting their **sharing** through the EOSC Federation.

→ There is a straightforward approach to leveraging individual SCL frameworks (combining VRE, CCC and working groups) to ensure continuous evolution and integration. Depending on the domain, other bodies (ex. consortia of national institutes) can be leveraged. It could be less suited for some domains (not needed to cover the 5 SCLs). Linked to ACTIVITY "1"

2.4 Establishing mechanisms for the integration and long-term sustainable provision of **all relevant outcomes into the EOSC Federation,** as well as for continuous **feedback and adaptation**, ensuring evolving requirements of researchers and RIs are met within the EOSC ecosystem.

→ We could start with the projects funded by OSCARS 1 and then plan to continue with the new grants. The first step is to study the integration of the results obtained into the Federation, and then to analyse the ongoing feedback on the services deployed, which will be used by the communities.

2.5 Engaging underrepresented thematic research and RI communities to increase their integration in EOSC.

→ It could be evaluated earlier and its results mentioned in the proposal. Mechanisms or events for further engagement (in collaboration with other EOSC events/actions) should then be mentioned.

Call text and analysis

- The ACTIVITY 1 (cascading grants) and ACTIVITY 2 (currently called ”consolidation”) have some intersections.
- In ACTIVITY 1 the SCL strategy board has sill a role to play.
- In ACTIVITY 2 there is the need of a larger involvement of key people of the corresponding individual SCL technical coordination and leaderships of working groups to guarantee that the OSCARS-2 activities coherently involve the SCLs.

  As an example (as per ESCAPE), in each SCL, let’s suppose that we have something like an executive board (SCL-EB) chaired by a technical coordinator (TC) and made of the leaders of dedicated working groups (SEL i:1..n).

The OSCARS-2 Executive Board (O2-EB) members include the five SCL TC (TC1, TC2, TC3, TC4, TC5) the OSCARS-2 Work Package coordinators (WP j:1..m). The O2-EB can also invite an “EOSC-Node-Representative Consulting Board”. Within a WP j:1..m one can count on the participation and the commitment of SEL i:1..n whose roles and competences in their own cluster are aligned with the activities and tasks in the OSCARS WP.

Ex.: if there is a “training’ activity, we do expect that the leader of the “training activities” in a SCL be involved therein.

First concept

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ACTIVITIES	Steering	Potential tasks with all 5 SCLs	EOSC integration	Open Science Impact	A SCL specific relevance or interest
1 (cascading grants)	SCL Strategy Board	Yes		++	No
2.1 (CCC)	O2- EB	Yes	++		Yes
2.2 (Training)	O2- EB	Yes	+	+	Yes
2.3 (EOSC onboarding)	O2- EB	No	++		Yes
2.4 (sustainability)	O2- EB	No	++		Yes
2.5 (engagement)	SCL Strategy Board	Yes		++	No

First concept

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	WP1	WP2	WP3	WP4	WP5
1 (cascading grants)	X				
2.1 (CCC)				X	
2.2 (Training)		X			
2.3 (EOSC onboarding)			X		
2.4 (sustainability)			X		
2.5 (engagement)	X				
Management					X

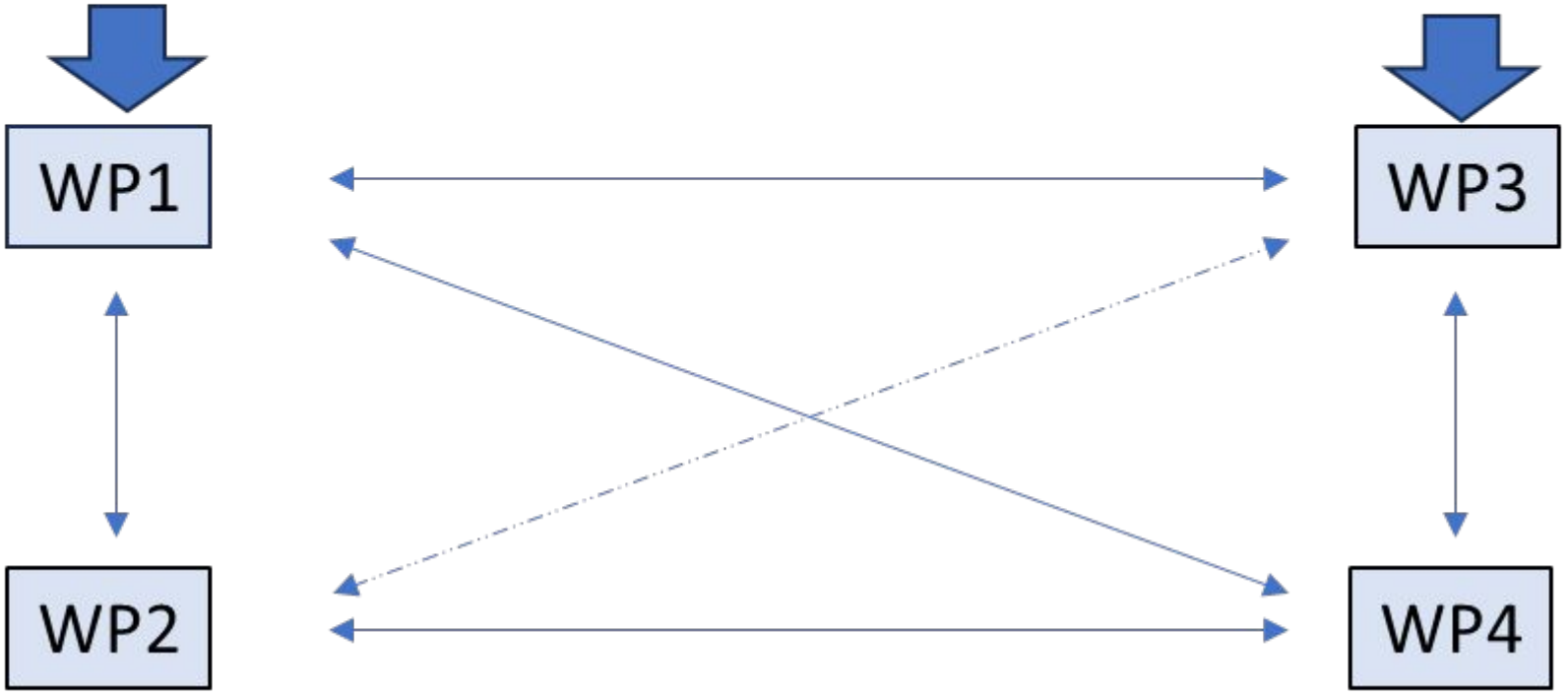
First concept

WP5

(MANAGEMENT, COMMUNICATION, C.G. ADMINISTRATION, STRATEGY BOARD CHAIRING)

OPEN SCIENCE GRANT PROJECT COORDINATION

EOSC – INTEGRATION COORDINATION



WP1 Scientific impact, engagement and sustainability

Accelerate FAIR adoption and the contribution to and use of EOSC resources by multiple research communities through **open science projects** through a cascading grant mechanism. (1)

Engaging underrepresented thematic research and RI communities to increase their integration in EOSC. (2.5)

TASKS for all 5 SCL are:

- Organize and deploy mechanisms or events for further engagement of communities.
- Coordinate with EC, ESFRI and the future EOSC Federation governance.
- Run the cascading grant “evaluation, scientific steering and outcomes” (linked with WP5).

[…]

WP2 Strengthening, surveying and conceiving training programmes

Training programmes tailored to the specific needs of different thematic research communities and the evolving needs of EOSC user communities.

TASKS:

- Join, integrate and develop EOSC-based and cross-functional FAIR data management training programmes.
- Survey, evaluate and promote successful domain-based SCL training programme (one per cluster if possible).
- Paving the way for the future by launching the Virtual Institute for Research Software.
- Coordinate with training offered by other Competence Centres further than the ESOC ecosystem: EuroHPC, AI RAISE and other actions.
- Conceive debates and seminars for new training or on topics that would demand to conceive dedicated training: ex. Open Science Hardware, Software Heritage, Citizen Science and Science diplomacy…

[…]

WP3 Enhancing the EOSC Federation's impacts

Developing frameworks for **high-impact** services and data repositories **onboarded** to the EOSC Federation.

Establishing mechanisms for the integration and long-term sustainable provision of **all relevant outcomes into the EOSC Federation**.

TASKS:

- Acknowledging, supporting and leveraging individual SCL frameworks (combining VRE and working groups) to ensure continuous evolution and integration.
- Operational connection with the EOCS Nodes and the EOSC board (including user forum/user desk).
- Promoting a selection of projects funded by OSCARS 1 for integration of the results obtained into the Federation. Analyse the ongoing feedback on the services deployed, which will be used by the communities.
- Gap analysis and federated actions to plan

[…]

WP4 Community-based competence centres

Coordinating, aligning and networking **existing community-based competence centres** on FAIR and open science practices **developed within the EOSC ecosystem**.

TASKS:

- Specific support to any domain-based SCLs' CCC.
- Coordinating synergies and complementarity enhancing impacts of the SCLs CCCs (cross-fertilisation by inter-SCL synergies and where applicable with other EOSC CCCs).
- Sustainability, economic model and functional role in the EOSC federation of the CCCs.
- Monitoring the CCCs' impacts for science, RI and cascading grant funded projects.

[…]

WP5 Management, Communication, Cascading Grant Administration

First concept

SCL ACTIVITIES	Astronomy and Particle Physics	Environmental Science	Life Science	Photon and Neutron Science	Social Sciences and Humanities
WP1	SCL Strategy Board	SCL Strategy Board	SCL Strategy Board	SCL Strategy Board	SCL Strategy Board
WP2					
WP3					
WP4					
WP5					

- SCL need to define priorities, interests in WPs/activities/tasks and propose WPs' leaderships.
- Each SCL should consider:
  - the (CG budget + consolidation budget – management budget) / 5 ;
  - decide how to share the 1/5 between CG & consolidation (knowing that a minimum to be allocated to CGs must be respected, while part of the consolidation can be moved to CG).

[…]

About OSCARS II (HORIZON-INFRA-2026-01-EOSC-01)

F. Schmidt-Tremmel

Science Clusters' proposal kick-off meeting

Paris, 23 /01/2026

Budget available - overview

	Budget (€)
Total	40,000,000.00
Open Calls (including management budget)	29,000,000.00
“Consolidation” part	11,000,000.00
Costs Open Call management	980,000.00
Costs General management + Events	1,370,000.00
Budget for Open Call projects	28,000,000.00
Budget for “Consolidation” part	9,130,000.00

Management budget - general

	Tasks	Resources (PMs)	Costs (€)	Partner(s) Based on figures from OSCARS
Coordination/ management		58	475,000.00	By CNRS-LAPP/Trust-IT (coordination, management, legal/finance staff)
Communication	Comms Lead	24	125,000.00	By CERIC
	Webpage, videos, social media,...	13	85,000.00	By Trust-IT
Events	Venue/Catering/ AV	11 events, about 25 days	600,000.00	
	Event management	10	85,000.00	TBD
TOTAL			1,370,000.00	

Management budget - Open Calls

	Tasks	Resources (PMs)	Costs (€)	Partner(s) Based on figures from OSCARS
Coordination/ management		58	475,000.00	By CNRS-LAPP/Trust-IT (coordination, management, legal/finance staff)
Communication	Comms Lead	24	125,000.00	By CERIC
	Webpage, videos, social media,...	13	85,000.00	By Trust-IT
Open Call	Grants platform	11	75,000.00	By Trust-IT
	Evaluation	20-25	220,000.00	By Science Cluster reps + external evaluators
TOTAL			980,000.00	

Timeline Open Calls

	Time (months)
Call opening - Submission deadline	2
Data export/eligibility checks/creation of lists	0.5
Evaluation	3.5
Contract preparation	2
Time before projects start (max)	4
TOTAL	12

Projects need to start at the latest in months 20 to end at the end of month 44. They then have 30 days to submit their final deliverables, and we need at least another 15 for approval plus we expect the presentation of the results at the final meeting (at the latest in month 46/47).
→ **That means the last call needs to close in month 10, or in other words all calls need to be opened and closed in the first 10 months!**

Potential formal eligibility criteria

First ideas - to be discussed

- Restricted to EU Members State and Horizon Europe Associated countries
- Budget between 100,000.- € and 250,000.- € or higher minimum?
- Lifetime between 12 and 24 months or 18 as a minimum?
- Consortium size: from 1 to 7 max or 3 minimum or any other restrictions?
- Consortium composition:
  - At least 2 different countries? Any minimum requirements?
  - Cross-domain projects ⇒ at least 1 partner from each relevant domain, their participation needs to be reflected in the overview of tasks per partner
  - ?

Potential scope restrictions

First ideas - to be discussed

- Specific challenge per call or sub-call - Repositories, metadata, software, training/dissemination
- Specific topic defined by/per Science Cluster
- Sustainability
  - Mandatory 1 hour consultation with Science Cluster nodes/hubs BEFORE proposal submission to support/enable the inclusion of…
  - Concrete steps to ensure outcomes will contribute to the EOSC federation
- Clearly beyond state of the art
- Specific sub-call for citizen science projects
- ?

Annexes

- Annex 1 - Financial management
  - Updated process (graphic and text)
  - Changes in line with updated TPPA (see below)
- Annex 2 - Proposal template
  - Adapt to new call text
  - Separate and more detailed budget table (Excel template)
- Annex 3 - Evaluation criteria
  - Instead of scores and comments develop specific questions that can be answered with yes/no by evaluators? Less time consuming, more comparable?
- Annex 4 - TPPA
  - New version that avoids signatures of project coordinators “on behalf” of partners, instead EC model (OSCARS coordinator + coordinator signatures first, partners signing in a 2nd step an accession form to the contract)?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Thank you