FutureFoodS

FutureFoodS Call 2024

„Transforming Food Systems - reshaping food system interactions, fostering food innovations and empowering sustainable food choices“

Question and Answers Document

Webinar 14 May 2025

1. Selection/Evaluation of proposals

Q: What is the role of national funders in the decision-making?
A: National funders provide the funding. They have no influence on the evaluation of the proposals. Whether a proposal can be funded depends on its position on the ranking list and the funds still available to the respective funder.

Q: Is it possible to know how many proposals have passed in second stage in total?
A: From a total of 275 submitted pre-proposals, 50 proposal passed to the second stage (Topic 1: 14, Topic 2: 23 Topic 3: 13)

Q: Do you have the rankings from the pre-proposal?
A: Yes, but the ranking list is not publicly available.

Q: Any idea of the expected acceptance rate for this phase?
A: There is no expected acceptance rate, it depends on ranking and available funding

Q8. What is the maximum budget allocation for this call?
A: The budget allocated for this call is published in the call announcement.

Q: It would be useful if we could get an extended version of the evaluation feedback of the first round, beyond the summary that was embedded in the email. Would that be possible?
A: Yes, that would be possible. Coordinators of proposals can send an email with Acronym and ID to the call office, we can provide the single evaluation comments. However, please be advised that the summary is the relevant document, not the single evaluations.

Q: Will the peer reviewer from the first round also review in the second round? And in what way are the reviews from the first round taken into account in the second round?
A: We will work with the same pool of evaluators, however, this does not necessarily mean that the exact same reviewers will evaluate the proposal.

Q: Related to the question of the number of projects per topic funded, is this proportionally distributed?
A: There is only one ranking list following the evaluation results. The budget is not allocted proportional to topics.

Q: How many projects per topic are intially planned for funding?
A: We cannot make any predictions on this. Whether a full proposal is selected for funding depends on its rankingand the available funding.

Q: Our national funder has stated already that they can fund max 3 projects on a country level. Would there be a situation that the consortium might be funded, but then the national funder states that they don't anymore have funds left for this project? How would you navigate such a situation.
A: Projects are selected based on the ranking list and the available funds. A selection meeting with all funders involved will be conducted and the proposals will be selected jointly which should mitigate such a situation.

Q: If we submit a full proposal (which complies with formal requirements), what is the likelihood that the project will receive funding?
A: We cannot make any predictions on this. Whether a full proposal is selected for funding depends on its ranking and the available funding.

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2. Changes from pre-proposal to full-proposal

Q: In the online platform, the character limit on the Food systems approach-section has increased from 2000 to 3500 characters and it says "additional information needed". Are we expected to change/elaborate on this part?'' Also, other sections now have the character increased.... Are we, in each of these sections supposed to add extra-info, developed the info we previosly provided?
A: Yes, increasing the character limit opens up the opportunity to include additional or more detailed information. There is no need to use the character limit in case no adaptation is necessary.

Q: In the partner profile, can we add a new team member? / Would it be possible to change someone in the staff of a partner? Would it be possible to make a substitution in the staff of one of the partners (specifically, a post-doc for a pre-doc)?

A: Yes. If changes are not possible in the tool but necesssary for your submission, please contact the Call Office.

Q: If we included figures in the pre-proposal for e.g. project summary, can we change these for the full proposal to clarify, even if the project summary text does not change?

A: Yes, you can change the figures. If changes are not possible in the tool but necesssary for your submission, please contact the Call Office.

Q: If we want to change the budget. Is it worth asking at all or is it totally forbidden? And if so, do we need to ask every single regional and national FO?

A: According to the Call Announcement, the following rules must be complied with: Change of budget can be allowed by the relevant FO. The NCP/ RCP of a FO can decide according to its own rules whether a justification is needed. Prior to such a change, the CO must be informed. Applicants must explicitly indicate any changes made compared to the pre-proposal in the online submission platform.

Can we make small changes to what we already entered, such as references, figures without substantially changing the action or budget?

A: Yes, such changes are possible. If you are in doubt or if changes are not possible in the tool but necesssary for your submission, please contact the Call Office.

Q: Does it have to be added to the history of changes?
A: All changes have to be added to the history of changes in a reasonable way (e.g. adding a reference is not a change but an addition)

Q: Do we have to ask for permission every time even for small changes?

A: The sections where changes are allowed are not blocked. The sections where changes are not allowed or only after having the approval from FO/CO are blocked

Relevant changes should be noted in the history of changes.

Q: Is it allowed to remove a subcontracting task which was previewed in the first stage and include a full partner which can carry out the task as part of the consortium for the second stage?
A: See call announcement, section 6.2.1: „*...Changes in the consortium composition (i.e. addition, removal and replacement of a partner) can <u>exceptionally</u> be allowed in case of force majeure or if <u>explicitly **requested by the CB**</u> for*

the particular cases of i) ineligibility of a partner and/or ii) invitation to add a partner that will request funds to an undersubscribed FO (widening option, see 6.2.2)……"

Q: Regarding the stakeholder approach: shall we preview specific funding for reaching out to stakeholder organizations which are not included in the project consortium (example outreach to JRC if the project funding is approved)?
A: If these stakeholder organisations are important for your project; important to apply the systems approach/multi stakeholder approach you should calculate a certain amount of resources (time/ money) for these activities.
But please note: According to the Call Announcement, the following rules must be complied with: Change of budget can be allowed by the relevant FO. The NCP/ RCP of a FO can decide according to its own rules whether a justification is needed. Prior to such a change, the CO must be informed. Applicants must explicitly indicate any changes made compared to the pre-proposal in the online submission platform.

Q: In the online platform, the problem and context analysis has been pre-filled but as text that can be edited. As the character limit has not changed for this section, are we allowed to make changes to the problem and context analysis? Other pre-filled sections do not allow us to make edits
A: The sections where it is allowed to make changes are not blocked. The problem and context analysis belongs to the impact pathway which we ask for only now in the full-proposal. Therefore, it might be necessary to adapt the problem analysis. In case you plan to make large changes in this section please do not forget to also note them in the history of changes section in the tool.

Q: Ethics: We received no comments on that section at the pre-proposal stage. Can I assume everything is OK with that or do I need to worry? A: The evaluation criteria of this call for proposals include the evaluation of compliance with relevant ethical requirements. In order to identify any potential ethical issues, applicants are required to complete an ethics self-assessment and provide support documentation referred to in the ethics issues checklist. Please consider that in the pre-proposal the information that you gave on ethical issues and how you will deal with them was reviewed by the international expert panel. If you have not received critical remarks these sections were found to be ok. In the full-proposal there will be a deeper check performed by the FutureFoodS Ethics Board, consisting of experts in Ethics. They will review the proposals checklist and descriptions of the relevant sections. Any proposal deemed to violate fundamental ethical principles will not be accepted. Any ethical issues raised will be shared with national/regional funders who may stipulate specific ethics requirements, which in turn must be met by successful applicants as part of the national funding contract.
We recommend that you thoroughly go through your ethics part to ensure it is consistent.

Q: We were told that the ethical self assesment was not reviewed during this peer review phase. However we are told to add additional infomation, what information excatly is needed?
A: As described in the Call Announcement (section 5.3), the evaluation criteria of this call for proposals include the evaluation of compliance with relevant ethical requirements.

Q: The allowed maximum number of characters for the Food Systems Approach statement has been increased, but no indications are provided. Any guidelines on what specific additional information is required?
A: Writing the full proposal you may give a more detailed description. How you use it is up to you.

Q: The section on Food Systems Approach is now extended in terms of characters. Can we substitute the text in the whole section or are we allowed only to extend the previous text?
A: Both is allowed. In case of substantial changes please give a short indication in the history of change section.

Q: Is it possible to use some of the budget to compensate stakeholders for e.g., workshop participation?
A: In theory, yes, depending on the national/ regional fudners rules. But please note: According to the Call Announcement, the following rules must be complied with: Change of budget can be allowed by the relevant FO. The NCP/ RCP of a FO can decide according to its own rules whether a justification is needed. Prior to such a change, the CO

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must be informed. Applicants must explicitly indicate any changes made compared to the pre-proposal in the online submission platform.

3. Partner – associated partner - letter of commitment – subcontracting

Q: Wich special rules are there for sub-contracting ? Is there a limit? The sub contract must be signed before the submission and up load some where? or we can do later ?
A: There is no general rule concerning subcontracting and no need for an upload but applicants need to respect national/regional rules: Please contact the concerned National contact point(s) / Regional contact point(s) to discuss. Subcontracting would likely also change the budget. This must also be taken into account. See the call announcement, section 6.2.1 for details. --> 6.2.1: „Change of budget can be allowed by the relevant FO. The NCP/ RCP of a FO can decide according to its own rules whether a justification is needed. Prior to such a change, the CO must be informed. Applicants must explicitly indicate any changes made compared to the pre-proposal in the online submission platform.

Q: If the associated partner is solely providing samples for analysis, it is not appropriate to expect them to commit to any specific findings. Could the letter of commitment be rephrased or adapted accordingly?
A: Annex E is a template. It says: „This template may be used for applicants participating in R&I proposals who choose to be self-funded (e.g. from a country not participating in the call) or who are not eligible for funding, so called "associated partners", in order to provide evidence of their commitment. **Grey-marked fields must be completed. Organisations are allowed to use their own templates, however the content of the letter as described hereunder should be regarded as the minimum requirement**. An authorised representative of the organisation must sign this document. In case of failure in providing such commitment, an applicant will be regarded as ineligible, jeopardising the whole research consortium.

There is no section about commitment to specific findings in Annex E.

Q: Eligibility of Cooperation partners (self-financed): is a PIC code still required? Isn't it sufficient with a Letter of Commitment?
A: Associated partners also need to fill in their PIC number. If no PIC is available, please contact the Call Office.

Q: Do the letters of commitments in Annex E regard only the associated and self-funded partners, or all partners of the consortium?
A: Letter of commitments are only needed for associated partners/self-funded partners.

Q: What about more loose, ideal partners? Does the letter of commitment also apply to them?
A: Letter of commitments are only needed for associated partners; other partners/ stakeholders can give a letter of support if they want but it is not required. Please describe those partners in the proposal.

Q: In our project, None of the involved partners are self-financed, do we still need the commitment letters? Because on the website we can´t avoid to attach one.
A: Only associated partners need to upload a letter of commitment each. (If technical problems persist, please contact the call office.)

Q: Do we need to get letters of commitment from societal stakeholders already, or is it enough to identify (some/most) participating stakeholders who we would (like to) work with?
A: You only need to provide letters of commitment for associated partners. Whether you want to include societal stakeholders as partner, associated partner or in any other way, e.g. via a stakeholder board is your decision.

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4. Tool

Q: Who enters the data in the submission portal: can all beneficiaries edit or the coordinator only?
A: The coordinator has to fill in most of the sections. Partners have to fill in the partner section and have to support the coordinator – providing the data she/ he needs to have in order to fill in the different sections – like the finance tables.

5. Workplan

Q: Applicants need to be careful in making sure the person months indicated in the WP descriptions match what it says in the partner profiles?
A: Yes

Q: Can you please specify where one finds the "Work Packages" section?
A: You find it under "work plan"

Q: I do not have this section on Work Packages to start with, only a section called "Work Plan" with narrative sections, but no tasks, deliverables, milestones that you have just shown.
A: The work plan section is an interactive section. It adapts to what you fill in. The work packages and tasks and milestones appear as soon as you start adding work packges with the "+" sign in the "work plan" section. Please contact the call office in case of any difficulties or have a look at the webinar slides and recording.

Q: Are the amount of FTE and the task duration linked for the WP's? It may be that for some WP's we require on average 0.5 FTE over a longer period. Is this an issue in the system or will this work without problems
A: You only need to fill in the PM per Task and Partner. There is no technical link in the system between your entered PM and the work packgae duration.

Q: Do all partners in a consortium have to start their projects at the same point in time?
A: This would be ideal, but it is often not possible due to adminsitrative issues. However, a common timeframe should be found and agreed upon. Furthermore, the funders involved should be asked whether any specific deadlines must be met.

Q: Can we postpone the start date?
A: The start date is indicative when preparing the proposal, but should be realistic. Some funders have rules regarding the start of the project. Please clarify this at national/regional level. If a change of the start date is OK, please also enter this change in the „Description of changes from pre- to full-proposal" in the tool.

Q: Regarding the Research Plan (Work Plan) . The packages are automatically transferred into a Gantt chart. However, there is no possibility to enter a specific duration for each work-package. Should we define the timeline in the objectives or the description?
A: You can define the duration of each task in a work package. The Work Plan modul than takes the first start month of a task and the last end month of a task as the duration of the Workpackage. (

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6. Other

Q: For the DEC, the annex does not focus on the exploitation but mostly only dissemination and communication. Should we also elaborate on exploitation?
A: Yes, please also elaborate on exploitation.

Q: Do we have to contact/provide other info to our funding bodies before/after the submission of the second stage?
Please read the national/regional rules for this. If still insecure, we strongly encourage you to get in contact with the NCP/RCP.

Q: One of the evaluation criteria assesses whether the project plan includes the involvement of young researchers to be trained: can you define young researcher?
A: No, there is no concrete definition to follow, but this is meant to encourage involvement of researchers at the earlier stages of their career.

Q: Are the reporting requirements identical for all partners in the consortium, or do they differ, depending on the national funding organisation?
There are two layers of reporting: One on the transnational level (by the coordinator with support of all partners) and one on the national /regional funding organisation level (each funded partner). Please read section 8.4. of the Call Announcement for further information.

Q: Do the funding organisations expect one or several deliverables per WP, as in Horizon Europe funded projects?
A: There are no specific rules for this.

Q: Or would it be sufficient to provide annual (formal) reports of the work conducted in the reporting period?
A: Please read section 8.4. of the Call Announcement for further information.
Requirements concerning the reporting at national/regional level depend on the national/regional rules.

Q: Would it be sufficient to promise scientific publications of the results, instead of deliverables?
A: No. Deliverables are due during the project lifetime and can and should include more than only scientific publications. They help assess the projects progress and success

Q: Or would it be sufficient to promise fact sheets, blogs, posts on social media as means of dissemination of results?
A: Fact sheets, blogs andposts on social media are examples of means of dissemination and possible deliverables. However, in the full proposal a comprehensive Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication Plan is expected (Annex G).

Q: What is the consequence when an associated partner changes organizations (the new organization would also be eligible)? Do we inform the CO beforehand?
A: For all changes it is always advisable to inform the Call Office. Associated partners are not included in the elgibility check as they are per definition not asking for funding. The requirement for an associated partner is to provide a letter of commitment. Please still take into account that a change of the organisation of an associated partner means a change in the partner profile and will lead to needed adjustments in the respective profile (organisation info).

Q: DEC plan - is this for stakeholders within the project (e.g. farmers we are working with) or outside the project? Or both?
A: Please read Annex G, it explains in detail what is expected in the DEC Plan

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