

# Mentoring package for innovative SMEs in the water sector

Period: November 2021 – December 2021

EIT Food offers **8 mentoring packages** for SMEs working with water efficiency and sustainability. The mentoring packages are focused on finding opportunities within Horizon Europe. The service is co-funded by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). Selected companies will contribute with 350 Euros (+ applicable VAT).

**Deadline to submit your expression of interest: 21.11.2021, 23:59 CET.**

**Application method:** applicants must submit expression of interest through the following form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/jR65hbaBWS>

**Clarifications:** for clarifications about the programme, please send an e-mail to [carmen.galindo@eitfood.eu](mailto:carmen.galindo@eitfood.eu) with the subject **[WATER] Mentoring package**

## 1. About EIT Food

EIT Food is one of the largest food-related initiatives worldwide. EIT Food wants to make the food system better for people's health and the environment. To this end, EIT Food works with entrepreneurs, startups, scaleups, students, businesses, academics and policy makers to support the ideas that are going to transform Europe's food system.

EIT Food divides its activities into 4 key areas to help us achieve our mission:

- Help big businesses to change their practices and innovate,
- Make studying agrifood more attractive
- Engage consumers around the topic of the food system
- Ensure the success of the agrifood innovators that are transforming the food system.

EIT Food has partnerships with Europe's leading agrifood businesses and universities, including Pepsi, Danone, John Deere, Waitrose etc. A full list of our business partners can be found [here](#).

More information on EIT Food and the extent of our activities can be found at <http://www.eitfood.eu>.

## 2. Background: Opportunities under HORIZON EUROPE

Horizon Europe (HE) is the new framework programme of the European Commission (EC) to fund research and innovation. Horizon Europe has a budget of EUR 95.5 billion for the period from 2021-2027. This budget is considerably higher than the budget of the previous programme, Horizon 2020. In real terms, and excluding the participation of UK beneficiaries in Horizon 2020, there is a 30% increase in HE budget compared to H2020<sup>1</sup>. Therefore, HE offers plenty of opportunities for innovative companies.

Moreover, SMEs are one of the most relevant target groups for the EC. They are essential to Europe's strategy to promote Research and Innovation. In Horizon 2020, it is expected that 20% of the total combined budget for all Societal Challenges and the specific objective Leadership in Enabling and Industrial Technologies (LEITs) will go to SMEs. This means that over EUR 8 billion in EU support for Research and Innovation activities will go directly to SMEs, most of them part of consortiums participating in EU collaborative Research and Innovation projects<sup>2</sup>.

## 3. Mentors of the programme

We have selected three high-profile mentors (see below) with an extensive experience in the proposal preparation and coordination of R&D&I projects funded by the EC to support your company in the process of fundraising. The selected experts will provide tailored-made advice on how to access European R&D&I funding opportunities within Horizon Europe. The mentoring programme will be very practical and oriented to define the best strategy for your specific innovative solution. Thus, you will be able to identify the scope, objectives, impacts and exploitation routes of your innovation and set the basis to further develop a complete and successful proposal.



**Antonia Lorenzo** is founder, CEO and R&D director at BIOAZUL. She has worked for 20 years in the management and implementation of more than 60 national and international industrial and R&D&I projects, mainly related to blue infrastructures, sustainable water management - treatment, water reuse, nature-based solutions – as well as circular economy and resources sustainability. Antonia has specialized in intellectual property (IP) protection and exploitation. She works for the European Commission since April 2012 as an External Expert in aspects related to intellectual protection and exploitation of R&D results, as a Technical Project Advisor (NANOSELECT project) and as a proposal evaluator.

<sup>1</sup> <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1f107d76-acbe-11eb-9767-01aa75ed71a1>

<sup>2</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/horizon2020/en/area/smes>

Since 2018, Antonia leads the Working Group of Water Europe on Water&Agrifood. Antonia is member of the Spanish Management Committee of the Circular City COST Action and also member of the Spanish “Nature-based solution Cluster”. She is also mentor for the EIT Food Accelerator Network, and has recently been selected as a mentor in the European Commission's “EIC Women Leadership Program”. Finally, she is member of the Governing Council of the Andalusian Knowledge Agency.



**Rafael Casielles** is senior project manager in BIOAZUL with more than 13 years of experience in proposal writing and project coordination. Rafael has led the proposal preparation of numerous R&D&I projects such as the successful projects coordinated by BIOAZUL: SuWaNu Europe, RichWater, Water2RETURN and TREAT&USE as well as other proposals from relevant partners in the industry of fertilizers, renewable energies or water management. As general coordinator of several EU funded projects related to circular economy in the

water sector, Rafael has a deep practical knowledge on project implementation which is very valuable for the proposal preparation. Rafael has a broad experience in international cooperation for R&D&I on account of his work in Africa and Latin America: WAFLA project related to the promotion of agroforestry concepts in Latin America, WATERBIOTECH project related to the promotion of sustainable water treatment technologies adapted to the African context, CLARA project for the development of cost-benefit analysis for water and sanitation alternatives in Africa. Finally, Rafael is member of the Body of Knowledge of EIT for the Water Scarcity Programme.



**Marco de la Feld** has more than 15 years of experience and a specific expertise in exploitation related activities, awareness raising on entrepreneurship, innovation management and critic analysis of economic factors of the market definition of new markets and new customer segments. Marco de la Feld graduated from the University of Studies of Naples – Federico II, Faculty of mechanical engineering (energy). He achieved his Doctor's Degree (PhD) in territorial advanced and composite materials. Since 2007 up to 2008, Marco de la Feld has been Senior Expert in Ernst Young – Financial and Business Administrator. Since 2008, he is Project Manager and Business Developer in ENCO srl (Naples office) a consultancy company specialized in EU project development and innovation strategy. He is expert for the FOOD – CIRCULAR ECONOMY – RAW

MATERIALS – ENVIRONMENTAL – CLIMATE CHANGES to help SMEs in the exploitation activities. Winner, in 2015, of net future innovation day in Brussels Teacher in different Italian (la Sapienza,

Univeristà di Napoli – Suor Orsola Benincasa) and European University for Master in EU founding and development of Business plan. He is running, since 2012, the EU young Entrepreneurship Program in Italy.

#### 4. Key activities during the mentoring:

There will be three mentoring sessions of approximately 1.5 hours each. The first session will be a general session with all the SME participants (i.e. mentees). There will be two more individual sessions adapted to each participant in order to find specific opportunities within Horizon Europe according to the profile of the mentee and type of solution developed. In sessions 1 and 2, there will be an assignment that will be the basis of the subsequent sessions.

##### Session 1 (General): 26 November 2021 at 10:00 CET

General overview of Horizon Europe programme.

Objective: understanding the different pillars of HE, where to find funding opportunities for SMEs, types of projects, funding scheme, etc.

Assignment: Each mentee will be requested to draft a summary of their innovation idea in order to identify the specific calls for proposals within the HE work programmes that might be suitable for funding.

##### Session 2 (Individual): 1.5 h

This session will be very practical and participatory. The mentor will guide each mentee to check the different work programmes where the funding opportunities are published and extract what kind of information is needed to select the right strategy. During the session mentor and mentee will search together specific opportunities (i.e. calls for applicants) adapted to the characteristics of the mentee and analyse for each opportunity the budget available, the type of action required, the maturity of the solution, etc.

Assignment: Mentors will prepare a summary table with the most promising calls for proposals for each mentee. Mentees will be requested to select one specific funding opportunity to work during session 3.

##### Session 3 (Individual): 1.5 h

In this session, mentor and mentee will go through the template for applicants related to the opportunity selected and define together the scope and type of information needed in each section showing how the application should look like with practical examples. Special attention

will be paid to the definition of “Key Impact Pathways”<sup>3</sup> (KIP), a new approach in Horizon Europe to define impacts indicators. Finally, the mentor will share practical tips for the proposal preparation.

## 5. Costs of the mentoring programme

This mentoring programme is co-funded by EIT through EIT Food. The cost of the programme is estimated in 3,500 Euros per participant. Participants will be charged with **350 €** (+ applicable VAT).

## 6. Conditions for selection of beneficiaries

Beneficiaries will be selected on a “first come, first served” basis. Therefore, first 8 applications complying the eligibility criteria for programme participation will be selected.

Selected candidates will be considered officially participants of the mentoring programme when they complete the bank transfer of the fee indicated in section 4.

## 7. Eligibility criteria

To be considered eligible to participate in the InnoWise Scale mentoring package, the company must comply with the following criteria:

- Be considered an **SME under the EU definition**, i.e. having less than 250 employees, with an annual turnover up to 50 million EUR, OR a balance sheet total of no more than 43 million EUR.
- Be an already registered company based in one country within the EU and Horizon Europe (HE) associated countries:
  - EU Member States.
  - HE associated Countries - provided they enter into an Association Agreement before 31/12/2021: United Kingdom, Switzerland, Israel, Western Balkan countries and Turkey.
- The request must be submitted in English.
- Be the idea owner and, if applicable, hold I.P. rights of their respective innovations.

Please, note that activities will be carried out in English. Therefore, proficient English skills are required for the participants in the InnoWise Scale mentoring package.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/other/events/20210421/impact-following-kip\\_en.pptx](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/horizon/other/events/20210421/impact-following-kip_en.pptx)

## 8. How to apply?

Interested SMEs shall send their application through the following form before 21-11-2021 at 23\_59 CET: <https://forms.office.com/r/jR65hbaBWS>

Applicants will receive a confirmation e-mail including the documentation required to formalise the participation in the mentoring programme and the invoice for the services.

Given the limited availability of spaces, non-selected applicants will be included in a waiting list for future editions of the sessions.

## 9. Disclaimer

For inquiries about the mentoring package, applicants can contact EIT Food (please contact Carmen Galindo [carmen.galindo@eitfood.eu](mailto:carmen.galindo@eitfood.eu)). EIT Food can assist the potential beneficiaries by explaining the contents of the programme.

Further details about EIT Food can be found at: [www.eitfood.eu](http://www.eitfood.eu).