UTTER
Unified Transcription and Translation for Extended Reality

UTTER – Unified Transcription and Translation for Extended Reality

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FSTP – Pilot Projects Open Call 1 Call Documentation

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1   Summary – Key Parameters

Pilot Project Objectives	Develop and/or pilot applications using XR models[1] in new sectors, with a focus on enabling new types of human-human and human-machine interaction. Examples of welcome project objectives include: ● Improving or demonstrating efficiency of XR model inference; ● Improving or demonstrating efficiency of XR model training; ● Designing interfaces for usability; ● Extending XR models to new languages, domains or modalities; ● Applying XR models to new tasks; ● Building resources for XR models; ● Evaluation of XR models.
Budget Allocation	€60,000 (maximum amount per pilot project) Approx. €895,206 to be distributed in total
Eligibility	● Only SMEs and research organizations (Section 5.2) ● Horizon Europe eligible countries ● One organization per project only (i.e., no collaborative multi-party projects) ● Only one proposal per applying institution will be considered ● Resubmission in the second call is allowed
Proposals	● Short proposal (approx. 8 pages, incl. formalities) ● Lightweight submission and evaluation procedure
Evaluation criteria	● Objective fit ● Technical approach ● Business, Integration, and Dissemination ("BID") plan ● Budget adequacy ● Team
Project execution	Consists of the following activities: (1) Development (2) Dissemination

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[1] Pre-trained neural network models adaptable to a large variety of forms of expression, interaction, languages, domains, styles and intent.

Schedule	**First call** ● published: July 2023 ● project submission period: August – October 2023 ● project start: December 2023 ● project duration: 6 – 9 months **Second call** ● published: July 2024 ● project submission period: August – October 2024 ● project start: January 2025 ● project duration: 6 – 9 months
Payment Principle	Lump Sum in two payments: 1. 50 % after signing the contract 2. 50 % after demonstrating and disseminating results
Contact	utter-fstp@list.uva.nl

2 Introduction

Open Calls for UTTER Pilot Projects

UTTER will publish two open calls for pilot (demonstrator) projects. This documentation relates to the first call (opened in August 2023), the second call will be opened in August 2024 and closed in October 2024.

The projects should further the design and implementation of XR models, aided by UTTER research and technology, enabling new types of human-human and human-machine interaction in new sectors.

Amounts awarded to a single project will be up to €60,000, the duration of the projects is expected to be in the 6-9 months range.

SMEs as well as research organizations are allowed to apply for individual pilot projects.

Outcome of the Pilot Projects

Projects will develop and/or pilot applications using XR models, from UTTER or elsewhere, in new sectors, exploring new boundaries in XR interaction and aiming for high societal or commercial impact. Projects will provide valuable user feedback to UTTER, and collaborate and consult with UTTER researchers as needed.

Examples of welcome project objectives include:

- Improving or demonstrating efficiency of XR model inference;
- Improving or demonstrating efficiency of XR model training;
- Designing interfaces for usability;
- Extending XR models to new languages, domains or modalities;
- Applying XR models to new tasks;
- Building resources for XR models;
- Evaluation of XR models.

Pilot Board

The Pilot Board is set up for the supervision of the pilot projects. It provides a forum so that the UTTER project can discuss the progress of the pilots, their intermediate feedback and the results. The Pilot Board consists of UTTER consortium members.

About UTTER (Unified Transcription and Translation for Extended Reality)

Find out more about UTTER, the objectives, timeline and consortium at UTTER's website. UTTER project coordinator, responsible for this call administration, is the University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

Contact

Website: https://he-utter.eu/

E-mail: utter-fstp@list.uva.nl

3 UTTER Pilot Projects Call

3.1 Funding scheme

The Maximum Amount of Financial Support

The maximum amount of financial support is €60,000 per project. The financial support will be structured according to the conditions and paid in two installments:

1. 50 % of the amount requested after signing the contract,

2. 50 % of the amount requested after demonstrating and disseminating the results.

We request one report at the end of the project execution, after demonstrating and disseminating the results. Each installment has to be separately approved by UTTER based on the Awardee's performance.

No guarantee is given with respect to the second installment at the time of the award, as specified in the contract with the Awardee (these payments will be made only if the pilot project is executed according to the project proposal).

Criteria for Calculating the Exact Amount of the Financial Support

Submitted project proposals need to include a detailed budget structure. The initial proposal evaluation procedure will make sure that these requests for funding are in line with the standard Horizon Europe budget criteria and the criteria set in this document, in sum as well as in the structure. The financial support will be awarded as a lump sum.

3.2 Timeline

Publication time of the first call:	31 July 2023
Submission deadline:	30 September 2023 (23:59 CET)
Evaluation and selection of projects:	October – November 2023
Contract signing and project start:	December 2023
Project duration:	6 – 9 months

After the selection of winning proposals, UTTER will publish the outcome of the call, including a description of the third party (Awardee), the date of the award, duration, and the legal name of the Awardee and its country.

3.3   Applicable Law

Any matters not covered by this document will be governed by Dutch law, in particular the provisions of the Civil Code, and any other applicable legislation in the European Union.

4   Eligibility Criteria

4.1   Types of Activities and Funding Conditions

List of Activities that Qualify for Financial Support

As per 4.1, funding is provided in two installments. The final installment is conditioned on carrying out the proposed plan.

All Horizon EU cost categories are eligible for funding; subcontracting must be justified and it is limited to 25% of the overall budget. Each funded project will receive a maximum of €60,000, depending on the proposal and funding appropriation. All projects have to specify and justify which amount of work and budget for development and dissemination are necessary to successfully perform the project and achieve its results and objectives.

4.2 Type of Beneficiaries

Definition of Persons or Categories of Persons that May Receive Financial Support

Only SMEs and research organizations (including but not limited to higher education organizations, independent research organizations and NGOs) eligible for EU funding are allowed to apply in individual projects (**one organization per project only**). The definition of SME is the one by the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC.

Partners of the UTTER consortium are not eligible.

Only one proposal per individual applicant will be accepted for evaluation. The last proposal submitted will be evaluated; others will be discarded. If the project proposal is not accepted in the first call, resubmission to the second call is allowed. No double funding is allowed between the project UTTER and/or any other incubator or similar scheme for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP). Proposals with significant overlap or proposals requesting double funding will be considered ineligible.

4.3 Countries

Only beneficiaries legally established in any of the Horizon Europe eligible countries will be eligible to apply for the Pilot Projects. Please check if your country is eligible.

4.4 Conflict of Interest

No conflict of interest is allowed to exist between the applicant and any member of the UTTER project's consortium. This is confirmed by the Declaration of Honor signed by the applicant.

External experts (evaluators) evaluating proposals shall not be in conflict of interest with the project they are evaluating. In case of such a conflict, evaluators shall excuse themselves from the evaluation of such a project.

5 Preparation and submission of the proposals

5.1 Proposal submission

Proposals are to be submitted via https://utter-fstp.science.uva.nl/. For more information on the proposal submission see Annex 1 – Guide for Applicants.

5.2 Proposal Template

See Annex 3 – Proposal Template.

5.3 Communication with UTTER

All relevant questions and communication with applicants will be published on the UTTER website. For any queries, get in touch with us at utter-fstp@list.uva.nl.

5.4 Language

Project proposals and all related documents should be written and all communication will be held in English.

6 Summary of the evaluation process

6.1 Eligibility Check

See Annex 4 – Evaluation Criteria.

6.2 Evaluation

Financial support will be awarded to the selected applicants following an open, transparent and expert-evaluation based selection process. Match to the overall business objectives will be the main content-related evaluation criterion. Proposals will further be awarded based on criteria of excellence and innovativeness, impact, applicant's team, and reasonability and appropriateness of the budget.

At least two experts from the field (the "evaluators"), selected by UTTER, will evaluate each proposal against the following criteria:

    (a) Objective fit
    (b) Technical approach
    (c) Business, Integration and Dissemination ("BID") plan
    (d) Budget adequacy
    (e) Team
    (f) Ethics

The criteria descriptions, points awarded, and weights of the individual criteria are specified in detail in Annex 4 – Evaluation Criteria.

Each project will be assigned to one member of the Pilot Board, who will report to the Pilot Board the summary of the evaluation provided by evaluators. The Pilot Board will rank all submitted projects and decide how many projects will be accepted for funding. It is expected that at least 6 projects will be selected in Call 1 and at least 6 projects in Call 2, up to the maximum funding available. A minimum budget of 50 % of the available funding (approx. €800,000 for both calls) will be left for Call 2 (approx. €400,000).

Budget

The requested budget for the projects might be reduced based on the evaluation results, item (d) "Budget Adequacy". If changes are proposed by the evaluators and accepted by the Pilot Board, they will be communicated to the applicant, who can accept or reject them. Rejecting the recommended reduction of the requested budget by the applicant means that the project will be rejected. Based on the ranking, the first non-funded project might be accepted for funding.

Final Selection and Contracting

Selected projects will be publicly listed on the project website and full proposals and evaluations will be provided to the European Commission. Awardees will be invited to sign the contract within a given, short period of time after the awards are announced. All Awardees will sign a sub-grantee agreement (see Annex 2) between them and the UTTER (represented by UVA). The Awardees are obligated to allow the European Commission, the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF) and the Court of Auditors to exercise their powers of control on documents, information, even stored on electronic media, or on the final recipient's premises.

6.3   Complaint Procedure

If, at any stage of the evaluation process, the applicant considers that a mistake has been made or that the evaluators have acted unfairly or have failed to comply with the rules of this UTTER Open Call, and that their interests have been prejudiced as a result, the following appeal procedures are available.

A complaint should be drawn up in English and submitted by e-mail to the UTTER Coordinator Wilker Ferreira Aziz (w.ferreiraaziz@uva.nl), no later than 5 calendar after the evaluation results have been presented to the Applicants. Complaints submitted after that will not be processed. Any complaint made should include:

- contact details (including postal and e-mail address),
- the subject of the complaint,
- information and evidence regarding the alleged complaint.

Anonymous complaints will not be reviewed.

As a general rule, the UTTER Coordinator (UvA) will investigate the complaints with a view to arriving at a decision to issue a formal notice or to close the case within no more than 15 working days from the date of reception of the complaint, provided that all required information has been submitted by the complainant.

7   UTTER Pilot Projects Execution

Selected projects will be offered guidance and supervision throughout the lifecycle of the project once the contract is in place and the project has started. Control days will be organized (possibly remotely) when projects will have to report progress, any problems, state of completion etc.

7.1   Interim interview

Each selected project will be supervised by one member of the Pilot Board ("Project Sponsor") appointed by the Pilot Board. Halfway through the project duration the Project Sponsor will meet the team (or a representative of it) responsible for the awarded project's execution to discuss progress. In this meeting the Project Sponsor will probe for indicators of progress along the development phase as well as any updates to the dissemination plan. The result of this meeting will be documented in a short report by the Project Sponsor and attached to the project execution documents. This report may be used as evidence in the final evaluation of the project.

7.2   Evaluation of the final results

The final evaluation of a project will be performed by the Project Sponsor after the dissemination activities took place.

The project team is required to report their results, business plans, secured venture capital for further development and future plans. The Pilot Board will assess the finished projects and evaluate the immediate results. It will also formulate recommendations for sustainability and future operation of the UTTER based on the experience of and with the pilot projects.

The Project Sponsor will then prepare a short report (to be made public) and recommend to the Pilot Board to approve (or not) the final payment to the project Awardee.

7.3   Overview of project execution

Call and agreement phase
- Project submission period (August – October 2023)
- Project evaluation (October – November 2023)
- Project selection (November 2023)
- Contract signing + first payment (December 2023)

Project execution phase
- Project Sponsor assigned
- Development
- Interim meeting with Project Sponsor
- Dissemination activities take place
- Final report + second payment

8 Obligations of Beneficiaries

Obligations of Awardees are specified in Annex 2 – Third Party Agreement.

9 Intellectual property rights

Intellectual property rights are specified in Annex 2 – Third Party Agreement

10 Annex 1 Guide for Applicants

This annex is available [here](#).

11 Annex 2 Third Party Agreement

This annex is available [here](#).

12 Annex 3 Project Proposal Template

This annex is available [here](#).

13 Annex 4 Evaluation Criteria

This annex is available [here](#).