

# AIoD Platform Governance Model

First Version - June 2023



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<b>Abstract</b>	This document proposes a system of governance for the AI-on-Demand (AIoD) platform that is being developed, funded and also otherwise resourced by the European Commission. It also serves as a means of verification for Milestone 2 (Governance models available online) in the AI4Europe project.
<b>Keywords</b>	AI, Governance models, Business processes

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1. Introduction.....	4
2. Governance structure .....	6
2.1 Decision Boards .....	7
2.1.1 Project Management Team.....	7
2.1.2 Technical Decision Board .....	8
2.1.3 AloD Communication Board .....	8
2.1.4 Executive Management Committee .....	8
2.2 Focus (Community) Groups.....	8
2.2.1 Technical Contributors Board .....	9
2.2.2 AI Experts.....	9
2.2.3 Champions and Ambassadors .....	9
2.2.4 DIH (and TEF) Experts .....	9
2.3 Advisory Committees.....	9
3. Business Processes .....	10
3.1 Content Contributors (AI4Experiments) .....	10
3.2 Business processes related to Contributors.....	10
3.2.1 Code Contributors .....	10
3.2.2 Content Contributors.....	10
3.2.3 AI4Experiments Contribution .....	11
3.3 Business process related to Consumers.....	11
3.4 Overview of the business processes and decision points for the related user groups.....	11
4. User Registration .....	12
5. Next steps.....	13
6. Final remarks.....	14
Consortium .....	15

## Index of Figures

Figure 1 – Positioning the AloD Platform in the operational context.....	5
Figure 2 – Governance of the AloD Platform .....	6
Figure 3 – Overview of the operational governance of the AloD Platform .....	7
Figure 4 – Business processes of the AloD Platform .....	11

# 1. Introduction

This document proposes a system of governance for the Artificial Intelligence on Demand platform (AI-on-Demand, AI-on-Demand platform, AIoD platform, the Platform) that is being developed, funded and also otherwise resourced by the European Commission. The technological and Artificial Intelligence (AI) processes outlined here are premised to give as much freedom of interaction as possible for all those in the AI community (AI-research community, the community). The system is designed to take into account not only the current state of the art, but also future developments, in particular with respect to a long-term sustainability of the Platform.

Taking off from the above premises, this document provides an overview of the overall governance of the AIoD platform, and the business processes related to this. The structure, processes and governance related to this Platform thus unfold as an open system, allowing for broad engagement and contributions within and by the AI community. At the same time, aspects and European values related to security, trustworthiness and ethics are considered. The governance structure and its mechanisms are outlined in chapter 2 of this document.

The business processes presented in this document are not described at any level of technical detail. Instead, an effort is made to place the business processes in the context of the general ecosystem and evolutionary contexts in which the AI-on-Demand platform is and will continue to be embedded.<sup>1</sup>

The business processes related to AIoD platform are described and categorized on four levels. Each of the levels is taken to have different implications in terms of requirements for and impact on the Platform, in particular related to the core of the Platform. The least impact is caused by a consumer and the most by a code contributor. A specific “sandbox environment” (**AI4Experiments**) is presented as a space for relatively free interaction between users facilitating the co-creation of experiments, modules, and so forth. The latter business process has already been implemented.

For each process, decision points are identified. These decision points are associated with relevant governance mechanisms and procedures. Suggestions on who or which body is to make decisions at those points are proposed.

The most operational immediate context of decision-making as to the AIoD platform is presented in Figure 1 below. This context is the one where inputs are generated to be processed in the Platform and the one into which the Platform produces outputs. The governance mechanisms of the Platform have been designed to deal with the inputs that can be fed into business processes linked to the Platform in its working or operational state. The resulting boxes-and-arrows representations of the business processes are intended to represent the current structure of their governance. Chapter 3 provides more explanatory text for each of the business processes.

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<sup>1</sup> For configuring the above business processes, various sources of information have been used, such as flowcharts and other content from Del 4.1, the project's Grant Agreement, as well as the discussions at the Task 2.1 workshop held on March 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

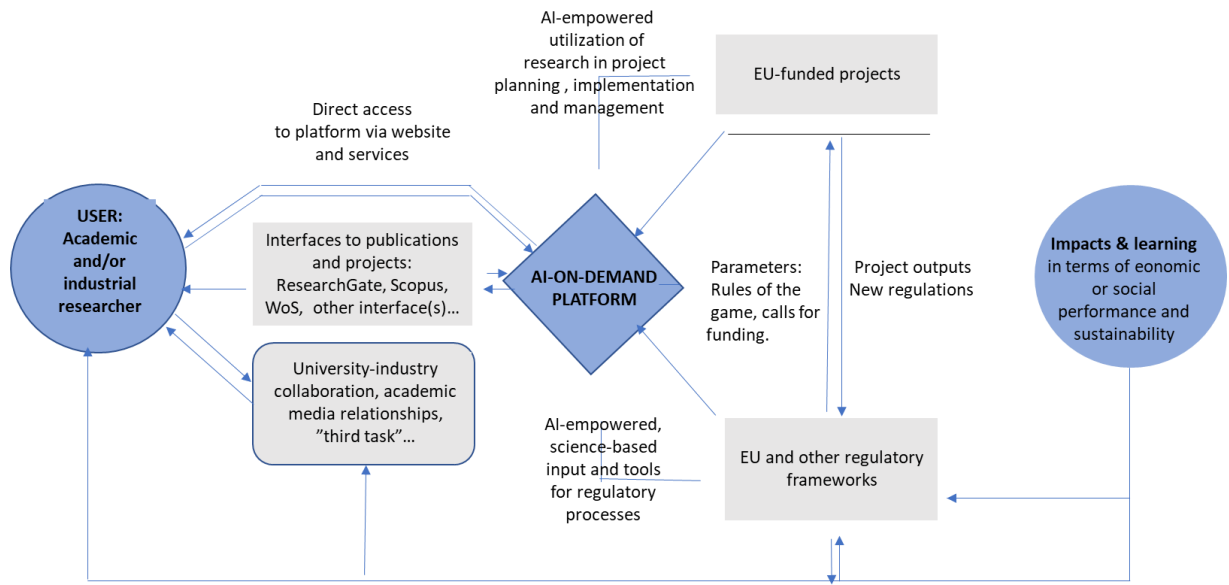


Figure 1 – Positioning the AIoD Platform in the operational context

## 2. Governance structure

The AIoD platform is designed to have a governance system open to the AI community, as well as to other European communities, a structure that allows for impactful participation and broad-based engagement as much as possible. The system takes into account the needs to monitor how guidelines for trustworthiness and ethics will be followed so as to make appropriate contributions to and on the Platform.

The result is a governance structure with mechanisms to generously onboard the latest technical updates, as well as to deal with significant issues and challenges coming with such and other new developments. Apart from Decision Boards already named and shortly described (see section 2.1) the AI community will engage through several thematic Focus Groups, further contributing to the effectiveness of the platform and improving its performance.

Figure 2 provides an overview of the planned overall governance structure of the AIoD Platform. It envisions the establishment of a legal entity and a Governance Board representing the owners of the platform. Some Advisory Boards will then support the Platform providing valuable information from the perspective of different stakeholders as well as the latest developments on policy level, e.g., the Advisory Committee on Ethics and Trustworthiness. This part of the governance will be developed in the future – more details on the next steps can be found in chapter 5.

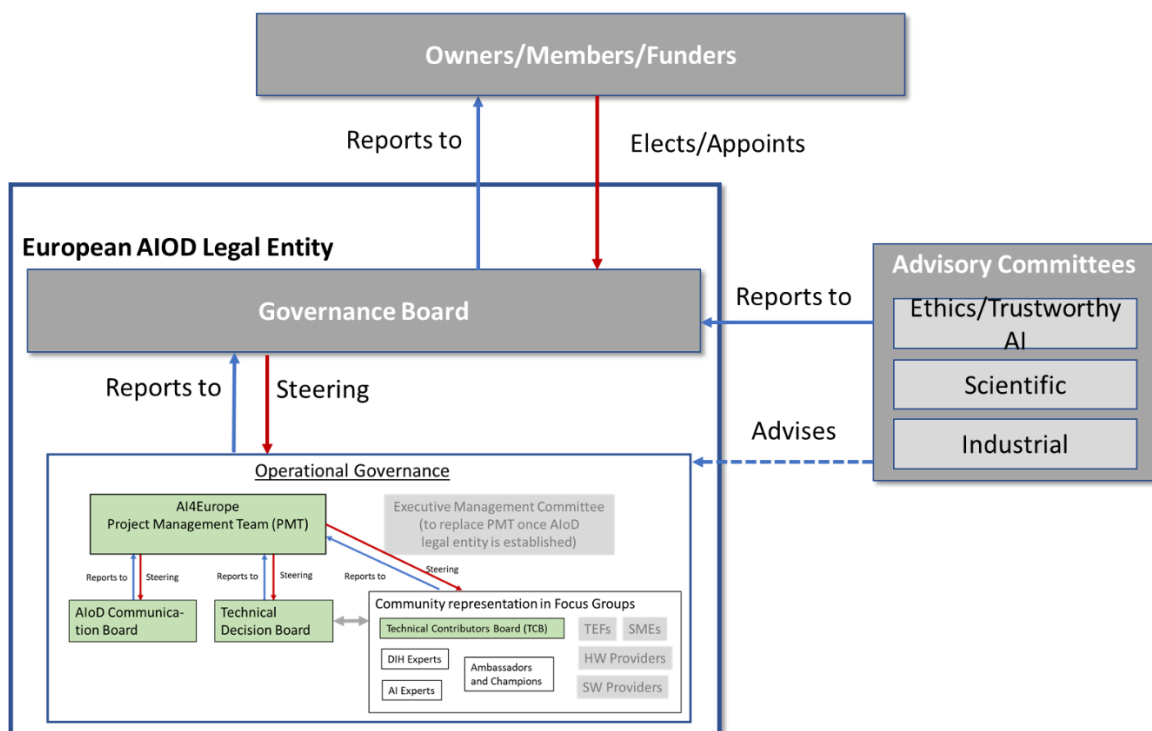


Figure 2 – Governance of the AIoD Platform

Figure 3 presents the operational part of the governance taking into account also envisaged future developments to the Platform. The figure points to some sub-structures and mechanisms that are already under development. The sub-structures and mechanisms that are more developed are on the left and in green in the figure with the white ones in the planning, while further options are on the right and in grey. Members to represent the AI community (i.e. AI-research community) are proposed to be selected by the Project Management Board (PMT) and/or Technical Decision Board (TDB), later envisaged to be selected by the Executive Committee and the TDB.

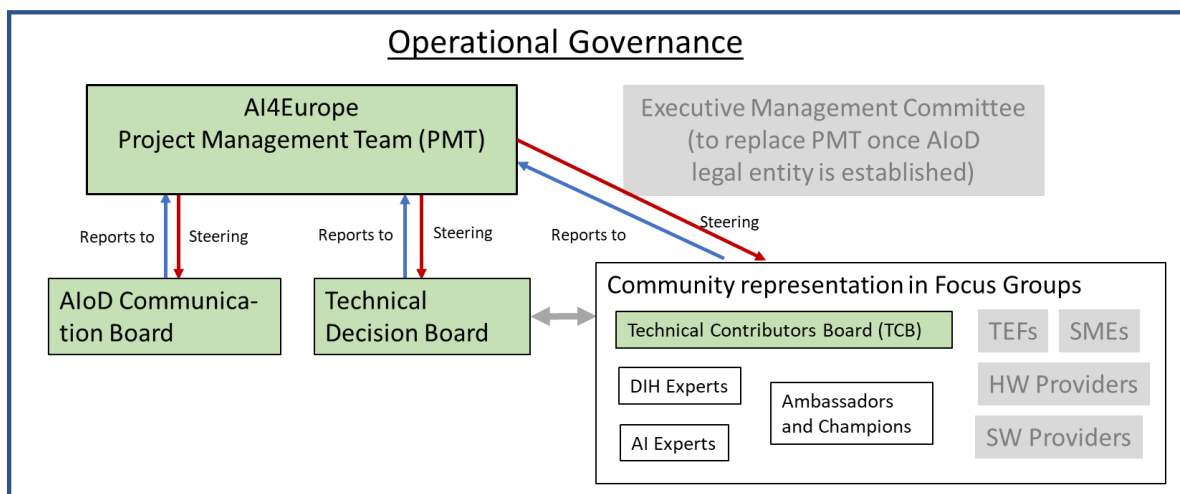


Figure 3 – Overview of the operational governance of the ALoD Platform

## 2.1 Decision Boards

The Project Management Team (see 2.1.1) is already in place. Further Decision Boards already defined – the Technical Decision Board and the ALoD Communication Board – will be supporting the further evolution of the ALoD platform in terms of technical compliance, trustworthiness, and future developments, importantly also in the direction of sustainability as well as the branding of the Platform. All membership, voting decisions and other implementation matters for this section are shaped and discussed over the course of the next steps in the project work.

### 2.1.1 Project Management Team

The Project Management Team (PMT), currently provided by the AI4Europe project, is already in place since the beginning of the project to manage the further development of the Platform. PMT is the Decision Board which, in addition to the operational execution, is currently also driving the strategic direction of the Platform. This Decision Board makes it attractive to the community to provide both the freedom to collaborate with low entrance barriers and also guidelines for ethics and trustworthiness. The PMT is closely working together with the Technical Decision Board and the ALoD Communication Board. In the future, once a legal entity will be created that will be driving then also a commercial part of the platform, the PMT will be replaced by the Executive Management Committee (see

2.1.4). Once a legal entity will be created the strategic decisions for the platform will be done by the Governance Board – see Figure 2.

### 2.1.2 Technical Decision Board

The Technical Decision Board is responsible for overseeing the technical development and maintenance of the AIoD platform. It also decides on the Trustworthiness and Ethics of the contributions to the Platform according to the technical conformance with the platform architecture and offerings. It also works in close connection with the PMT for the strategic direction of the Platform in terms of technological development. Currently the TDB would consist of the members of the technical development team in AI4Europe under the leadership of UCC, drawing upon similar representatives across the AIoD Platform community represented in the Technical Contributors Board (2.2.1), as appropriate and with the approval of the PMT (later EMC).

### 2.1.3 AIoD Communication Board

The AIoD Communications Board is responsible for all non-technical external engagement including, but not limited to, communications, promotion, marketing, events, branding, partnerships, etc. The interim board would be the current AI4Europe Communications Team, drawing upon similar representatives across the AIoD Platform community, as appropriate and with the approval of the PMT (later EMC).

### 2.1.4 Executive Management Committee

The Executive Management Committee (EMC) will be established once the legal entity has been created, which entity will manage also the commercial part of the Platform. The EMC will drive the further strategic direction of the Platform in accordance with the “owners” or members of the Platform. It is responsible for the day-to-day management of implementing the AIoD’s vision, as approved by the body (Governance Board in Figure 2) representing the owners of the Platform, with oversight of the allocations and available resources. The EMC will also be responsible for developing and maintaining a long-term strategic plan for the AIoD organisation and will ensure the on-going, smooth operation of the AIoD legal entity through the effective day-to-day implementation of its long-term strategy.

Finally, members and the details of the Decision Power for the still to be established formal boards are currently under development.

## 2.2 Focus (Community) Groups

Focus Groups represent different parts of the AI community providing them the possibility to actively contribute to the AIoD Platform, exchange views and collaborate with each other. Currently, several Focus Groups have already been established or are in the process of being established (green and white boxes in Figure 3). Some other Focus Groups have been envisaged but not yet further developed to deal with particular topics (grey boxes in Figure 3). Focus Groups can be nominated by the PMT (EMC) supporting the operational work of the AIoD platform.



### 2.2.1 Technical Contributors Board

This board/group is already in place since the beginning of the AI4Europe project as being a heritage from the previous project. It is in charge of enabling the technical contributions to the Platform, mainly coming from the many EU funded projects. It supports/enables contributors to get all information they need to implement the contribution, especially to connect contributors with the corresponding subsystem experts. This board/group may refer contributors to the TDB for fundamental technical decisions.

### 2.2.2 AI Experts

The Group is in charge of validating and proposing new tools and challenges for the Platform. This group is closely working together with the Technical Decision Board as well as with the Champions and Ambassadors.

### 2.2.3 Champions and Ambassadors

The Group, which mainly consists of Young Researchers and PhD (students), is in charge of validating and proposing new tools and challenges for the Platform – similar to the focus of the AI Experts Group – but with a particular focus on the research perspective. They are Champions and Ambassadors for the AIoD platform, supporting in this role Decision Boards and more senior participants of the AI community. This group is closely working together with the Technical Decision Board, and also closely collaborates with the AI Experts Group.

### 2.2.4 DIH (and TEF) Experts

This group will represent the DIHs and EDIHs (as their representative the DTA) focusing on the needs of this group with respect to the AIoD platform. It might also include representatives from the TEFs. This group will act as a link to communication with DIH and TEF experts, so that there is cross-pollination of ideas, challenges, and solutions, as well co-creation (and subsequent exploitation) of solutions and services across AI, TEF and DIH domains.

Further focus groups are planned, like e.g., for SMEs, HW providers, SW providers, etc.

The conditions for joining these Focus Groups are currently under development and will be published as soon as their governance is defined in terms of applications to the group and collaborations mechanisms.

## 2.3 Advisory Committees

It is envisaged that the AIoD legal entity will be advised by the following three independent committees, with members drawn from international external stakeholders. These committees will include:

- a Trustworthy and Ethics AI Advisory Committee,
- a Scientific Advisory Committee,
- an Industrial Advisory Committee.

These committees have not yet been created, but will be initiated in the foreseeable future.

## 3. Business Processes

Based on the kind of user interaction with the AIoD platform and user role, several design and business processes related to the AIoD platform can be imagined and defined already at this phase of development. For each (design and/or business) process, decision points are identified. One essential decision point is controlling for requisite compliance with AIoD guidelines trustworthiness and ethics, to be drafted as part of the AI4Europe project. The processes are described here in details and the flow chart for each process can be found in Figure 4. The Business Processes are related to the operational governance of the Platform as outlined in Figure 3.

### 3.1 Content Contributors (AI4Experiments)

For facilitating an easy access and collaboration between different users in the AI community, in particular addressing here the AI-research community, a lightweight business process has been defined and is currently implemented when making contributions to the Platform. That is, researcher-users who want to collaborate in the testing environment, AI4Experiments, can do so by following the procedures indicated in the Platform. The access to this environment is free without restrictions, a “formalities” check regarding the information provided will be done to ensure that collaboration partners can find all necessary information and collaboration can be done in a safe environment

### 3.2 Business processes related to Contributors

Contributors are users that propose to contribute, code, content, or both, to the platform: additional code or extensions, tools, material, datasets or services. Contributors are users that may follow processes that differ depending on the purpose but have important commonalities.

#### 3.2.1 Code Contributors

A Code Contributor is a user who wants to provide an extension to the Platform (e.g., a security layer, an infrastructure patch, an application). The process for this user interaction needs several decision points – and within these decision points also potential iterations – as there may be a higher probability of having an impact at the core of the platform. Also, over time, a system needs to be developed that will guide (online, offline, or in hybrid ways) code contributors where and how to propose a contribution or contributions.

#### 3.2.2 Content Contributors

A Content Contributor is considered a user who wants to upload tools, datasets, videos, information material or services to the Platform for offering them free of charge (FOC) or on payment to the community. The process for this user includes decision points regarding both in technical and compliance issues.

### 3.2.3 AI4Experiments Contribution

For providing the AI community the possibility for a relatively free interaction, a specific “sandbox environment” (AI4Experiments) is made available on the platform. There, users can co-create experiments, test modules, create pipelines and so forth. This process is already implemented and the related documentation can be found on the Platform.

### 3.3 Business process related to Consumers

In general, it can be said that a user that just wants to browse and access public content from the platform will be able to do so without registration. Only if a user wants to download content or use services, he/she will have to register. In case a service is not FOC, the user will need to pay and can at this point in the process decide whether he/she wants to proceed or not.

### 3.4 Overview of the business processes and decision points for the related user groups

The decision points indicated in the flow charts (grey boxes in Figure 4) might need iterations if e.g., technical assessments are needed or queries need to be answered.

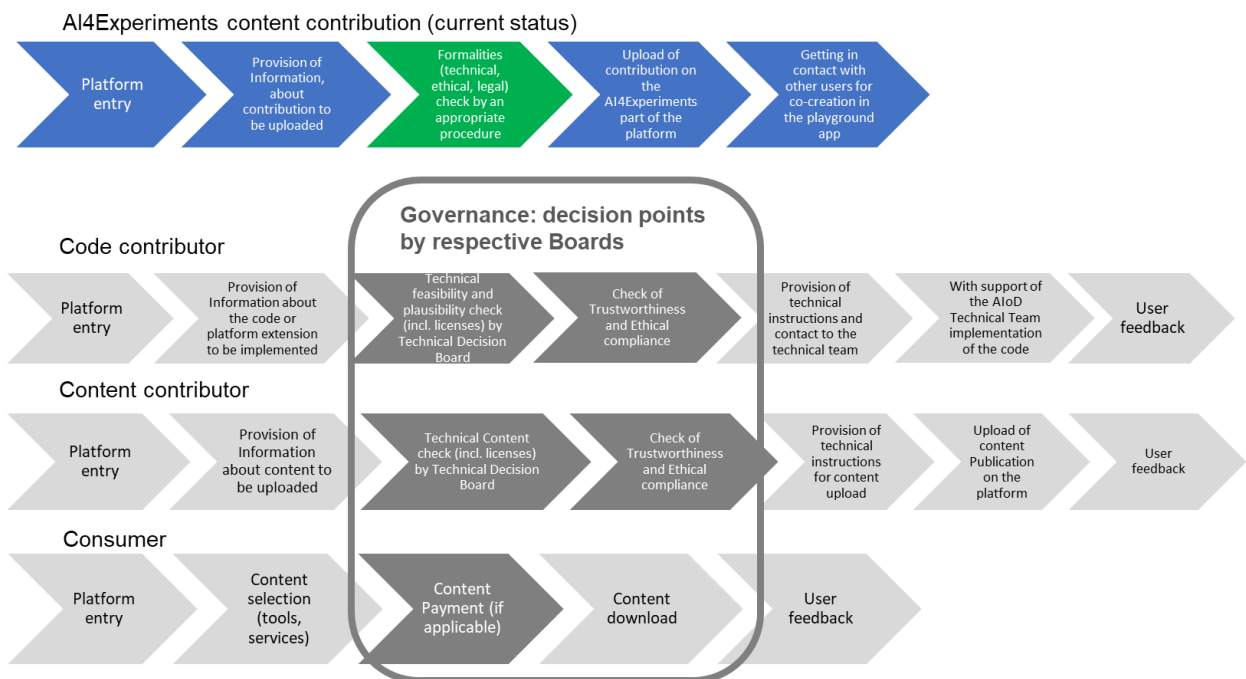


Figure 4 – Business processes of the AIoD Platform

Figure 4 shows the current status of the business processes implemented. The first business process is already implemented. The other business processes will be implemented based on the needs from users interacting with the Platform, e.g., commercial users want to contribute to or consume from the Platform, or changes in the governance structure might need also an adaptation of the business processes.

## 4. User Registration

All users (i.e., both contributors and consumers) will be free to explore the content of the AIoD Platform without registration. Registration will only be needed once a user intends to actively interact with the platform by either consuming (i.e., downloading) content from or providing content to the platform.

Successful registration across levels (code, content, and/or consumption) or at a given level requires that the criteria determined in and by the respective boards are met.

Once the user is registered on the platform, he/she can enter the Platform (via an entry point) and choose following activities:

- I want to contribute with a code to the platform (extension, modification)
- I want to upload tools/services
- I want to collaborate in a testing environment
- I want to download/acquire material (tools, services, etc.) (role: consumer)
- I want to connect my platform with the AIoD platform via an API

During the interaction process with the platform, several decision points – as shown in the business processes (see chapter 3) - indicate whether the user can follow up with the activity or if there are checkpoints that need be communicated to the user.

## 5. Next steps

AI4Europe has defined the operational governance of the European AI on demand platform as outlined in this document. As the scope is to make this Platform sustainable in the long run, the creation of a legal entity with a clear structure for the ownership and the maintenance of the Platform is planned. At current status, the organisational type is not defined yet, but this could be e.g., a non-profit organisation based in Europe, having as organisation form e.g., an association or foundation.

For the governance structure of the Platform this would mean the instalment of an additional layer on top of the PMT (later EMC) representing the “owners” or members of the Platform's legal entity as outlined in Figure 2. They have specific rights; principal amongst these rights will be votes to elect/appoint the Governance Board.

It is vital that the AIoD legal entity has a strategic vision to ensure that it remains a valuable resource for the AI community working in the European Union, in terms of science, the application of that science to industrial competitiveness, and to capacity development. To this end, it is the responsibility of the Governance Board to ensure that the strategic vision for the AIoD legal entity is reviewed on an annual basis with appropriate international input and benchmarking. For this purpose, Advisory Boards and additional Focus Groups representing the community might be installed, to further develop the vision of the AIoD platform that can then be presented to and reviewed by the Governance Board.

The Governance Board will also assist the Executive Management Committee in ensuring that the AIoD legal entity performs in line with best practice in all aspects of its operations.

## 6. Final remarks

This document provides the current situation of the operational governance of the AIoD platform and its related business processes. With respect to future developments, e.g., the development of a business-oriented part of the Platform, new developments in AI, new actors entering, and especially the future establishment of a legal entity that will be in charge of supporting the long-term sustainability of the AIoD platform, the governance model will have to adapted to forthcoming situations.

AI4Europe, which is currently running and maintaining the AIoD platform, will guide the development of the governance model. Based on the current progress and sustainability considerations, as well as new events like the ones mentioned before, the document will be updated on a regular basis.

As part of the work undertaken by AI4Europe, we should establish the AIoD legal entity, in consultation with key stakeholders, over the course of the second year of the project. It is proposed to arrange a meeting with the European Commission to begin this process in Q3/Q4 of 2023. Establishing the AIoD legal entity is not addressed in this milestone.

-----End of Document-----



# Consortium

