



SPADE

Open Call for evaluators #1

Guidelines for evaluators

OPENING: 19 February 2024

CLOSING: 19 March 2024 at 17:00 (Brussels Time)

Project Website: <https://spade-horizon.eu/>

Open Call platform: https://bit.ly/SPADE_Call-For-Evaluators

List of Acronyms

CA	Consortium Agreement
OC	Open Call
FSTP	Financial Support for Third Parties
VAT	Value Added Tax Plus
UAVs	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
CStudy	Case Study



Table of Contents

1. Introduction	5
1.1 About SPADE project	5
1.2 Objectives and Ambition of SPADE	5
1.3 SPADE Approach	5
1.4 SPADE Open Calls	5
2. SPADE is looking for evaluators!	6
3. Tentative timeline for activities	7
4. Evaluators selection process	8
4.1 Expression of interest	8
4.2 Evaluators' liability	8
4.3 Admissibility	8
4.4 Conflict of interest	8
4.5 Confidentiality	9
5. Challenges of Open Call #1	10
6. Proposals Evaluation Procedure	11
6.1 Step 2. External Remote evaluation.	11
7. Payments conditions	13

List of figures

Figure 1. SPADE OC#1. Challenges	10
Figure 2. Evaluation process	11

List of tables

Table 1. Criteria Score.....	12
------------------------------	----



1. Introduction

1.1 About SPADE project

SPADE is a project funded by the European Union under the Horizon Europe program through the HORIZON-CL6-2021-GOVERNANCE-01 call. SPADE comprises a consortium of 21 partners from 10 European countries. Initiated in September 2022, this project is scheduled to span a duration of 4 years and is under the coordination of the Centre for Research and Technology Hellas (CERTH) in Greece.

1.2 Objectives and Ambition of SPADE

The strategic objective of SPADE project is to develop an intelligent ecosystem to address the multiple purposes concept in the light of deploying unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs alias drones) to promote sustainable digital services for the benefit of a large scope of end users in sectors of crop production, forestry, and livestock. This includes individual UAV usability, UAV type applicability (e.g., swarm, collaborative, autonomous, tethered), UAV governance models availability and UAV-generated data trustworthiness. Multi-purposes will be further determined in the sensing dataspace reusability based on trained Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML) models. These models will enable sustainability and resilience of the overall life cycle of developing, setting up, offering, providing, testing, validating, refining as well as enhancing digital transformations and “innovation building” services in agriculture. Pilot prototypes will contribute toward greater goals, such as the reduction of deforestation, precision farming and animal welfare.

1.3 SPADE Approach

The SPADE project will take a multifaceted approach. First, it will create a digital ecosystem to address the multipurpose character of UAVs improving the accessibility and control of drone operations, making it easier to utilize UAVs effectively. This platform will also serve as a channel for value-added services enabled by drones. Second, SPADE will showcase three innovative case studies for drones, analyzing and quantifying the benefits at a detailed stakeholder level. These demonstrations will not only reveal new business opportunities but also help in examining the regulatory framework at both international and national levels.

1.4 SPADE Open Calls

SPADE is excited to announce the launch of two Open Calls, with a total budget of 720,000 EUR thoughtfully distributed between them, to finance up to 12 innovative projects. These Open Calls are a significant part of SPADE’s commitment to driving innovation in the field of drones for agriculture. In the first Open Call for applicants, the overall budget amounts to 360,000 EUR.

2. SPADE is looking for evaluators!

SPADE is looking for independent evaluators who can assess the quality of the received applications within the Open Call #1 shortly after the call is closed.

The evaluators should meet the following criteria:

- 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](#)).
- Previous experience in the evaluation and management of technological projects, especially in the field of drones or similar technologies.
- Technical competence to comprehend the technical aspects of proposals, including SPADE architecture and technologies related to drones.
- Ability to assess the technical excellence of proposals, including implementation feasibility and the quality of technical planning.
- Experts with experience in evaluating proposals for the European Commission or similar experience.
- To have the ID number/VAT

An evaluator must not work for an organization that aims to participate in the SPADE OC#1 or for an organization that is currently involved in the SPADE consortium.

The evaluators will be responsible for providing a neutral but technical/scientific and/or commercial review of the received applications, generally focusing on, but not limited to, the following aspects:

- Technical Relevance
- Implementation Viability
- Technical and Scientific Excellence
- Quality of Technical Planning
- Impact and Contribution to SPADE
- Exploitation of Results
- Team Skills and Experience
- Collaboration and Communication

It is important to note that the number of applications to be reviewed per evaluator depends on various factors:

- the availability of evaluators',
- the number of applications submitted.

You will be notified of the number of proposals during the contract signing, and you will have access to the details of the proposals once the contract is signed and you log in to the SPLORO platform for evaluations. For specific dates, please refer to **Section 3** of this document.

3. Tentative timeline for activities

- SPADE Open Call #1 duration: 09.02.2024 - 10.04.2024, 17:00h (Brussels Time)
- Call for evaluators: 19.02.2024 - 19.03.2024, 17:00h (Brussels Time)
- Invitation to participate for evaluators: 16.04.2024.
- Contracting with selected evaluators: 16.04.2024 – 22.04.2024
- Onboarding webinar with evaluators: 22.04.2024, 10:00 (1 hour) (Brussels Time)
- Proposals evaluation: 22.04.2024 – 30.04.2024 17:00 (Brussels Time)



4. Evaluators selection process

Evaluators will be selected by the SPADE team members based on their competences and needs for the OC #1.

4.1 Expression of interest

If you are interested in becoming an evaluator, please create an evaluator profile on the SPLORO platform, complete all the necessary fields in the form ([see Annex 1](#)) and upload your **CV (in .pdf format)**.

Apply here: https://bit.ly/SPADE_Call-For-Evaluators

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 SPADE Call for Evaluators, applicants automatically accept all the rules and conditions described below.

4.2 Evaluators' liability

By applying to the SPADE evaluator Call and registering on the SPLORO platform, the expert:

- understands that submitting an application (registration) does not guarantee selection as an evaluator for any of the open calls.
- understands that they must agree to the [Code of Conduct](#) as well as any other requested document if selected to serve as an evaluator.
- confirms that they will conduct the evaluation within the specified timeframe (**22.04.2024 – 30.04.2024 17:00 (Brussels Time)**)
- confirms participation in the Onboarding webinar with evaluators: **22.04.2024, 10:00 (1 hour) (Brussels Time)**
- ensures that they will only evaluate applications from applicants with whom they have no Conflict of Interest (Col).

4.3 Admissibility

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

- Applications for the call for Evaluators can be submitted at any time starting from **19.02.2024 to 19.03.2024 17:00h (Brussels Time)**
- Applications for the call for Evaluators must be submitted electronically through the SPLORO platform, as indicated in this call, using the provided form on the platform, and a CV must be uploaded as a **.pdf** file as part of the application. **Paper or email submissions are NOT eligible.**
- Applications must be completed in all parts, and the CV must be legible, accessible, and printable.
- The applicant cannot have participated as part of a team that has applied to the call for proposals of SPADE.

If the eligibility criteria are met, the expert evaluation will be conducted by the SPADE team members. To formalize the collaboration, unless otherwise specified, selected evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest ([see Annex 2](#)), a confidentiality agreement with the call manager (Sploro) and the contract prior to the start of the evaluation.

4.4 Conflict of interest

Evaluators must not have a conflict of interest at the time of their appointment and must sign a contract stating that they do not have one. They must also notify the consortium if such a conflict arises in any of the applications to which they have been allocated. When an evaluator reports a potential conflict of interest or it is brought to the project consortium's attention in any way, the project consortium will assess the circumstances and any objective aspects of

information available. If the consortium determines that there is a conflict of interest, the evaluator will be removed from the application's evaluation. All potential conflicts of interest will be thoroughly investigated. More information can be found [HERE](#).

4.5 Confidentiality

All information connected to the evaluation process is absolutely confidential, thus evaluators are bound by secrecy. They are not permitted to reveal any information regarding the applications submitted, as well as the outcomes of the assessment and selection, to anyone. They are also not permitted to use the application's concepts for their own purposes.



5. Challenges of Open Call #1

SPADE is initiating a comprehensive program that encompasses specific challenges in the domains of Open-Field Case Studies in Spain, Forestry Case Studies in Norway, and Livestock Case Studies in Greece. Through this call, we invite applicants to tackle tailored challenges for each Case Study, promoting innovation in agricultural practices, forestry management, and livestock breeding.

Furthermore, a series of overarching challenges applies across all Case Studies, fostering cross-disciplinary collaboration and addressing broader considerations crucial to the success of the SPADE project. Refer to the graphic below (Figure 1) for a visual representation of the call's structure, outlining the unique challenges associated with each case and the universal considerations that unite them.

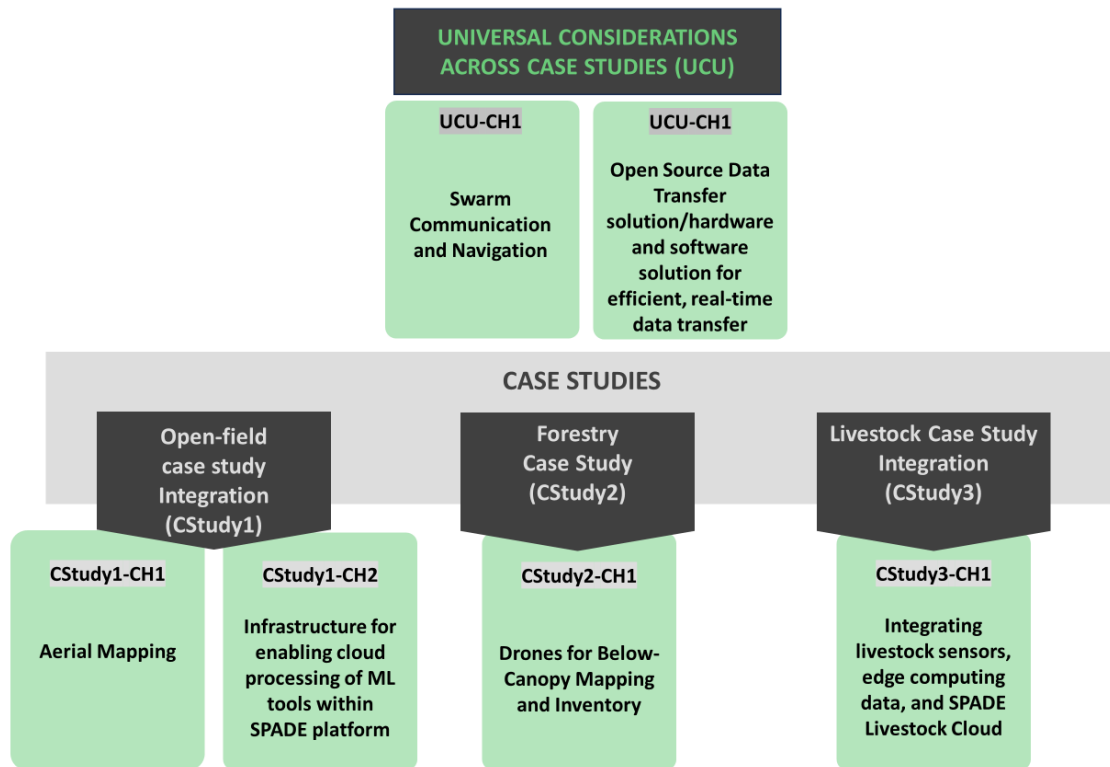


Figure 1. SPADE OC#1. Challenges

To understand the objectives of the challenges as well as the technical aspects that applicants must meet, we recommend that you read the [Guidelines for applicants](#) as well as the [Technical Annex](#).

6. Proposals Evaluation Procedure

The evaluation process to be followed during the selection of the proposals is shown in the following figure.

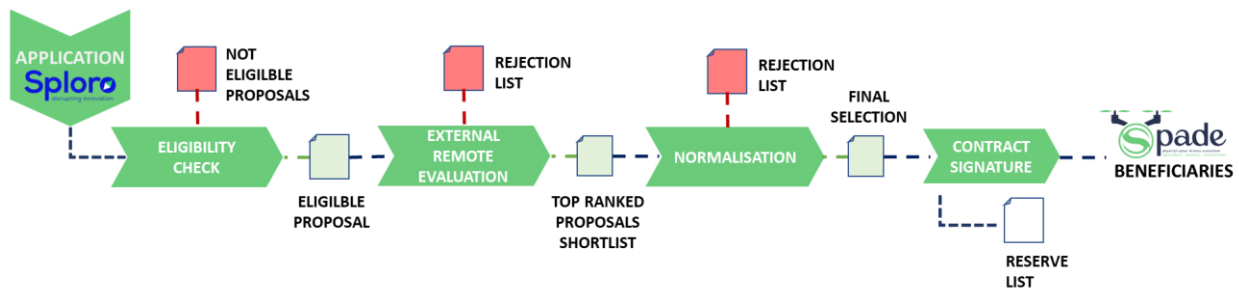


Figure 2. Evaluation process

The evaluation process will be assessed based on the following steps:

Step 1. Eligibility check. An automatic filtering to discard non-eligible proposals (**done by SPLORO**). The number of evaluators chosen depends on the quantity of proposals that pass Step 1. *For additional details regarding this stage, please refer to the [guidelines for applicants](#).*

Step 2. External remote evaluation: All selected evaluators will carry out Step 2 of the evaluation procedure. *It is important to note that a single evaluator can assess up to 30 proposals, as specified in the contract they must sign once selected.* Each evaluator will produce a short Individual Evaluation Report. (**done by the evaluator**)

Step 3. Normalisation. The scores given by the experts will be normalized (to avoid positive/negative biases) and the preselected proposals will be chosen. (**done by SPLORO**). *For additional details regarding this stage, please refer to the [guidelines for applicants](#).*

All applicants will be informed about the evaluation results through an **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)**. For this reason, it is required that during the evaluation process, the experts justify the score they have decided to give to the applicant. Clear, concise, and non-generic justifications are required.

The following section will provide more detailed information about the activities that the evaluator will undertake during the evaluation process.

6.1 Step 2. External Remote evaluation.

This step corresponds to the activity that the evaluators will carry out individually on the SPLORO platform.

The 22.04.2024, 10:00 (1 hour) (Brussels Time) an online webinar will be conducted with the selected evaluators, where the evaluation process will be explained step by step, with special attention to the evaluation criteria.

After the onboarding webinar, the evaluators will receive a manual for the platform and all the necessary documentation for the evaluation process.

Each proposal will then be assigned to 2 evaluators, and consequently, 2 individual evaluation reports will be prepared for each proposal, which should be based on the assessment of 4 main criteria:

- 1) **Team:** The applicants will provide details about:
 - their management and leadership qualities;
 - their ability to take a concept from ideas to application;

- their capacity from a technical perspective and understanding of the SPADE concepts.

The team should be enough in terms of resources and fully dedicated to the project and with a strong background and skill base in drones. We will request at least 2 team members to work full-time (or 1 full-time and several part-time) for the development of the experiment.

- 2) **Technical excellence:** The proposals must clearly indicate what they are going to do and how they are going to do it, showing improvements over the SPADE architecture and demonstrating a high level of understanding of the open architectures provided by the consortium. The Excellence is evaluated according to the following criteria:
 - Clarity and pertinence of the objectives
 - Excellence, innovation and quality of the project.
 - Appropriateness of the solution to solve the selected challenge.
 - Clear identification of the improvements that will be developed over the current state of technology and their technical feasibility.

- 3) **Implementation:** how they plan to implement the experiment within the given time framework which should be aligned with SPADE planning.
 - Clear and detailed plan of proposed activities, ensuring that the activities are aligned with the project objectives and developed within realistic timeframes.
 - The plan should highlight the suitability of resources, both in terms of human and technological resources, emphasizing the team's commitment and ability to execute the project.
 - The proposed activities must be carried out within realistic timeframes, demonstrating a practical understanding of the project's scope and complexity. This ensures that the experiment progresses as planned and contributes effectively to the overall success of SPADE.
 - It is necessary to take into account all the deliverables established by the case studies leaders and, in addition, contribute to other deliverables that the applicant deems essential for the project's implementation.

- 4) **Impact:** Proposals must demonstrate impact on the SPADE advancement and its contribution to meeting the overall project objectives. The impact is evaluated according to the following criteria:
 - Clarity and specificity of the expected benefits for the organization by participating in SPADE.
 - Their plans for integration with the SPADE consortium.
 - Their ideas in terms of exploitation of results
 - Explanation of how mutual and sustainable benefits will be ensured.
 - Assessment of the relevance and scope of the expected environmental impact.
 - Relevance and potential for economic impact of the project
 - Relevance and contribution of the project to desired social improvement or transformation.
 - Effectiveness of the proposed experiments to exploit and disseminate the project results and to communicate the project.

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

Table 1. Criteria Score.

SCORE	DEFINITION
0	Proposal fails to address the criterion or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.
1	Poor – criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.
2	Fair – proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses
3	Good – proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.
4	Very good- proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.
5	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Only proposals reaching at least 2 points on each criterion and 10 in total will be shortlisted for the consensus meeting. The consensus meeting will only consider proposals over thresholds and will define between experts the feedback which will be given back to proposers with the final result. Each evaluator will produce a short Individual Evaluation Report.

7. Payments conditions

As an integral part of the evaluation process, it is mandatory for all evaluators to be registered in the VIES (VAT Information Exchange System) before engaging in the assessment of proposals. The VIES registration ensures that evaluators possess valid VAT identification numbers, contributing to the transparency and credibility of the evaluation process. This measure aligns with international standards and is crucial for handling financial transactions associated with the compensation system outlined below.

During the evaluation process, every evaluator will be compensated with 40 EUR for each proposal they review.

Action	Amount/Action
Review	40 EUR

Given the dynamic nature of the evaluation process, where assignments are made to align with the evaluator's experience and knowledge, it is important to note that a specific minimum number of evaluation sessions cannot be guaranteed. However, the precise details of the evaluator's work will be formally communicated via email by the SPADE consortium on 22.10.2024. It is estimated that the evaluator will be involved in evaluating up to 30 applications received in SPADE Open Call #1.

The evaluator is required to prepare an invoice and forward it to SPLORO. Each invoice submitted by the evaluator must clearly state:

- The reference of the contract: SPADE2024-1.
- Identification of the evaluator.
- The number of evaluations, performed.
- The EVALUATOR's bank details.

SPLORO will make a single payment via bank transfer. All payments will be made to the bank account provided by the evaluator, strictly in euros, to bank accounts that accept euros. The transfer will be made to the evaluator's account within 60 days of receiving the invoice.

All taxes, including VAT, are included in the fees payable by SPLORO. It is important to note that SPLORO is not subject to any commercial tax, including VAT, and the amount indicated as the project fee is therefore considered as all-inclusive.