Guide for Applicants
Active and Assisted Living Programme
Call 2021

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[1] Please always check our website for the latest version of this document.

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1   Introduction

The AAL Programme is a common funding activity of partner states of the AAL Association, with the financial support of the European Commission, based on Article 185 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Detailed information can be found at www.aal-europe.eu.

Most used abbreviations in this document:

AAL	Active and Assisted Living
GA	AAL General Assembly
CMU	AAL Central Management Unit
NFA	AAL National Funding Agency
NCP	AAL National Contact Person (representing the national management)
CP	Collaborative Project
SCP	Small Collaborative Project

1.1   Overview of the Roles and Responsibilities in the AAL Programme

It is important to understand that the AAL Programme – due to the special way of integrating partner States and the European Commission – has its own rules of participation and own funding procedures.

In the AAL Programme, several partner States join their individual funding programmes under a common topic. The European Commission rewards this common activity by granting a subsidy to the AAL Programme in a certain percentage relative to the joint funds from the partner States. The projects funded under such a policy receive their funding from two sources: from the local government of every participating country and from the European Commission. The actual payment procedure differs from country to country but in all cases, the EU contribution is transferred to the project partner through the NFA.

The funding of a project is implemented at **national level**. Every project partner within a funded project applies at his/her National Funding Agency (NFA) for funding. The NFA accepts the central selection decision and applies the national funding rules to the project partner.

Every project partner has a direct counterpart within the NFA with whom he/she shall communicate in all funding related issues. This person is called the National Contact Person (NCP). The project coordinator and his associated NCP (the "lead" NCP) will handle all project related matters like defining a common project start and duration, collecting consortium agreements, or project reporting. For more details on NFAs and NCPs please go to the AAL website www.aal-europe.eu.

Given this relatively complex framework, it is the aim of this document to help project coordinators and project partners in submitting proposals and during the execution of funded projects.

1.2   Call implementation - Central vs. National Activities

1.2.1   Management Level (collaboration between the CMU and the NCP):

- Common definition and central publication of the AAL Calls for proposals and related documents
- Definition and adoption of central eligibility criteria for AAL projects

1.2.2   Central Level

- Call promotion at central level
- Conducting of the evaluation
- Provision of central Programme services, e.g. maintenance of websites, partnering tools, submission systems, templates, etc.
- Central storage of AAL project documents
    - Project descriptions
    - Project progress reports
    - Deliverables
- Distribution of the EC co-funding via the NFA/NCP
- Central administration of the AAL Programme
- Conduction of central AAL events (e.g. "Info day")

1.2.3   National Level

- Nomination of a national funding programme specifying:
    - The eligibility of type of organisations under the AAL Programme
    - Funding conditions for project partners (funding quota, eligible costs, etc.)
- Commitment of an annual funding budget for AAL activities to be used for the funding of national project partners
- Advice to national project proposers
- Call promotion at national level
- Nomination of evaluation experts for the central evaluation process
- Negotiation with national project partners
- Conclusion of grant agreements with funded national project partners
- Administration of national AAL project partners

2   Preparing a Project Proposal

Within the AAL Programme, only projects which fulfil a set of eligibility criteria can be funded (see chapter 5). Funding will be possible only for project consortia of at least 3 independent eligible organizations from at least 3 different AAL partner States. The process of gathering a consortium is usually not an easy one and will in most cases need a considerable time. The AAL Programme offers some help to consortia as described below.

2.1 Finding Project Partners at Information Days

The AAL Programme organises Call information days. At this occasion, interested proposers will have an opportunity to present their project ideas and actively call for additional partners. Documents and presentations will be published on the AAL website www.aal-europe.eu.

2.2 Finding Project Partners through the AAL Partner Search Tool

Interested participants can either identify potential project partners, or post a partner search request via the AAL online Partner Search Tool available on the AAL website: https://aal-europe.force.com.

2.3 Finding Project Partners through the NCP (National Contact Person)

To identify a suitable project partner, you can also contact the NCPs (National Contact Persons) of the AAL Programme. These persons are responsible for the respective national activities organising and implementing the AAL Programme at national level. Due to their extensive knowledge of their national organisations, they can provide useful hints in the composition of a consortium (www.aal-europe.eu/contacts/national-contact-persons/).

2.4 Supporting Documentation

The AAL Programme has funded several supporting measures aiming to provide useful information to the project participants and future participants:

- Tools for the involvement of end-users: http://www.aal-europe.eu/support-to-projects/end-users/

- Tools for the development and validation of business models in AAL projects: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Business-model-development-toolkit.pdf

- Some results about business needs of projects: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/AAL2Business-Final-Report-final.pdf and network of investors: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/D6-Network-of-private-investors-20161222.pdf

- Information on interoperability and standards in the AAL domain: http://www.aal-europe.eu/support-to-projects/interoperability-standards/

- Collection of relevant information portals on the AAL domain: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Information-Portal-in-the-field-of-AAL-Final-Report-public-version-2.pdf

- Latest trends in AAL-related market in terms of innovation and technologies: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/AAL-Market-report-Technopolis-180604.pdf

- AAL funded projects public deliverables: http://www.aal-europe.eu/public-deliverables/

- AAL Guidelines for Ethics, Data Privacy and Security: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AAL-guidelines-for-ethics-final-V2.pdf

3 AAL Programme Calls

The AAL Programme regularly launches Calls for proposals on its website http://www.aal-europe.eu/. Calls are accompanied by documents containing details on the challenges, timetable, eligibility criteria and other administrative issues.

4 Proposal Submission

Proposals can only be submitted for open Calls during the period specified in the Call document. The submission of a proposal is possible only through the web site https://ems.aal-europe.eu. A detailed description of the proposal submission system can be found in chapter 7. During the submission process, the software will automatically check formal eligibility criteria (see chapter 5. 5) and the completeness of information and allow the submission only when all criteria are met by the proposal.

The potential proposer is responsible to ensure that all consortium partners meet the national eligibility criteria. Therefore, each partner is strongly encouraged to contact his/her NCP (www.aal-europe.eu/contacts/national-contact-persons/) in order to ask for a pre-eligibility check of proposals[2]. Any questions about wrong processing, submission, misinterpretation shall be sent to Call@aal-europe.eu .

A proposal consists of two parts:

- **Part A** contains the **administrative information** about the proposal and the participants including a proposal abstract, contact details and characteristics of the participants and budgetary information.

- **Part B** presents **the project idea**, and, among other, the state of the art of the proposed AAL solution, the project content, the project implementation, the consortium and the potential exploitation of the results. For this purpose, a template is given on our http://www.aal-europe.eu/call-2021/, which is obligatory to be used. The template is designed to highlight those aspects that will be assessed against the evaluation criteria (see chapter 6.2). The template itself gives further binding guidance rules for proposers and is made available with the publication of each Call.

Proposers should make sure to **register the proposal early enough** as a sharp Call deadline[3] is applied. After this deadline, the web site does not accept submissions of any proposal. Proposers should also not underestimate the effort needed to collect the required information from their

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[2] In some of the AAL Partner States, the pre-check of proposals is compulsory for the projects to be eligible. Please refer to the Guide for Applicants and the national eligibility criteria, and do not hesitate to contact the relevant NFA/NCP.

[3] The Call deadline is given in the Call text.

partners and in completing the information on the website. Especially **inexperienced users should start very early**.

On completion of all required information, proposers can submit their proposal on the web site. Proposals can be saved as many times as wanted but **have to be submitted before the deadline!** Proposers can submit their proposal at any time before the deadline.

5   AAL Eligibility Criteria

Under the AAL Programme[4], both central and national eligibility criteria are applied:

- The central eligibility criteria have been agreed upon by all participating AAL Partner States.
- National eligibility criteria are defined by the AAL Partner States (see the document National Eligibility Criteria). National eligibility criteria stem from the national funding programme(s) that provide the national funding for national project partners under the AAL Programme.

Both sets of criteria may be subject to changes from one Call to the other. Proposers are asked to check the current versions that are published together with each AAL Programme Call and contact the AAL Central Management Unit or the National Contact Persons if necessary.

5.1   Eligibility criteria

5.1.1   Consortium- level general eligibility criteria

- Submission of a complete proposal through the AAL electronic submission system before the deadline, as specified in the Guide for Applicants.
- English as the mandatory language of the proposal.
- Consortium composition of at least 3 independent eligible organizations (legal entities), from at least 3 different AAL Partner States participating in the Call for Proposals *(IMPORTANT - applicants for Small Collaborative Projects should check in the list of countries reported at the end of the Call text, whether their respective funding agency will fund this type of project)*
- Consortia must include at least one eligible for-profit business partner
- Consortia must include at least one eligible for-profit SME partner which can be the business partner.
- Consortia must include at least one eligible end-user organisation.

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[4] Entities falling under situations as described in Art. 136(1) of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 (EU Financial Regulation) shall be excluded from funding, every applicant having to submit a Declaration of Honour along with the application form stating their organisation don't fall in any of the exclusion situations. The DoH template, to be stamped and signed by the legal signatory of the applicant organisation is provided along with the Proposal's template. The article defines the Exclusion criteria preventing a project participant from receiving EU financial contribution (due to, for example, bankruptcy, guiltiness, grave professional misconduct, fraud and other

5.1.2 Consortium-level specific eligibility criteria

	COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS	SMALL COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS
Duration	A Collaborative Project has a duration of 12 to 30 months.	A Small Collaborative Project has a duration of 6 to 9 months.
Funding	The maximum funding from the AAL Programme per project is of €2.500.000 (the indicative total budget being €5.000.000).	The maximum funding from the AAL Programme per project is of €300.000.
TRL	Collaborative Projects funded under Call 2020 will be operating in technology readiness levels (TRL) 5-8.[5]	No TRL is applied to this type of project.

5.1.3 National eligibility criteria

- Only organisations that are explicitly described in the national eligibility criteria are eligible for funding. The national eligibility criteria are published together with the Call text.
- It is highly recommended to contact the AAL National Contact Persons (NCPs) prior to submission of a proposal (list of NCPs and contact data can be found on the AAL Programme website www.aal-europe.eu/contacts/national-contact-persons/).
- In some countries, establishing contact with the NCP prior to the submission of the proposal is a **requirement** for being eligible for funding.
- In addition, the project may include organizations not requesting funding or organizations that are not eligible for funding according to national eligibility rules or organizations not residing in any AAL Partner State[6]. Such organisations may be associated with the project without funding from the AAL Programme, but they cannot be crucial for the project's implementation. They will not be taken into consideration when assessing the project proposal against the eligibility criteria and project characteristics stated above.

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[5] Technology readiness levels (TRL)
- TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment.
- TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment.
- TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment.
- TRL 8 – system complete and qualified.

[6] The participation of organisations residing outside an AAL Partner State is restricted to organisations residing in a Member State of the European Union that currently does not participate in the AAL Programme, i.e. Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Sweden. Participants from the United Kingdom may participate as "Self-Funded".

Consortium Agreement

Projects which are recommended for funding must submit a signed consortium agreement before the grant agreements with the national agencies enter into force. Moreover, according to the Article 27. of the EC Framework for State aid for research and development and innovation (2014/C 198/01), the consortium agreement must be signed prior to the start of the project.

The Consortium Agreement should state a set of rules/procedures to ensure fair protection for the IPR interests of the partners and partners' "employees (e.g. conditions/ limitations on the ability of individual consortium partners to freely publish or profit from project results directly covered by other partners" IPR). The consortium agreement should include conflict resolution procedures/ mechanisms to be invoked if and when necessary. The consortium agreement must be submitted in English[7] . The AAL Programme offers to project consortia a skeleton for a CA, developed in collaboration with the IPR Helpdesk (this document is available at: http://www.aal-europe.eu/documents-resources/resources-for-project-coordinators/). Please note that, for a Small Collaborative Project, the AAL Programme expects consortia to agree on a more concise consortium agreement fitting the need of a small project in terms of resources, scope and length.

6 Evaluation Process and Criteria

6.1 Evaluation Process

Under the AAL Programme, the CMU manages a central evaluation for all project proposals received in each Call. Independent experts who are nominated by the NFAs perform the evaluation. Experts are drawn from academia, business, industry and user organisations. Their professional background allows assessing the quality of the proposed ICT work as well as other aspects, such as the business plan and the user dimension of the project's processes and results. Each project proposal will be assigned to a panel of independent experts. The decision of the panel is final.

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[7] *For template and guidelines see* http://www.aal-europe.eu/documents-ressources/resources-for-project-coordinators/

6.2 Evaluation Criteria

Once the central eligibility check has been carried out, the proposals accepted as eligible will be evaluated on the basis of the criteria mentioned below. Please notice that criteria may slightly vary from one type of project to the other.

Collaborative Projects	Small Collaborative Projects
(a) criteria under **Relevance and Scope**: Fit to the Call, unique features relative to existing solutions, European dimension (b) criteria under **Implementation:** Quality and efficiency of implementation, with emphasis on **Quality of Proposed Solution and Workplan, Quality of Consortium and Project Management**. (c) criteria under **Impact: Potential Impact of Proposed Solution on Quality of Life** and **Potential Impact of Proposed Solution on Market Development**; The details of the criteria are described in the following sub-sections. **Relevance and Scope** To be assessed: whether the proposed project is in line with the objectives and priorities of the Call and addresses relevant challenges at the European level. The project is expected to apply Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to the specific objectives of the Call and the challenges described. The project may address one or several of the application areas described in the Call text.	(a) criteria under **Relevance and Scope**: Fit to the Call, unique features relative to existing solutions, European dimension (b) criteria under **Implementation:** Quality and efficiency of implementation, with emphasis on **Quality of Proposed Solution and Workplan, Quality of Consortium and Project Management**. (c) criteria under **Innovation potential:** the essence and uniqueness as well as the features distinguishing the proposed solution, approach, methodology from others (d) criteria under **Expected Outcome**: the general benefits deriving from the project results Details of the criteria are described in the following sub-section. **Relevance and Scope** To be assessed whether the proposed project addresses the general challenges related to the AAL domain. The project should clearly describe the objectives and expected results of the Small Collaborative Project and how they will create collaboration with end user organisations and other stakeholders in order to:

The proposal is expected to describe clearly the challenges being addressed and the unique features of the proposed solution.

The proposal is expected to describe the European dimension of the project, with respect to users as well as markets.

Quality of Proposed Solution and Workplan

To be assessed: the overall quality of the proposed solution, the extent to which the project will contribute to innovation in the field and deliver the final deliverables according to plan:

The proposal should present a scientifically and technically sound approach to developing an innovative solution that clearly goes beyond state-of-the-art (combination of products/services/systems).

Proposals should present a high-quality work plan describing activities, methodologies and organization of work in sufficient detail. The activities in the workplan should be coherent, and the proposers must allocate adequate resources to achieve the stated results.

Proposals must contain a plan explaining how end-users will be involved and their interests taken into account at all stages of the project (see chapter 11).

The proposal must show how accessibility, end-user acceptance and usability of planned solutions will be secured. The approach to specific end-user challenges (needs/desires) should be validated by an evidence base in a use case (testing in a realistic real user environment).

The proposal is expected to include a realistic prototype or pilot application available no later than one year after the start of the project. This prototype or pilot application will be used to finalise the project by testing the product/solution on a large scale with end-users, further improve the solution based on user-feedback and demonstrate the expected impacts stated in the initial proposal.

Quality of Consortium and Project Management

To be assessed: If and how the consortium includes the critical mass and diversity of competencies and infrastructure required for the successful completion of the defined tasks.

• Thoroughly investigate the wishes and needs of end-users for appealing solutions;

• Explore novel and improved approaches for involving all types of end-users and stakeholders in the development of AAL solutions;

• Provide evidence in relation to expected benefits for end-users and for end-user organisations, enhancing the latter's own processes (including for the improvement of service delivery);

• Explore ways to open up the market for ICT-based solutions for older adults; and

• Assess the market potential of a proposed AAL concept.

Quality of Proposed Solution and Workplan

To be assessed: the overall quality of the proposal, the extent to which the project will contribute to social and/or business innovation in the AAL domain. The proposal should present an explanation of the complexity of the problem and a justification on why the Small Collaborative Project is needed as well as a sound and innovative approach and clearly explain the methodologies that will be used.

Quality of Consortium and Project Management

To be assessed: if and how the consortium includes the right experience and diversity of competencies required for the successful completion of the defined tasks.

• Consortia are expected to evidence the necessary skills and resources to achieve project goals.
• The timeline proposed must fit to the proposed objectives and activities.
• Project management, financial resources and risk management must be commensurate to the project goals.

Innovation potential

To be assessed whether the proposed project is unique/innovative.

Consortia are expected to evidence the necessary skills and resources to deploy the scientific, technical and market expertise to achieve project goals. The consortium should include all essential components of the value chain/network and demonstrate an added value by collaboration across borders of geography, expertise and function/roles.

The proposal must explain how the respect for the rights of end-users will be secured, e.g. to self-determination, privacy, consent (directly or delegated), dignity and other relevant ethical issues (see chapter 9). The proposal should show that necessary actions have or will be undertaken to comply with relevant national and European rules and regulations on ethical issues (e.g. data protection and more).

The consortium must demonstrate significant involvement of industry and other business partners in terms of budget and effort. SMEs should play an active role, particularly in the process of business modelling for commercialisation of the resulting solution.

The consortium are expected to set up adequate quality assurance and control procedures regarding development and release of external project deliverables, as appropriate to each type of deliverable (e.g. management reports, research notes, market studies, application or service prototypes, etc.). The proposal should contain a set of rules/procedures to ensure fair protection for the IPR interests of the partners and partners' employees (see chapter 10). The proposal should include conflict resolution procedures/mechanisms to be invoked if and when necessary.

The proposal should include a dissemination plan, involving end-users and other project partners, subject to limitations imposed by the protection of partners' IPR over commercially sensitive information, as stated in the Consortium Agreement.

Potential Impact of Proposed Solution on Quality of Life

To be assessed: The extent to which the proposed solution will provide a direct benefit to the targeted groups of end-users.

The project should clearly describe:

- to what extent and how it has analysed the state of the art in AAL solutions, services or systems and how it proposes progress.
- how the new ideas, concepts and approaches are better and/or significantly different to any alternative. If applicable, the assessment should also take into consideration whether the proposal tackles the latest innovation areas and topics such as (for example and non-exhaustive): Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, 5G, Big Data, IOT, Standardisation, Ethics and privacy.
- how it has analysed the demand for the innovation to be generated by the new ideas of concepts, with the potential to create new markets.
- to what extent and how it has analysed the feasibility and achievability for implementation of the proposed ideas, concepts or approaches.

Expected outcome

The expected outcome of the project will be assessed depending on the specific objectives of the project. Outcomes may be expected in several domains such as improvement of end users involvement, validation of a commercialization strategy and others (as a reminder: it is acceptable that SCP might not have a strong focus either on commercialization or on end users' quality of life, they might tackle both or only one of them). Projects should clearly describe the results to be measured and the effectiveness these results will lead to.

The proposal should demonstrate the expected improvement in the quality of life of older adult, primary as well as secondary end-users. This may be achieved for example through more equal access to services, easier participation in communities of interest, greater ability to live independently, reduced anxiety among end-users, family and other carers, etc.

How the proposal addresses the issue of access by end-users to the proposed solution, with respect to affordability, distribution and support.

How the proposal is expected to have significant social and ethical impact, substantiated by research, prior experience and other valid sources of knowledge.

Potential Impact of Proposed Solution on Market Development

To be assessed: the extent to which the consortium will be able to create and access an attractive and viable European market for the solution upon project completion.

i.   The proposal should target an attractive and high potential market in Europe and beyond, and document this in a clear business model.
ii. The proposal should provide evidence of relevant knowledge and plan for marketing and distribution of the planned solution (including services) in prospective countries and markets activities should be targeted towards bringing new products, solutions or service concepts to the market within max. 2 years after the project end.
iii. A business plan should be outlined in the proposal. This outline should include a market analysis identifying target group(s), the active competition, the unique selling proposition, and a strategy for market entry (see chapter 12). Business analysis activities should be planned throughout the project period to support the realization of the identified economic opportunities.
iv. The project should contribute to the creation of a European market through the development of open interfaces and interoperability, applying the relevant standards, norms and regulations.

6.3   Scoring, Thresholds and Weight

Project proposals are evaluated by independent experts and an evaluation panel. Each criterion will be scored on a 5-points scale (only full points allowed):

5 (Excellent)	Issues under assessment are comprehensively covered.
4 (Good)	Issues under assessment are well covered, with minor suggestions being put forward to enhance the project chances of success.
3 (Acceptable)	Issues under assessment are adequately covered, but the proposal shows weakness in some specific area of the criterion. To enhance the project chances of success may require significant additions or changes to some specific part of the proposal that can realistically be introduced prior to the start of the project.
2 (Defective)	Issues under assessment are sketchily covered and proper evidence of project chances for success is lacking or omitted. Potential for greater chance of successful outcome(s) requires significant major additions or changes.
1 (Failed)	The proposal does not adequately cover the issues under assessment and/or demonstrate that it has met the objectives of the AAL Programme.

Following thresholds* and weights** will be applied to the criteria:

- For COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS:

1. Relevance and scope	threshold = 3, weight = 1
2. Quality of proposed solution and workplan	threshold = 3, weight = 1
3. Quality of the consortium and project management	threshold = 3, weight = 1
4. Potential impact – quality of life	threshold = 3, weight = 1
5. Potential impact – market development	threshold = 3, weight = 1

- For SMALL COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS:

1. Relevance and scope	threshold = 3, weight = 1
2. Quality of proposed solution and workplan	threshold = 3, weight = 1
3. Quality of the consortium and project management	threshold = 3, weight = 1
4. Innovation potential	threshold = 3, weight = 1
5. Expected outcome	threshold = 3, weight = 1

* Threshold: indicates the minimum score a proposal needs to obtain for each criterion to be considered for funding.

** Weight: indicates the factor by which a score from the 5-points scale will be multiplied.

The decision reached by the panel of experts with regards to the score of a project is final.

6.4   Outcome of the Evaluation and Selection

A message will be sent to the coordinator of the proposal, informing on the outcome of the evaluation and selection. It will also indicate the address if an applicant wishes to query the

outcomes of the evaluation of the proposal, in terms of shortcomings observed during the evaluation process.

The deadline for the receipt of any such request for information or further examination is 3 weeks from the date of receipt of the official message. The proposal coordinator should provide the identifier of the Call, the number, name and acronym of the proposal, and a full description of the alleged shortcomings. An Evaluation Review committee will examine all such requests. This review committee does not evaluate the proposal itself.

If there are any questions about this process, please contact Call@aal-europe.eu.

The AAL Programme counts on the partners' cooperation not to send in requests unless there is clear evidence of a shortcoming.
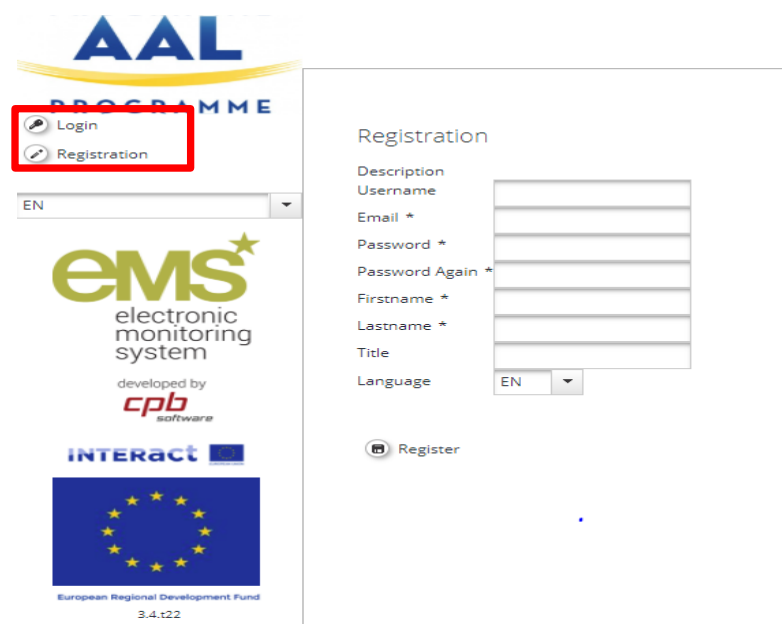
7   The Proposal Submission Tool

7.1   Registering to the submission platform

The Call page consists of three sections. The first section, on the AAL Website, gives general information about the Call, the Call topic, and related material like the template for part B. The two remaining sections, on the Evaluation Website, allow logging into the site and registering of a new project proposal.

You should click on the link available on our website under the tab http://www.aal-europe.eu/call-2021/. You will then reach our submission platform where you can either log in if you have previously used the platform or register if you are a new user. Please note that only the coordinator of the project is allowed to register.
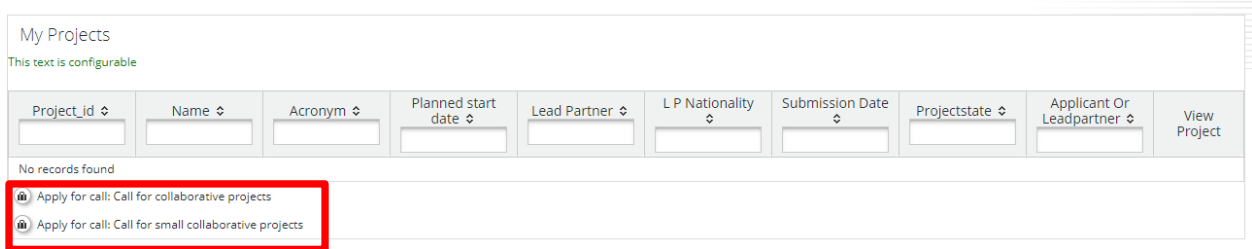
The home page of the submission platform offers two options: Registration and Login. Select the appropriate option and fill in all the requested information (Fig. 1).

- Fig. 1: registration to the new submission platform
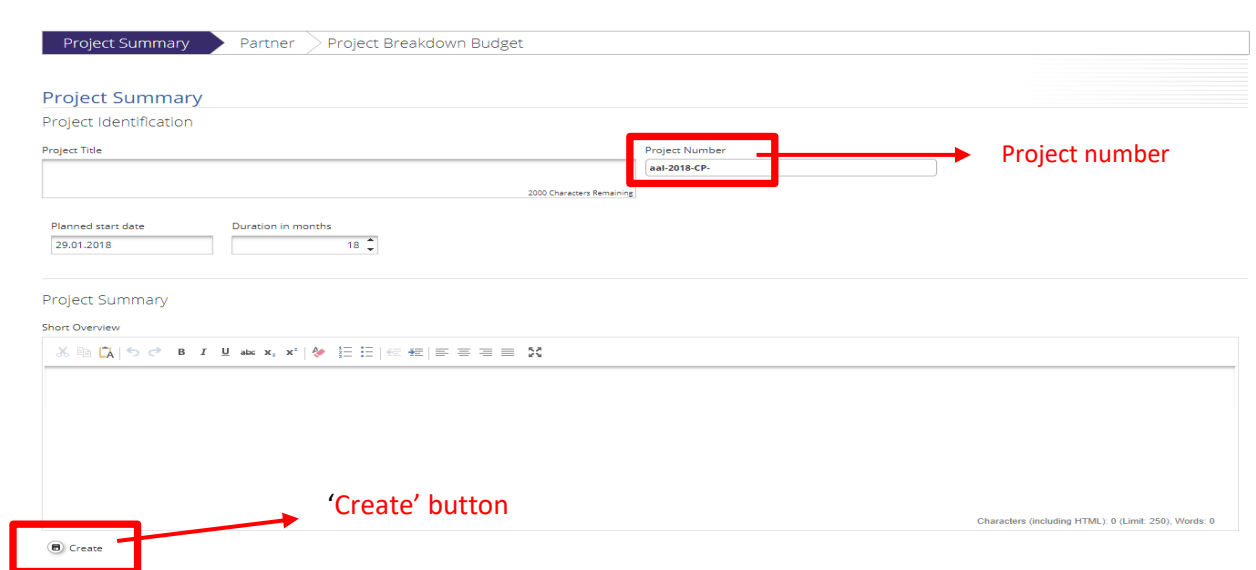
7.2 Project Proposal

Once you have registered, you will be given the choice between applying to a Collaborative Project or a Small Collaborative Project (fig. 2).

- Fig. 2: Collaborative Projects and Small Collaborative Projects

7.3 Project summary

After selecting the type of project you would like to apply to, you will reach the Project Summary page. You should enter all the relevant information and then click on the 'Create' button at the bottom of the page (fig. 3). The Project number is automatically created and available on the same page. After creating the project, you should save it before adding partners (fig.4).
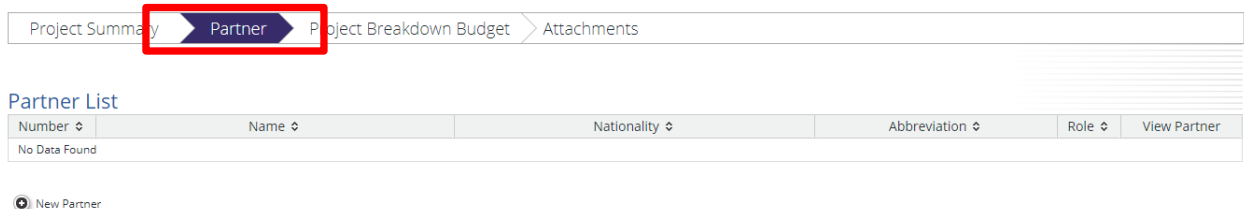

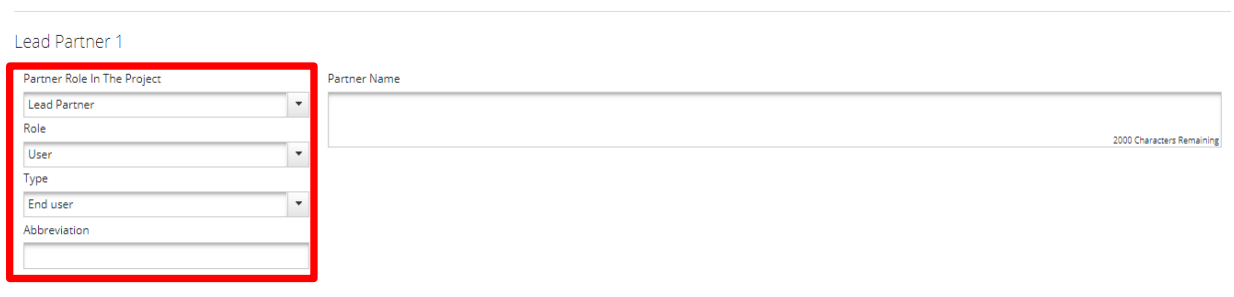- Fig. 3: creating a project summary

Project budget overview

Partner	Country	
No records found.		
	Totals:	

💾 Save
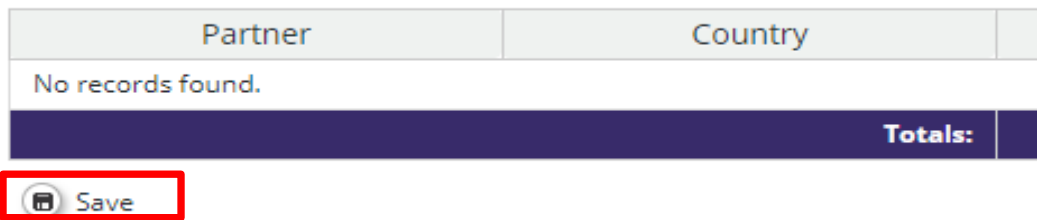
- Fig. 4: Saving the project summary

7.4   Adding or Removing Project Partners

You can then add partners by clicking on the Partner tab (fig. 5) and then clicking on 'New partner' (fig. 5). Project members are users who may access the proposal site and the contents of the project but who cannot modify or submit anything. You can then select the type of partners (lead partner or project partners), their names, roles and types (fig. 6). It is important to note that before choosing the country, you should first select the option 'from all Regions' (fig. 7). This option will allow you to visualise all 28 European member states. Make sure to also select the relevant National Funding Agency and all necessary requested information. Please note that beneficiaries from countries not participating in the Call can be part of the consortium through self-funding but cannot have a key role in the project.

Project Summary	Partner	Project Breakdown Budget	Attachments

Partner List

Number ⇕	Name ⇕	Nationality ⇕	Abbreviation ⇕	Role ⇕	View Partner
No Data Found					

⊕ New Partner

- Fig. 5: Selecting partners

Lead Partner 1

Partner Role In The Project
Lead Partner ▼

Partner Name

Role
User ▼

Type
End user ▼

Abbreviation

2000 Characters Remaining

- Fig. 6: entering partners data

* Fig. 7: Country, National Funding Agency, type of organisation and activities

You can also decide to remove a partner. This option is visible at the bottom of the same page:
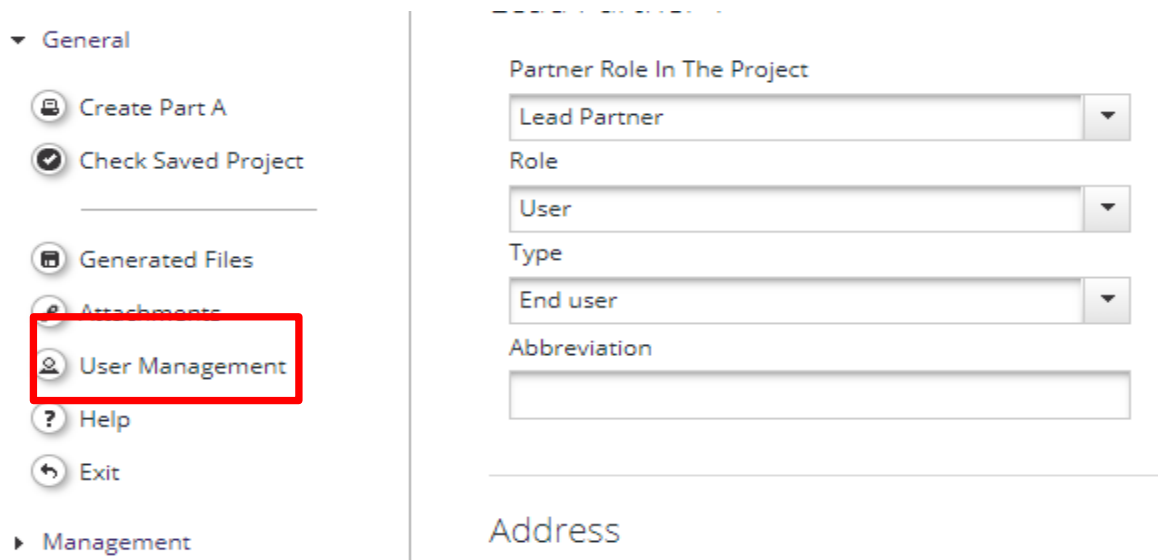

* Fig. 8: Removing a partner

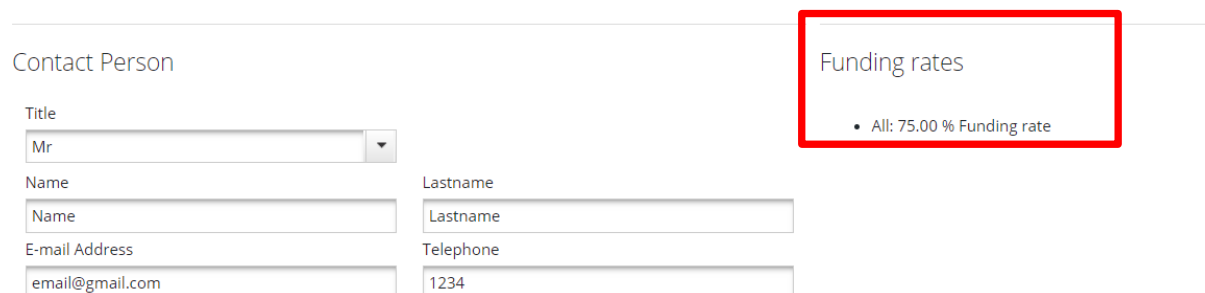## 7.5 Inviting project partners to access the platform

Once the project partners are saved, you can invite their representative to access the proposal. To do so, they first need to create a user account for themselves and share it with you, so you can use it to send them an invitation. You can do so by clicking on 'user management' (fig. 9).

- Fig. 9: Inviting project partners to access the proposal

7.6 Project Budget

Back to the partner tab, you will see that the funding rate is indicated in the middle of the page (fig.10), next to the 'Contact Person' details. This rate is specific to each country, National Funding Agency, type of organization and (for some NFAs) type of activity.

- Fig. 10: Funding Rate

The next step will be for you to enter the desired budget in the dedicated category. You can do so by clicking on the item in front of the numbers (fig.11). You should note that the first row in the table is used to enter the effort and not the costs (PM meaning Person Months), also it is recommended to plan the project so that it does not exceed an unrealistic number of PMs; for example, a Collaborative Project should not exceed 300PMs and a Small Collaborative Project 60PMs.

Detailed cost and budget calculation

Maximum funding per project for partners located in Biscay is 150.000€.

Category	Cost (All)
Effort / P M	0.00
Personnel cost / €	0.00
Other cost / €	0.00
Subcontracting / €	0.00
Total direct cost / €	**0.00**
Indirect cost / €	0.00
Total cost / €	**0.00**
Requested contribution from AAL / €	**0.00**
FA Component of public contribution for Call 2018	0.00
EC Component of public contribution for Call 2018	0.00

Save   Remove Partner

- Fig. 11: cost and budget calculation

7.7 Project Breakdown Project

The breakdown of the project is visible in the next tab with the same title. You can see the details for each partner. You are also given the opportunity to export the breakdown by clicking on the dedicated button (fig. 12).
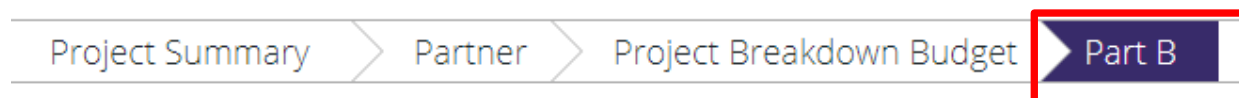
- Fig. 12: Project budget overview

7.8   Part B

This will lead you to the final stage of the process – Uploading the Part B (fig.13). You should upload a .pdf format document of maximum 30 pages for a Collaborative Project respecting the naming convention: **Application Form Part B**. Proposers will not be able to submit their proposal without such a document attached. For Small Collaborative Projects, the document should be limited to 20 pages.
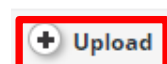
- Fig. 13: Part B

## 7.9   Letter of Intent (for Collaborative Projects only):

Proposals submitted by consortia presenting a Collaborative Project must include at least one signed declaration of intent (one-page document) from relevant stakeholders: eg: end-user organisations, health care delivery institutions and government stakeholders. The submission platform will automatically check that such a document has been attached to the proposal, together with the part B, respecting the naming convention: **Letter of Intent.** Proposers will not be able to submit their proposal without such a document attached.

7.10 Declaration of Honor (all proposals)

All Proposals and for each beneficiary must complete and sign a Declaration of honour. If a project consortium is composed of 5 organizations, a single pdf document (with all the 5 DoHs included) will have to be uploaded. The submission platform will automatically check that such a document has been attached to the proposal, together with the part B, respecting the naming convention: **Declaration of Honor.** Proposers will not be able to submit their proposal without such a document attached.
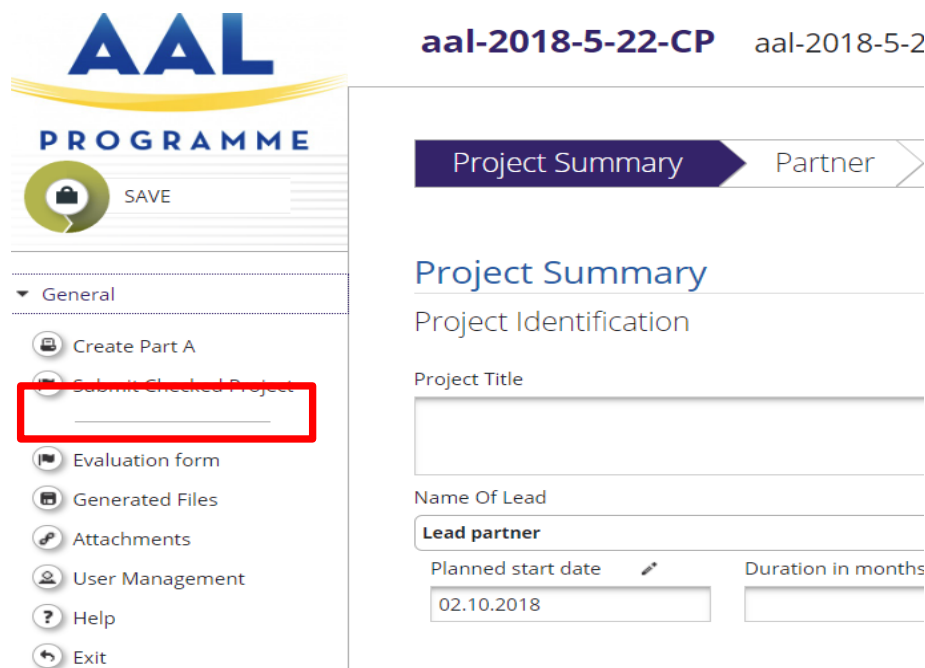
7.11 Submission of the project proposal

If you want to know which information might be missing before submitting the project proposal, you should select the item 'Check saved project' on the left side of the screen (fig.15). A project can be saved as often as wanted. However, the proposal has to be submitted by the deadline mentioned in the Call. Please note that only the coordinator or a project member of the coordinating organization is allowed to submit a project proposal and that <u>once it is submitted, it cannot be updated anymore</u>.
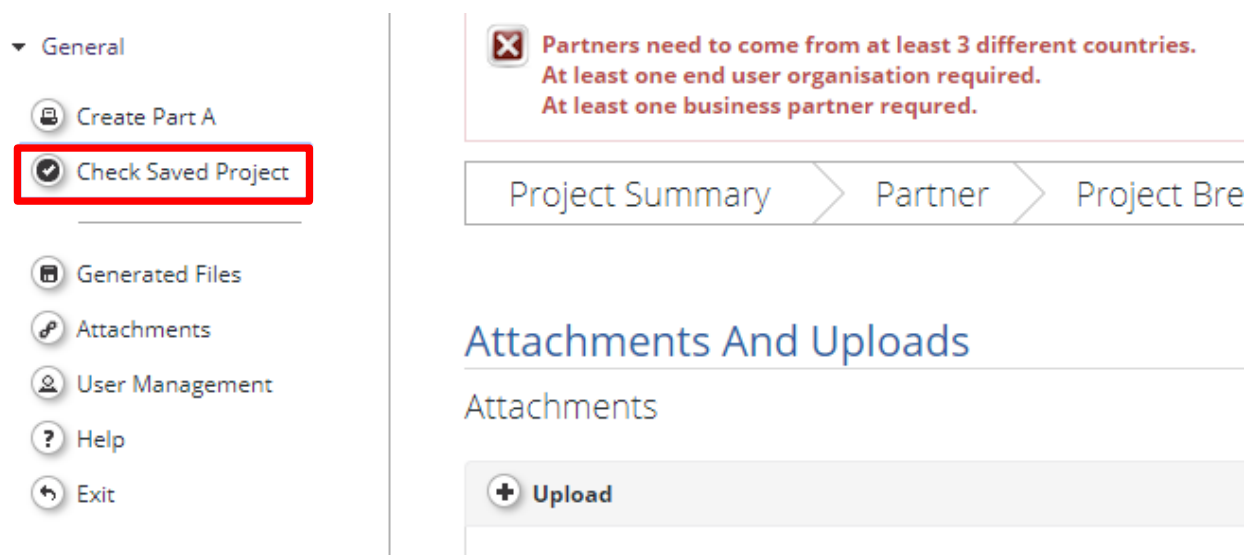
- Fig. 15: overview of missing information before submitting the proposal

IMPORTANT NOTE: saving the project does not mean it has been submitted. Only by clicking on the "Submit Checked Project" button will you be submitting your proposal.

8   Potential Benefits

8.1   Contribution from end-users

The primary aim of the AAL Programme is to foster solutions that meet end-user aspirations and needs. It is important to recognise the contributions that technology and service advancements can make to the quality of life of older people. However, even more importantly, it must be recognised that end-users should be the drivers in the development and practical application of these advancements. Industry stands to gain clear benefits and generate a "***market pull***" by engaging end-users. A synergistic relationship between industry, service businesses, research institutions and end-users will ensure that products/services reflect user wishes and needs. This will then translate into products/services that are reliable, acceptable, useful, adaptable and marketable. The AAL Programme deems active end-user involvement to be an essential component of activities from the outset and throughout the life of the project (see also chapter 11).

8.2   Commercial benefits

A partly affluent market exists and continues to grow as a result of European demographics, so business opportunities are increasing. In the AAL Programme, all projects are expected to investigate the commercial aspects of the solutions being developed through business cases, value network analysis and financial considerations. Business cases should consider consumers´ willingness to pay. In solutions that require larger investment, the possible financing models (fully or partially), by third parties e.g. by insurance or housing companies should be considered.

In such cases, these parties have to be considered in the business development activities. Adaptation to local markets requires scalability of the solutions across Europe and beyond with necessary modularity and flexibility to the cultural, social, economic and legislative differences between countries and regions (see also chapter 12).

8.3   Socio-economic benefits

Innovations for older adults can have significant impact not only on the individual level, but also on societal level. Solutions aimed at helping people to maintain independence in their everyday environment and a high level of intellectual engagement as they get older, will support active, healthy and independent ageing and thus improve the quality of life of older adults. Involving research on socio-economic impact can be an important factor in generating evidence on the effectiveness of the developed solutions. The evidence is needed especially when an investment or reimbursement policy of the public sector is needed in order to bring the solutions to the market.

9   Guideline for Ethical Considerations in AAL Projects

> **NEW! - AAL Guidelines for Ethics, Data Privacy and Security**
> The AAL Programme has recently published the new Guidelines for Ethical Excellence. The document provides the AAL Community with a model that integrates general law compliance with an ethical dialogue. It also provides reflections on how to set up ethical excellence for solutions targeting active and heathy ageing through digital technologies.
> It is highly recommend that project applicants read the guidelines that are available here: http://www.aal-europe.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/AAL-guidelines-for-ethics-final-V2.pdf

In AAL projects, ethical considerations apply 1) to the process of implementing the project, and 2) to the solutions targeted as results of the project. Both dimensions must be handled in ways that are ethically valid and acceptable to the end-users and to society in general. This means that ethical issues must be addressed from the concept phase to test installations, related to user involvement during the project and when the solution is tested and eventually launched in the market.

In addition to national requirements regarding ethical issues involved in R&D, the AAL Programme requires proposals to document their procedures and principles for handling ethical issues related to process and product (final solution), see part B template.

The nature of AAL projects will raise a broad range of ethical concerns such as:
- the technology involved is often new and unfamiliar to the end-users,
- vital aspects of the solutions will not be transparent to the end-users and other stakeholders because of a high degree of complexity.

This may involve ethical issues such as:

- privacy
- control of personal data

- confidentiality
- autonomy and dignity.

Solutions developed must be trusted, accessible and accepted by all designated user groups.

Ethics in the context of AAL projects is fundamentally about what a project can and shall do for the benefit of those defined as the end-users of that particular project. Ethical issues may also be raised regarding the relationships and social networks of the involved (or future) end-users. New AAL solutions might bring about new allocation of resources and responsibilities and thus have an impact that goes beyond the quality of life of primary end-users.

In the conduct of an AAL project, ethical issues concern *inter alia* the correct recruitment and involvement of end-users. Whenever end-users are involved in projects, informed consent is a standard procedure. All end-users who participate in an AAL project, through interviews, observations and/or testing of prototypes, should know what they are signing up for and how they can withdraw from the project at any time. Transparency is the keyword.

An informed-consent form which guarantees transparency should cover the following issues:
- a description of the project and its aims (accessible with respect to language and content),
- a specification of the role(s) of different end-users in the project,
- self-determination of the end-users (must be able to turn off systems or services at their own discretion),
- compensation provided to the primary end-users (expenses or fees paid, etc.),
- contact person in the project (for ethical issues and related questions),
- exit rights for individual end-users (procedure for withdrawal from the project at any time, without giving a reason and without incurring costs or penalties).

Special concerns

When designing the involvement of primary end-users in a project, it should be taken into account that end-users may become accustomed to the special attention and services they receive during the project. When people become deeply involved, termination of the project may create problems. Provisions for dealing with such issues are necessary in order to avoid distress and negative reactions among end-users at the end of the project. In short, the involvement of end-users in projects requires ethical awareness and respect for their dignity and right to self-determination all through the project.

Other important ethical issues concern the information and data management. In most cases, this will be covered by existing legislation and directives (national and EU) on privacy and data protection. The relevant security and privacy rules regarding storage and transmission of personally identifiable information must be respected. Data must be made anonymous, codified and stored in a secure place guaranteeing access only to authorized persons. All collection of data and other interventions in the projects should follow the principles of proportionality and purposefulness, i.e. restricted to what is necessary to meet the aims of the project.

On a macro level, distributive ethics are very important in the AAL field. Distributive ethics are about issues of justice, equality of access, choice etc. Proposals must demonstrate the ethical quality of the proposed solution as an element in the life of older people in a socially sustainable society.

In relation to people with dementia, some specific aspects should be taken into account: People living with dementia have a right to enjoy equity of service and service provision; to participate in decisions that affect them; to feel safe, take positive risks and enjoy freedom of choice; to have their strengths and experience acknowledged and used to maintain and develop skills; to attain and maintain maximum independence, health and wellbeing; to enjoy access to recreational, leisure and cultural life in their community.

The handling of ethical issues in the Active and Assisted Living Programme is dependent on the national rules of the involved partners in a project that is to be funded. In some countries, projects have to get a positive statement or permission by ethical committees before they can start working. In other countries, national partners responsible for the involvement of end-users will have to submit the final draft of the informed consent for assessment. Medical devices need to be approved according to the appropriate regulations. Please consult with your National Contact Point what requirements are applicable to your proposal.

In the part B template, you will find the following ethics declaration table:

Ethics declaration required by proposals in the AAL Programme	Described on page
• How is the issue of informed consent handled, according to the specific situation related to the cognitive impairment?	
• What procedures does the proposal have to preserve the dignity, autonomy and values (human and professional) of the end-users?	
• If the proposal includes informal carers (e.g. relatives, friends or volunteers) in the project or in the planned service-model - what procedures exist for dealing with ethical issues in this relationship?	
• If the proposal includes technology-enabled concepts for confidential communication between the older adult and informal and formal carers, service providers and authorities – what procedures are planned for safeguarding the right to privacy, self-determination and other ethical issues in this communication?	
• What "exit" strategy for the end-users involved in the project does the proposal have (in terms of end-users leaving the project during its implementation and after the project end)?	
• How are the ethical dimensions of the solution targeted in the proposal taken into account? (Brief description of distributive ethics, sustainability et.al.)	

10 IPR Provisions under the AAL Programme

The Active and Assisted Living Programme (AAL Programme) is a joint research, development and innovation (R&D&I) funding activity by 16 European Member States and Associated States, with financial support of the European Community based on article 185 of the EC treaty. The most important activity under the AAL Programme is the publication and evaluation of Calls for Proposals.

The EC financial contribution is based on EU co-decision No. 742/2008/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 09 July 2008 on the Community's participation in a research and development programme undertaken by several Member States aimed at enhancing the quality of life of older people through the use of new information and communication technologies, which includes the provision that *"by way of derogation from Articles 41 to 49 of Regulation (EU) No. 1290/2013, the rules of the designated national programmes governing results, access rights to background and results shall apply, without prejudice to the principle of open access to scientific publications set out in Article 18 of Regulation (EU) No. 1291/2013."* (Art. 5.5.)

1. The AAL Programme supports the IPR regime on the basis of Regulation No. 1290/2013, which establishes the rules for participation in the Horizon 2020.
2. Taking into account the time-to-market perspective of two years after the end of an AAL project, all AAL projects recommended for funding must submit a signed Consortium Agreement (CA) to the National Funding Agencies. The agencies also must approve the CA. The signed CA must clearly indicate the reference (Consortium Agreement of the project "X") on every page.
3. The CA must be in effect at the official start of the project, but it is not required to conclude it at the time of the proposal submission.
4. The AAL Association leaves it to the project consortia to draft a CA ("freedom of contract").
5. The Consortium Agreement should state a set of rules/procedures to ensure fair protection for the IPR interests of the partners and partners' employees (e.g.: conditions/ limitations on the ability of individual consortium partners to freely publish or profit from project results directly covered by other partners' IPR). The consortium agreement should include conflict resolution procedures/ mechanisms to be invoked if and when necessary.
6. The AAL Association does not recommend any specific service or model agreement. The IPR Helpdesk, an EC funded consultancy service on Intellectual Property Rights, provides example models for consortium agreements on its website http://www.ipr-helpdesk.org.
7. For any problem with the IPR orientations laid out above, the AAL President as a legal representative of the AAL Association shall be contacted by AAL project partners via the email Call@aal-europe.eu).

11 Framework for "End-user Involvement" under the AAL Programme

End-user involvement is a mandatory and essential part of all collaborative projects funded under the AAL Programme. When developing new solutions for older adults as the primary end-users, specific questions and challenges related to user involvement need to be addressed:

- Who are the relevant end-users in this proposal (primary, secondary and tertiary)? Are there different groups of end-users who should be involved (maybe at different stages of the project)?
- Who are stakeholders and what are their roles? (Who will use the solution, who will pay for it, who will decide or regulate, purchase and use it? – Answers to these questions will also assist in development of the business plan.)
- What is the purpose of end-user involvement in the project?

- What methodology will be adopted? How will the wishes and needs of the relevant end-user groups be expressed and integrated at different stages of the project (e.g. how will input from end-users be collected, documented, analysed and used in the development process)?
- What is the time and work plan for end-user involvement?
- How will privacy concerns, dignity and other relevant ethical issues be dealt with? (Is there a specific national legislation or other requirements that will be applied to this project?)
- If primary end-users include persons with reduced cognitive capabilities, how will they be involved, and their dignity and privacy respected? Who will represent them and protect their interests if they cannot do it themselves?
- How will the innovation potential of the end-users be explored and mobilized (creating an innovation culture where the design of new solutions is done with and for older adults).

In the AAL Programme, end-user involvement is assessed by evaluating and reviewing the methodology and the representation of end-users in different phases of the innovation process.

1. In exploratory and creative phases of the innovation process, the wishes and needs of the end-users serve as input to the development of new solutions and design of the business plan.
2. In development phases, the end-users provide the feedback loops validating and verifying the progress of the development work.
3. In business plan development, end-users provide input about customer behaviour and attitude, purchasing processes, regulatory and other decision-making. End-users are also crucial for validating the customer appreciation and evaluation of the solution, willingness to use it and willingness to pay for it (price sensitivity).

Additional information about end-users is provided in the AAL web-site: http://www.aal-europe.eu/support-to-projects/end-users/.

12 Framework for "Business Plan Development" under the AAL Programme – Collaborative Projects only

The AAL Programme aims at launching research, development and innovation activities that will bring new products, solutions or service concepts to the market within 2 years after project completion. The close-to-market nature of the AAL programme means that business plans for the envisaged solutions constitute essential parts of all projects already from the proposal preparation phase.

Business plan development should be approached in a systematic manner, utilizing a suitable conceptualization framework and involving different actors of the value network (end-users, payers, delivery partners, service providers, integrators). It is advisable to use tools proven to be effective and adaptable to different needs, for example the Business Model Canvas or the Lean Start-up approach (each consortium is free to adopt other tools and methods, however). In the context of AAL, "business plan development" is to be interpreted in a broad sense, involving both business partners and other stakeholders necessary for creating economic and social value in

society, based on new solutions such as those targeted in the AAL Programme.

This means that activities of non-profit and public-sector organizations must take into account business aspects, and business plans of companies must include social and ethical aspects.

The business case should be formulated in the form of a business plan illustrating significant benefits for (1) end-users, (2) society and (3) companies (SMEs and others).

In the AAL Programme, the business plan is assessed by evaluating and reviewing:

Product/Solution:

- specific problem(s) the planned product/solution will solve;
- market acceptability and readiness for the product/solution
- technological readiness, including infrastructure;
- its unique selling proposition

Target Group(s) & Market:

- the definition and delimitation of the target group(s) and their value network;
- the market potential for the product/solution in the targeted market(s);
- the active competition (including prospective competitors, as far as possible);

Business Model:

- how to assure sustainability of the product/solution in the market
- how to make money with your product/service (and sharing among partners)?
- strategy for market entry
- market risks and barriers, including delays

Resources

- resources (including material, human and financial) required to put the strategy into practice (during development as parallel non-funded activity, or after AAL-funded project is completed).
- Refer to the potential team which will bring the product/solution to the market.

Proposals are expected to include a *preliminary* business plan, which should be developed and improved during the project period. Please note that an intermediate business plan and business model must be provided at midterm and that the deliverable *Final business plan* must be a complete business plan. The business plan will be subject to an assessment in both midterm and final reviews of the project. If the consortium considers it necessary, the business model can be changed in the implementation stage. The business plan should demonstrate that the proposed product/solution has the opportunity to succeed in the market. The plan should answer the following questions (the list is indicative, not exhaustive):

Product/Solution:

- What product/service will you offer?
- What main challenge(s) will the product/service meet – for end-users and other stakeholders? What will be its most important benefits for customer(s)?

- What is the added value of the product/service versus those of competitors and/or existing solutions on the market (unique selling proposition)?

Target Group & Market:

- Who will use the product/service (target groups)?
- Who are the different stakeholders in the value network and how are they connected?
- Who are your competitors?
- What is the estimation of the size of the market for your product/service? Indicate stages and time horizons for market development.

Business Model:

- What is your business model? How do you plan to make money out of your project idea and product/service later on (1-2 years after AAL-funded project)?
- How will you enter the market? Who will be the most important partners for market entry?
- How will the product be sold (including which consortium partner takes an active role)?
- Who will provide products/services?
- Who will pay for the product/service?
- What are the market risks and barriers?
- How is your cost calculation for the product and a target pricing; including efforts and costs for after sales services and support

Resources:

- Which consortium members are involved in the customer value proposition?
- What will be the roles of different consortium partners in market development, in the first stage and later?
- Which partners have market experience/position at project start?
- How will partners, businesses and others, draw benefits from the project results (commercial and other economic, organisational and social benefits)?
- What/which external stakeholder(s) will be necessary for the proposed product/solution to succeed in the targeted markets? (e.g. manufacturing, investments, designer, service provider, etc.)
- What is the estimated cost of entering the market(s) with the final product/service, and how will this be financed?

13 Technology Readiness Levels

As mentioned in the Call text, projects funded under the AAL Call 2020 will be operating in technology readiness levels (TRLs) 5-8[8].

TRLs are indicators of the maturity level of particular technologies. This measurement system provides a common understanding of technology status and addresses the entire innovation chain. There are 9 technology readiness levels; TRL 1 being the lowest and TRL 9 the highest[9]. Please refer to Annex G of Horizon 2020 General Annexes to the Work Programme 2016/17 for a full description of TRLs.

14 Project Selection and Reconfiguration Process

14.1 Selection of Projects for Funding

Guided by the outcome of the evaluation process, the final selection of projects for funding will be made using the following principles:

- Maximizing the total quality of the project portfolio of the Call;
- Optimizing the usage of the available funding of the Call;
- Ensuring sufficient thematic spread and avoiding directly overlapping projects to be funded in the AAL Programme;
- Ensuring participation of project partners from as many AAL Partner States participating in the Call as possible.

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[8] Technology readiness levels (TRL)
- TRL 5 – technology validated in relevant environment
- TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment
- TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment
- TRL 8 – system complete and qualified

[9] https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/support/faqs/faq-2890.html

Phase 1 of project selection is ended with a list of projects, which after approval of the AAL General Assembly, are invited to start the clarification and negotiation phase with their national funding agency (Batch 1 of projects).

14.2 Reconfiguration of Consortia

After the completion of phase 1 of the project selection, additional project proposals that have been assessed to be of good quality by the evaluation process will be invited to restructure their consortia. Restructuring may take place with the following boundary conditions:

- Invitation for restructuring will take place only when availability of national funding is the limiting factor;
- Restructuring is possible only in cases where changes affect less than 50% of the total effort (person months) of the original proposal; consortia should be aware about the fact that this aspect will be thoroughly checked by the AAL Programme before inviting the consortia to the reconfiguration phase
- Restructuring cannot lead to the changing of the project coordinator;
- The Central Eligibility criterion of at least 3 partners from 3 different countries is respected
- Restructuring can take effect either through non-funded participation of the partner or through finding a replacement partner from an AAL Partner state that still has funds available. This can be combined with the redistribution of tasks between the remaining partners of the consortium.

Projects that are invited to resubmit their proposal with a restructured consortium have to meet the eligibility criteria of the Call. They may be subject to a re-evaluation by independent expert(s), in order to ensure their quality. The selection of the projects to be funded among the resubmitted proposals will be guided by the outcome of the evaluation process and the availability of national budgets. After the approval of the AAL Executive Board, additional projects are invited to start the clarification and negotiation phase with their national funding agency (Batch 2 of projects)

IMPORTANT : If at any point of the project selection phase or the clarification and negotiation phase a project partner with a crucial role in the project (like end users involvement, pilots coordination, commercialization of the proposed solution or other) withdraws from the project, is ineligible or not able to fulfill its commitment as stated in the proposal and this affects more than 25% of the total effort (in person months) of the original proposal, the project proposal is irrevocably disqualified without the opportunity of restructuring. Furthermore, if at any point, the project coordinator withdraws from the project, is ineligible or not able to fulfill its commitment as stated in the proposal, the project proposal is irrevocably disqualified without the opportunity of restructuring. In any case, a restructuring of the consortium can lead to a re-evaluation of the proposal.