

Call for expression of interest to participate in “EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs”

EIT Food is looking for 4 companies that would participate in market testing of products co-created with consumers in the EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs project.

Application deadline: 27 September 2023, 11 am CEST.

Application template: see Annex.

Further details about EIT Food can be found at: www.eitfood.eu. More information about the EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs methodology developed by University of Warsaw are available at <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ris-consumer-engagement-labs>.

1. Background information

1.1. EIT Food

EIT Food is one of the largest and most impactful food-related initiatives worldwide. As part of the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), EIT Food connects partners from leading businesses, universities, and research centres across Europe. It is a people-centric and resource-smart transformer of the European food system, driving consumer confidence and improved global health. EIT Food members have a strong belief that the food sector needs to be transformed and that this can only be achieved by reconnecting partners within the food sector and by giving the consumer a more central role.

1.2. EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs

EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs is the largest food co-creation initiative in Europe. In 2019-2022, the co-creation processes involved 82 consumer panels and 43 companies from 16 European countries, who worked together to design, develop and introduce to the market 22 innovative food products.

Consumer Engagement Labs are **co-creation processes** involving **consumers and producers**, based on innovative methodology developed by University of Warsaw. Each Labs process engages a relatively coherent group of consumers, who jointly go through a multi-stage interactive process of ideation to develop proposals for new products that better address their specific needs. Unlike typical sensory panels and consumer surveys, the Labs do not involve testing of sample products but creation of innovative, yet non-existing combinations of product features and benefits. This is enabled by an interactive Labs format, creativity-stimulating techniques and opportunities to redesign food products without the need to master specialist vocabulary or possess detailed knowledge concerning ingredients or manufacturing processes.

The activity continues the successful format of Consumer Engagement Labs, using the innovative co-creation methodology tested, modified and refined in 2019-2022. The Labs make local food system actors more aware of specific needs of selected consumer groups, establishing trust-based dialogue, offering the consumers an opportunity to propose new products that better address their needs. The Labs encourage local companies to introduce to the market new food products and stimulate cooperation between startups, academics and food companies. The methodology relies on insights

from anthropology and psychology of creative processes, and food-related behaviors. The sessions are interactive and engaging, enabling non-expert consumers to modify features of their preferred foods, to reconceptualize approaches to dietary needs and to develop non-existing combinations of features and benefits. The activity puts strong emphasis on dissemination and exploitation of project results, and enhances the understanding of needs of consumers among food producers in various countries, encouraged to develop dedicated products.

Additional information about EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs is available on the project website at: <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ris-consumer-engagement-labs>.

2. Participation in “EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs”

Selected activities of “EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs” will be implemented with the support of dedicated subcontractors. The present call is launched by EIT Food jointly with University of Warsaw to select companies that will deliver market testing services for products that were successfully developed with the participation of consumers (each company-subcontractor selected in the present call will deliver market testing services for one product specified in section 2.4 of this call document). The selection process is implemented as an open call, using clear and transparent selection criteria, and the selection will be carried out with the help of experts evaluators. In 2023, each subcontractor will benefit from **funding of 8,000€** to carry out the tasks and implement the contractual obligations (based on subcontracting relationship, i.e. by issuing VAT invoices, without the requirement to apply Horizon Europe rules for personnel cost accounting). The subcontractors will have a precisely defined workplan, linked to the timeline of project activities.

2.1. Eligibility

Eligible companies need to meet the following criteria:

1. A legal person (informal organizations/unregistered startup teams are not eligible) registered in a member state of the European Union;
2. A retailer (company specializing in retail sale; NACE code G47), focused on fast-moving consumer goods or food service company (NACE I56);
3. Willing to carry out market tests of a selected new product, which is the outcome of the Labs co-creation process;
4. Able to sign a subcontracting agreement with the EIT Food Co-Location Centre and act as a subcontractor in a project funded based on Horizon Europe/EIT modalities (EIT Food partners and Rising Food Stars members are not eligible);
5. Possessing knowledge, skills, and resources needed to carry out the subcontracted tasks.

While evaluating applications, EIT Food will also consider the following criteria:

6. Experiences in sales of consumer food products;
7. Scale of existing sales and/or delivery operations;
8. Proposed plan of product market testing.

2.2. Contractual tasks of subcontractor

The Subcontractor will be responsible for the organisation and delivery of research services related to a product co-created with the participation of consumers and the food company. Specific new products were designed with the involvement of consumers in 2021-2022 and introduced to the market by food companies in 2022-2023. The Subcontractor will deliver research services supporting the market testing of one such product. The following list of contractual tasks applies:

- Participation in a meeting with the food producer company to analyse the innovative product features and benefits, alongside available product marketing collateral;
- Providing inputs into the food producer company planning for commercial exploitation of results of the Labs by discussing possible approaches to commercialisation and successful product marketing communication;
- Carrying out the retail market testing of the product by: placing an order with the food producer for an initial batch of products, amounting to at least 10,000€; making the product available for consumers in a selected number of retail outlets/service points; analysing sales performance for at least 1 month; collecting insights, lessons learned and possible reactions to the product by consumers and company employees;
- Submitting “Report on the new product market testing” (providing details of 1 new product concept selected for market introduction and commercialization plans) – detailed instructions and report templates are provided by the University of Warsaw and the report includes: data about the number of retail outlets/service points (geographical scope), number of products used in the test (confirmed by an invoice issued by the food company to the Subcontractor, amounting to at least 10,000€), data about sales performance for at least 1 month; insights, lessons learned and possible reactions to the product by consumers and company employees;
- Participation in the debriefing session with the team from University of Warsaw to discuss the project experiences and lessons learned, following the submission of the report.

2.3. Benefits for organisation selected as subcontractor

Organisation selected as subcontractor will be offered the following benefits in 2023:

- Ability to benefit from the association with EIT Food and the EIT community (as subcontractor in EIT Food activities), and the brands of EIT Food and the EIT;
- Rights to participate in thematic project meetings, organized by EIT Food and its partners (no membership fees will be required from subcontractors; EIT Food will not cover travel costs to attend internal meetings, but organisations designated as subcontractors can use their assigned budgets to cover these costs);
- Rights to promote the association with EIT Food project, commercialise the product(s) developed as outcomes of the Labs process and introduce them to the market;
- Opportunities for networking with EIT Food partners, including opportunities for joint project ideation and involvement in other EIT Food projects;
- Subcontracting agreement with EIT Food Co-Location Centre with funding as defined in this call document, contingent upon the delivery of contractual tasks. Payments will be linked to compliance with the contractual tasks and deliverables;
- Opportunity to leverage consumer insights for new product design and commercialisation;

- Knowledge and organisational support of EIT Food, its CLCs and partners in implementation of the activities planned for each subcontractor of the project.

Becoming a subcontractor in EIT Food project shall be considered an opportunity to become associated with the community of EIT Food, establish relations with EIT Food partners and become better embedded in their activities, as well as to benefit from results of consumer co-creation processes to develop and commercialise innovative products. Subcontractors will also benefit from the increased visibility in their local innovation ecosystems, strengthening their position on the regional and national levels.

2.4. Information about products used for market testing

(1) Fresh Spirulina with Nordic lemon

Producer: SIA SpirulinaNord, Latvia

WWW: <https://www.spirulinanord.eu/>

Email: info@spirulinanord.eu

Description: Concentrated syrup consisting of fresh spirulina grown in Latvia combined with Latvian quince (Nordic lemon). Fresh spirulina is a natural, unprocessed superfood rich in vitamins and antioxidants, with neutral taste. Spirulina can be easily absorbed, improves the gastric microflora and does not irritate the digestive tract. Healthy, natural and innovative dietary supplement that can be used as the basis for lemonades, home-made soft drinks or added to teas and herbal infusions. The product can be stored in room temperatures and does not need to be refrigerated. One recommended portion is 2 tablespoons, to be mixed with water or other drinks. Product available in two unit sizes - 300 ml (14 portions) or 120 ml (5 portions).

Ingredients: quince juice (Ch.japonica), fresh spirulina (A.platensis), sugar

Unit size: 330 ml - unit price: 14.90€ or 120 ml - unit price: 7.55€

Estimated quantity of products required for market testing: ~672 units of 330 ml or ~1325 units of 120 ml

(2) Vegan kaves kehely

Producer: Prookies Kft, Hungary

WWW: www.prookies.hu

Email: attila.borbas@prookies.hu, rendeles@prookies.hu

Description: Vegan dessert without sugar, coffee flavour. Cup dessert, with oatmeal and coconut flour-based nut crumble sponge cake, creamy-coffee flavoured cream and sliced almond. Made without sugar or wheat flour, suitable for vegans. Healthy and delicious source of proteins.

Ingredients: coconut cream, almond milk, erythritol, ground nuts, coconut oil, coconut flour, oat flour, almonds, corn starch, sweetener (Na-cyclamate, Na-sacharinate), coffee aroma, salt, xanthan

Unit size: 104g - unit price: 2.5€

Estimated quantity of products required for market testing: ~4000 units

(3) Vegan bounty kehely

Producer: Prookies Kft, Hungary

WWW: www.prookies.hu

Email: attila.borbas@prookies.hu, rendeles@prookies.hu

Description: Vegan dessert without sugar, chocolate and coconut flavour. Cup dessert, with oatmeal and coconut flour-based nut crumble sponge cake, chocolate-coconut flavoured cream and sliced almond. Made without without sugar or wheat flour, suitable for vegans. Healthy and delicious source of proteins.

Ingredients: Coconut cream, almond milk, erythritol, ground nuts, coconut oil, coconut flour, oat flour, almonds, cocoa powder, corn starch, sweetener (Na-cyclamate, Na-sacharinate), coconut aroma, salt, xanthan

Unit size: 104g - unit price: 2.5€

Estimated quantity of products required for market testing: ~4000 units

(4) Topinambur puree with sweet potato and walnut

Producer: Venets.T, Bulgaria

WWW: www.venets.co

Email: c.zanev@venets.co

Description: A savoury vegetable puree packed with nutrients, with organic topinambur, sweet potatoes and walnuts as main ingredients. The product can be consumed as a dip/spread on its own, or easily turned into a creamy soup, allowing for creativity and variation. The product is sterilized in small glass jars, with each jar containing the amount needed for a small serving size of soup.

Ingredients: topinambur, potato, carrot, sweet potato, apple, celeriac, onion, walnuts, garlic, leek, ginger, sunflower oil, salt, turmeric and other spices (all organic)

Unit size: 240g - unit price: 1.75€

Estimated quantity of products required for market testing: ~5715 units

3. Selection process

Interested and eligible organisations are invited to **submit their applications by 27 September 2023, 11 am CEST**, using the attached “EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs” **Application Form**. **Please send the electronic version of application, based on the attached template**, to: [magdalena.zatorska@uw.edu.pl](mailto:magdalenazatorska@uw.edu.pl). Incomplete applications or applications submitted by ineligible organisations will be rejected. Complete applications will be evaluated by an expert committee using standardized selection criteria. EIT Food reserves the right to contact the applicant organisations by e-mail or phone asking for additional explanations or supporting documents, and to schedule selection interviews with the short-listed organisations. All applications will be evaluated using transparent selection criteria, and all applicants will receive concise written feedback, sent to an e-mail account indicated in the application template.

All proposals will be evaluated taking into account the following **eligibility criteria**, related to the applicants and their operations:

1. A legal person (informal organizations/unregistered startup teams are not eligible) registered in a member state of the European Union;
2. A retailer (company specializing in retail sale; NACE code G47), focused on fast-moving consumer goods or food service company (NACE I56);
3. Willing to carry out market tests of a selected new product, which is the outcome of the Labs co-creation process;
4. Able to sign a subcontracting agreement with the EIT Food Co-Location Centre and act as a subcontractor in a project funded based on Horizon Europe/EIT modalities (EIT Food partners and Rising Food Stars members are not eligible);
5. Possessing knowledge, skills, and resources needed to carry out the subcontracted tasks.

Eligibility criteria 1-5 will be evaluated on a 0-10 scale: 0 – not satisfactory; 10 – satisfactory.

Applications that meet all of the eligibility criteria (1-5) and receive 50 points will be further evaluated, based on the following **selection criteria**:

6. Experiences in sales of consumer food products;
7. Scale of existing sales and/or delivery operations;
8. Proposed plan of product market testing.

Selection criteria evaluated on a 0-10 scale: 0 – non satisfactory; 5 - satisfactory; 10 – excellent.

The application can receive max. 80 points for criteria 1-8. The highest ranked applications that meet all the eligibility criteria (1-5) will be selected.

“EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs” Application Form

Please fill in the application form, ensuring that **all fields** are completed. Please submit the application in electronic format (PDF) by 27 September 2023, 11 am CEST to email address: maqdalena.zatorska@uw.edu.pl. Applications that are incomplete or sent after the deadline will not be considered. Please do not provide further supporting documents and limit your application to presenting all information required by this form.

“EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs” Application Form – market testing	
1. Country	
2. Name of the applicant organisation	
3. Legal form	
4. Company registration address (street, postcode, city)	
5. Company registration number	
6. Date of company registration	
7. Website address	
8. Contact person	
7. Position	
8. E-mail	
9. Phone	
10. I declare that our company operates as a retailer (NACE code G47) or food service company (NACE I56)	Yes / No*
11. I declare that our company is willing to carry out market tests of a selected new product, which is the outcome of the Labs co-creation process	Yes / No*
12. I declare that our company is not EIT Food partner or Rising Food Stars members	Yes / No*
13. I declare that our company possesses knowledge, skills, and resources needed to carry out the subcontracted tasks	Yes / No*
14. Please describe your sales/delivery operations, including the region of operations, number of shops/service outlets, volumes of food products and estimated numbers of consumers.	
15. Please indicate the product co-created in Consumer Engagement Labs for which you would like to carry out market testing (tick “X” to indicate one of the four available products; if you are interested in market testing of more than one product, please submit separate applications for each product):	
(1) Fresh Spirulina with Nordic lemon - producer: SIA SpirulinaNord, Latvia	

(2) Vegan kaves kehely - producer: Prookies Kft, Hungary	
(3) Vegan bounty kehely - producer: Prookies Kft, Hungary	
(4) Topinambur puree with sweet potato and walnut - producer: Venets.T, Bulgaria	
16. Please briefly summarize your planned market testing activities for this particular product, including: target consumer audience, geographical coverage, sales channel(s), promotional and communication activities.	

* - Please select (underline) the applicable answer

By submitting this application form, I confirm that the information provided above correctly represents the scope of activities and plans of my organisation. I understand that the information provided in this form may be used to define obligations in subcontracting agreement. I give consent to processing the application by EIT Food, its Co-Location Centres, University of Warsaw and external experts involved in the evaluation process, and am willing to cooperate to provide further information or documents confirming the facts presented above.

If selected, I declare the willingness to promptly proceed to sign the subcontract agreement with EIT Food based on the template published online by EIT Food as part of the call documentation. I will act as subcontractor in 2023 based on conditions described in the "Call for expression of interest to participate in "EIT Food RIS Consumer Engagement Labs"". I am aware of the scope of services that should be provided and confirm having familiarized myself with the contents of the call and subcontract agreement, published online by EIT Food as part of the call documentation.

Date, place

Name of the person submitting the application

Organisation submitting the application