



Single Market Programme (SMP Food)

Call for proposals

EU support to stakeholders to improve measurement of food waste and help implement food waste prevention in their operations and organisations.

SMP-FOOD-2024-FW-STAKEHOLDERS-PJ

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CALL FOR PROPOSALS

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0. Introduction

This is a call for proposals for EU **action grants** in the field of food under the Food strand of the **Single Market Programme (SMP Food)**.

The regulatory framework for this EU Funding Programme is set out in:

- Regulation 2018/1046 ([EU Financial Regulation](#))
- the basic act (SMP Regulation [2021/690](#)¹).

The call is launched in accordance with the 2024-2027 Work Programme² and will be managed by the **European Health and Digital Executive Agency (HaDEA)** ('Agency'): **EU support to stakeholders to improve measurement of food waste and help implement food waste prevention in their operations and organisations**³.

The call covers the following topic: **SMP-FOOD-2024-FW-STAKEHOLDERS-PJ – Food Waste - Support to Stakeholders 2024-2025**.

We invite you to read the **call documentation** carefully, and in particular this Call Document, the [Model Grant Agreement](#), the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal Online Manual](#) and the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

These documents provide clarifications and answers to questions you may have when preparing your application:

- the [Call Document](#) outlines the:
 - background, objectives, scope, activities that can be funded and the expected results (sections 1 and 2)
 - timetable and available budget (sections 3 and 4)
 - admissibility and eligibility conditions (including mandatory documents; sections 5 and 6)
 - criteria for financial and operational capacity and exclusion (section 7)
 - evaluation and award procedure (section 8)
 - award criteria (section 9)
 - legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements (section 10)
 - how to submit an application (section 11)

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/690 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing a programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European statistics \(Single Market Programme\) \(OJ L 153, 3.5.2021, p. 1\).](#)

² [COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION of 21.12.2023 on the financing of the Programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed, and European Statistics and the adoption of the work programme for 2024-2027.](#)

³ Section 2.4 of [ANNEX to the COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING DECISION C\(2023\) 8926 final of 21.12.2023 on the financing of the Programme for the internal market, competitiveness of enterprises, including small and medium-sized enterprises, the area of plants, animals, food and feed and European statistics and the adoption of the work programme for 2024-2027.](#)

- the [Online Manual](#) outlines the:
 - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal ('Portal')
 - recommendations for the preparation of the application
- the [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#) contains:
 - detailed annotations on all the provisions in the Grant Agreement you will have to sign in order to obtain the grant (*including cost eligibility, payment schedule, accessory obligations, etc*).

1. Background

This call for proposals implements one of the objectives in the food area within the Single Market Programme, aiming to support sustainable food production and consumption by preventing and reducing food waste, including through information sharing and awareness raising activities.

In the EU, nearly 59 million tonnes of food waste are generated annually with associated costs estimated at 132 billion euro⁴.

The EU has implemented a dedicated action plan⁵ to reduce food loss and waste since 2016, including both regulatory and non-regulatory actions. For example, the Commission established the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste (FLW)⁶ in 2016, with the aim to support all actors in defining measures needed to prevent food waste; sharing best practice; and evaluating progress made over time. The Platform developed key recommendations for action in food waste prevention⁷, addressing action required by public and private players at each stage of the food supply chain (December 2019).

In 2020, the Commission presented the EU Farm to Fork Strategy⁸ aiming to make food systems fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly. Reducing food loss and waste is an integral part of the Farm to Fork Strategy action plan. The Commission proposed in 2023 legally binding targets to reduce food waste across the EU to drive progress towards the global target of halving food waste by 2030. According to the latest EU data, 70% of total food waste arises at consumption and retail, with households generating more than half of the total food waste in the EU (54%). Addressing consumer food waste is crucial to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal Target 12.3 of halving per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer level by 2030.

At the consumer level, the drivers⁹ and behaviours that lead to food waste are complex and often inter-related. These can be impacted by market causes (e.g. the

⁴ [Eurostat, 2022](#)

⁵ [Communication](#) from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic And Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Closing the loop, An EU action plan for the Circular Economy, COM(2015) 614 final, Brussels, 2.12.2015

⁶ https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste_en

⁷ https://food.ec.europa.eu/safety/food-waste/eu-actions-against-food-waste/eu-platform-food-losses-and-food-waste/key-recommendations_en

⁸ https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy_en

⁹ Attiq, S., Danish Habib, M., Kaur, P., Junaid Shahid Hasni, M., & Dhir, A., [Drivers of food waste reduction behaviour in the household context](#), Food Quality and Preference, 94, 2021, doi:10.1016/j.foodqual.2021.104300; Canali et al. [Drivers of current food waste generation, threats of future increase and opportunities for reduction](#), FUSIONS Project. ISBN: 978-94-6257-354-3, 2014.

price of food) and occur during planning, shopping, storing, preparing and/or consuming stages. Consumer expectations regarding the appearance of food (such as the size and shape of fruit and vegetables) can contribute to food waste upstream in the food supply chain just as the food environment can also influence consumer food purchases and habits (e.g., availability of 'doggy bags' in restaurants to take home surplus food from meals)¹⁰.

Evidence from scientific literature shows that changing consumer behaviour is not easy and that simple awareness-raising actions, such as information campaigns, are not sufficient to support behavioural change to reduce food waste. Therefore, it is important to understand the drivers¹¹ and situations leading to food waste generation at consumption (in- and out-of-home) and to utilise a mix of interventions that target specific behaviours (based on such models as the Motivation Opportunity and Ability framework) in order to achieve real change. This can best be achieved by a partnership of actors in the food system working together¹². Such partnerships can include both private and public-private collaboration.

Food waste reduction depends on consumers' motivation, opportunity and ability to act¹³. There may be insufficient motivation to take action due to a number of factors including lack of awareness about food waste; attitudes and/or level of concern about food waste and its related impacts; lack of self-awareness on the amount of food generated; lack of role models etc.¹⁴. Lack of opportunity such as time constraints affecting meal planning and preparation, not having access to technologies supporting food management (e.g., freezing) or to advice on how to store and re-use food safely can lead to food being wasted. Lack of ability (knowledge and skills) can also contribute to insufficient food management, leading to food waste. One of the main reasons leading to avoidable food waste in households is food not being used in time including due to the misunderstanding of the meaning of date marking¹⁵.

In order to address consumer food waste, the European Commission coordinated a pilot project funded by the European Parliament: the European Consumer Food Waste Forum¹⁶. In this forum (from October 2021 to May 2023), researchers and practitioners were working together to find solutions and develop tools to help reduce consumer food waste. The main outcome is compiled in a "best practice" compendium, published in July 2023¹⁷.

The European Commission also funds research and innovation projects on this topic. For example, under the Horizon Europe Programme, two projects received funding

¹⁰ [REFRESH, *Policies against consumer food waste*, Background report contributing to "REFRESH Policy brief: reducing consumer food waste" \(D3.4\), 2019.](#)

¹¹ [How to reduce consumer food waste at household level: A literature review on drivers and levers for behavioural change, M. Vittuari et al., 2023. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2352550923000672#ab0005>](#)

¹² [Changing behaviour to help more people waste less food: a guide, Champions 12.3 publication, 2022.](#)

¹³ van Geffen, L., van Herpen, E., Sijtsema, S., van Trijp, H., 2020. *Food waste as the consequence of competing motivations, lack of opportunities, and insufficient abilities*. *Resour. Conserv. Recycl. X* 5, 100026. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcrx.2019.100026>.

¹⁴ Hebrok, M., Boks, C., 2017. *Household food waste: Drivers and potential intervention points for design – An extensive review*. *J. Clean. Prod.* 151, 380–392. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2017.03.069>

¹⁵ Flash Eurobarometer 425 (2015): while 58% of Europeans state that they always check 'use by' and 'best before' labels when shopping and preparing meals, less than half understand the meaning of 'best before' (47%) or 'use by' (40%).

¹⁶ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/projects-activities/european-consumer-food-waste-forum_en

¹⁷ https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/tools-best-practices-recommendations-reduce-consumer-food-waste-compendium_en

under the call *Evidence-based decision-making to change social norms towards zero food waste* and began their activities in 2023: ToNoWaste¹⁸ and CHORIZO¹⁹ projects. It is generally difficult to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of consumer food waste prevention actions. Many consumer-focused initiatives do not have a monitoring system, do not determine KPIs nor do they set SMART objectives²⁰²¹. Providing information is the most widely used intervention; however, there is little robust evidence for its effectiveness in isolation from other factors²².

Although households are significantly influenced by other sectors' actions and external factors, consumers are aware of their role in reducing food waste. According to a Eurobarometer survey on food waste carried out in 2015²³, the majority of people living in the EU (76%) were aware that food waste prevention is something for which the individual consumer bears responsibility, along with other actors. This view is also shared by respondents across different stakeholder groups in the context of the public consultation²⁴ on the legislative proposal to establish EU-wide food waste reduction targets. In addition, in this consultation, carried out between 24 May and 24 August 2022, respondents identified the main actors that need to take more action to reduce food waste as consumers (71%), followed by other actors of the food supply chain: retailers and other distributors (70%), food manufacturers (62%), and hospitality and food services (hotels, restaurants, canteens, etc.) (59%).

2. Objectives – Themes and priorities – Activities that can be funded – Expected impact

Objectives

The objective of this call for proposals is to support EU stakeholders (single or multi-stakeholders) in taking actions to address **consumer food waste** (both in- and out-of-home), covering types of actions such as behavioural change interventions, education and training, the elaboration and implementation of food waste prevention guidelines, food waste monitoring programs, awareness raising campaigns and communication materials, and development of new business models. Actions out-of-home could, for example, take place in schools, canteens, restaurants and cafeterias.

Proposals shall describe how the **Target-Measure-Act approach**²⁵ is applied in **the 4 steps** below:

- carrying out an **initial food waste diagnosis** to understand the extent of the issue and to identify the "hotspots" needing specific action (e.g., target audiences, situations where food waste arises). This could be based on a previously made diagnosis. This process should be clearly described in the proposal.

¹⁸ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101059849>

¹⁹ <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101060014>

²⁰ JRC Report, 2019, [assessment of food waste prevention actions](#),

²¹ Reynolds et al, 2019, Review: Consumption-stage food waste reduction interventions – What works and how to design better interventions <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.foodpol.2019.01.009>

²² [REFRESH Policy Brief: Reducing consumer food waste, 2019](#)

²³ FLASH Eurobarometer 425, Food waste and date marking. October 2015.

²⁴ The findings of the public consultation can be consulted here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/better-regulation/have-your-say/initiatives/13223-Food-waste-reduction-targets/public-consultation_en

²⁵ [Call to Global Action on Food Loss and Waste, Champions 12.3 \(2020\)](#)

- setting **food waste reduction targets**²⁶ with reference to a specific baseline. Project proposals should define SMART objectives and specific KPIs (ideally including reduction of food waste and/or other indicators such as changes in awareness and/or attitudes, results indicators such as outreach achieved etc.) to be utilised in monitoring progress made.

- **developing and implementing actions** to tackle the hotspots identified during the initial food waste diagnosis.

- carrying out a **final evaluation at the end of the project**, in order to understand the results achieved by implementing the actions, and progress made towards the targets and KPIs set. The results of the evaluation should be publicly available and accessible for key stakeholders (see **Expected impacts** section for further information). Information on projections concerning the food waste reduction trend in the long term, or for how long the action(s) proposed by the project is/are expected to bring food waste reductions, is welcome.

Themes and priorities (scope)

This call targets both single stakeholders and multi-stakeholder collaborations or partnerships across the food supply chain including key actors such as farmers, manufacturers, retailers, food services as well as researchers, NGOs and public entities (e.g. local, regional or national authorities, educational establishments etc.).

Activities that can be funded (scope)

A wide range of activities are eligible to be supported by the grants offered under this call for proposals, provided that they can be linked to the abovementioned objectives.

The grants would cover **consumer** food waste prevention actions (in and out-of-home) such as (non-exhaustive list):

- behavioural change interventions (e.g. nudges to prevent food waste at consumer level such as specific tools and prompts for households and in food services, coaching programmes, etc.);
- education and training (e.g. school programmes, staff training and actions in school canteens);
- awareness raising campaigns (e.g. local, regional or national scale);
- measurement and reporting tools and solutions for preventing food waste at consumption level (e.g. mobile applications and other monitoring tools beyond self-reporting);
- studies, data collection and experimental actions widening the evidence base for consumer food waste prevention interventions (e.g. audience segmentation studies to better tailor and target actions).

Actions proposed should go beyond the provision of information to consumers and focus on supporting consumer behavioural change to reduce food waste. Initiatives should be evidence-based, using an appropriate behavioural change model wherever possible. They may combine awareness raising together with practical tips and tools to help consumers reduce food waste.

²⁶ Please consider established targets such as the global SDG Target 12.3 or other targets set at national or local level and/or linked to a specific sector/activity.

Proposed actions must comply with relevant EU and EU legislation (food safety, food information to consumers, animal health, etc.).

Actions promoting waste treatment, such as composting, are not covered by the scope of this call, nor are actions promoting the use of food no longer intended for human consumption to animal feed.

Expected impact

It is expected that grant beneficiaries will help prevent and reduce the amounts of food waste generated at consumer level, with positive environmental, economic and social impacts.

The impact of the project on food waste reduction must be clearly identified, either through quantitative data (e.g. measurement of food waste amounts) and/or qualitative data (e.g. reported behavioural change).

Project proposals should explain how the economic, social and environmental impacts of food waste reduction will be quantified and should describe the short to long-term impacts expected²⁷.

Grant beneficiaries should share the results of the projects (the executive summary and the final report in the same language as the Grant Agreement as well as the short case study²⁸) through the [EU Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub](#). At the request of the granting authority, beneficiaries could be asked to share information in the form of webinars, meetings, etc. with the EU Platform on FLW and/or with the Expert Group on Food Losses and Food Waste.

3. Available budget

The estimated available call budget is **EUR 4 000 000**.

We reserve the right not to award all available funds or to redistribute them between the call priorities, depending on the proposals received and the results of the evaluation.

4. Timetable and deadlines

| Timetable and deadlines (indicative) | |
|---|---|
| Call opening: | 30 May 2024 |
| <u>Deadline for submission:</u> | <u>25 September 2024 – 17:00:00 CET</u> (Brussels) |
| Evaluation: | January 2025 |
| Information on evaluation results: | March 2025 |
| GA signature: | June 2025 |

²⁷ The Joint Research Centre of the European Commission has developed a calculator to determine the net economic benefits and net environmental savings of food waste prevention actions. The latter are calculated using the methodology of Life Cycle Assessment. The calculator is available here: https://eplca.jrc.ec.europa.eu/permalink/valeria/prevention_action_calculator.xlsm

²⁸ Further information can be found under section *Milestones and deliverables*

5. Admissibility and documents

Proposals must be submitted before the **call deadline** (see *timetable section 4*).

Proposals must be submitted **electronically** via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System (accessible via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section. Paper submissions are NOT possible.

Proposals (including annexes and supporting documents) must be submitted using the forms provided *inside* the Submission System (⚠ NOT the documents available on the Topic page — they are only for information).

Proposals must be **complete** and contain all the requested information and all required annexes and supporting documents:


- Application Form Part A — contains administrative information about the participants (future coordinator, beneficiaries and affiliated entities) and the summarised budget for the project (*to be filled in directly online*)
- Application Form Part B — contains the technical description of the project (*to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed and then assembled and re-uploaded*)
- **mandatory annexes and supporting documents** (*templates available to be downloaded from the Portal Submission System, completed, assembled and re-uploaded*):
 - detailed budget table/calculator,
 - CVs (standard) of core project team,
 - activity reports of last year for all applicants (in the case of consortia, for all organisations part of the consortium),
 - list of previous projects if related to food waste prevention (key projects for the last 4 years) (template available in Part B).

Please note that the amounts entered into the summarised budget table (filled in directly online) must correspond to the amounts calculated in the detailed budget table. In case of discrepancies, the amounts in the online summarised budget table will prevail.

At proposal submission, you will have to confirm that you have the **mandate to act** for all applicants. Moreover, you will have to confirm that the information in the application is correct and complete and that the participants comply with the conditions for receiving EU funding (especially eligibility, financial and operational capacity, exclusion, etc). Before signing the grant, each beneficiary and affiliated entity will have to confirm this again by signing a declaration of honour (DoH). Proposals without full support will be rejected.

Your application must be **readable, accessible and printable**.

You may be asked at a later stage for further documents (*for legal entity validation, financial capacity check, bank account validation, etc*).

 For more information about the submission process (including IT aspects), consult the [Online Manual](#).

6. Eligibility

Applications will only be considered eligible if their content corresponds wholly (or at least in part) to the topic description for which it is submitted.

Eligible participants (eligible countries)

In order to be eligible, the applicants (beneficiaries and affiliated entities) must:

- be legal entities (public or private bodies)
- be from an eligible country, i.e.:
 - EU Member State (including overseas countries and territories (OCTs)).

Beneficiaries and affiliated entities must register in the [Participant Register](#) — before submitting the proposal — and will have to be validated by the Central Validation Service (REA Validation). For the validation, they will be requested to upload documents showing legal status and origin.

Other entities may participate in other consortium roles, such as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions, etc (*see section 13*).

Specific cases

Exceptional funding — Entities from other countries (not listed above) are exceptionally eligible, if the granting authority considers their participation essential for the implementation of the action.

Natural persons — Natural persons are NOT eligible (with the exception of self-employed persons, i.e., sole traders, where the company does not have legal personality separate from that of the natural person).

International organisations — International organisations are eligible. The rules on eligible countries do not apply to them.

Entities without legal personality — Entities which do not have legal personality under their national law may exceptionally participate, provided that their representatives have the capacity to undertake legal obligations on their behalf, and offer guarantees for the protection of the EU financial interests equivalent to that offered by legal persons²⁹.

EU bodies — EU bodies (with the exception of the European Commission Joint Research Centre) can NOT be part of the consortium.

Associations and interest groupings — Entities composed of members may participate as 'sole beneficiaries' or 'beneficiaries without legal personality'³⁰. ⚠ Please note that if the action will be implemented by the members, they should also participate (either as beneficiaries or as affiliated entities, otherwise their costs will NOT be eligible).

EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (*e.g. entities subject to [EU restrictive measures](#) under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)*³¹ and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#)³²). Such entities are not eligible

²⁹ See Article 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁰ For the definitions, see Articles 187(2) and 197(2)(c) EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³¹ Please note that the EU Official Journal contains the official list and, in case of conflict, its content prevails over that of the [EU Sanctions Map](#).

³² Commission guidelines No [2013/C 205/05](#) on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11).

to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any).

Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties). In this case, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Consortium composition

Not applicable.

Eligible activities

Eligible activities are the ones set out in section 2 above.

Projects must comply with EU policy interests and priorities (*such as environment, social, security, industrial and trade policy, etc*).

Financial support to third parties is not allowed.

Geographic location (target countries)

Proposals must relate to activities taking place in the eligible countries (*see above*).

Duration

Projects should normally range **between 18 and 24 months**.

Extensions are possible, if duly justified and through an amendment.

Project budget

Project budgets (maximum grant amount) are expected to range between EUR 100.000 and EUR 300.000 per project.

This does not however preclude the submission/selection of proposals requesting other amounts. The grant awarded may be lower than the amount requested.

7. Financial and operational capacity and exclusion

Financial capacity

Applicants must have **stable and sufficient resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share. Organisations participating in several projects must have sufficient capacity to implement all these projects.

The financial capacity check will be carried out on the basis of the documents you will be requested to upload in the [Participant Register](#) during grant preparation (*e.g. profit and loss account and balance sheet, business plan, audit report produced by an approved external auditor, certifying the accounts for the last closed financial year, etc*). The analysis will be based on neutral financial indicators, but will also take into

account other aspects, such as dependency on EU funding and deficit and revenue in previous years.

In addition, a beneficiary, requesting an EU-contribution of \geq EUR 750 000 EUR, shall submit an audit report produced by an approved external auditor, where it is available, and always in cases where a statutory audit is required by Union or national law, certifying the annual accounts (profit and loss account and the balance sheet) for to the last two available financial years. In all other cases, the applicant shall provide a self-declaration signed by its authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts.

The check will normally be done for all beneficiaries, except:

- public bodies (entities established as public body under national law, including local, regional or national authorities) or international organisations
- if the individual requested grant amount is not more than EUR 60 000.

If needed, it may also be done for affiliated entities.

If we consider that your financial capacity is not satisfactory, we may require:

- further information
 - an enhanced financial responsibility regime, i.e. joint and several responsibility for all beneficiaries or joint and several liability of affiliated entities (*see below, section 10*)
 - prefinancing paid in instalments
 - (one or more) prefinancing guarantees (*see below, section 10*)
- or
- propose no prefinancing
 - request that you are replaced or, if needed, reject the entire proposal.

 For more information, see [Rules for Legal Entity Validation, LEAR Appointment and Financial Capacity Assessment](#).

Operational capacity

Applicants must have the **know-how, qualifications** and **resources** to successfully implement the projects and contribute their share (including sufficient experience in projects of comparable size and nature).

This capacity will be assessed together with the 'Quality' award criterion, on the basis of the competence and experience of the applicants and their project teams, including operational resources (human, technical and other) or, exceptionally, the measures proposed to obtain it by the time the task implementation starts.

If the evaluation of the award criterion is positive, the applicants are considered to have sufficient operational capacity.

Applicants will have to show their capacity via the following information:

- general profiles (qualifications and experiences) of the staff responsible for managing and implementing the project
- description of the consortium participants
- applicants' activity reports of last year

- list of previous projects (key projects for the last 4 years).

Additional supporting documents may be requested, if needed to confirm the operational capacity of any applicant.

Exclusion

Applicants which are subject to an **EU exclusion decision** or in one of the following **exclusion situations** that bar them from receiving EU funding can NOT participate³³:

- bankruptcy, winding up, affairs administered by the courts, arrangement with creditors, suspended business activities or other similar procedures (including procedures for persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- in breach of social security or tax obligations (including if done by persons with unlimited liability for the applicant's debts)
- guilty of grave professional misconduct³⁴ (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- committed fraud, corruption, links to a criminal organisation, money laundering, terrorism-related crimes (including terrorism financing), child labour or human trafficking (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- shown significant deficiencies in complying with main obligations under an EU procurement contract, grant agreement, prize, expert contract, or similar (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- guilty of irregularities within the meaning of Article 1(2) of EU Regulation [2988/95](#) (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant)
- created under a different jurisdiction with the intent to circumvent fiscal, social or other legal obligations in the country of origin or created another entity with this purpose (including if done by persons having powers of representation, decision-making or control, beneficial owners or persons who are essential for the award/implementation of the grant).

Applicants will also be rejected if it turns out that³⁵:

- during the award procedure they misrepresented information required as a condition for participating or failed to supply that information
- they were previously involved in the preparation of the call and this entails a distortion of competition that cannot be remedied otherwise (conflict of interest).

8. Evaluation and award procedure

³³ See Articles 136 and 141 of EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

³⁴ Professional misconduct includes: violation of ethical standards of the profession, wrongful conduct with impact on professional credibility, false declarations/misrepresentation of information, participation in a cartel or other agreement distorting competition, violation of IPR, attempting to influence decision-making processes or obtain confidential information from public authorities to gain advantage.

³⁵ See Article 141 EU Financial Regulation [2018/1046](#).

The proposals will have to follow the **standard submission and evaluation procedure** (one-stage submission + one-step evaluation).

An **evaluation committee** will assess all applications. Proposals will first be checked for formal requirements (admissibility, and eligibility, *see sections 5 and 6*). Proposals found admissible and eligible will be evaluated against the operational capacity and award criteria (*see sections 7 and 9*) and then ranked according to their scores.

For proposals with the same score (within a topic) a **priority order** will be determined according to the following approach:

Successively for every group of *ex aequo* proposals, starting with the highest scored group, and continuing in descending order:

- 1) Projects focusing on a theme that is not otherwise covered by higher ranked projects will be considered to have the highest priority.
- 2) The *ex aequo* proposals within the same topic will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for the award criterion 'Relevance'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Impact'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on their scores for the criterion 'Quality'.
- 3) If this does not allow to determine the priority, a further prioritisation can be done by considering the overall project portfolio and the creation of positive synergies between projects, or other factors related to the objectives of the call. These factors will be documented in the panel report.

All proposals will be informed about the evaluation result (**evaluation result letter**). Successful proposals will be invited for grant preparation; the other ones will be put on the reserve list or rejected.

No commitment for funding — Invitation to grant preparation does NOT constitute a formal commitment for funding. We will still need to make various legal checks before grant award: *legal entity validation, financial capacity, exclusion check, etc.*

Grant preparation will involve a dialogue in order to fine-tune technical or financial aspects of the project and may require extra information from your side. It may also include adjustments to the proposal to address recommendations of the evaluation committee or other concerns. Compliance will be a pre-condition for signing the grant.

If you believe that the evaluation procedure was flawed, you can submit a **complaint** (following the deadlines and procedures set out in the evaluation result letter). Please note that notifications which have not been opened within 10 days after sending will be considered to have been accessed and that deadlines will be counted from opening/access (*see also [Funding & Tenders Portal Terms and Conditions](#)*). Please also be aware that for complaints submitted electronically, there may be character limitations.

9. Award criteria

The **award criteria** for this call are as follows:

- 1. Relevance (40 points):** clarity and consistency of project, objectives and planning; extent to which they match the themes and priorities and objectives of the call;); possibility to use the results in other countries.
- 2. Quality (40 points):**

- **Project design and implementation:** technical quality (including description of the Target-Measure-Act approach); logical links between the identified problems, needs and solutions proposed (logical frame concept); methodology for implementing the project (concept and methodology, management, procedures, timetable, risks and risk management, monitoring and evaluation); feasibility of the project within the proposed time frame; cost effectiveness (sufficient/appropriate budget for proper implementation)
- **Project team and cooperation arrangements:** quality of the project team; appropriate procedures and problem-solving mechanisms for cooperating within the project team(s) and possible sub-contractors; collaboration between public/private sectors and/or with other actors in the food value chain.

3. Impact (20 points): environmental, economic and social gains expected from the project; ambition and expected long-term impact of results on target groups; appropriate dissemination strategy for ensuring sustainability and long-term impact; sustainability of results after EU funding ends; dissemination of results and sharing of best practices within relevant networks.

| Award criteria | Minimum pass score | Maximum score |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|
| Relevance | 21 | 40 |
| Quality | 21 | 40 |
| Impact | 11 | 20 |
| Overall (pass) scores | 55 | 100 |

Maximum points: 100 points.

Individual thresholds per criterion: 21/40, 21/40 and 11/20 points.

Overall threshold: 55 points.

Proposals that pass the individual thresholds AND the overall threshold will be considered for funding – within the limits of the available budget (i.e. up to the budget ceiling). Other proposals will be rejected.

10. Legal and financial set-up of the Grant Agreements

If you pass evaluation, your project will be invited for grant preparation, where you will be asked to prepare the Grant Agreement together with the EU Project Officer.

This Grant Agreement will set the framework for your grant and its terms and conditions, in particular concerning deliverables, reporting and payments.

The Model Grant Agreement that will be used (and all other relevant templates and guidance documents) can be found on [Portal Reference Documents](#).

Starting date and project duration

The project starting date and duration will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 1*). Normally the starting date will be after grant signature. A retroactive starting date can be granted exceptionally for duly justified reasons – but never earlier than the proposal submission date.

Project duration: *see section 6 above*.

Milestones and deliverables

The milestones and deliverables for each project will be managed through the Portal Grant Management System and will be reflected in Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

The following deliverable will be mandatory for all projects:

Due by the last month of the project the beneficiary shall submit:

- **A report** in the language of the Grant Agreement containing the results of the project together with an **executive summary**. The beneficiary shall also publish the report and the executive summary on the [European Food Loss and Waste Prevention Hub \(europa.eu\)](https://europeanfoodlossandwaste.eu). At the request of the granting authority, beneficiaries could be asked to share information in the form of webinars, meetings, etc. with the EU Platform on FLW and/or with the Expert Group on Food Losses and Food Waste.
- **A short case study** (up to 5 pages) with key information about:
 - the main consumer food waste prevention intervention(s) carried out during the project and how they were implemented (e.g., tools or software used, costs related to implementation and actors involved);
 - key findings from the food waste diagnosis and monitoring activities (e.g., where and why food waste occurs at consumer level and audiences targeted by the project);
 - results achieved (for example, amounts of food waste prevented, outreach, and changes in attitudes).
 - lessons learned from the implementation of the project.

Form of grant, funding rate and maximum grant amount

The grant parameters (*maximum grant amount, funding rate, total eligible costs, etc*) will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3 and art 5*).

Project budget (maximum grant amount): *see section 6 above*.

The grant will be a budget-based mixed actual cost grant (actual costs, with unit cost and flat-rate elements). This means that it will reimburse ONLY certain types of costs (eligible costs) and costs that were *actually* incurred for your project (NOT the *budgeted* costs). For unit costs and flat-rates, you can charge the amounts calculated as explained in the Grant Agreement (*see art 6 and Annex 2 and 2a*).

The costs will be reimbursed at the funding rate fixed in the Grant Agreement **(50%)**.

Grants may NOT produce a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). For-profit organisations must declare their revenues and, if there is a profit, we will deduct it from the final grant amount (*see art 22.3*).

Moreover, please be aware that the final grant amount may be reduced in case of non-compliance with the Grant Agreement (*e.g. improper implementation, breach of obligations, etc*)

Budget categories and cost eligibility rules

The budget categories and cost eligibility rules are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 3, art 6 and Annex 2*).

Budget categories for this call:

- A. Personnel costs
 - A.1 Employees,
 - A.2 Natural persons under direct contract,
 - A.3 Seconded persons
 - A.4 SME owners and natural person beneficiaries
- B. Subcontracting costs
- C. Purchase costs
 - C.1 Travel and subsistence
 - C.2 Equipment
 - C.3 Other goods, works and services
- D. Other cost categories
 - D.1 Financial support to third parties
- E. Indirect costs

Specific cost eligibility conditions for this call:

- personnel costs:
 - SME owner/natural person unit cost³⁶: Yes
- travel and subsistence unit cost³⁷: Yes
- equipment costs: depreciation
- other cost categories:
 - costs for financial support to third parties: not allowed
- indirect cost flat-rate: 7% of the eligible direct costs (categories A-D, except volunteers costs and exempted specific cost categories, if any)
- VAT: non-deductible VAT is eligible (but please note that since 2013 VAT paid by beneficiaries that are public bodies acting as public authority is NOT eligible)
- other:
 - in-kind contributions for free are allowed, but cost-neutral, i.e., they cannot be declared as cost
 - project websites: communication costs for presenting the project on the participants' websites or social media accounts are eligible; costs for *separate* project websites are not eligible

³⁶ Commission [Decision](#) of 20 October 2020 authorising the use of unit costs for the personnel costs of the owners of small and medium-sized enterprises and beneficiaries that are natural persons not receiving a salary for the work carried out by themselves under an action or work programme (C(2020)7115).

³⁷ Commission [Decision](#) of 26.7.2023 amending Commission Decision C(2021)35 authorising the use of unit costs for travel, accommodation and subsistence costs under an action or work programme under the 2021-2027 multi-annual financial framework.

- other ineligible costs: No

Reporting and payment arrangements


The reporting and payment arrangements are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 21 and 22*).

After grant signature, you will normally receive a **prefinancing** to start working on the project (float of normally **50%** of the maximum grant amount; exceptionally less or no prefinancing). The prefinancing will be paid 30 days from entry into force/10 days before starting date/financial guarantee (if required) — whichever is the latest.

There will be no **interim payment**.

Payment of the balance: At the end of the project, we will calculate your final grant amount. If the total of earlier payments is higher than the final grant amount, we will ask you (your coordinator) to pay back the difference (recovery).

All payments will be made to the coordinator.

 Please be aware that payments will be automatically lowered if one of your consortium members has outstanding debts towards the EU (granting authority or other EU bodies). Such debts will be offset by us — in line with the conditions set out in the Grant Agreement (*see art 22*).

Please also note that you are responsible for keeping records on all the work done and the costs declared.

Prefinancing guarantees

If a prefinancing guarantee is required, it will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4*). The amount will be set during grant preparation and it will normally be equal or lower than the prefinancing for your grant.

The guarantee should be in euro and issued by an approved bank/financial institution established in an EU Member State. If you are established in a non-EU country and would like to provide a guarantee from a bank/financial institution in your country, please contact us (this may be exceptionally accepted, if it offers equivalent security).

Amounts blocked in bank accounts will NOT be accepted as financial guarantees.

Prefinancing guarantees are formally NOT linked to individual consortium members, which means that you are free to organise how to provide the guarantee amount (*by one or several beneficiaries, for the overall amount or several guarantees for partial amounts, by the beneficiary concerned or by another beneficiary, etc*). It is however important that the requested amount is covered and that the guarantee(s) are sent to us in time to make the prefinancing (scanned copy via Portal AND original by post).

If agreed with us, the bank guarantee may be replaced by a guarantee from a third party.

The guarantee will be released at the end of the grant, in accordance with the conditions laid down in the Grant Agreement.

Certificates

Depending on the type of action, size of grant amount and type of beneficiaries, you may be requested to submit different certificates. The types, schedules and thresholds for each certificate are fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet, point 4 and art 24*).

Liability regime for recoveries

The liability regime for recoveries will be fixed in the Grant Agreement (*Data Sheet point 4.4 and art 22*).

For beneficiaries, it is one of the following:

- limited joint and several liability with individual ceilings — *each beneficiary up to their maximum grant amount*
 - unconditional joint and several liability — *each beneficiary up to the maximum grant amount for the action*
- or
- individual financial responsibility — *each beneficiary only for their own debts.*

In addition, the granting authority may require joint and several liability of affiliated entities (with their beneficiary).

Provisions concerning the project implementation

IPR rules: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 16 and Annex 5)*:

- rights of use on results: Yes
- access rights to ensure continuity and interoperability obligations: Yes

Communication, dissemination and visibility of funding: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 17 and Annex 5)*:

- communication and dissemination plan: No
- additional communication and dissemination activities: Yes

Specific rules for carrying out the action: *see Model Grant Agreement (art 18 and Annex 5)*: n/a

Other specificities

n/a

Non-compliance and breach of contract

The Grant Agreement (chapter 5) provides for the measures we may take in case of breach of contract (and other non-compliance issues).



For more information, see [AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement](#).

11. How to submit an application

All proposals must be submitted directly online via the Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Submission System. Paper applications are NOT accepted.

Submission is a **2-step process**:

a) create a user account and register your organisation

To use the Submission System (the only way to apply), all participants need to [create an EU Login user account](#).

Once you have an EU Login account, you can [register your organisation](#) in the Participant Register. When your registration is finalised, you will receive a 9-digit participant identification code (PIC).

b) **submit the proposal**

Access the Electronic Submission System via the Topic page in the [Search Funding & Tenders](#) section (or, for calls sent by invitation to submit a proposal, through the link provided in the invitation letter).

Submit your proposal in 3 parts, as follows:

- Part A includes administrative information about the applicant organisations (future coordinator, beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners) and the summarised budget for the proposal. Fill it in directly online
- Part B (description of the action) covers the technical content of the proposal. Download the mandatory word template from the Submission System, fill it in and upload it as a PDF file
- Annexes (*see section 5*). Upload them as PDF file (single or multiple depending on the slots). Excel upload is sometimes possible, depending on the file type.

Proposals shorter than 30 pages are recommended (Part B; annexes do not count towards this recommendation).

Documents must be uploaded to the **right category** in the Submission System otherwise the proposal might be considered incomplete and thus inadmissible.

The proposal must be submitted **before the call deadline** (*see section 4*). After this deadline, the system is closed and proposals can no longer be submitted.

Once the proposal is submitted, you will receive a **confirmation e-mail** (with date and time of your application). If you do not receive this confirmation e-mail, it means your proposal has NOT been submitted. If you believe this is due to a fault in the Submission System, you should immediately file a complaint via the [IT Helpdesk webform](#), explaining the circumstances and attaching a copy of the proposal (and, if possible, screenshots to show what happened).

Details on processes and procedures are described in the [Online Manual](#). The Online Manual also contains the links to FAQs and detailed instructions regarding the Portal Electronic Exchange System.

12. Help

As far as possible, ***please try to find the answers you need yourself***, in this and the other documentation (we have limited resources for handling direct enquiries):

- [Online Manual](#)
- [Portal FAQ](#) (for general questions).
- [Topic Q&A on the Topic page](#)

Please also consult the Topic page regularly, since we will use it to publish call updates. (For invitations, we will contact you directly in case of a call update).

Contact

For individual questions on the Portal Submission System, please contact the [IT Helpdesk](#).

Non-IT related questions should be sent to the following email address: HADEA-FOOD-GRANTS@ec.europa.eu

Please indicate clearly the reference of the call and topic to which your question relates (*see cover page*).

13. Important



IMPORTANT

- **Don't wait until the end** — Complete your application sufficiently in advance of the deadline to avoid any last minute **technical problems**. Problems due to last minute submissions (*e.g. congestion, etc*) will be entirely at your risk. Call deadlines can NOT be extended.
- **Consult** the Portal Topic page regularly. We will use it to publish updates and additional information on the call (call and topic updates).
- **Funding & Tenders Portal Electronic Exchange System** — By submitting the application, all participants **accept** to use the electronic exchange system in accordance with the [Portal Terms & Conditions](#).
- **Registration** — Before submitting the application, all beneficiaries, affiliated entities and associated partners must be registered in the [Participant Register](#). The participant identification code (PIC) (one per participant) is mandatory for the Application Form.
- **Consortium roles**— When setting up your consortium, you should think of organisations that help you reach objectives and solve problems.

The roles should be attributed according to the level of participation in the project. Main participants should participate as **beneficiaries** or **affiliated entities**; other entities can participate as associated partners, subcontractors, third parties giving in-kind contributions. **Associated partners** and third parties giving in-kind contributions should bear their own costs (they will not become formal recipients of EU funding). **Subcontracting** should normally constitute a limited part and must be performed by third parties (not by one of the beneficiaries/affiliated entities). Subcontracting going beyond 30% of the total eligible costs must be justified in the application.

- **Coordinator** — In multi-beneficiary grants, the beneficiaries participate as consortium (group of beneficiaries). They will have to choose a coordinator, who will take care of the project management and coordination and will represent the consortium towards the granting authority. In mono-beneficiary grants, the single beneficiary will automatically be coordinator.
- **Affiliated entities** — Applicants may participate with affiliated entities (i.e. entities linked to a beneficiary which participate in the action with similar rights and obligations as the beneficiaries, but do not sign the grant and therefore do not become beneficiaries themselves). They will get a part of the grant money and must therefore comply with all the call conditions and be validated (just like beneficiaries); but they do not count towards the minimum eligibility criteria for consortium composition (if any).
- **Associated partners** — Applicants may participate with associated partners (i.e. partner organisations which participate in the action but without the right to get grant money). They participate without funding and therefore do not need to be validated.
- **Consortium agreement** — For practical and legal reasons it is recommended to set up internal arrangements that allow you to deal with exceptional or unforeseen circumstances (in all cases, even if not mandatory under the Grant Agreement). The consortium agreement also gives you the possibility to redistribute the grant money according to your own consortium-internal principles and parameters (for instance, one beneficiary can reattribute its grant money to another beneficiary). The consortium agreement thus allows you to customise the EU grant to the needs inside your consortium and can also help to protect you in case of disputes.

- **Balanced project budget** — Grant applications must ensure a balanced project budget and sufficient other resources to implement the project successfully (*e.g. own contributions, income generated by the action, financial contributions from third parties, etc*). You may be requested to lower your estimated costs, if they are ineligible (including excessive).
- **Completed/ongoing projects** — Proposals for projects that have already been completed will be rejected; proposals for projects that have already started will be assessed on a case-by-case basis (in this case, no costs can be reimbursed for activities that took place before the project starting date/proposal submission).
- **No-profit rule** — Grants may NOT give a profit (i.e. surplus of revenues + EU grant over costs). This will be checked by us at the end of the project.
- **No cumulation of funding/no double funding** — It is strictly prohibited to cumulate funding from the EU budget (except under 'EU Synergies actions'). Outside such Synergies actions, any given action may receive only ONE grant from the EU budget and cost items may under NO circumstances be declared under two EU grants. If you would like to nonetheless benefit from different EU funding opportunities, projects must be designed as different actions, clearly delineated and separated for each grant (without overlaps).
- **Combination with EU operating grants** — Combination with EU operating grants is possible, if the project remains outside the operating grant work programme and you make sure that cost items are clearly separated in your accounting and NOT declared twice (see [AGA — Annotated Grant Agreement, art 6.2.E](#)).
- **Multiple proposals** — Applicants may submit more than one proposal for *different* projects under the same call (and be awarded funding for them).
Organisations may participate in several proposals.
BUT: if there are several proposals for *very similar* projects, only one application will be accepted and evaluated; the applicants will be asked to withdraw the others (or they will be rejected).
- **Resubmission** — Proposals may be changed and re-submitted until the deadline for submission.
- **Rejection** — By submitting the application, all applicants accept the call conditions set out in this Call Document (and the documents it refers to). Proposals that do not comply with all the call conditions will be **rejected**. This applies also to applicants: All applicants need to fulfil the criteria; if any one of them doesn't, they must be replaced or the entire proposal will be rejected.
- **Cancellation** — There may be circumstances which may require the cancellation of the call. In this case, you will be informed via a call or topic update. Please note that cancellations are without entitlement to compensation.
- **Language** — You can submit your proposal in any official EU language (project abstract/summary should however always be in English). For reasons of efficiency, we strongly advise you to use English for the entire application. If you need the call documentation in another official EU language, please submit a request within 10 days after call publication (for the contact information, see *section 12*).

- **Transparency** — In accordance with Article 38 of the [EU Financial Regulation](#), information about EU grants awarded is published each year on the [Europa website](#).

This includes:

- beneficiary names
- beneficiary addresses
- the purpose for which the grant was awarded
- the maximum amount awarded.

The publication can exceptionally be waived (on reasoned and duly substantiated request), if there is a risk that the disclosure could jeopardise your rights and freedoms under the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights or harm your commercial interests.

- **Data protection** — The submission of a proposal under this call involves the collection, use and processing of personal data. This data will be processed in accordance with the applicable legal framework. It will be processed solely for the purpose of evaluating your proposal, subsequent management of your grant and, if needed, programme monitoring, evaluation and communication. Details are explained in the [Funding & Tenders Portal Privacy Statement](#).