

# Call for EIT Food RisingFoodStars Mentors and Evaluators

## Selection of mentors for RisingFoodStars scaleups and selection of evaluators for the 2023 applicants to the RisingFoodStars programme

### EIT Food

EIT Food is a consortium of more than 200 partners from leading businesses, research centres and universities across more than 40 countries that has been selected by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) as the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) in the agrifood sector. As one of the largest public funded initiatives in the EU agrifood innovation space, the EIT Food KIC acts as a people-centric and resource-smart transformer of the European food system, driving consumer confidence and improving global health.

RisingFoodStars is the EIT Food programme that empowers aspiring scaleups to expand beyond their current market(s), raise funds and gain new commercial partners. The programme lasts up to three years and provides its members with scaleup audit, personalised coaching, privileged spots at pan-European fairs and much more. RisingFoodStars targets leaders and impact-driven ventures with innovative technology that are ready to upscale their commercial capabilities. Read more about RisingFoodStars [here](#).

### Missions and detailed scope of work

EIT Food RisingFoodStars invites applications from individuals with a view to establishing a database of independent experts who could apply to become a mentor to our scaleups (members of the programme in 2023), an evaluator to the 2023 applications for RisingFoodStars programme or both.

### Mentors

Mentors are experts in their area that have the right competencies and skills to share their knowledge and accompany young companies on the path of success, by helping to lift roadblocks. Based on the scaleup scan (an audit we run for our members with external partners), we identify the pain point of our scaleups and call upon the mentors to:

- Advise and accompany the startup
- help draft an action plan to overcome growth barriers
- share your knowledge and expertise
- help make new connections
- Share back with the RisingFoodStars management team their insights on:
  - o The potential of the startups



- The quality and relevance of the services provided by the RisingFoodStars programme

You can potentially be invited to provide advice regarding the selection and exit for RisingFoodStars startups to and from the network and attend other specific workshops on a need basis.

Estimated time in the year:

- Necessary time to support minimum 3 startups per year;
- On average 6 hours per startup per year;
- Additional hours on demand and as aligned with the RisingFoodStars management team.

## Evaluators

Evaluators are experts in specific areas required to support with an online evaluation of the applications to the RisingFoodStars programme in 2023.

What is expected from an evaluator:

- attend an online training with RisingFoodStars team on the programme's eligibility criteria and scope (approx. 1h);
- attend an online training on the evaluation process and expectations (approx. 1h);
- Review online (on our application platform) all relevant background documentation provided by the applicants, qualitatively assess their assigned applications according to pre-defined evaluation criteria and provide scores and comments in English on each criterion and each related question (approx. 8h);
- Attend the pitching and Q&A session and consolidation meeting for round 2 selected companies (Online - approx. 5h).

*It is critical that all comments and recommendations are written clearly, succinctly, and constructively. Evaluators are expected to be present and actively engaged in the pitching and Q&A session and consolidation meeting.*

## What's in it for you?

By entering our database you:

- Access a pan-European agrifood network (startups, corporates, and universities),
- Raise your profile and increase visibility,
- Get the opportunity to be invited to our events, workshops, speaking slots,
- Get the opportunity to meet the best startups and scaleups in the ecosystems,
- Contribute to their growth journey and have an impact on a future-fit food ecosystem.

## Knowledge, skills and experience

### Mentors

We require our mentors to showcase a strong background in one or several of the following:

- commercialisation of innovative products and services (or processes);
  - definition of market and consumer needs in the agrifood sector;
  - business plan and revenue forecasting/pricing;
  - consumer analysis and customer acquisition;
  - intellectual property;
  - production and supply chain;
  - sales and route to market;
  - legal and regulatory;
  - marketing and communication;
  - investment and fundraising;
  - leadership;
  - human resources and re-organisation;
  - public affairs
  - Any other expertise relevant to scaleups.
- Fluency in English (written and spoken);
  - Collaborative mindset and ability to work well with a team;
  - Pedagogical approach and willingness to share knowledge and support young entrepreneurs;

#### Nice to have:

- Professional experience in the agrifood sector
- Additional experience in at least one of the three EIT Food Missions:
  - Mission Area 1: Healthier Lives through Food
  - Mission Area 2: Net-Zero Food Systems
  - Mission Area 3: A Fully Transparent, Resilient and Fair Food System

### Evaluators

Experts applying as evaluators to RisingFoodStars needs to demonstrate deep expertise in one of the following areas:

- Proven experience in at least one of the three EIT Food Missions:
  - Mission Area 1: Healthier Lives through Food
  - Mission Area 2: Net-Zero Food Systems
  - Mission Area 3: A Fully Transparent, Resilient and Fair Food System
- Proven experience in Go to market / Commercial readiness / business development
- Overall startup and scaleup environment knowledge

## Application and Selection Procedure

Individuals with relevant experience are invited to apply as prospective independent mentor and/or evaluator via the online electronic system available at the following website <https://apply.eitfood.eu/courses/course/143>

### The call is open until:

- Mentors: **31 March 2023**
- Evaluators: **12 March 2023**

All sections of the application must be completed. Areas of expertise and professional experience should be adequately detailed.

Independent experts will be selected for inclusion based on the following criteria:

### Mentors

- Proven track record in your field of expertise (30%)
- Experience working with Startups and ideally scaleups (30%)
- Experience in mentoring (20%)
- Previous experience with EIT community in general (10%)
- Experience in agrifood is a nice to have (10%)

### Evaluators

- Proven track record (40%) in either
  - One of our mission areas
  - Or go to market/business development/ commercialisation
  - Or VC experience with scaleups
- Experience working with startups and ideally scaleups (20%)
- Previous experience with EIT community in general (20%)
- Experience in agrifood (20%)

For its annual Call for Mentors and evaluators 2023 cycle, EIT Food RisingFoodStars will select the most qualified mentors and evaluators from its database with a balanced composition of skills, experience, thematic knowledge, geographical and gender diversity.

The personal data collected in the context of the present call will be processed in accordance with regulation (EU) 2016 of the European Parliament and of the Council from April 27, 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data and the repeal of directive 95/46/EC (hereinafter: “General Data Protection Regulation” or “GDPR”) and the Belgian law of July 30, 2018 regarding the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data.

When relevant, such data will be processed by EIT Food for the purposes of performing, managing, and monitoring the contract.

Prior to any work assignment, evaluators will be contracted and given a description of the tasks, duration, location (remote), remuneration rates, and reimbursement methods. Mentors and Evaluators will be issued both a Code of Conduct, including confidentiality, and a Conflict of Interest for each assignment to be reviewed and signed.

## Compensation

There will be no compensation for being included in the database.

When experts are selected for mentoring or evaluating and receive compensation, they are responsible to comply with their local legal and fiscal regulation in relation to the payment.

## Mentors

Based on the needs of the companies in RisingFoodStars portfolio, mentors can be contacted to provide services. It is expected that a first contact under the format of a 30-minute call organised between the mentor and the company for matchmaking purposes is not compensated.

When there is a successful fit with a startup for mentoring, the mentor signs a contract directly with the company for **up to 6 hours** at a fixed rate of **150 euros per hour**. Any additional hour requested by the RisingFoodStar member outside of the 6 hours can be charged at a rate freely defined by the mentor.

## Evaluators

For experts selected to become evaluators, **depending on their status**, EIT Food IVZW will:

- **Employees of EIT Food Partners:** reimburse Personnel costs based on actual working hours supported by timesheets following the Horizon Europe Grant agreement rules, applicable to employees of **EIT Food Partners**.
- For companies or freelance:
  - o Round 1 (online deep evaluation of the applications): 500 euros per package of 25 applications (*estimated 8h*);
  - o Round 2 (pitching and consolidation meetings): 500 euros per package of 10 pitches (*estimated 3h pitching, 1h filling survey, 1-2h debriefing session*)

Payment of the fees is subject to the following conditions:

1. Evaluator's time is reflected in the request for payment (using the template provided by EIT Food).
2. The fee can only be claimed for days actually worked:
  - a) Desk evaluation: Startups evaluated (the fee is based on a provision that the expert evaluates 25 Startups per day)
  - a) Pitching and Consolidation meeting actually attended (online) which will be attested by a meeting log kept by EIT Food

3. Tasks will be remunerated only if they were accomplished in accordance with the provisions of the Contract, within the given deadlines, to the highest standards of quality and if they were approved by EIT Food
4. As the panels are held online no travel expenses will be incurred or reimbursed.

Please note: At the moment of the Pitching and consolidation meetings, evaluators are required to have uninterrupted, strong internet connection and proper equipment like camera and headsets/microphones are needed. In case of a technical problem, which causes an evaluator to miss all or part of the online meetings, payment will be modified according to actual presence in the meeting.

## Timeline

Mentors	
Date	Milestone
<b>30 April 2023</b>	<i>Application deadline</i>
<b>8 May 2023</b>	<i>Mentors Selection</i> Notification of inclusion in the database of experts
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Week of May 2023 (TBD)</b> <b>2-hour</b>	<i>Mentor Info session</i> Online training for mentors on mentorship process and expectations
<b>May to December 2023</b>	<i>Startup mentorship</i> Matchmaking with startups, support to RisingFoodStars startups based on ad hoc needs. (Average of 6 hours per startup, min 3 startups per year)
Evaluators	
Date	Milestone
<b>12 March 2023</b>	<i>Application deadline</i>
<b>15 March 2023</b>	<i>Evaluators Selection and notification</i>
<b>24 March 2023</b>	<i>Signature of the contracts</i>
<b>29 March 2023</b>	<i>Evaluator Info session</i> Online information session for Evaluators on evaluation process and expectations
<b>03-14 April 2023</b>	<i>Online Startup application Evaluations</i> This is the period during which evaluators independently evaluate and score the Startups. Evaluators are expected to carefully read and assess all proposal documents. Evaluators should provide EIT Food with scores and carefully crafted and constructive comments.
<b>Session 1-3: 20 April 2023</b> <b>Session 4-6: 26 April 2023</b> <b>Estimated 3 hours - online</b>	<i>Pitching and Q&amp;A session</i> In this meeting evaluators and EIT Food Team listen to the pitch of the companies with the best scoring and ask them complementary questions to allow the evaluators to judge

	the quality of the profiles. Each evaluator will commit to attend at least one of the sessions.
<b>Session 1-3: 21 April 2023</b> <b>Session 4-6: 27 April 2023</b> <b>Estimated 2 hours - online</b>	<i>Committee debrief meeting</i> Based on the quality of the pitches and Q&A session the evaluators gather with the EIT Food Team to discuss Startups profile and evaluation results. The outcome is a list of recommended companies to join the RisingFoodStars programme based on defined EIT Food criteria. Each evaluator will commit to attend at least one debriefing session.

### Conflict of Interest (for evaluators)

The task of the evaluator is to be performed in a confidential, transparent, fair, and equitable manner, according to the rules of the evaluation process established by the EIT Food.

To ensure the independence of the work that they are called upon to perform in their capacity as 'independent experts', prior to the signature of their contract, experts will be required to attest that they abide by the terms of the EIT Food code of conduct (including confidentiality aspects) in the electronic exchange system.

Experts shall be excluded from participation in this call if they have a conflict of interest in connection with the proposers; a conflict of interest could arise, in particular as a result of economic interests, political or national affinities, family or emotional ties or any other relevant connection or shared interest.

#### A disqualifying conflict of interest exists if mentor:

- If he/she has part in a company, is member of the board, or has any decision-making authority related to the company;
- If he/she or his/her organisation could stand to benefit, or be disadvantaged, as a direct result of the evaluation carried out;
- Has a close family relationship with any person representing an applying company;
- Is employed by one of the applying companies;
- Is in any other situation that compromises his/her ability to evaluate the applying companies impartially.

A potential conflict of interest may exist, even in cases not covered by the clear disqualifying conflicts indicated above, if an evaluator:

- Was employed by one of the applying companies within the previous three years – in this case the reviewer should indicate this potential conflict of interest. This does not disqualify him / her from the review process all together, special measure will be put in place to maintain impartiality.
- Is involved in a contract or any type of collaboration with an applying company or had been so in the previous three years.
- Is in any other situation that could cast doubt on his/her ability to evaluate the applying companies impartially, or that could reasonably appear to do so in the eyes of an external third party.

At the signature of the contract, experts shall be aware that based on the contract terms. If an expert selected for performing evaluation tasks has a conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with any applying company, they must declare such facts to EIT Food as soon as they become aware of this. In this case, they must immediately stop reviewing the application in question until instructed otherwise by EIT Food.