



NEMESIS

Open Call 1: Guidelines for Applicants



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1. Introduction

1.1 Project background

Desertification and land degradation are widespread threats to soil health in the arid, semi-arid and sub-humid areas of the Mediterranean. The loss of land productivity due to desertification threatens food security as well as other ecosystem services provided by healthy soils. While it is well known that desertification can result from various factors, including climatic variations and human activities such as overgrazing and poor farming practices, soil management practices that combat desertification are still rare. The Nemesis project will identify, test and apply soil management practices to combat desertification and land degradation in the Mediterranean thereby supporting the EU Mission ‘A Soil Deal for Europe’, which aims to restore healthy soils by 2030.

To that end, Nemesis is setting up five autonomous but connected Living Labs (LLs) in Cyprus, France, Italy, North Africa (Tunisia/Algeria), and Spain to find solutions against desertification and land degradation. The Nemesis LLs are working groups centred around specific regions and bring together scientists, communities, and policymakers to create, test and validate soil management practices that halt desertification and improve soil health.

During the project, the LLs will form a single virtual network that collects and shares all key soil health data from different environments. Nemesis aims to become a sustainable hub for innovative ideas and practical solutions to soil degradation and to support the EU’s Soil Monitoring Law. The project will create tools and frameworks to ensure that the LLs continue to operate effectively over the long term. The 60 experimental sites already identified have the potential to become Lighthouses (LHs), based on the evaluation framework defined by the SOILL project, showcasing successful examples and supporting knowledge exchange through training and peer learning activities.

Nemesis places a strong emphasis on co-creation and collaboration, involving local communities, citizens, and young people to promote environmental awareness and responsibility. It will also share knowledge and develop new tools to support better decision-making and policy design, ensuring that its results help shape stronger and more coordinated policies to fight desertification and protect soil health.

This document provides the relevant information regarding the OC 1 promoted under the Nemesis - “INNOVATIVE CO-CREATION SOIL HEALTH LIVING LABS” project.

1.2 Definition of “Living Lab” in Nemesis

Nemesis Living Labs (LLs) are place-based, problem-solving, co-creation, co-development, & livelihood-centred real-life environments, which will function as decentralized community-based platforms, (a) providing co-solutions (co-creation of solutions) for combating desertification & reversing soil degradation and (b) serving as open-access repositories of resources & affordable, accessible, adaptable, & scalable assets that contribute to the welfare of individuals & communities.

Each LL focuses on specific regional soil health challenges linked to desertification and land degradation in the Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on different soil-related dimensions.

Spain: Soil-pasture

France: Soil-biodiversity

Italy: Soil-crops

Cyprus: Soil-water

Tunisia/ Algeria: cross-border Soil-management practices

1.3 Overview of the Open Call (OC) 1

Open Call (OC) 1 aims to strengthen and expand the Nemesis LLs (see definition in Section 1.2) by integrating at least one additional experimental site per LL. In doing so, OC1 will enhance the Nemesis network.

Selected applicants will receive **Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP)** and become part of the respective LL. FSTP thereby enables the active involvement of relevant stakeholders, including farmers, businesses and civil society actors, in the LLs. It allows the consortium to channel EU support more broadly by building on the know-how, infrastructure and resources of the Nemesis beneficiaries. Applicants must comply with the eligibility criteria and specific requirements of the LL to which they apply (see Section 3). Successful applicants will not only operate an additional experimental site but will also be expected to contribute actively to the respective LL and to the wider implementation of Nemesis. This includes the participation in co-creation, monitoring, stakeholder engagement, awareness raising, communication and demonstration activities, in accordance with the approved work plan and the sub-grant agreement.

The guide explains
What support is available
Criteria for giving financial support
Who is eligible to apply to Open Call 1
How to submit a proposal
The evaluation and award process
The rights and obligations of selected recipients

1.4 FSTP-based opportunities under OC1

What we offer	Details
Funding	Up to 100% funding of eligible lump-sum budgets
Total FSTP	EUR 500,000 distributed across all third parties
Maximum amount per third party	Up to EUR 100,000
Number of grants	5-8
Selection	At least one third party per LL

OC1 will provide applicants with up to **100% lump-sum funding** of their eligible budget. At least one third party will be selected per LL, ensuring that at least one additional experimental site is added to each LL. A total budget of EUR 500,000 will be distributed among the selected recipients, with a maximum of EUR 100,000 per third party.

Selected applicants will cooperate closely with the Nemesis consortium and will be integrated into the co-creation and overall implementation process of Nemesis. They will become active actors within their respective LLs and will benefit from the activities and knowledge generated by the project, while building capacity, co-implementing solutions at their experimental sites, contributing data, and participating in the LLs activities and initiatives.

Main advantages of participation
Financial support for expanding the Nemesis LL network.
Access to LLs knowledge, infrastructure, stakeholder-engagement activities, co-developed practices and tools, project and LL events focusing on desertification & soil degradation.
Scientific and technical mentoring from experts in soil-related challenges, geoinformatics, social science, educational and vocational training, policy recommendation, and innovation.
Capacity building and skills enhancement through participation in co-creation activities, workshops, networking events, and knowledge exchange processes within the LLs ecosystem.

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Increased visibility and policy relevance through participation in an initiative contributing to the EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe” and broader EU soil health and environmental objectives.
Networking opportunities with key ecosystem stakeholders from industry, academia, policy and society.
Possibility to contribute to the co-design, testing, validation, and demonstration of innovative and transformative soil health solutions in real-world settings.

OC1 will be implemented in line with the key principles of transparency, fairness and impartiality, ensuring an accessible and public call for proposals, transparent selection procedures, confidential and fair treatment of all applications.

2. Timeline

What?	When?
Launch of the Open Call 1	01 June 2026
Deadline for submission	01 August 2026 (17:00 CEST)
Eligibility check (communication to proposals considered not eligible)	Beginning of August 2026
Evaluation of the eligible applications	Beginning of August – Beginning of September 2026
Communication of evaluation results	Beginning of September 2026
Signature of sub-grant agreements	End of September 2026
Start of FSTP-funded additional LL sites	1 October 2026
First assessment	September 2027
Second assessment	September 2028
Final assessment	September 2029

3. Eligibility criteria

Proof of access to the experimental site is a mandatory eligibility condition. Applicants must demonstrate secure access to the proposed site for the implementation period of the sub-project. Acceptable proof may include ownership documents, a lease agreement, a formal site-use agreement, or a signed authorisation / commitment by the site owner.

Proposals that do not include acceptable proof of access to the experimental site will be declared ineligible and will not be evaluated further.

3.1 Eligible applicants

Applicants must be **single legal entities** established in an eligible country / region corresponding to the relevant LL and must comply with the specific requirements of the LL to which they apply. To be eligible, applicants must:

- be a legal entity;
- not be beneficiaries, affiliated entities or associated partners of Nemesis;
- have the operational capacity to implement soil-related and site-based activities;
- demonstrate secure access to the proposed experimental site for the implementation period of the sub-project;

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- have no CoI / no access to privileged information (for ex. via collaboration with beneficiaries, affiliated entities or associated partners of Nemesis).
- comply with the thematic, geographic and operational requirements of the respective LL.

Depending on the LL-specific requirements (section 3.4), eligible applicant profiles may include, for example:

- farmers and landowners, including farmer cooperatives and producer organisations;
- regional or local public authorities managing relevant land or demonstration sites;
- environmental NGOs with managed demonstration sites;
- applied research institutes with field sites;
- SMEs operating test fields, pilot farms or providing relevant soil-related intervention services.

The following additional conditions apply to any eligible applicant:

- The applicant should not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures.
- No double funding is allowed.

The final determination of fit will depend on the applicant's ability to meet the specific LL requirements and to implement the proposed work plan. The following LL-specific requirements should be read together with the general eligibility conditions above. Applicants must review the subsection relevant to the LL to which they apply.

3.2 Eligible activities

Activities supported under OC1 must directly contribute to the strengthening and expansion of the Nemesis LLs through the integration of additional experimental sites. Funded activities must be clearly linked to the objectives of the respective LL and to the broader Nemesis mission of combating desertification and land / soil degradation in the Mediterranean.

Eligible activities may include, but are not limited to:

- establishment and operation of an additional experimental site with a maturity level comparable to the existing sites in the respective LL, located within the same or adjacent region of the LL's geographical area;
- participation in the LL and contribution to relevant Nemesis project activities, including meetings, workshops, information days, demonstration events and co-creation sessions;
- support to the implementation of the multi-actor approach (MAA) and the further enhancement of the Multi-Actor Platforms (MAPs), based on the characteristics of the experimental site;
- support to stakeholder engagement, awareness raising and communication activities related to the LL, including workshops, surveys, demonstrations, visits to experimental sites and, where relevant, educational or outreach activities;
- supporting the deployment of the experimental site for testing the Nemesis virtual environment (Nemesis Digital Twin), enabling the simulation and monitoring of soil-related processes and conditions across the LLs;
- support to the co-creation process for defining and selecting the solutions to be tested at the experimental site;
- establishment of soil health baselines, including soil sampling, collaboration with the designated Nemesis partners, and submission of samples to the designated laboratory of the respective LL, following the relevant protocols and measurements;



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- implementation of at least one relevant management practice at the experimental site and support to the related monitoring activities;
- provision of relevant data and support to environmental and socio-economic impact assessment;
- contribution to the preparation of practice abstracts, technical guidance materials and other knowledge outputs related to the tested practices;
- support to the development of policy recommendations based on findings derived from the experimental sites;
- support to communication and dissemination activities aimed at expanding outreach communities;
- support to activities linked to the SOILL project, where relevant for the respective LL;
- collection of structured feedback from local actors on soil-related challenges, opportunities and needs.

Activities must be implemented in line with the technical, governance and monitoring requirements of the respective LL and in accordance with the Grant Agreement, the Guidelines for applicants and the sub-grant agreement.

3.3 Eligible costs

OC1 provides lump-sum funding. Applicants must therefore submit a realistic and well-justified budget covering the activities proposed for implementation. Funding may cover costs necessary for the execution of the approved work plan, provided they are directly linked to the supported activities and are compliant with the conditions set out in the call documents and the sub-grant agreement.

Eligible budget items may include the following cost categories for the implementation of FSTP activities:

- **Personnel costs:** time dedicated to the project and linked to the implementation of the supported activities;
- **Travel:** travel and subsistence costs for experimental site activities and participation in relevant Nemesis and LL activities, knowledge exchange, training events aligned with the objectives of the Nemesis project and the EU Mission “A Soil Deal for Europe”; Successful applicants are expected to attend our Nemesis Progress Meetings that will take place in September 2027 (mid-term meeting) in Italy and September 2029 (final meeting) in France.
- **Other goods, works and services:** When consumable components or materials are used up or cannot be recovered, their full purchase cost may be eligible. This budget category might include on-the-ground implementation costs at the experimental site, including soil sampling and shipment, field implementation of management practices and monitoring-related actions; costs related to stakeholder engagement and awareness-raising activities, including workshops, field visits, demonstrations, information days and similar actions; costs related to communication and dissemination activities, including preparation or printing of communication materials where necessary. Applicants are advised to foresee an indicative amount of approximately EUR 2,000 for soil analyses. This amount may be further adjusted during the sub-grant agreement preparation phase with the selected third parties, once the concrete soil analysis needs and corresponding costs have been confirmed. Costs related solely to obtaining access to, renting, or using an experimental site without ensuring active involvement, contribution, and long-term integration of the site within the Nemesis LLs network are not eligible, as the objective of OC1 is to support the sustainable expansion and strengthening of the network of experimental sites and stakeholders.



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Applicants are reminded that the lump-sum principle applies: reimbursement is linked to the satisfactory implementation of agreed activities and milestones, not to the reimbursement of individual cost items.

Applicants should therefore ensure that all necessary implementation costs are adequately foreseen in the proposed budget and consistent with the project's scope, scale, and duration. Indirect or overhead costs are not eligible. The detailed financial conditions will be set out in the sub-grant agreement.

3.4 Living Lab-specific requirements

Cyprus Living Lab (CY LL)

Geographic scope: Sites must be located within the territory of the Republic of Cyprus, including **Limassol, Nicosia, Paphos, Larnaca and Famagusta**, provided that implementation, monitoring and stakeholder engagement are feasible within the Nemesis framework.

Thematic focus: Proposals must address combatting desertification as the primary objective and align with the soil–water nexus of the CY LL. Relevant challenges include water scarcity, drought resilience, reduced water retention, salinisation, erosion, soil organic carbon loss and loss of soil biodiversity. Other challenges may also be considered where clearly justified by the local context.

Minimum site requirements: The site must already be operational, with secured access rights for the full project duration, demonstrate at least one year of documented activity, have a minimum size of 1 hectare, and allow monitoring, data collection and the testing of co-created solutions. Agriculturally relevant sites affected by soil-water-related pressures are expected.

Particularly relevant applicant types: Smallholder farmers and landowners, SMEs and consultants on irrigation management and soil health, start-ups providing soil–water decision-support tools, NGOs focused on combating desertification and sustainable soil–water management, organic farming associations, climate-smart agriculture SMEs, organic and regenerative agriculture practitioners, and food processing or distribution companies may apply, provided they are legal entities with operational capacity and access to a relevant site.

French Living Lab (FR LL)

Geographic scope: The FR LL covers Mediterranean areas in **South-Eastern France**, currently in **Occitanie (Gard and Hérault), Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (Alpes-de-Haute-Provence and Vaucluse) and Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes (Drôme)**. Other neighbouring “départements” within these Mediterranean areas may also be eligible, while other French regions are not.

Thematic focus: Proposals must contribute to combatting desertification and land / soil degradation and align with the FR LL focus on soil biodiversity and broader soil health improvement. A mandatory condition is the land-use / management type: the existing sites are all based on agroforestry (alley-cropping) systems, and the new site must either already belong to this type of system or be clearly committed to conversion toward such a system.

Minimum site requirements: The site should be a real, active on-farm site, not a site at planning stage only. The site must have a minimum area of 1 hectare, and allow soil-related practices, monitoring under Nemesis protocols and integration into LL activities. Existing data, previous experience and demonstration potential are considered an advantage.

Particularly relevant applicant types: Smallholder farmers and landowners, farmer associations and cooperatives, NGOs, SMEs, consultants and AgTech actors may apply, provided they manage or operate an on-farm site implementing agroforestry systems and can demonstrate direct access and operational capacity.

Italian Living Lab (IT LL)

Geographic scope: The IT LL focuses on North-Central Italy, in particular **Lombardy** and **Emilia-Romagna**.

Thematic focus: Proposals must contribute to combatting desertification and align with the IT LL focus on soil–crop agroecological systems, with particular attention to soil erosion. Eligible sites should be linked to agricultural land uses with permanent cultures and/or agroforestry and should support demonstration, monitoring and experimental activities. Relevant agroecological practices include, for example, rotation, intercropping, agroforestry, organic farming, agrobiodiversity support, mulching, cover cropping, minimum / no tillage, irrigation innovation, erosion control, forest restoration and monitoring technologies.

Minimum site requirements: The site should have a minimum area of 1 hectare and be active and suitable for soil-related practices, monitoring and experimental purposes, and be capable of integration into LL activities. Particularly valued are sites with experience in agroforestry or regenerative agriculture, hill contexts exposed to erosion, existing monitoring experience or data, dissemination experience and links to wider farm networks or agricultural districts.

Applicant profiles: All applicant types listed in section 3.3 may be considered eligible, including farmers and agricultural cooperatives, AgTech start-ups, farmer networks, SMEs, NGOs, organic farming associations, climate-smart agriculture SMEs, and practitioners of organic and regenerative agriculture, provided they can demonstrate access to an experimental site.

North Africa Living Lab (NA LL – Tunisia / Algeria)

Geographic scope: The NA LL covers pilot sites in **north-western Tunisia (Jendouba and Kef) and north-eastern Algeria (Souk Ahras)**, within and around the **Medjerda–Mellègue river basin**. Adjacent eligible zones may also include selected areas in Siliana, Zaghouan and Nabeul in Tunisia and Guelma, Constantine, Mila and Oum Bouaghi in Algeria, provided they fall within the same Mediterranean agro-ecological band and share similar degradation pressures.

Thematic focus: Proposals must contribute to combatting desertification, align with the NA LL focus on soil–management practices, address a clearly defined soil-related challenge, focus on relevant land-use systems and contribute to soil-health monitoring.

Minimum site requirements: The site must represent real farming conditions, implement at least one soil-health intervention or management practice, and be compatible with Earth Observation-based monitoring. A size of around 2–3 hectares is preferred for monitoring purposes, although sites of 1 hectare or more may still be acceptable if monitoring can be reasonably ensured. The site should have at least one year of activity, preferably previous demonstration experience, and must allow soil monitoring, use designated laboratory services, host monitoring visits and participate in LL events.

Particularly relevant applicant types: Relevant applicant types include individual farmers, cooperatives, agri-service SMEs, field-based research institutes, NGOs managing land and local authorities directly managing agricultural or pastoral land, provided they have direct access to land and can implement practices and host monitoring.

Spanish Living Lab (ES LL)

Geographic scope: The ES LL focuses on **Eastern and South-Eastern Spain**, especially **Murcia, Valencia, Alicante and Castellón**. The eligible scope is defined primarily through Mediterranean climatic conditions and environmental context rather than strict administrative boundaries, with attention to desertification-relevant conditions.



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Thematic focus: Proposals must contribute to combatting desertification and land / soil degradation and align with the ES LL focus on soil–livestock and mixed farming systems. Relevant themes include improving soil organic carbon, soil structure and water retention, reducing erosion, improving nutrient and manure management, and improving soil biodiversity.

Minimum site requirements: The site should have a minimum area of 1 hectare, at least one year of activity, allow soil-related practices and monitoring under Nemesis protocols, be accessible for LL activities and stakeholder engagement, and preferably be suitable for demonstration. Sites linked to livestock or mixed systems are particularly relevant.

Particularly relevant applicant types: Relevant profiles include smallholder farmers and landowners, pastoralist and grazer associations, cooperatives, feed and forage producers, composting or organic matter recycling industries, soil–livestock consultants, SMEs, NGOs and AgTech start-ups, provided they can demonstrate real operational capacity and direct access to a suitable site.

3.5 Multiple submissions

An applicant may submit only one proposal per LL under OC1. The same legal entity may not receive more than one sub-grant under OC1. If several applications from the same legal entity are submitted to the same LL, only the latest complete submission received before the deadline will be considered, unless otherwise decided by the Nemesis consortium for justified reasons.

3.6 Conflict of interest

Applicants must declare any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest that could compromise the fairness of the selection process. This includes, in particular, any contractual, financial, employment, advisory, governance or close collaborative relationship with a Nemesis beneficiary, affiliated entity, associated partner or evaluator that could result in privileged information, unequal treatment, or undue influence.

If such a conflict of interest is identified and cannot be effectively mitigated, the application may be declared ineligible or excluded from the evaluation process.

Conflicts of interest will also be assessed on the evaluator side. All evaluators will sign confidentiality and conflict-of-interest declarations before accessing proposals. Evaluators must not assess any proposal with which they have a direct or indirect conflict of interest, including employment links, financial interests, current or recent collaboration, advisory roles, family or close personal relationships, or other circumstances that may impair impartiality.

Where a conflict of interest is identified, the evaluator will be recused and replaced. The evaluation process will be organised in line with the principles of transparency, equal treatment, conflict-of-interest management and confidentiality.

4. Preparation and submission of proposals

4.1 Deadline

The deadline for submission of proposals is **01 August 2026, 17:00 CEST**. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered. After the call closure no additions or changes to received proposals will be taken into account. It is strongly advised that applicants do not wait until the last minute to submit their proposal.

4.2 Submission system

Applications must be submitted before the deadline and exclusively through the **Nemesis online submission portal**: <https://www.nemesis-soil.eu/open-calls/submission>. Applications sent by email or



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by any other channel will not be accepted. The applicant is responsible for ensuring that the proposal is complete.

An application will be considered **complete and admissible** only if all mandatory fields of the online form have been completed and all mandatory documents listed in the call documentation have been uploaded by the deadline.

4.3 Language

The application must be submitted in **English**. Submissions done in any language other than English will not be eligible or evaluated. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools for translation purposes is allowed to avoid language barriers in the application process, provided that the tool used is specified and careful double-checking is ultimately conducted. To facilitate accessibility, supporting call documents such as the call text, guide for applicants and FAQs is available in additional LL languages. However, the application itself must be submitted in English to ensure a manageable and fair evaluation process across the consortium. Administrative supporting documents (e.g. proof of access to the experimental site) may be accepted in local languages where this is explicitly allowed in the LL-specific call documentation.

4.4 Documentation

Applicants must submit the documentation specified in the application package. This will include:

- completed proposal template;
- proof of legal entity status;
- proof of access to the experimental site (owner confirmation, official agreement between applicant and owner);

4.5 Application preparation

Applicants are strongly encouraged to read carefully:

- The Open Call 1: Guidelines for applicants,
- the proposal template,
- the FAQ section,
- and any additional information published on the Nemesis website.

Applicants should make sure that the proposal clearly explains:

- the relevance and added value of the site as an applicant to the LL,
- the expected contribution to [Nemesis Mission](#),
- the resources and budget required,
- the activities to be implemented,
- the applicant's capacity to implement the proposed work,
- the potential for long-term engagement and sustainability within the Nemesis LL ecosystem.

5. Evaluation and award procedure

5.1 Evaluation criteria

All proposals undergo an eligibility check and a remote evaluation by three independent experts, one internal (Nemesis consortium members) and two external evaluators.

Eligible applications will be assessed against criteria:

Relevance and excellence

- relevance of the proposed site and the thematic focus to the respective LL;
- fit of the proposed site within the geographical and land use context of the LL;
- contribution to combating desertification and land degradation;



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- capacity to engage stakeholders and to contribute to co-creation, demonstration, communication and dissemination activities.

Capacity and implementation potential

- operational capacity of the applicant;
- ability to participate actively in LL activities and co-creation processes;
- site maturity and operational readiness;
- adequacy and effectiveness of the proposed eligible activities (section 3.1);
- feasibility of implementation within the proposed timeframe and budget
- budget adequacy and value for money.

Expected contribution / impact

- expected contribution to the representativeness and strengthening of the LL;
- expected added value for Nemesis activities and outputs;
- potential contribution to capacity building, demonstration, practice uptake and policy relevance;
- Sustainability and longer-term perspective.

The maximum total score is 20 points. Proposals will be evaluated as follows:

- Alignment and excellence: 0–5 points
- Capacity and implementation: 0–10 points
- Expected contribution / impact: 0–5 points

A minimum threshold of 3/5 applies to the section “Alignment and excellence”. Proposals scoring below this threshold will be rejected and will not be evaluated further against the remaining criteria. Funding decisions will be based on the final ranking of proposals, taking into account the available budget allocation and the objective of selecting at least one third party per LL.

5.2 Tie-break procedure

In the event of a tie between two or even more proposals, priority will be determined in the following order:

1. the proposal with the higher score for **Alignment and excellence** as it demonstrates the strongest fit to the LL-specific context and needs;
2. if still equal, the proposal with the higher score for **Capacity and implementation**;
3. If still equal, the proposal that offers the **best value for money** within the available budget.

If a tie remains after applying the above step, the Evaluation Committee will prioritise the proposal that best strengthens the representativeness of the relevant Living Lab and the Nemesis network. In this case, the final decision and its justification will be documented in the evaluation report / consensus report.

5.3 Award procedure

The award procedure will consist of the following **main steps**:

1. admissibility and eligibility check;
2. evaluation of eligible proposals;
3. ranking of proposals;
4. internal validation and final award decision including consensus meeting(s);
5. If considered necessary, an interview process for clarifying uncertainties within the top-ranked applications will be conducted;
6. communication of results to applicants;
7. preparation and signature of sub-grant agreements.

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At least one third party is expected to be selected per LL, in line with the project objective of expanding each LL by at least one additional site. Unsuccessful applicants will be informed of the evaluation outcome and may make use of the redress procedure described in Section 5.4.

5.4 Redress / Compliant procedure

Following the evaluation process, applicants may submit a complaint if they consider that a procedural error or flaw has occurred during the eligibility check or evaluation process, or that the rules of this Open Call 1 have not been applied correctly. Complaints may concern, for example, procedural shortcomings, conflict of interest issues, unequal treatment, or manifest errors in the handling of the application. Complaints may not challenge the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators as such.

Complaints must be submitted by e-mail to the Nemesis Open Call 1 team via opencalls@nemesis-soil.eu within 15 business days from the date of the notification of the evaluation result. Complaints submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

The complaint must include:

- the reference of the application concerned;
- the name and contact details of the complainant;
- the subject of the complaint;
- a clear description of the alleged procedural error or flaw;
- any supporting information or evidence available.

Anonymous complaints will not be considered. Receipt of the complaint will be acknowledged in writing. The complaint will be reviewed by the Nemesis Monitoring Committee responsible for the fairness of the call, excluding any persons affected by the complaint or concerned by a potential conflict of interest. A reasoned written reply will be provided within 15 business days of receipt of the complaint. Where additional time is needed due to the complexity of the case, the applicant will be informed accordingly.

If the complaint is found to be justified, appropriate corrective measures may be taken, in line with the principles of transparency, equal treatment and sound administration. The redress procedure does not automatically suspend the evaluation or contracting process.

6. Sub-grant agreement preparation and signature

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into a sub-grant agreement with the coordinator designated by the Nemesis consortium. The sub-grant agreement will define:

- the scope of the supported activities;
- the approved lump-sum budget;
- implementation period;
- reporting obligations;
- payment conditions;
- data, confidentiality and communication obligations;
- and the applicable legal and ethical conditions
- where relevant, arrangements concerning designated laboratories for soil analyses

No funding can be disbursed before the sub-grant agreement has been signed by all relevant parties.

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The following **financial documents** will be requested:

1. The Financial Identification Form (FIF), signed and stamped by your bank in addition to the account holder's signature. If the form does not bear the bank's seal and signature, a recent bank statement will be requested.
2. A Formal IBAN Certificate.
3. A formal confirmation email verifying that the provided bank details are correct and confirming that payments should be made to the specified bank account.

Failure by the awardees to provide the required documents may lead to rejection and replacement from the reserve list.

7. Project implementation

7.1 Kick-off Meeting (KoM) and onboarding procedure

Selected third parties will take part in an **onboarding phase** after signature of the sub-grant agreement. This may include:

- an introductory kick-off meeting within the LL ecosystem (Oct 2026),
- clarification of technical and administrative requirements,
- integration into the relevant LL governance and working processes,
- alignment on work plan, milestones, data management plan and reporting expectations (KPIs).

In addition, during the onboarding phase, the Nemesis consortium and the relevant LL will verify that no actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest exists between them and the selected third party. Successful applicants will receive support from the relevant LL and the Nemesis consortium during implementation. This may include technical guidance, administrative support, participation in LL activities, and mentoring by designated representatives of the LL and the consortium.

7.2 Project meetings and co-creation activities

To ensure alignment with the LL and the broader objectives of the project and to foster exchange and visibility, selected third parties are expected to participate actively:

- in Nemesis progress meetings that take place every two years (i.e. in Italy in 2027 and France in 2029)
- in the relevant LL activities

Depending on the LL-specific context and the approved proposal, this may include:

- participation in LL meetings, co-creation sessions, workshops and technical exchanges;
- support to stakeholder mobilisation and engagement within the LL ecosystem;
- organisation of stakeholder engagement events, demonstration activities, site visits or awareness-raising actions;
- contribution to the implementation of the multi-actor approach and to the LL governance structure;
- contribution to Nemesis communication, dissemination and outreach activities;
- support to activities linked to SOILL, where relevant.

Successful applicants must actively support stakeholder engagement, co-creation and demonstration within their respective LL. At least one stakeholder engagement, co-creation or demonstration activity is mandatory during Month 1–12 and must be documented as part of MS1 reporting. Further activities of this kind may be required during the implementation period and will be specified in the approved work plan and the sub-grant agreement.

7.3 Progress evaluations

Implementation progress will be reviewed periodically against the approved work plan, milestones and reporting obligations defined in the sub-grant agreement. **Progress evaluation** may include documentary checks, meetings, technical review, site visits, and assessment of outputs and milestones (MS).

Milestone logic to be included in the work plan:

- **MS1 / early implementation and baseline phase (Month 1-12):** inception and planning finalised; experimental site characterised; alignment with the respective LL confirmed; baseline soil sampling completed; selected management practice(s) identified and initiated; at least one stakeholder engagement, co-creation, or demonstration activity carried out.
- **MS2 / co-solution testing and assessment phase (Month 13-24):** co-solutions testing and assessment phase: selected co-solutions identified and tested during the second implementation year; contribution to environmental and socio-economic assessment activities and monitoring processes
- **MS3 / final implementation phase (Month 25-36):** results communicated to stakeholders and wider communities; contribution to LL knowledge exchange and dissemination activities; final implementation outputs and reporting delivered.

The final milestone structure and payment-linked conditions will be defined in the sub-grant agreement.

7.4 Reporting requirements

Reporting period 1												Reporting period 2												Reporting period 3											
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36

Successful applicants will be required to submit periodic reports and supporting evidence on the implementation of their activities. This may include:

- an **initial inception / engagement report (M12)** describing the experimental site, objectives, planned activities and timeline, selected management practices, implemented activities and preliminary results;
- an **intermediate progress report (M24)** summarising stakeholder inputs, tested management practices, implemented activities, monitoring progress and preliminary results;
- a **final implementation report (M36)** summarising contributions to soil health improvement and desertification mitigation, communication and dissemination activities, and input to policy recommendations.

Supporting evidence may include, where applicable:

- site descriptions and site-use documentation,
- records of workshops, visits, demonstrations and stakeholder engagement activities,
- soil sampling and monitoring records,
- photographs, logs and implementation records,
- communication outputs,

These reporting requirements are intended to support both project monitoring and the verification of milestone achievement for payment purposes.

7.5 Payment schedule

The attendance to the initial meeting (KoM) will be mandatory and the first payment will be linked to this and paid just after. The second payment will be made upon successful completion of the intermediate progress report. The final payment will be linked to the achievement of the agreed milestones and reporting obligations set out in the sub-grant agreement.

Payment in % of grant volume	Due month
70%	M1 (start of sub-project)
15%	M13
15%	M35

8. Obligations of third parties of OC1

8.1 Conflict of interest

Recipients must avoid any **conflict of interest** in the implementation of their sub-granted activities and must inform the contracting entity without delay if any such situation arises. This includes any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest towards Nemesis beneficiaries. Recipients must immediately disclose any such situation to the contracting entity and the relevant LL. Where a conflict of interest is identified, the Nemesis consortium may require appropriate **mitigation measures** to ensure impartiality, scientific integrity and compliance with the call and project rules. If the beneficiaries breach any of their obligations, the sub-grant agreement may be automatically terminated.

8.2 Data sharing, FAIR principles, and integration with the Nemesis framework

Recipients must cooperate with the Nemesis consortium on data sharing and integration of relevant results into the project framework. Where applicable, they must:

- follow Nemesis monitoring protocols,
- provide relevant data and metadata,
- support harmonisation and interoperability,
- and respect the project's data management requirements and FAIR principles.

8.3 Data protection and confidentiality

Recipients must comply with applicable data protection law and with the confidentiality obligations defined in the call documentation and sub-grant agreement. Personal data and confidential information must be handled securely and only for legitimate project-related purposes.

8.4 Ethics self-assessment

Applicants may be required to complete an **ethics self-assessment** where relevant to the proposed activities. Selected recipients must ensure that their activities comply with all applicable ethical, legal and regulatory requirements.

8.5 Communication, dissemination and visibility

Before engaging in a communication or dissemination activity expected to have a major media impact, the OC beneficiaries must inform the leader of its LL. Recipients must acknowledge Nemesis funding support in their communication and dissemination activities, in line with the instructions provided by the consortium. They may also be required to contribute to communication activities, social media outreach, practice abstracts, demonstration events or other dissemination outputs.

8.6 Information obligations

Recipients must provide, during the project implementation or four (4) years after, any information reasonably requested by the Nemesis consortium for implementation, monitoring, reporting, communication or audit purposes.

8.7 Record-keeping

Recipients must, at least until four (4) years after the end of the project implementation, keep records and supporting documentation related to the implementation of the funded activities. The records and supporting documents must be made available upon request or in the context of checks, reviews, audits or investigations done by the granting authority and/or other bodies (i.e. European Anti-Fraud Office OLAF; European Public Prosecutor's Office EPPO; European Court of Auditors ECA). If there are on-going checks, reviews, audits, investigations, litigation or other pursuits of claims under the Agreement, the beneficiaries must keep these records and other supporting documentation until the end of these procedures.

9. Contact information

For questions related to OC1, applicants should consult the FAQ section. If additional clarification is needed, applicants may contact the Nemesis Open Call team via opencalls@nemesis-soil.eu. An online information session / webinar will be held mid June 2026. The exact date and registration details will be published on the Nemesis website and social-media channels.