European Forest Institute

Grant process G-01-2026

Knowledge to Practice: Develop applications and AI solutions utilizing the ForestWard Observatory

Questions and answers

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#	Question	Answer
1	Do we have indirect cost on the call?	As stated in Section 7 of Part B (Budget), overhead costs cannot be included in the budget.
2	**Definition of "Application" and "Knowledge to Practice"** Our strategy involves building a highly flexible, "AI-ready" API gateway and a Python-first data pipeline (SDK) rather than a rigid, monolithic graphical user interface (GUI). This would democratize data access, allowing data scientists, researchers, and LLM-agents to easily query and integrate ForestWard data into their own predictive models via modern tools (e.g., Pandas, LangChain). Does an advanced developer toolkit / API pipeline qualify as an "application" under this call, or is a traditional end-user GUI strictly required?	No, a toolkit is not considered an application in this case.
3	**AI-Readiness of Existing Data** To properly design our integration layer, could you clarify the current state of the Observatory's data? Are there plans within the core consortium to expose data in modern, AI-ready formats (e.g., vector embeddings for semantic search), or should we budget for building the data transformation pipelines that convert raw GIS/sensor data into LLM-compatible formats?	1. Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset. 2. Vector embeddings of the data is not a part of the Forestward Observatory.
4	**Cloud Compute and Infrastructure Budget** Creating LLM-compatible pipelines and training machine learning models require substantial computational resources. Should applicants budget for their own third-party cloud infrastructure (e.g., AWS, GCP) within the €150,000 grant, or will the FORWARDS consortium provide grantees with access to its own cloud environment during the 10-month project?	1. Applicants should budget for their own needs of cloud infrastructure within the grant. 2. It is for the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).

5	**Post-Project Integration Standards** The Grant Agreement states that results must feed back into the ForestWard Observatory. Are there specific open-source standards (e.g., STAC APIs), containerization rules (Docker), or architectural constraints we must adhere to, ensuring our "AI-ready" API layer can be seamlessly adopted by the Observatory at the end of the project?	1. STAC API is in the development roadmap for the ForestWard Observatory, but is not yet implemented. 2. Containerization is done in Podman.
6	**Priority Thematic Areas for Showcase Applications** While our core architectural vision centers on building a flexible, AI-ready data pipeline and API toolkit, we understand the critical need to demonstrate immediate, tangible end-user value to fulfill the "Knowledge to Practice" mandate. Therefore, we plan to build 1-2 highly focused "Showcase Applications" (e.g., a predictive decision-support dashboard) directly on top of our new API layer. Does the FORWARDS project have specific thematic priorities or urgent forestry challenges (e.g., bark beetle outbreak prediction, drought stress modeling, species transition planning) that you strongly prefer to see as the primary use case for these practical showcases?	We cannot pre-evaluate applications. The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines. Note the call text does not specify thematic priorities.
7	We have attempted to access the real datasets from the ForestWard Observatory. We can see the network information here: https://forwards-project.eu/eu-csf-network/. However, it is not clear where the actual datasets can be accessed.	Datasets are still under development and cannot be accessed. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
8	The call refers explicitly to the development of an application. For example, it states: *"The developed application must be integrated into the ForestWard Observatory…"*. How strict is this requirement? Our proposal would focus on testing the suitability of our **Forest Resilience Index** across different regions in Europe using available data from ForestWard. We are not planning to develop a standalone application. Would such a proposal still be eligible?	We cannot pre-evaluate applications. The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.
9	Should projects use datasets covering the entirety of Europe, or would it be acceptable to work with datasets from only a subset of regions?	We cannot pre-evaluate applications. The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.

10	Could you provide a list of the datasets currently available through the ForestWard Observatory for use in this call?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
11	What is the spatial resolution of the available datasets?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
12	What is the temporal resolution and update frequency of the datasets?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
13	Could you provide a list of the locations or sites currently monitored within the ForestWard Observatory?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
14	For which locations is laser scanning data available?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
15	The ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA in the Grant Submission guidelines state that applicants must be a legal entity (legal person). We assume that legal definitions of that vary in member states. We'd like to get confirmation that we can apply as a "Eingetragener Kaufmann (EK) with a Gewerbeanmeldung". We have been part of an ERASMUS+ consortium before and thus assume it should work.	We cannot pre-evaluate applications. The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.
16	Would a civil law partnership (GbR) of natural persons be eligible?	We cannot pre-evaluate applications. The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.
17	What is the amount of costs that have to accounted for in adminstrative duties?	The grant is lump sum. It is for the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).
18	What is the funding allocation expected for (a) hardware resources , (b) staff (c) subcontracting and (d) travel to forest observatory consortium meetings	The grant is lump sum. It is for the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).
19	How many reports are expected to be submitted and which source will be financing the project, assuming the project is funded. Will the funding be from DFG for projects that are granted in Germany?	The following reports are to be submitted: 1. Checkpoint 1 2. Interim report 3. Checkpoint 2 (if applicable) 4. Final report The grant is provided by EFI under Horizon Europe project FORWARDS.

20	What is the minimum finacial overhead that can be accounted in the budget for the legal entitity that will apply for this project?	The grant is lump sum. It is for the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (Annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).
21	Will the project be fully funded by the foward consortium for the complete 10 months duration	The grant under this call will fund the project up to a maximum amount of 150,000 EUR.
22	Our system uses Edge AI on ground-based sensor stations to autonomously dispatch drones only when a threat (e.g., fire) is detected. Does the ForestWard Observatory support event-driven data ingestion via API, or should we buffer this data and push it during the scheduled nightly tasks ?	1. API ingestion is not currently supported by the ForestWard Observatory.
23	We generate high-resolution 3D Digital Twins (LiDAR point clouds) from our custom drones. Since the backend is based on PostGIS, should we provide this as raw LAS/LAZ files via an API link, or does the Observatory prefer we pre-process these into 2D raster layers (e.g., Canopy Height Models) before ingestion?	1. 2D raster layers are currently supported in the Observatory. 2. Note that we cannot pre-evaluate proposals and project applications will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.
24	We do not use off-the-shelf equipment; we design & build our drones and Edge AI stations in-house. In the budget, can we list the full cost of raw components and assembly labor as 'Consumables' or 'Pilot Equipment,' or must we apply the 10-month depreciation rule to our custom-built prototypes, since we'll need to build more units?	The grant is lump sum. It is for the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).
25	The call mentions a 'reasonable processing resource' (e.g., 8GB GPU). Does this limit apply only to the tasks running on your central servers, or can we utilize higher-performance computing on our own Edge devices and send the metadata/results to the Observatory?	Applicants can utilize higher performance computing on their own resources. The limit is only set to avoid making the system running the Observatory in risk of getting too large computational loads to be able to serve the GUI.
26	While we commit to Open Access for the data and results generated during the project, does the EFI require the source code of our proprietary Edge AI models to be open-sourced as well, or can we maintain the underlying algorithms as company Intellectual Property (IP)?	Source code must be made available open access, as stated in the Special conditions, Article 5 (Annex 3).
27	Our solution involves deploying Edge AI sensor stations and automated drone nests in remote forest locations in Armenia. Since these act as 'data collection systems' that will eventually be integrated into the Observatory, can the grant fully cover the costs of materials and assembly labor for these physical units?	The grant is lump sum. It is up to the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (Annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).

28	The call mentions integration into the existing frontend solution. Will EFI provide a staging environment or a sandbox API during the 10-month project so we can live-test the visualization of our 3D Digital Twins within the ForestWard interface?	1. No sandbox of staging environment is currently deployed. 2. Necessary documentation, API access, and/or source code for the ForestWard Observatory will be shared at project implementation.
29	Does the FORWARDS project have specific Biogeographical Regions (e.g., Alpine, Continental) that are currently under-represented in the Observatory? Would a pilot site in the Caucasus forest ecosystem (Armenia) be considered a high-priority 'Monitoring Supersite' for the project's expansion?	1. Datasets are still under development therefore we cannot answer questions on details about their specifications or locations. 2. There are no higher priority geographic areas.
30	How tightly does the developed application need to be integrated with the ForestWard Observatory? For example, is a stand-alone web application that consumes the Observatory's APIs sufficient, or is direct integration into the existing GeoDjango/PostGIS backend or frontend preferred or required?	A standalone web application working on data from the Observatory's API is sufficient.
31	How could we have access to technical documentation, schema descriptions, and sample datasets from the ForestWard Observatory (e.g., STAC, REST APIs, database schema) before or during proposal development?	1. No technical documentation, schema descriptions, or datasets have been published yet. 2. Documents and datasets (including metadata descriptions) will be made available during project implementation.
32	The call specifies that tasks added to the data pipeline should run within minutes on a desktop setup (e.g., ~8GB GPU). Does this requirement apply only to pipeline tasks, or also to external applications or web services that integrate with the Observatory?	This specification applies to code that should be run in the same instance as the ForestWard Observatory. It does not apply to services with external hosting.
33	Is the primary goal to develop applications that use existing ForestWard datasets, or are projects expected to generate and contribute new datasets or data collection systems that will be integrated into the Observatory?	The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines. As stated in the Grant Submission Guidelines, at minimum, the applicant is invited to "*propose projects developing applications that utilize or enrich the Forestward Observatory datasets, or systems for data collection that can be integrated"*
34	In the evaluation of proposals, how will the balance be assessed between technical innovation (e.g., new analytical methods or AI-based processing) and practical usability for	We cannot pre-evaluate proposals. The proposal will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.

	forest managers, policymakers, or other practitioners?	
35	What are the expectations regarding the long-term maintenance and sustainability of the developed applications once the funded project ends? For example, will the ForestWard Observatory team maintain integrated components, or should applicants plan for continued support?	Continuation from the FORWARDS project is not guaranteed.
36	Would deploying an instance of our existing cloud-based application within the ForestWard Observatory be considered a valid form of integration under the call?	Yes, if the application is light-weight enough for deployment. Embedding of an instance hosted elsewhere is also a valid option.
37	What is the funding rate for different types of legal entities? (Start-up, SMEs, Large Entities, Research/Universities)	Funding rates do not differ for different types of legal entities. The project is funded as lump sum.
38	Is there a minimum/maximum number of participants per project?	Please refer to eligibility criteria outlined in the Grant submission guidelines.
39	What is the base URL for the ForestWard Observatory REST API, and is there existing documentation (e.g., Swagger/OpenAPI) available to explore the available endpoints before submitting the proposal?	No, there is no available documentation prior to submitting the proposal.
40	Is access to the REST API currently open to all applicants for testing and exploration purposes, or does it require prior authorization?	No, access to the REST API is not currently open and it does not require authorization.
41	What is the base URL for the TiTiler service, and what raster datasets are currently served through it?	TiTiler is behind a proxy. Currently only test datasets are available.
42	Are the ALS and TLS point cloud samples available for download now, and in what format (e.g., LAS, LAZ, PLY)?	No, ALS and TLS point cloud samples are not available for download.
43	What spatial resolution and geographic coverage do the tree species raster and biomass rasters have?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
44	Are the Swedish open National Forest Attribute Maps representative of broader European coverage, or are they limited to Sweden only? Are similar datasets available for other countries?	The Swedish National Forest Attribute maps represent an example of the type of datasets handled by the ForestWard Observatory. Availability will vary between different countries.
45	What is the temporal coverage and update frequency of the super-site data collections and ICOS data available in the Observatory?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
46	Are there any known data gaps or quality limitations in the currently available datasets	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about

	that applicants should be aware of when designing their methodology?	their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
47	Beyond the GeoDjango/PostGIS/Celery stack described in the guidelines, is there a preferred programming language or framework for pipeline tasks? Is a development sandbox or staging environment available for testing integrations prior to project start?	There is no sandbox of staging environment currently deployed. We can share the ForestWard Observatory codebase for the projects to set up their own development instances at project implementation.
48	Is there a staging or test version of the ForestWard Observatory frontend available for applicants to better understand how new components should be integrated?	No, there is no staging test version of the ForestWard Observatory frontend available.
49	The guidelines specify that pipeline tasks should be runnable on a desktop setup with an 8GB GPU within minutes. Could you clarify the expected RAM and storage constraints for pipeline tasks, as well as any other hardware or infrastructure specifications we should consider when designing our solution?	1. Exact requirements and storage constraints are currently unavailable. 2. The pipeline tasks should be reasonable to not take too many resources of a multi-user system. 3. Containerization is, due to hosting solution, done using Podman, and the system is running Linux.
50	Under which specific open-source licence should the source code be published (e.g., MIT, Apache 2.0, GPL)?	We cannot specify which license is to be used. Beneficiaries must find a license that meets the requirements in the grant agreement (Annex 3 to the Grant submission guidelines).
51	Should travel costs to EFI-organised meetings (e.g., the joint kick-off) be explicitly included in the project budget, and are there any caps or guidelines on such costs?	The grant is lump sum. It is up to the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).
52	Which raster datasets will be operationally available through the ForestWard Observatory REST API at project start (June 2026)?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
53	Which datasets will be downloadable as GeoTIFF (or equivalent) products?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.
54	What is the expected spatial resolution and temporal frequency of the following datasets (where applicable): • Tree species raster, • Biomass rasters, • Disturbance maps, • Stand age maps, • National Forest Inventory-derived layers.	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.

55	Will datasets be country-specific?	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset. Some datasets will be country-specific, others covering all of EU/Europe.
56	Is the STAC API expected to be operational during the project implementation period?	Yes.
57	Are there any processing or request limits (i.e., size, rate limits, compute constraints, etc.)?	The FORWARDS Observatory is primarily a storage and data sharing platform, with possibility of some processing at data ingestion.
58	Whether more than one researcher from the same institution could submit proposals.	Please refer to eligibility criteria stated in the Grant submission guidelines.
59	**Reference Project:** Is there an existing sample or reference project currently operational? If so, could you share the URL to help us better understand the expected outcome and functional requirements?	No, there is no existing sample nor reference project.
60	**Data Handling:** What level of detail is expected in data handling and processing? Furthermore, are all five specified data categories mandatory, or is there flexibility in the collection process?	There are options for flexibility in selection of data categories.
61	We understand the solution may need to integrate with an existing system, but we lack the technical specifications. Could you provide documentation regarding: The existing infrastructure and integration requirements. Available endpoints or data exchange methods.	No, there is no available documentation regarding existing infrastructure and integration requirements or data exchange methods.
62	**API Functionality:** We identified an API that currently appears to support only GET requests. Is there a separate API for POST/PUT operations? If data submission to a central database is required, what is the intended mechanism?	A separate API for POST/PUT will be implemented.
63	**Purpose:** If data is submitted to a central database via API, could you clarify the specific role of AI processing? Is the AI expected to perform prediction, classification, anomaly detection, or decision support?	The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.
64	**LLM Requirements:** If training or fine-tuning of an LLM is required, are there guidelines regarding providers? Are open-source models acceptable, or is a paid enterprise solution preferred?	There are no guidelines regarding providers. Please note all project data and results, including source code, must be made available open access, as stated in grant agreement (Annex 3 to the Grant submission guidelines).

65	**Constraints:** Are there specific data privacy or regulatory constraints we must consider for the AI models?	We cannot advise on this.
66	**Post-Delivery:** Who will be responsible for maintaining the system after delivery, and for how many years is operational support expected?	This depends on each application. Continuation from the FORWARDS project is not guaranteed.
67	**Budgeting:** Should long-term maintenance and infrastructure costs be included in the project budget?	The grant is lump sum. It is up to the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table provided in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines).
68	**Division of Roles:** Where does the forestry stakeholders' responsibility end and the IT provider's begin (e.g., who is responsible for data validation and ensuring ongoing accuracy)?	We cannot advise on this.
69	Finally, to help us scale the technical solution appropriately, could you provide information regarding the **available budget or the maximum funding limit** allocated for this development?	The maximum grant value is 150,000 EUR.
70	As we understand it, this call is implemented as cascade funding (FSTP) under the FORWARDS project. From your perspective, should this sub-grant be interpreted fully as a Horizon Europe-style research grant (with the usual dissemination and exploitation logic), or is it intended to function more like a commissioned assignment with specific restrictions linked to the ForestWard Observatory?	All details and requirements in relation to the grant are stated in the Grant submission guidelines including its annexes.
71	Who formally owns the results generated under the sub-grant (FSTP)?	Ownership of results is governed by the grant agreement (annex 3 to the Grant submission guidelines)
72	Are beneficiaries of the sub-grant (FSTP) free to publish scientific results and reuse them in other research contexts?	Yes, applicants can publish their results. License agreements attached to any dataset should be respected, and FORWARDS should be acknowledged for support.
73	Is the intention that open access and dissemination take precedence over the confidentiality clause, once results are approved?	In event of a conflict between the Grant agreement Special conditions and the annexes, or between the annexes, the following order of precedence will apply: 1. Special conditions 2. Annex 1: Grant Agreement 101084481 — FORWARDS — HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01, articles 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 25 and annex 5 (as applicable) 3. Annex 2: General conditions

		4. Annex 3: Project plan 5. Annex 4: Application
74	Whether beneficiaries are expected to cascade Horizon Europe-type obligations (e.g. conflict of interest, ethics, record-keeping, visibility) contractually to subcontractors or other third parties?	All requirements in in this respect stated in Annex 3 to the Grant submission guidelines.
75	Whether any financial eligibility rules under the HE Model Grant Agreement are intended to apply, or whether the reference is limited to governance and compliance provisions?	All details and requirements in relation to the grant are stated in the Grant submission guidelines including its annexes.
76	We are aware that cascade funding can, in certain contexts, raise State aid questions depending on how the funding is classified at beneficiary level. Has EFI made a specific assessment of this for the present call, and is there any particular interpretation that beneficiaries should be aware of in this regard?	We cannot advise on matters relating to state aid.
77	We understand from the Grant submission guidelines that the grant is disbursed as fixed lump sum instalments (35% / 25% / 40%) linked to the approval of technical reports. Could you please confirm whether: 1. The model is purely performance-based (i.e. linked to the delivery and approval of agreed outputs), 2. No verification of actual eligible costs is foreseen under the sub-grant, and 3. No Horizon Europe cost eligibility principles (e.g. Article 6 HE MGA) are intended to apply at beneficiary level?	1. Yes, payments are linked to deliverable finalization, and submission and approval of the technical reports. 2. The grant is lump sum. It is up to the Applicant to submit a budget complying with the budget table in Part B template (annex 2 to the Grant submission guidelines). 3. All details and requirements in relation to the grant are stated in the Grant submission guidelines including its annexes.

78	I'm contacting you to ask for clarifications regarding the following paragraph: *The developed application must be integrated into the Forestward Observatory as a part of the data pipeline, as an addition to the existing frontend solution, or as an API integration. Applications that should be added as tasks to the data pipeline, it would preferably be as tasks running during data ingestion, or as a nightly task. The backend is based on a GeoDjango solution with a PostGIS database, and Celery is used for scheduling of tasks.* More in general, we would like to have more details regarding IP management and IP rights.	IP management and IP rights are regulated in the grant agreement (annex 3 to the Grant submission guidelines).
79	We have not been able to locate the datasets themselves or detailed information about their characteristics. The only references we found were the following descriptions in the form (i.e. tree species raster, biomass rasters, super-site data collections (ICOS), 3PG, so on, and two APIs: - The REST API (Django) appears to provide limited static information. - The TiTiler endpoint seems to expose spatial operators (e.g., tile generation from COGs), but not direct dataset documentation or downloadable data. Could you please clarify: - Whether the datasets will be publicly accessible before the submission deadline? - If detailed metadata or documentation will be provided?	1. The datasets (including metadata descriptions) are still under development and will not be publicly accessible before the grant submission deadline. 2. Datasets (including metadata descriptions) will be made available during project implementation.
80	Whether an Innovative SME can be eligible in this call submitting a proposal as single partner.	We cannot pre-evaluate applications. The application will be evaluated based on the criteria set out in the grant submission guidelines.
81	Some colleagues and I have been looking at the recent funding call: 'Knowledge to Practice: Develop applications and AI solutions utilizing the ForestWard Observatory'. We are unsure exactly what is wanted. Are you able to clarify the situation?	For all the info needed, please visit our website page: https://efi.int/grants-training/grants/G-01-2026
82	**ForestWard Observatory REST API - Available datasets and endpoints:** Is there a publicly available list or documentation page detailing the currently available endpoints and datasets in the ForestWard Observatory REST API? We are particularly interested in knowing	Datasets are still under development. We cannot answer questions on details about their specifications, which vary greatly depending on each dataset.

	which datasets are available, what data types they cover, and what time ranges are included for each. If this is not publicly documented, could you provide or point us to this information?	
83	**Open access requirement - Scope of "data and results":** The Grant Submission Guidelines state that "data and results from the supported activities must be made available open access upon completion of the project." Could you clarify the scope of this requirement? Specifically: • Does it apply to the source code of the developed web application? • Does it include the trained model weights and architecture? • Or does it refer only to making the web application publicly accessible with its data outputs?	All data and results, including source code, must be made available open access, as stated in grant agreement (Annex 3 to the Grant submission guidelines). This includes model weights and architecture and other processes that ensure transparency.
84	**Post-project hosting responsibilities:** Once the project concludes, what is expected regarding the continuity of the developed application? Is the applicant expected to keep the application hosted at their own cost, or does EFI/FORWARDS assume responsibility for hosting and maintenance after the grant period ends?	1. EFI does not assume any responsibility for hosting or maintaining applications. 2. Continuation from the FORWARDS project is not guaranteed.