

Request for contributors to carry out activities to build entrepreneurial capacities for women in the agrifood sector

EIT Food is looking for 10 organisations based in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain and Turkey that would organise activities within the project “Empowering Women in Agrifood” [hereinafter named Project] in 2022.

Application deadline: 15th of April 2022, 23:59 CEST

Application template: see Annex.

Further details about EIT Food can be found at: 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

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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 programme aims to provide up to 110 women entrepreneurs across 11 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 will perform the Project in eleven RIS countries, namely – Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Portugal, Spain and 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 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.

This programme is coordinated by EIT Food CLC South in high collaboration with CLC North-East interactive methodology and resources will be designed and/or approved by both entities and could be used to extend this programme in the future.

To learn more about previous editions of Empowering Women in Agrifood project please enter EIT Food website [here](#).

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

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).

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.

Evaluation of female entrepreneurs' applications based on the eligibility and criteria provided and selection of 10 female entrepreneurs ("Mentees"). Entrepreneurs scouting, application questionnaire and evaluation will be carried out within the F6S platform. The selected organisation should register and get familiar with F6S and with scouting methodology.

Duration: From April to June 2022

Stage 2 – Matchmaking and mentoring

After the selection of mentees and mentors, a matchmaking activity will be organised to match Mentees with Mentors and introduce them to the EWA programme 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: June 2022

Mentors should be selected by their experience and the specific needs of the entrepreneurs. There should be Mentoring sessions follow up and monthly feedback survey collection.

Stage 3 – Online EWA Platform/Community

EIT Food is running a dedicated online Platform for EWA community to upskill selected female entrepreneurs and provides training modules with useful information, webinars and virtual meetings to optimise beneficiaries learning. **Training for platform use will be provided to the key contact form the organisations prior to the programme execution.**

Tasks of the organisation:

- Offering once a week access to new material - 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).
- Posting all events organized within the EWA programme.
- Promote communication using online community in the local language, engaging participants and facilitating professional networking.
- Monitoring of online mentoring – foster interactions between Mentors and Mentees and tracking mentoring performance on the Platform.

Duration: June – November 2022

Stage 4 – 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 various competences expected upon the completion of the programme).

Task of the organization:

- utilise EIT Food Startup Manual information, expanding any specific topic during mentoring or training,
- design and organise a Masterclass event: 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 (Mentees and Mentors work together on the IP management of the solution or create distribution channels) or can be focused on reinforcing specific skills such as public appearances, media relations, sales and negotiations,
- provide at least one of the following additional training opportunities:
 - podcasts and/or webinars in local language with English subtitles to present specific elements of the business development;
 - 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.

Duration: June – November 2022

Stage 5 – Pitching event

The third event within the EWA programme, organised face to face or online (Pitching event and awards ceremony) should be organised with the aim of exposing mentees to public speaking and business competition, selecting 1st (10.000 EUR gross) and 2nd Prize (5.000 EUR gross) winners and networking all Mentees with the local startup and innovation ecosystem (investors, Business Angels, innovators, industry representatives, food companies, universities and research centres, NGOs, etc.). Pitching event should serve as a platform to discuss the current challenges in the local agrifood system and present the EIT Food activities to the invited audience – **women interested in pursuing their career in agrifood** – 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.

Tasks of the organisation:

- Design and promotion of the event:
 - creation of a final agenda, taking into account the following:
 - during the event participants:
 - ✓ present their final pitches,
 - ✓ are evaluated by Jury,
 - ✓ receive competition results based on the progress score (60%) and pitching score (40%),
 - at least part of the event has to be open to general public. There needs to be an attractive panel discussion, training session, inspirational speech, cocreation workshop accompanying the pitching session.
 - managing invitations and registration,
 - in case of face to face event – contract 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.

Audience: Minimum 60 people (including mentors, mentees and organisers)

Timing: no later than the 30th November 2022

Duration: at least 5 hours, in case of an online format the event can be divided into two sessions.

Applicants 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 6 – Communication of the Project

Tasks of the organisation:

- Contribute to the dissemination of the Project activities and news, 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 EWA CLC 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.
- Distribution of EIT Food EWA materials to project participants.
- Send evidence of at least 3 media publications in the national press (digital or paper)
- Encourage and foster participation of the selected women on social media, interviews on the national media and/or in EIT Food channels.

Duration: From April to December 2022

Stage 7 – Internal coordination of the EWA programme

Tasks of the organisation:

- ensure monthly update to the relevant EWA CLC coordinator with any project progress or action on top of regular communication,
- attendance to EWA regional calls, fostering cross-country synergies and networking,
- use of tools and platforms required by the project: EWA platform, 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 standardised throughout all EWA countries.
- ensure at least one sponsorship within the programme organised in the country in the amount of at least 5.000 EUR gross and facilitate the cooperation between the Sponsor and the CLC. A sponsorship over 5.000 EUR gross shall be regulated by a separate contract.

Duration: April – December 2022

4. Project activities budget

The selected organisation will sign a subcontracting agreement with the relevant EIT Food's Co-Location Centre with a total funding of **35.000 EUR gross** to cover the eligible costs of implementing the EWA activities according to the workplan in one country.

This gross funding would include any mentor or expert remuneration contracted for EWA entrepreneurs' benefit.

When applying for the call, interested organisations should submit an agenda proposal aligned with the format requirements.

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 invites organisations from **Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain** and **Turkey** to submit their proposals to become an organizer of the Project activities in respective country. The Project will be run in Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain and Turkey.

5.1. Eligible organisations

- Legal persons¹ (such as companies, incubators or accelerators, higher education institutes, research institutes, non-governmental organisations).
- Operating in a country/region targeted by the call.
- Able to sign a subcontracting agreement with relevant EIT Food's Co-Location Centre.
- 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 2022.
- 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 Events in the amount of 5.000 EUR (VAT included).

5.2. Benefits for organisations selected

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

- Ability to benefit from the collaboration with EIT Food and the EIT community (as subcontractors in EIT Food activities),
- subcontracting agreement with relevant EIT Food's Co-Location Centre with gross funding of **35.000 EUR** to cover the eligible costs of the EIT Food EWA activities,
- Knowledge and organisational support of EIT Food and Co-Location Centres in organising and implementing the actions,
- Taking part in international event EWA Networking Online Event 2022 with an opportunity of networking with experts from the whole Europe (pending the COVID-19 restrictions at the time an offline opportunity will be provided). To learn more about previous editions of EWA Networking Online Event please enter dedicated EIT Food YouTube account [here](#).

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

¹ Consortia are not eligible in this call.

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.

5.4. Selection process

Interested and eligible organisations are invited to submit their applications by **15th of April 2022, 23:59 pm CET**, using the attached **“Request for contributors to carry out activities to build entrepreneurial capacities for women in the agrifood sector- Application Form”**. Please send the electronic version of application, based on the template, to 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 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 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 Co-Location Centres North-East or South.

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 events in the field of innovation/entrepreneurship/women’s empowerment.**
3. **Role in the ecosystem and existing network.**
4. **Plan of tailoring the general structure proposed above, with the approach to the organisation of Project Activities.**
5. **Interest and/or expertise in the agrifood system.**
6. **Plan to bring sponsors or financial sustainability to the programme.**

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.

Selected organisations will be required to sign subcontract agreements based on the agreement template published as part of this call documentation. The template agreement shall not be modified except the minimum sponsorship package (Annex II of the contract).