

# Call for proposals to carry out impact evaluation of the Empowering Women in Agrifood programme

**EIT Food is looking for an organisation that would evaluate the impact of activities performed within the programme “Empowering Women in Agrifood” [hereinafter named Programme].**

**Application deadline:** 19th of August 2022, 23:59 pm CEST

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 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 [ewa@eitfood.eu](mailto:ewa@eitfood.eu))

## 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

The EIT RIS is the EIT Community's outreach introduced in 2014 to share good practices and experience emerging from EIT Community activities. The EIT RIS opens up the activities of EIT's Innovation Communities to innovators that are not partners, by providing targeted support to individuals and organisations to take part in and benefit from EIT Innovation Communities' activities, services and programmes.

EIT Food RIS aims at strengthening those regions in Europe which are modest and moderate in terms of innovation in the agrifood sector. This outreach scheme is open to innovators that are not partners of EIT Food and provides targeted support to EIT RIS stakeholders through a portfolio of projects.

## 1.3 Empowering Women in Agrifood - 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 Empowering Women in Agrifood Programme is to encourage a stronger level of enterprise development in RIS areas targeted at emerging female entrepreneurs. The first edition of the Programme was organized in 2020 and covered 5 RIS countries (Czech Republic, Romania, Spain, Portugal and Turkey), in 2021 the geographical scope was extended to 8 countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania Spain and Turkey) reaching 11 countries in 2022 (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey).

By the end of 2022 the Programme will provide up to 230 women entrepreneurs across 12 RIS targeted countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey) 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 runs for a period of 6 months supporting early-stage female entrepreneurs and seeks out and assists 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 have performed the Programme in twelve RIS countries in the local languages, namely – Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey.

### Programme structure

- 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 during 6 months.
- Community building: Participation in entrepreneurship and networking events, Virtual community with more than 200 female entrepreneurs in the sector and mentors. 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.

The Programme is implemented by top entrepreneurial local organizations responsible for different aspects of the projects within the country. They scout mentees, select mentors, provide trainings opportunities, monitor the mentoring process and organise a pitching event at the end of the Programme, where EIT Food awards the best projects with 10K and 5k prizes in each country.

To learn more about Empowering Women in Agrifood Programme you can enter the website: <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ewa-empowering-women-in-agrifood-2022>.

The present call is launched by EIT Food to select organisation that will perform impact evaluation of the activities within the Programme. The selection process is implemented as an open call managed by EIT Food, Co-Location Centre South together with Co-Location Centre North-East, using clear and transparent selection criteria.

## 2. SCOPE OF THE WORK

The selected organisation will carry out an independent final evaluation of the Programme.

### 2.1. Objectives of the evaluation

The objectives of the Programme evaluation is understanding its impact and outcomes within the community of women entrepreneurs supported by the Programme, EIT Food network and women entrepreneurship in the RIS countries. The evaluation process should:

- a) Evaluate how the Programme changed women businesses (2020-2022) and assess whether the effects of the Programme are likely to continue their entrepreneurial journey; In general, assess the socioeconomical value of the Programme in the RIS regions by applying impact measurements and methodologies (such as SROI);
- b) Evaluate the organizations reach and performance in terms of implementing the Programme in each country (2022);
- c) Evaluate how the Programme is contributing to the EIT Food and EIT objectives and KPIs and identify how a future Programme could build on the achievements and learnings of the 2020-2022 editions.

The evaluation should provide concise impact data and identify a clear list of recommendations to be considered in the design and the implementation of Empowering Women in Agrifood Programme in the future.

## 2.2. Methodology and process

The offer should propose a provisional methodology for conducting the final evaluation. The final methodology will be defined after the discussion with the EWA Team leadership. The evaluators will arrange all logistics, including the organization of interviews with stakeholders.

A range of documentation and inputs that can be made available to inform the evaluation:

- Original EWA Programme proposal
- EWA website <https://www.eitfood.eu/projects/ewa-empowering-women-in-agrifood-2022>
- EWA community website: <https://womeninagrifood.com/company/ewa-empowering-women-in-agrifood>
- Final reports from organizations implementing EWA Programme in 2020 and 2021
- Materials from EWA Online Networking Event

Relevant documentation will be provided by the EIT Food. Contact details of interviewees will be confirmed by the EIT Food.

The evaluation is expected to start in September 1st and be finalized by December 30<sup>th</sup> 2022.

## 2.3. Expression of interest

Interested candidates are invited to submit a short proposal outlining the following:

- An overview of an evaluation methodology with a clear task description, execution, deliverables and timeline
- Expected calendar
- The service provider's experience in the field. Please shortly describe other similar tasks that you have conducted. Please provide links or references where possible
- CV's of the evaluation team members
- A budget breakdown on the different tasks

The selected subcontractor will sign a subcontracting agreement with the EIT Food's Co-Location Centres South and North-East.

Please note that the following expenses are compulsory to be included:

- Cost of face to face workshop in English with organisations implementing EWA Programme in 2022 from 11 countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Turkey).
- Cost of internal translation of materials provided in the local languages such as video from local events, training materials provided in local languages, evaluation surveys of the mentoring process in local languages etc.

## 2.4. Applicant's Evaluation Team Qualifications

The evaluation should be undertaken by an evaluation team composed of at least three experts, including at least one from RIS Southern Europe countries and one from RIS Central Eastern Europe countries. The evaluation process should be led by a senior consultant with high level of evaluation competence - a person leading at least 5 evaluation research projects including more than 5 countries.

The following required qualifications for other team members include:

- At least five years of experience in undertaking evaluation projects; experience in evaluating using qualitative and quantitative methodology is desirable.
- Participation in at least 3 evaluation projects of EU funds carried out within the last 3 years.
- An excellent level of oral and written communication skills and excellent drafting ability in English proved by at least 2 open access reports authored by the researcher.

Furthermore, it is expected that at least one person from the evaluation team possesses the following competencies:

- Understanding women entrepreneurship challenges in EIT Food RIS countries;
- Understanding agrifood startup ecosystem in RIS countries.

The above mentioned competences might be possessed by the same individual or two different members of the evaluation team.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the offer. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

### 3. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- Legal persons
- Able to provide the evaluation team according to the point 2.4 Applicants Evaluation Teams Qualifications
- Experience in performing evaluation projects at the EU level
- Good understanding of women entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem in EIT Food RIS countries

### 4. SELECTION PROCESS

Interested and eligible organisations are invited to **submit their applications by 19<sup>th</sup> of August 2022, 23:59 pm CEST**, via email with the title **“Request for contributors to carry out impact evaluation of the Empowering Women in Agrifood programme”** sent to: [ewa@eitfood.eu](mailto:ewa@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 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 organisation will

be required to sign subcontracting agreement with EIT Food Co-Location Centres North-East and South.

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

- 1. Experience in performing EU programme evaluation.**
- 2. Experience and ability to successfully organise and execute research projects.**
- 3. Good understanding of women entrepreneurship and startup ecosystem in EIT Food RIS countries**
- 4. Methodology of the impact evaluation.**
- 5. Cost of service planned by applicant.**

Above criteria will be evaluated on a 0 – 15 scale:

0 – not satisfactory;

5 – satisfactory;

10 – good

15 points – very good.

The application can receive a maximum of 75 points.

## Annex 1: Redress mechanism

In case proposers have concerns that there have been procedural shortcomings and/or factual errors in the evaluation of their proposal, they can seek a review of the evaluation procedure through the redress mechanism. It should be noted that this mechanism is not meant to call into question the judgement made by the expert review panel.

Upon receipt of the Evaluation Summary Report, the Activity Leader of the proposal (or a representative of their organisation) may request an evaluation review, if there is an indication that the results of the eligibility checks were incorrect or that there has been a procedural shortcoming or a manifest error of assessment.

A complaint can be made if the Activity Leader considers that the assessment of the eligibility and/or evaluation of their proposal has not been carried out in accordance with the procedures set out in this evaluation procedure and the Call for Proposals document. The deadline to launch a complaint is 30 days from the date of receiving the Evaluation Summary Report.

Complaints must be:

- related to the evaluation process, or eligibility checks, for the proposal in question;
- set out a clear description of the grounds for complaint;
- received within the time limit specified in the information letter;
- sent by the Activity Leader or a representative of their organisation;
- sent to EIT Food's CEO, Andy Zynga, [andy.zynga@eitfood.eu](mailto:andy.zynga@eitfood.eu).

An acknowledgment of receipt will be sent to complainants no later than one week after the deadline for submitting the complaint. This acknowledgement of receipt will indicate the estimated date of a definitive reply.

A redress committee may be convened to examine the eligibility or evaluation process for the complaint. The redress committee will bring together relevant staff of EIT Food and will be chaired by Andy Zynga, EIT Food CEO. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of requests, and fair and equal treatment of applicants. During the evaluation review procedure, the committee itself, however, does not re-evaluate the proposal. Depending on the nature of the complaint, the committee may review the evaluation report, the individual comments and examine the CVs of the experts. [The committee will not call into question the judgement of appropriately qualified panels of experts.](#) In the light of its review, the committee will recommend a course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

Please note:

- a re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the quality assessment of a proposal. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria;
- the evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. It may be lower than the original score;
- only one request for evaluation review per proposal will be considered by the committee;
- all requests for evaluation review will be treated in confidence.