

## Request for contributors to carry out activities to build entrepreneurial capacities for women in the agrifood sector in Southern Europe for 2023-2025

*EIT Food CLC South is looking for organisations based in Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and/or Turkey that would organise activities within the project “Empowering Women in Agrifood” [hereinafter named Project] during the period 2023-2025.*

**Application deadline:** 12<sup>st</sup> of April 2023, 23:59 CEST

**Application template:** see Annex.

Further details about EIT Food can be found at: [www.eitfood.eu](http://www.eitfood.eu), and the principles of the EIT Regional Innovation Scheme are described at: <https://eit.europa.eu/activities/outreach/eit-regional-innovation-scheme-ris>. With respect to the present call, **EIT Food South will not provide new information that has not already been included in this call document**, but can assist the potential applicants by explaining contents of this document (please with inquiries regarding applications contact [lara.rodriquez@eitfood.eu](mailto:lara.rodriquez@eitfood.eu)

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## 1. Overview of EIT Food

### 1.1. About EIT Food

EIT Food is one of the largest and most impactful food-related initiatives worldwide. As a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) 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's vision is to put Europe at the centre of a global revolution in food innovation and production, and its value in society. EIT Food will engage consumers in the change process, improve nutrition and make the food system more resource-efficient, secure, transparent and trusted. EIT Food has six strategic objectives:

- **Overcome low consumer trust:** support Europeans in the transition towards a smart food system that is inclusive and trusted;
- **Create consumer valued food for healthier nutrition:** enable individuals to make informed and affordable personal nutrition choices;
- **Build a consumer-centric connected food system:** develop a digital food supply network with consumers and industry as equal partners;
- **Enhance sustainability:** develop solutions to transform the traditional 'produce-use-dispose' model into a circular bioeconomy;
- **Educate to engage, innovate and advance:** Provide 'food system' skills for more than 10,000 students, entrepreneurs and professionals through advanced training programmes;
- **Catalyse food entrepreneurship and innovation:** foster innovation at all stages of business creation.

EIT Food boosts the skills and entrepreneurial spirit in the sector and unlocks the potential of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which in turn will accelerate innovation, create jobs, benefit businesses and increase Europe's competitiveness.

### 1.2. EIT Food Regional Innovation Scheme (RIS)

The EIT Regional Innovation Scheme (EIT RIS) was introduced in 2014 to advance the innovation performance of more countries and their regions across Europe, especially countries with moderate or modest innovation scores as defined by the European Innovation Scoreboard. Since its establishment, the EIT RIS, which is steered by the EIT and implemented by its Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs), has successfully led to a significant expansion of EIT Community activities to more countries and regions across Europe, contributing to a pan-European spread of EIT Community engagement opportunities and networks.

The overarching objective of the EIT RIS is to contribute to the advancement of the innovation performance of the targeted countries and their regions by strengthening the capacity of their innovation enablers and actors and linkages among them (such as business accelerators, incubators,

start-ups, scale-ups, businesses including SMEs, agencies, educational and research institutions and their infrastructures, etc.) through the dissemination of the KTI approach, the cornerstone of the EIT intervention logic.

More specifically, during the 2021-2027 period, the EIT RIS shall aim to deliver on the following objectives:

- Improve the innovation capacities of the local ecosystem, via capacity building activities and closer interactions between the local KT innovation actors (such as, clusters, networks, regional public authorities, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), research organisations, Vocational Education and Training (VET) institutions, SMEs) and their activities;
- Support the objective of attracting and facilitating the integration of potential new partners in the EIT KICs and link local innovation ecosystems to pan-European innovation ecosystems, including through the establishment of Co-Location Centres (CLCs) and RIS Hubs, as part of a “place-based” innovation approach;
- Used as a bridge towards relevant Research and Innovation Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3s);
- Leverage additional private and public funding, with particular attention to European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF).

## 2. Empowering Women in Agrifood (EWA) - Entrepreneurial capacity-building for women from RIS regions in the agrifood sector

The lack of representation of women prevent them from fully developing and choosing positions of responsibility in agrifood companies. Therefore, female creativity and entrepreneurial potential are an under-exploited source of economic growth that should be further explored. The European Commission is working with EU countries to overcome these challenges and encourage more women to start their own companies.

The objective of this EIT Food programme is to encourage a stronger level of enterprise development in RIS areas targeted at emerging female entrepreneurs.

The Project, run in Southern Europe aims to provide up to 50 women entrepreneurs across 5 RIS targeted countries with the required knowledge, confidence, support and networking opportunities to meet and exceed their aspirations, leading them to successfully start and develop sustainable businesses.

The programme will run for a period of 6 months supporting early-stage female entrepreneurs and it will seek out and assist women to grow and develop their businesses with a tailored, focused approach that specifically considers the concrete challenges which female entrepreneurs face generally as well as the barriers which can limit entrepreneurial activity

EIT Food South will perform the Project in 5 RIS countries, from the following list: Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and/or Turkey.

The main objective of the activities to be developed is to support women entrepreneurs in the food sector within the above-mentioned countries to find innovative solutions that tackle the current food system challenges, build and develop business ideas. The Project will also help these women to access other programmes offered by EIT Food.

The secondary aims of the activities are:

- Developing early stage startups and create new ones
- Sparking co-founder relationships
- Building links between industry, academia, startups and the wider community

## 2.1. EWA programme structure

The aim of the programme is to build entrepreneurial skills of women willing to create their own business or at an early stage of running own business in agrifood sector.

- **Education:** 6 months of tailor-made free online and presential training and access to resources to improve female entrepreneurs' capabilities.
- **Ongoing Support:** personalised mentoring, both online and face-to-face from experts in business, agrifood and successful entrepreneurs for 6 months.
- **Community building:** participation in entrepreneurship and networking events, Virtual community and possibility to meet EIT Food high-level network contacts.
- **Access to finance:** Beneficiaries will have the chance to win Economic prizes of up to 10,000 euros per country. Channeling to other relevant EIT Food programs. Access to Investors, corporates etc.

To learn more about previous editions of Empowering Women in Agrifood project please enter EIT Food website: <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ewa-empowering-women-in-agrifood-2022>

The present call is launched by EIT Food South to select organisations that will perform activities described in the Project activities format and requirement sections in Southern European countries.

The selection process is implemented as an open call managed by EIT Food South, using clear and transparent selection criteria.

## 3. Scope of work

### 3.1. Project Activities format and requirements

The selected organisation will manage the following tasks within the Project in their respective country:

## Stage 1 – Scouting phase

The aim is to select 10 female talents per country to become direct beneficiaries of the Project. Moreover, 10 Mentors per country will be selected to provide personalised 1:1 mentorship to the beneficiaries for 6 months (from June to November both included). Mentors should be selected by their experience and the specific needs of the Mentees. Mentoring process should include at least 1,5 hours session per week. Both online and offline format of sessions are possible and should be decided directly by a mentoring pair for their best comfort

Tasks of the organisation:

- Scouting of Mentors and Experts in relevant topics (e.g. entrepreneurship, business model, sales, pitching, marketing, customer discovery, etc.) providing at least 10 engaged mentors;
- Contracting selected Mentors based on the list of Mentor responsibilities provided by EIT Food;
- Scouting of female early-stage startups or women with entrepreneurial talent interested in the agrifood system, providing at least 20 eligible applications.
- Evaluating female entrepreneurs' applications based on the eligibility and criteria provided and selection of 10 female entrepreneurs ("Mentees").

Note: Entrepreneurs scouting, application questionnaire and evaluation will be carried out within the previously indicated platform. The selected organisation should register and get familiar with it and with scouting methodology.

Stage 1 duration: From **18<sup>th</sup> of April to 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2023**

## Stage 2 – Matchmaking and mentoring

Mentors' selection will be based on their background, expertise, motivation and fit with the entrepreneurs selected (entrepreneurs diagnostics will reveal the main challenges to work on)

The selected Mentor will support the overall progress of the entrepreneur/ start-up they are partnered with during the programme. The Mentor is not a consultant but rather someone to guide, question and enable the entrepreneur's success. During the sessions they will work to prepare a Business Pitch deck that will be utilised during the final Pitching Day.

After the selection of mentees and mentors, a matchmaking activity will be organised to match Mentees with Mentors and introduce them to the Project in each country.

Tasks of the organisation:

- design of the activity, including creation of a final agenda, incl. 5 min. presentation of each Mentee and her idea,
- 1 interactive matchmaking exercise to create mentoring pairs,
- sharing an online survey on the self-assessed needs of Mentees and potential areas of mentoring for Mentors at least one week in advance,
- provision of information pack for communication with beneficiaries,

- management of attendance and registrations,
- in case of face-to-face event – provide all necessary arrangements (contract of a venue, catering, audio-visual materials, facilitators and speakers)

Timing of the Matchmaking activity: June 2023

Note: there should be mentoring sessions follow up and monthly feedback survey collection both from Mentees and Mentors.

### Stage 3 – Training programme

The aim of the training opportunities is to reinforce specific skills of the mentees and expose them to real life challenges in their business. ensuring expected competences are achieved from the beneficiaries (**EIT Food will provide the organisation with the competences expected upon the completion of the programme** and the evaluation method).

Additionally, EIT Food South is running a dedicated online Platform for EWA community to connect the female entrepreneurs and provide them with useful information, webinars and virtual meetings to optimise beneficiaries learning. Note: A short Training for the virtual community use will be provided to the key contact from the organisations selected prior to the programme execution.

Task of the organization:

- Utilise EIT Food Startup Manual information provided by EIT Food South whether online or paper format, expanding any specific topic during mentoring or training,
- Design and organise a **Masterclass activity**: with the objective of providing networking, high level coaching to the beneficiaries and dedicated training from experts to complement online educational actions ensuring greater project impact – it can be dedicated to specific aspect of the business idea development focused on reinforcing specific skills such as public appearances, sales or negotiation.
- Provide with at least one of the following additional training opportunities:
  - group sessions with thematic Mentors who support Mentees with specific elements of their businesses like legal, financial, marketing, logistic experts;
  - learning-by-doing opportunities in which women are taking part in the process of creating podcasts, photo shooting for advertisement campaign of their product/service, take part in other startup competitions;
  - group sessions with thematic experts who support mentees with their self-development like natural talents, emotional intelligence in business, coaching.
- Offering once a month access to new material on the existing virtual community- video and audio or publications relevant to female entrepreneurs for building their entrepreneurial skills and gather expertise knowledge within the following pathways:
  - leadership skills (team management, diversity and inclusion, public speaking, pitching, negotiations, active listening, empathy, time management);
  - business skills (financial management, legal matters, IP management, data management, successful sales, market mapping);
  - agrifood expertise (new trends in agrifood sector, new regulations in agrifood sector – country wise and at the EU level incl. New Green Deal and Farm to Fork Strategy, food security requirements, supply chain in agrifood).

Stage 3 duration: June – November 2023

## Stage 4 – Pitching and awards ceremony.

The **Pitching activity** (event) should be organised with the aim of exposing mentees to public speaking and business competition, selecting a minimum of two prize winners summing up a total of 15.000 EUR granted from EIT Food South.

Pitching event should serve as a networking event for the female entrepreneurs to meet with local and European agrifood and innovation ecosystem (investors, Business Angels, innovators, industry representatives, etc.). – It should also serve as a platform to discuss the current challenges in the local agrifood system and present the EIT Food activities to the invited audience – it can be a panel discussion or inspirational speech aimed at reinforcing female entrepreneurship in agrifood sector in the local ecosystem. A presence of role model forms the female entrepreneurship would be highly recommended.

The audience should be a minimum of 60 people (including mentors, mentees) and be held in face-to-face mode if circumstances allow it. The date for the Pitch event should no be later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2023

Tasks of the organisation:

- Design and promotion of the event:
  - creation of a final agenda, taking into account the following:
    - during the event participants will present their final pitches, will be evaluated by unbiased Jury, and will receive competition results based on the progress score (60%) and pitching score (40%),
    - the event should be open to general public. There needs to be an attractive panel discussion, training session, inspirational speech etc accompanying the pitching session.
  - managing invitations and registration, contracting of venue, catering, audio-visual materials, facilitators and proposing speakers.
- Contribute to the final pitch evaluation of female startups providing two independent members to be part of the Jury panel. Selection and prizes criteria will be shared in advance.
- Evaluate a final business deck for the startups which would rate as in their Programme progress score.

EIT Food will organise a final event and graduation day, the Women in Agrifood Summit, where selected stakeholders are invited together with the entrepreneurs to connect at international level (1<sup>st</sup> of December 2023, location TBC)

Note: Organisations are welcome to be creative and introduce more features to the proposed format of events. The selected organization will work closely with EIT Food on customising the format and schedule of the event to the peculiarities of the local agrifood and startup ecosystem.

## Stage 5 – Communication of the Project

Tasks of the organisation:

- Contribute to the dissemination of the Project, using adequately internal communication and social media channels, and providing a separate communication and dissemination report on press appearances, number of social media publications and dissemination strategies.

- Ensure correct branding, EIT Food visibility and respect of the EWA visual world in all communication materials in accordance with the guidelines provided by EIT Food.
- Provide to EWA South coordinator with events agenda, press release/social media or other communication information at least 3 weeks in advance, following the template provided by EIT Food.
- Production, and distribution of EIT Food EWA materials and merchandising to project participants, and mentors when required. This includes, the production and distribution of Startup Manuals, Business planners, shirts and fabric bags. Also, the production of roll ups or any promotional material based on the open files provided by EIT Food
- Promote communication using the virtual community, engaging participants, and facilitating professional networking.
- Encourage and foster participation of the selected women on social media, interviews on the national media and/or in EIT Food channels.

Stage 5 Duration: From **April to December 2023**

### Stage 6 – Project internal coordination

Tasks of the organisation:

- Ensure regular update to the relevant EWA South coordinator with any project progress or action on top of regular communication.
- Comply with the conditions set out in the agreement and performing the necessary Project's activities indicated in the Annex to the document.
- Ensure at least one sponsorship within the programme organised in the country in the amount of at least 5.000 EUR gross (cash) and facilitate the cooperation between the Sponsor and EIT Food South. The sponsorship should be regulated by a separate contract.
- Attendance to monthly update meetings summarizing Project's implementation process, fostering cross-country synergies, and networking.
- Use adequately of tools and platforms required by the project: EWA Virtual platform, Sharepoint, F6S, Zoom and others,
- Carry out a final EWA activities report, providing all the required information,
- Share project Success Stories and best practices for project implementation and growth,
- Ensure EIT Food branding is always visible and respected in all communication materials (online events, agendas etc.) and guarantee the visibility of the programme standardized throughout all EWA countries.

Duration: **April – December 2023**

## 4. Project activities budget

The selected organisation will sign a Subcontracting agreement with EIT Food CLC South a total funding of **40.000 EUR gross** to cover the eligible costs of implementing the EWA activities according to the workplan in a country.

This gross funding would include any Mentor or Expert remuneration contracted for EWA entrepreneurs' benefit.

Note: When applying for the call, interested organisations should submit a proposal aligned with the requirements.

**Tentative dates**

Mid-End of April 2023

End of May 2023

Beginning- Mid June 2023

June to November 2023

November 2023

End of November

December 2023

**Action**

Launch of the call for Mentees

List of Mentees and Mentors confirmed  
and announced

Matchmaking

Mentoring sessions and trainings

Pitching

Final Project report submitted

Final event summarizing EWA 2023  
organized by EIT Food

Please note that the following expenses are compulsory:

- in case of face to face events: event photography, video recording, catering, venue renting, facilitators and/or speakers' gross cost,
- in case of online events: streaming system, subtitling option or simultaneous translations English/native language, facilitators and/or speakers' gross cost,
- additional training sessions (business, self-development etc.) gross cost

## 5. Applications to organise the Project Activities

EIT Food CLC South invites **individual organisations having the status of legal person OR two organisations acting as a consortium/innovation network** (one organisation as a lead entity, the other organisation supporting business creation activities and start-up ecosystem) **operating in the same country** to submit their proposals to become an organizer of the Project activities in respective country. The Project will run in five countries out of **Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Spain and Turkey**.

### 5.1. Eligible organisations

- Legal persons (such as companies, incubators or accelerators, higher education institutes, research institutes, non-governmental organisations).
- Individual organisation or consortium/innovation network of two organisations based and operating in the same country;
- Operating in a country/region targeted by the call.
- Able to sign a subcontracting agreement with EIT Food CLC South.
- Recognised as important players in the local female entrepreneurship ecosystem with strong regional outreach.
- Experienced in supporting female entrepreneurs.
- Capable of organising successful events and workshops.
- Able to organize the Project activities in the timeframe from early April to early December 2023.
- Having a wide network of business connections or capable to reach valuable experts.
- Capable of building relations with local ecosystem, which allow to provide a sponsorship of the programme in the amount of 5.000 EUR (VAT included).

In case of a consortium, there should be a single entity and contact point with EIT Food South, and the proposal should include the internal arrangement and budget allocation between entities.

## 5.2. Benefits for organisations selected as EWA Implementers

Organisations chosen by EIT Food CLC South to organise the Project activities will be offered the following benefits:

- Subcontracting agreement with relevant EIT Food's Co-Location Centre with gross funding of up to **40.000 EUR (VAT included)** yearly **to cover the eligible costs of activities of EWA in 2023-2025 with precisely defined performance targets.**
- Collaboration with EIT Food and the EIT community (as subcontractors in EIT Food activities) providing worldwide visibility, collaboration in additional activities supporting the Project and other EIT Food initiatives both during and after the Project.
- Knowledge and organisational support of EIT Food and CLC South in implementation of the activities planned;
- Taking part in international final EWA 2023 event with an opportunity of networking with experts from the whole Europe
- Opportunities to participate in...

Organising the Project Activities shall be considered an opportunity to become associated with EIT Food, establish relations with its community and potentially become better embedded in the EIT Food activities. The selected organisation will also benefit from the increased visibility in their local entrepreneurship ecosystems, strengthening their position on the regional and national levels thanks to contributing to important social cause.

## 5.3. Selection process

Interested and eligible organisations are invited to submit their applications by **12<sup>th</sup> of April 2023, 23:59 pm CET**, using the attached "**Request for contributors to carry out activities to build entrepreneurial capacities for women in the agrifood sector in Southern Europe- Application Form**". Please send the electronic version of application, based on the template, to [lara.rodriquez@eitfood.eu](mailto:lara.rodriquez@eitfood.eu). 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 CLC South reserves the right to select subcontractors only in some of the targeted countries, contingent on the quantity and quality of the submitted applications, ensuring the excellence of selected proposal and value for money, and to relaunch the call for the countries where the present selection process would not yield satisfactory results.

EIT Food CLC South 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. Results of the call will be published by EIT Food on its website and selected organisations will be required to sign subcontracting agreements with EIT Food CLC South.

### 5.3.1. Selection criterion

All proposals will be evaluated considering the following criteria, related to the applicant organisation and Project activities:

- 1. Experience in training and supporting female entrepreneurs.**
- 2. Experience and ability to successfully organise and execute innovative events in the field of entrepreneurship and women's empowerment.**
- 3. Being part of the local startup and/or female entrepreneurship ecosystem and having well established network of their organisations supporting startups and/or female entrepreneurs in the respective country.**
- 4. Plan of tailoring the general structure proposed above, with the approach to the organisation of Project Activities with adjustments to the local context and needs.**
- 5. Interest and/or expertise in the agrifood system.**
- 6. Proposal of sponsors and/or additional financial support for the implementation of the programme on the local market.**

Above criteria will be evaluated on a 0 – 15 scale: 0 – not satisfactory; 5 – satisfactory; 10 – good and 15 points – very good. The application can receive a maximum of 90 points.

### 5.3.2. Contract duration and complementary calls

EIT Food South will conclude a one year subcontracting agreement that will end at 31/12/2023. Nevertheless, the agreement shall be renewed each year for a successive period of one year if the specific criteria, based on objectively measurable indicators set up in the subcontracting agreement are met. Once after the first renewal, this agreement will not be renewed automatically. If the agreement is not renewed in a given country, the EIT Food will announce a complementary call dedicated to this particular country.

In case of a renewal of a subcontracting agreement, the budget, tasks and performance targets will be defined separately for each of the respective year under the new work plan. The final renewal year is 2025. Renewal will consist of a signing of the annex to the subcontracting agreement.

If under the present call no organisation is selected for a given country, the call might be relaunched for this respective country.

The contract will be concluded under the condition of the EIT Food 2023-2025 Specific Grant Agreement ("SGA") being approved and providing financing for EIT Food EWA Organisation activities.

The contract shall automatically end when the SGA ends. EIT Food South may at any time terminate the contract upon notice if the SGA is terminated or not concluded for a given year.

Selected organisations will be required to sign subcontract agreements based on the agreement template published as part of this call documentation. The Subcontract Agreement will be a basis for Personal Data Processing Agreement.