Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

D5.7: [Open Call Plan and Monitoring Report A]

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Document History

Date	Version	Changes	Contributor(s)
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FS4Africa Consortium			
Participant Nr.	**Participant organisation name**	**Short name**	**Country**
1	INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE	IITA	NG
2	STICHTING WAGENINGEN RESEARCH	WR	NL
3	ITC – INOVACIJSKO TEHNOLOSKI GROZD MURSKA SOBOTA	ITC	SI
4	COUNCIL FOR SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH	CSIR-GH	GH
5	REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIREIA	RFF	GR
6	UBUNTOO BV	Ubuntoo B.V.	NL
7	FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION SOLUTIONS (PTY) LTD	FSTS	ZA
8	UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA	UP	ZA
9	WAGENINGEN UNIVERSITY	WU	NL
10	KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY FOUNDATION FOR SOCIETY DEVELOPMENT	KEF	EG
11	AFRICAN UNION DEVELOPMENT AGENCY – NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT	NEPAD	ZA
12	EGERTON UNIVERSITY	EGE	KE
13	AGLOBE DEVELOPMENT CENTER	ADC	NG
14	UNIVERSITAET DER BUNDESWEHR MUENCHEN	UniBw M	DE
15	BAYER AKTIENGESELLSCHAFT	BAYER	DE
16	ROYAL INSTITUTION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF LEARNING MCGILL UNIVERSITY	McGill	CA

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Executive Summary

The FS4Africa project, funded under Horizon Europe, aims to address pressing food safety challenges in Africa's informal sector through innovative strategies and targeted interventions. As part of Work Package 5 on Ecosystem Building, Acceleration, and Upscaling, Deliverable D5.7 outlines the planning, preparation, and launch of the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1), to support research and technology stakeholders through Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP).

The 1st Open Call, launched on 2 June 2025 and open until 30 September 2025, provides up to €60,000 per project, with a total allocation of €600,000, to fund at least 10 projects. These projects are expected to either enhance existing FS4Africa use case solutions or develop new, market-ready tools that align with the project's broader objectives. Priority areas include food safety issues related to traceability, mycotoxin contamination, pesticide residues, microbial contamination, and food adulteration.

The deliverable details the full Open Call 1 process, including the preparation of the FS4Africa Open Call 1 Kit (comprising the Call for Evaluators, Open Call text (Fiche) – in English and French, Hand out Summary, Applicants' Guide, Declaration of Honour (DoH), SME Declaration, Proposal Template and Budget Template, Bank account information, Model sub-grant agreement, and Frequently Asked Questions). The Open Call 1 was promoted via the EU Funding & Tenders Portal, FS4Africa's website, opencalls.fund, social media, press releases, and targeted outreach events.

Each proposal is required to include a clear methodology for testing with at least 10 participants, public demonstration with a minimum of 30 stakeholders, and a roadmap for upscaling and market rollout. Eligible solutions should start at TRL 4 and aim to reach TRL 6.

The deliverable serves as a comprehensive reference for the Open Call procedure, ensuring transparency, replicability, and effective engagement with the innovation community in Africa. It also includes annexes with all official Open Call documents to support applicants and evaluators alike.

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Glossary of terms and abbreviations used

List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
OC	Open Call
GA	Grant Agreement
HE	Horizon Europe
UC	Use Case
WP	Work Package
DoH	Declaration of Honour
TRL	Technology Readiness Level

1   Introduction

To fuel the growth trajectory of food safety solutions, FS4Africa will launch 2 Open Calls (OCs) aiming at least at 15 projects in total providing Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), as a mechanism to maximize the project's impact and accelerate network expansion.

The 1st Open Call aims to provide financial support to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organizations and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project or develop ideas and tools that contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

FS4Africa's Open Call 1 will fund ≥ 10 (at least ten) additional projects with up to €60,000 per project and up to €600,000 in total.

The 2nd Open Call aims to provide financial support to third parties (innovation hubs) to train use case partners, open call beneficiaries by providing mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling in view of African or European food business entrepreneurs and start-ups. The activities can be either virtual or in-person.

FS4Africa's Open Call 2 will fund ≥ 5 (at least five) additional projects with up to €40,000 per project and up to €200,000 in total.

The aim of the present report (D5.7: Open Call Plan and Monitoring Report A) is to describe the process of the 1st Open Call (OC) planning, preparation, and launch, as well as the OC1's final outcomes. The OC1 preparation plan together with all relevant material, including call fiche, applicants' guide, handout summary, Q&A and model sub-grant agreement has been developed, with the OC1 been launched in M18 (2 June 2025) and proposals must be delivered before the defined deadline (September 30th, 2025, at 17:00 CET).

2 FS4africa Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

2.1 Open Call 1 overview

FS4africa Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders, aims to provide financial support to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations and other multidisciplinary actors) to:

➢ test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project (built on FS4Africa existing UC topics) or

➢ develop ideas and tools that address the specific challenges of the FS4Africa project and contribute to the project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

FS4Africa will only accept applications from one entity per proposal (no Consortia allowed). Through Open Call 1 (OC1), ≥ 10 (at least ten) additional projects will be funded to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project.

Each Open Call 1 proposal should propose the following activities:

➢ A New Solution or Enhanced Solution
  o Applicants should propose either a completely new innovative solution addressing the food safety challenges in the African Informal Sector, or enhancing an existing solution, leveraging tools, business concepts, or frameworks already developed by the FS4Africa project. Solutions do not necessarily have to be tied to FS4Africa existing UC topics as long as they align with the broader goals of the project and address one of the following challenges:
    ▪ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
    ▪ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
    ▪ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
    ▪ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. *Escherichia coli*)
    ▪ Food adulteration
➢ Testing with at least 10 participants
  o Outline a clear testing methodology to engage a minimum of 10 participants, such as (indicatively) farmers, SMEs, or other food supply chain actors.
  o Define metrics to measure the solution's effectiveness, scalability, and practicality in addressing food safety challenges.
➢ Demonstration in an event with at least 30 Stakeholders
  o Plan and organise a public demonstration event to showcase the solution's functionality, outcomes, and benefits.
  o Engage at least 30 stakeholders, including (indicatively) policymakers, industry representatives, researchers, and community leaders.
➢ Plan for Upscaling and Market Rollout
  o Present a roadmap for scaling the solution to a broader audience or market.
  o Identify potential barriers to scaling and propose solutions to overcome them (e.g., regulatory challenges, market entry barriers).

OC solutions are expected to start at TRL4 and reach TRL6 by the end of the project.

2.2 Open Call 1 publication

2.2.1 EU Funding & Tenders Portal

Following the requirements of the European Commission, the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) has been published on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal (Calls for funding in cascade) on Monday, June 2nd, 2025.
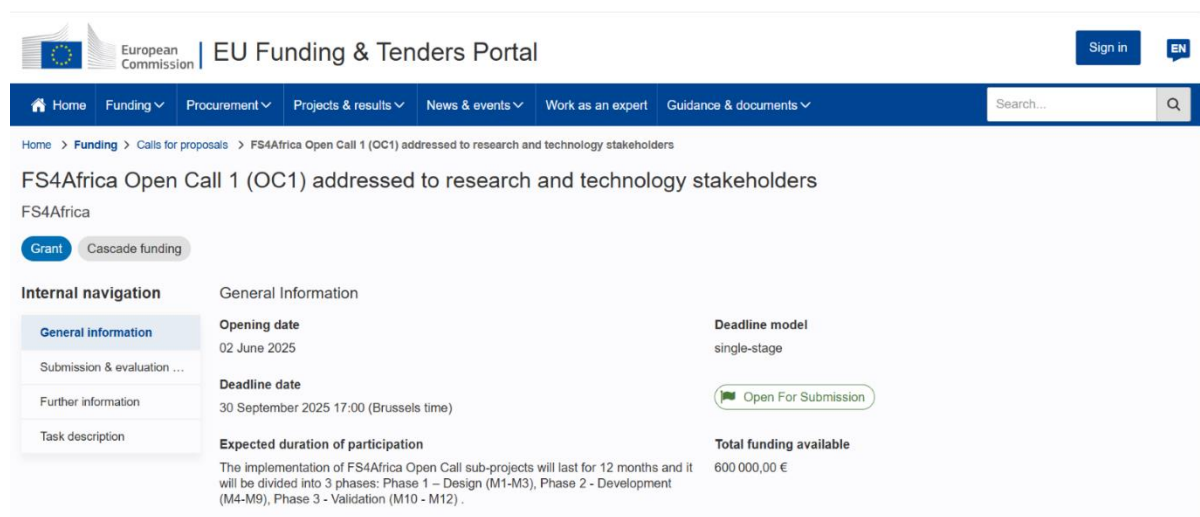

Figure 1 Open Call 1 on the EU Funding and Tenders Portal

2.2.2 FS4Africa website

Information on the FS4Africa Open Call 1 has been uploaded on a dedicated tab of the project's website and includes:

➢ An overview of the Open Call 1
➢ The FS4Africa Open Call 1 Kit with all relevant documents uploaded
➢ Link to the opencalls.fund platform

The FS4Africa Open Call 1 has been published on FS4Africa website (https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/), on Monday, June 2nd, 2025, and it will remain open until Tuesday, September 30th, 2025, at 17:00 CET.

2.2.3 Opencalls.fund

The entry point for submitting all proposals for the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) is the opencalls.fund platform. The link to the portal was provided within the FS4Africa Open Call 1 Applicants Guide and specifically underlined through the submission procedure. Submissions that would be received through any other channel would be automatically discarded.
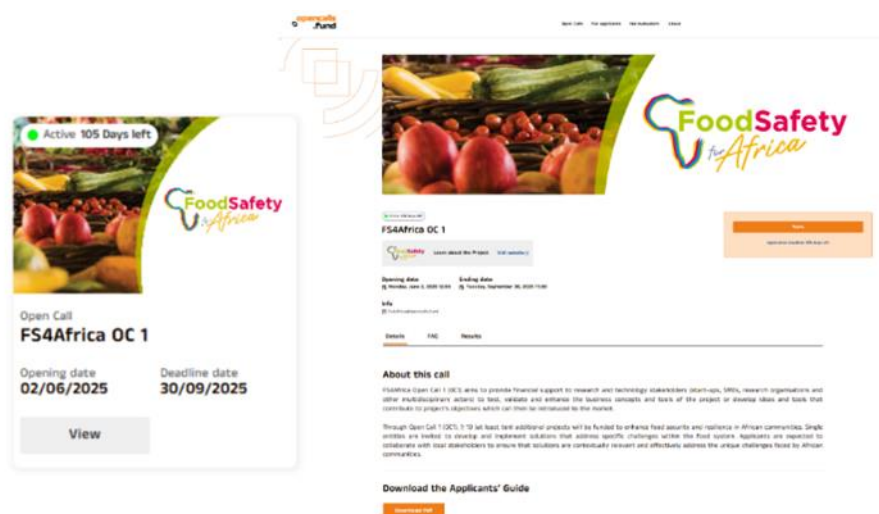
Figure 2 FS4Africa's Open Call 1 on opencalls.fund platform

2.3 Open Call 1 promotion

2.3.1 Social Media posts

A set of social media posts have been created to raise awareness of Open Call 1 and throughout the application phase. Screenshots of selected posts are presented below:

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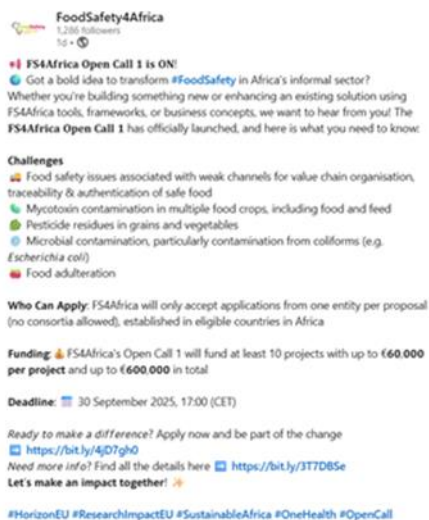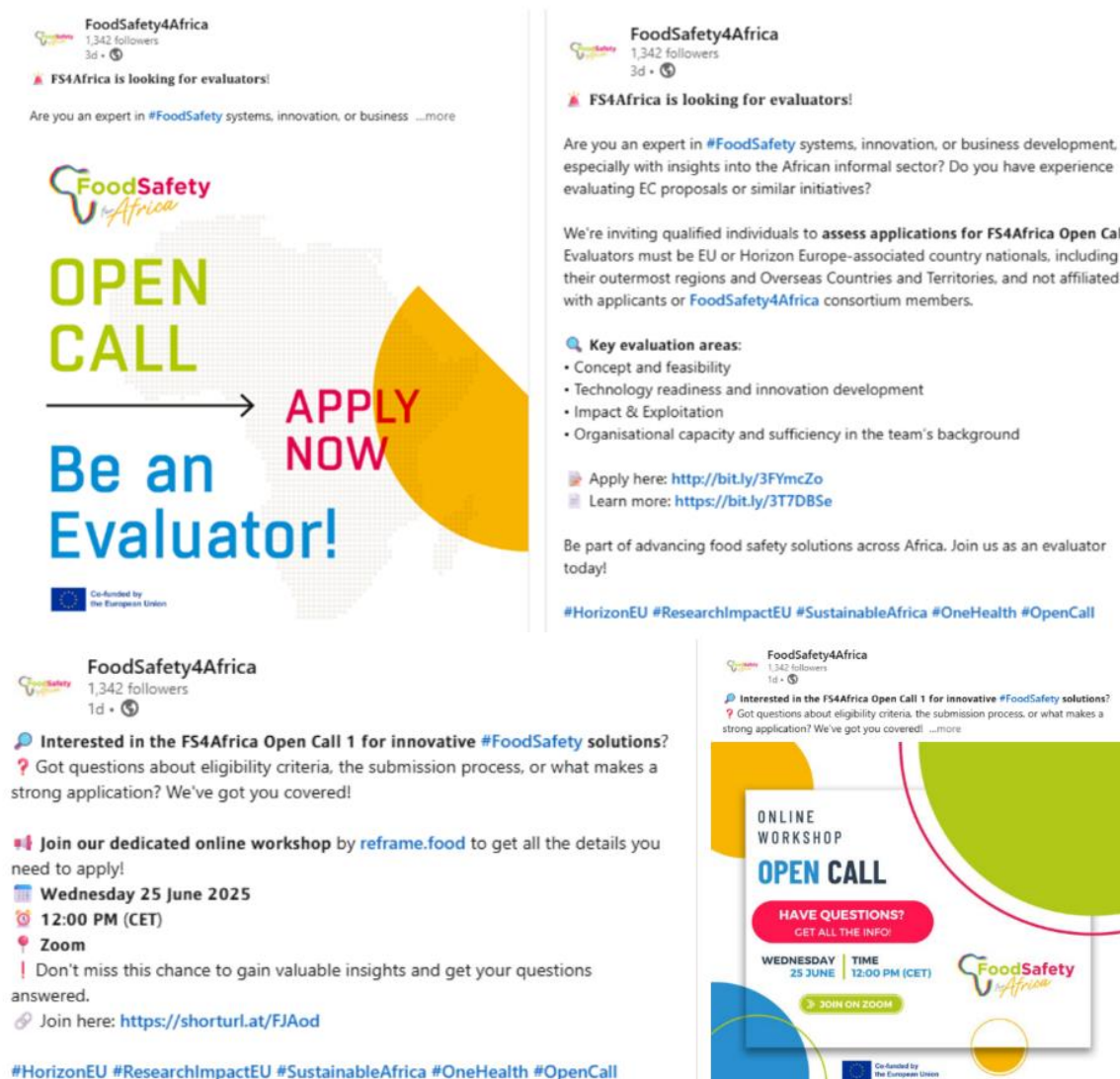
Figure 3 FS4Africa's Open Call 1 social media posts

2.3.2 Press Releases

Press releases have been also prepared to announce the launch of Open Call 1. The press release has been shared with the partners to translate and distribute it to the local media outlets for publication and is also available on FS4Africa website.
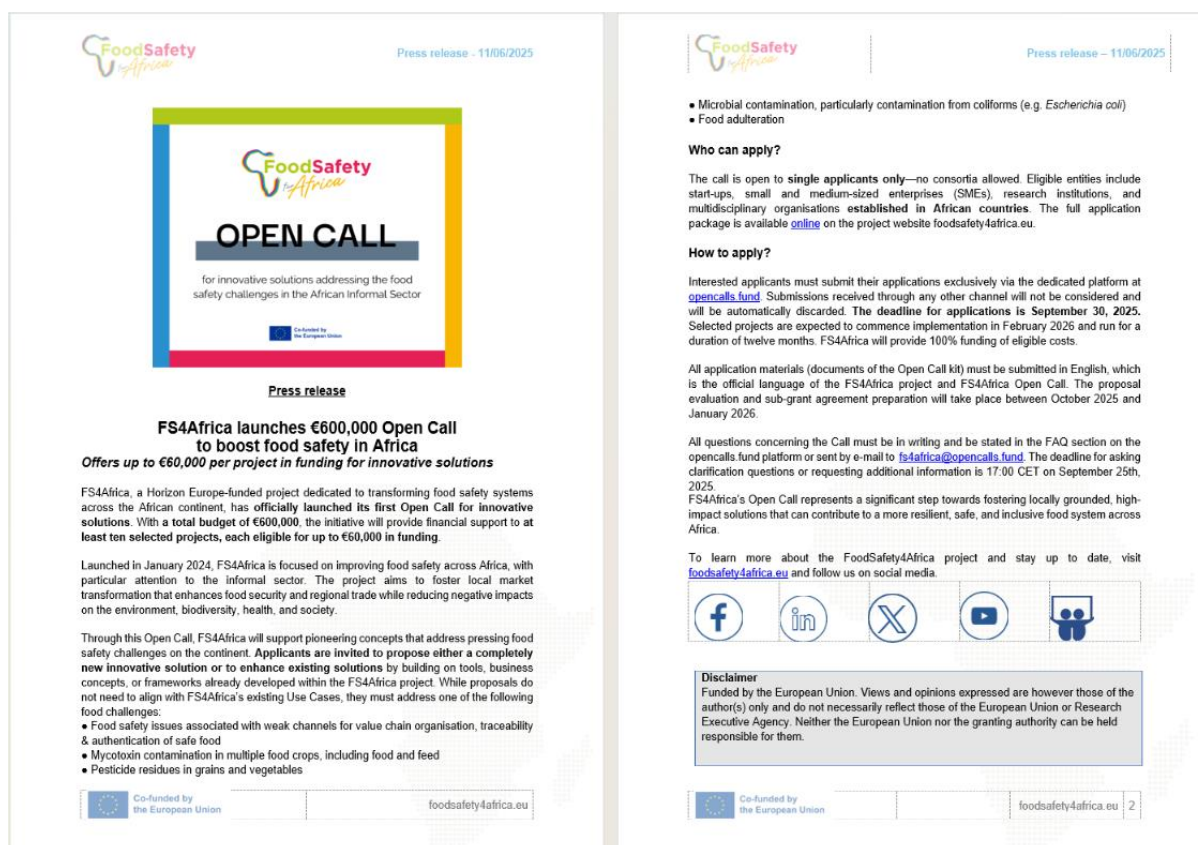
Figure 4 FS4Africa's Open Call 1 social media posts

2.3.3 Workshops / webinars

To raise awareness and outreach, provide a space to explain the details, answer questions, and engage potential applicants, RFF has organised a workshop on Wednesday, 25 June 2025 with more than 70 participants.

Figure 5 FS4Africa Open Call 1 Preparation Webinar

3   FS4Africa Open Call 1 Kit

The FS4Africa Open Call 1 Kit contains the following set of documents:

1. Call for Evaluators
2. Open Call text (Fiche)
3. Hand out Summary
4. Applicants' Guide
5. Declaration of Honour (DoH)
6. Declaration of Conducting Business
7. Proposal template
8. Bank account information
9. Model sub-grant agreement
10. Frequently Asked Questions

The above documents are available for download on the FS4Africa Open Call page on the FS4Africa website https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/

3.1   Call for Evaluators

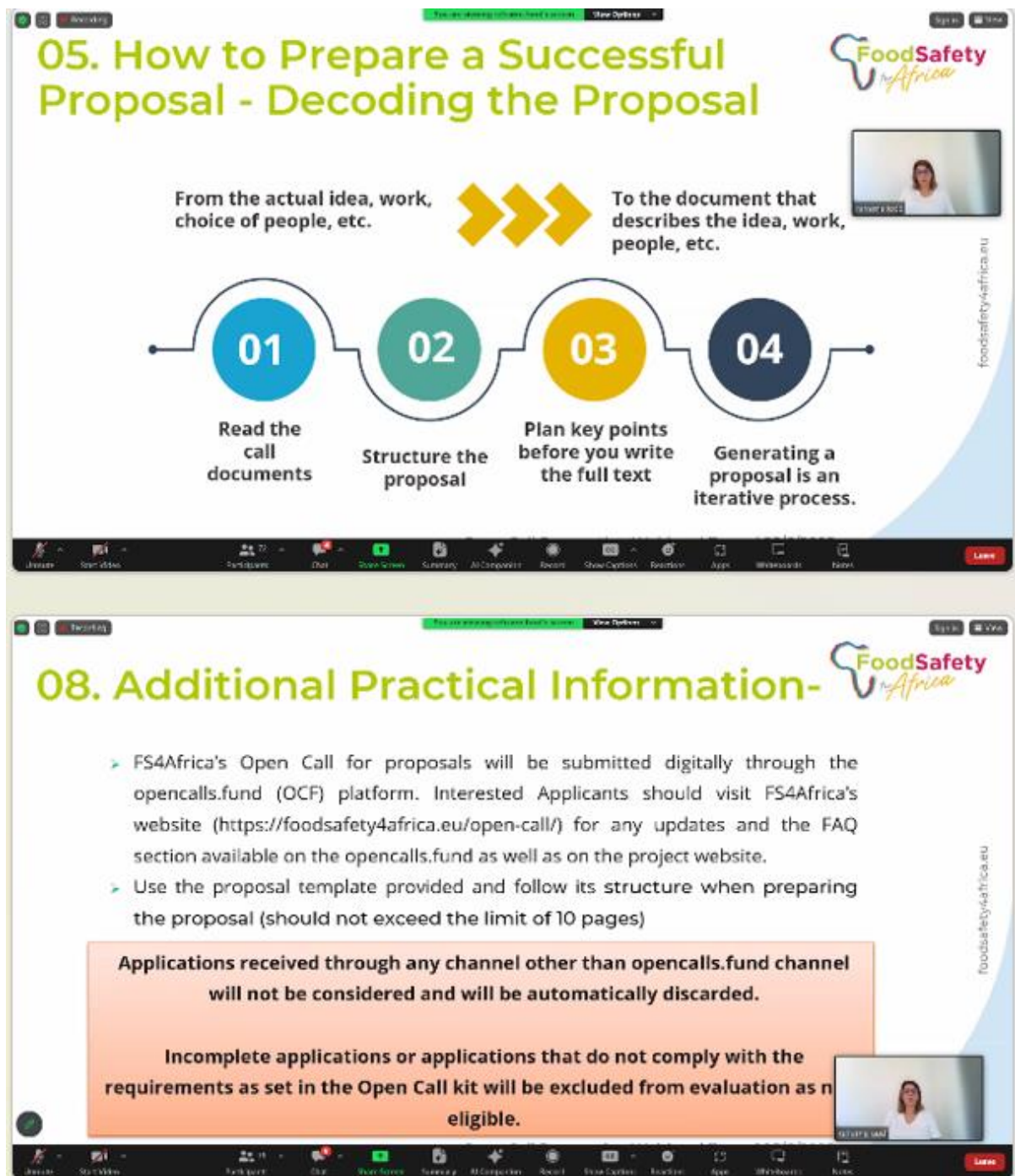This document presents information about the selection of independent evaluators who will be able to assess the quality of applications received within the FS4Africa Open Call 1. The following information is provided:

➢ Evaluators profile
➢ Financial benefits
➢ Evaluation procedure
➢ Evaluators selection process
➢ Expression of interest
➢ Timeline of activities
➢ Liability and Admissibility
➢ Conflict of interest
➢ Confidentiality

The full document is enclosed as Annex 1 of this deliverable.

3.2   Open Call text (Fiche)

This document presents the information of the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) and provides necessary information for applying in the framework of the FS4Africa project. This document contains information such as:

➢ Short description of the FS4Africa project
➢ General information about the Open Call
➢ Timeline and important dates
➢ Topics
➢ Eligibility criteria
➢ Submission procedure
➢ Origin of the funds
➢ Points of contact

The full document is enclosed as Annex 2 of this deliverable.

3.3 Open Call Hand out Summary

This document summarises the basic information of the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) and provides necessary information for applying in the framework of the FS4Africa project.

The full document is enclosed as Annex 3 of this deliverable.

3.4 Open Call Applicants' Guide

This document is an essential administrative support to the applicants during the application process. It introduces the Open Call1, explaining in detail all the points of the application. This document contains:

> ➢ Introduction (background information about the FS4Africa project its approach, purpose, objectives and expected outcomes)
> ➢ Overview of the Open Call 1 (general information, main objectives of the OC1, submission procedure, documentation format and origin of funds)
> ➢ Information about proposal submission and selection (specific information regarding the publication of the Open Call 1, eligibility criteria, application and evaluation process)
> ➢ Information about for the implementation of the sub-projects (timeline, activities, deliverables, and funding)
> ➢ Responsibilities of selected projects (conflict of interest, ethics and confidentiality, promotion of visibility and EU funding and data protection, etc.)
> ➢ Checklist of necessary application steps
> ➢ Points of contact.

The full document is enclosed as Annex 4 of this deliverable.

3.5 Declaration of Honour (DoH)

This document presents a form where applicants must declare exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest. Additionally, applicants by signing, declare that they enter the application process respecting the given guidelines.

The full document is enclosed as Annex 5 of this deliverable.

3.6 SME Declaration

This document is a form that follows guidelines set by the European Commission which evaluates the status of the entity applying for the Open Call 1. By submitting this document applicants declare they fulfil the eligibility criteria of being officially registered in the business registry and having the status of "legal entity".

The full document is enclosed as Annex 6 of this deliverable.

3.7 Open Call Proposal Template

This document is a comprehensive application form that applicants need to fill in and submit in a pdf format. As part of the template, applicants will describe the Applicant, the application's objectives, the proposed work plan and activities, the results and deliverables according to the FS4Africa expectations, business & technology impact and other aspects and budget requested. Applicants are requested to use the Budget template (the excel file provided in the

Open Call 1 kit) to calculate the budget for their project, save the workbook and submit it as .pdf in the application phase.

The full document is enclosed as Annex 7 of this deliverable.

3.8 Bank account information

This document follows the guidelines set by the European Commission for acquiring bank account information that will be used to release payments to selected applicants and based on the payment scheme.

The full document is enclosed as Annex 8 of this deliverable.

3.9 Model sub-grant agreement

This document presents the model of the sub-grant agreement that is planned to be used during the contracting phase with the selected single entities of the Open Call 1. It is important to note that this document is for informative purposes only, subject to possible changes suggested by EC or the legal team of RFF, thus cannot be treated as legally binding.

The full document is enclosed as Annex 9 of this deliverable.

3.10 Open Call Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides frequently asked questions about the Open Call 1 specifics. The full document is enclosed as Annex 10 of this deliverable.

4 Conclusions

This deliverable gives an overview of the work done and documentation prepared for the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1).

This material is expected to guide all potential applicants such as research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organizations and other multidisciplinary actors) in the preparation of their proposal.

It provides the most important information such as eligibility criteria, financial support and services, payment modalities, evaluation process etc.

All the original documents can be found in the Annexes.

5 Annexes

The list of Annexes is provided below:

- ➢ Annex 1 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders - Call for Evaluators
- ➢ Annex 2 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders - Open Call text (Fiche) – in English and French
- ➢ Annex 3 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Open Call Hand out Summary
- ➢ Annex 4 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Open Call Applicants' Guide
- ➢ Annex 5 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Declaration of Honour (DoH)
- ➢ Annex 6 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – SME Declaration
- ➢ Annex 7 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Open Call Proposal Template
- ➢ Annex 8 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Bank account information
- ➢ Annex 9 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Model sub-grant agreement
- ➢ Annex 10 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders – Open Call Frequently Asked Questions

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Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 1
Call for Evaluators

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1. Introduction

1.1. About FS4Africa

FS4Africa addresses the urgent call for improvements in policy, enforcement, food safety culture, trade and market access, innovation and research, and international collaboration and coordination for the informal sector on the African continent and decrease health and economic costs to society and foregone trade opportunities for a wide range of informal small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from farm to fork, such as local processors and street vendors.

With little empirical evidence to date of policy measures and interventions that incentivise positive contributions for informal groups, networks and associations, FS4Africa leverages effective entry points of digital and microbiome private sector led innovation and scaling up/out in four use cases embedded in an enabling environment and through the creation of additional co-benefits such financial inclusion, promoting innovation and start-ups, addressing the digital divide and creating market opportunities for a generally young, educated, tech-savvy, digitally mature, and remarkably resilient society. Another approach is to capitalize on, by the informal sector-adopted approach of microbiome-based alternatives to chemical and physical treatments, as well as preserving soil and plant microbial diversity. Under technical constraints, fermentation is also a proven and facile option for food preservation widely used in Africa.

Four use cases underpin the development of food safety approaches for the informal sector:

No	Title	Countries	Challenges addressed
1	Sustainable Aflatoxin Management through a Breeding and Food Convergence Innovation approach	Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya	Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
2	Reduction in the use and misuse of pesticides	Benin, Ghana, Nigeria	Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
3	Safe and healthy vegetable and fish production through online platform and mobile communication	Nigeria, Cameroon	Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
4	Microbiological quality of tomatoes and leafy greens from farm to fork	South Africa	Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. *Escherichia coli*)

1.2. The FS4Africa Open Call

FS4Africa will launch an **Open Call 1 (OC1)** addressed to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, and other multidisciplinary actors) to:

  ➢ test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project (built on FS4Africa existing UC topics) or
  ➢ develop ideas and tools that address the specific challenges of the FS4Africa project and contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

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Solutions **do not necessarily have to be tied** to FS4Africa existing UC topics as long as they align with the broader goals of the project and address one of the following challenges:

➢ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
➢ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
➢ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
➢ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. *Escherichia coli*)
➢ Food adulteration

Selected sub-projects will be launched in February 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until January 2027). The implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

➢ Phase 1 - Design (3 months / February 2026 – April 2026): Payment of 30% of the total grant [Deliverable: Activity plan];
➢ Phase 2 - Development (6 months / May 2026 – October 2026): Payment of 50% of the total grant [Deliverable: Results demonstration];
➢ Phase 3 - Validation (3 months / November 2026 – January 2027): Payment of the final 20% of the total grant [Deliverable: Report on market or community associated activities].

FS4Africa will only accept applications from **a single applicant per proposal (no Consortia allowed)**.

Key numbers and date of the Open Call

Open Calls	Total Amount	Sub - project Size	No of sub - projects
OC1	600k Euro	up to 60k Euro	≥10

The submission timeline of the Open Call 1 for the proposals is June 2nd, 2025 to September 30th, 2025.

1.3. Opencalls.fund platform

The opencalls.fund platform is a digital platform for the management of the applications for financial support to third parties and accelerator programs, developed and maintained by reframe.food. The FS4Africa open call 1 for financial support to third parties (FSTP) will be published through the https://opencalls.fund/ platform.

We are looking for evaluators!

➢ **Evaluators profile**

We are looking for independent evaluators, who will be able to assess the quality of applications received within the FS4Africa Open Call 1, shortly after its closure.

Evaluators must be:

➢ European - EU nationals Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to an EU Member as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list here).

- ➢ Experienced in technical and/or business expertise related to the topics of the call and knowledge surrounding food safety systems. Particular attention to the African informal sector will be highly appreciated.
- ➢ Experienced in evaluating EC proposals or similar experience.

An evaluator should not work for an organisation that aims to apply for the FS4Africa Open Call, nor in an organisation participating in the FS4Africa consortium.

All evaluators must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest and must immediately inform the FS4Africa Consortium staff if they detect a conflict of interest during the evaluation. The evaluator's contract also requires evaluators to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process.

They must follow any instruction given by the FS4Africa Consortium to ensure this. Under no circumstance may an evaluator attempt to contact an applicant on his/her own account, during the evaluation process. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times before, during and after the evaluation. All external evaluators will sign a confidentiality declaration.

All evaluators must adhere to the guiding principles for independent experts set out by the EC including independence, impartiality, objectivity, accuracy and consistency.

The evaluators will be in charge of providing a neutral yet technical/scientific review of the received applications on the following aspects:

- ➢ Concept and feasibility
- ➢ Technology readiness and innovation development
- ➢ Impact & Exploitation
- ➢ Organisational capacity and sufficiency in the team's background.

The full evaluation criteria of the FS4Africa Open Call 1 are specified in the respective open call kit documents. In addition, the kit will be part of the evaluators' manual. The evaluation process per application as well as specific reimbursement of evaluators' efforts will be listed. It is important to note that the number of applications per evaluator depends on several factors: the time availability of the evaluators, the number of submitted applications, and the number of evaluators to be selected throughout the FS4Africa Open Call 1.

- ➢ **Financial Benefits**

The evaluators daily rate amounts to 450€ and is based upon the EC rules. Two evaluators will be assigned to each proposal, with a projected capacity of two (2) proposal evaluations per day.

Payment will be done in Euros by bank transfer on the personal account of the evaluators, up to 60 days after submission of the evaluations and reception of an invoice from the evaluator.

The minimum and maximum number of days per evaluator will depend on the number of applications received, and other factors such as availability of the evaluator throughout the process etc.

> ➤ **Evaluation procedure**

The entire evaluation process will take place remotely on the https://opencalls.fund/ platform; no physical meetings are planned. The evaluation process will start with a short briefing meeting (online), about the evaluation procedure with a special focus on the evaluation criteria. An Evaluator's manual will also be shared at this time.

Each proposal will be assigned to two (2) evaluators. Each evaluator is expected to individually score each evaluation criterion and provide comments that justify their score. Evaluators are expected to work within their expertise for each criterion and ensure that any comments made align with the score they give. After completing their evaluation, each pair of evaluators will have to consolidate their evaluations into one report, ensuring that they reach a mutual agreement on the proposal's merits. The process will be monitored and facilitated by the OC manager/treasurer. This collaborative process ensures consistency in judgement and guards against bias, ultimately leading to the selection of the most deserving proposals. The effort of consolidation is included in the overall fee and is not reimbursed separately.

In case the difference in total scores between evaluators is significant (>5), a consensus meeting between the two evaluators will be held to seek adjustments. In case the consensus meeting is unsuccessful, an online interview of the applicant by the external evaluators (a third external evaluator) will be conducted. The following criteria will be evaluated:

(i) confirmation of proposed solution (40%);

(ii) viability of proposed solution (30%);

(iii) reliability to reach exploitation milestones (30%).

> ➤ **Evaluators selection process**

Evaluators will be selected by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board based on their competences and needs of the open call. Only the selected evaluators will be communicated via email.

> ➤ **Expression of interest**

If you are interested in being an evaluator, first you need to register as a user to the opencalls.fund platform. Then you can proceed and apply as an evaluator, by filling in all necessary fields and uploading your CV (as .pdf) - the application shouldn't take you more than 5 minutes!

For Evaluators

Joining our platform as an evaluator comes with a multitude of benefits tailored specifically for those engaged in assessing innovative projects under Horizon Europe open calls. As an evaluator in our open calls, you gain the opportunity to contribute your expertise to the advancement of groundbreaking EU funded projects while enhancing your professional profile in the industry.

Apply now

Apply here:

If you know someone else who might be qualified for this task and might be interested, please forward this to him or her. By applying to FS4Africa Call for Evaluators, applicants automatically accept all the rules and conditions described below.

➢ **Tentative timeline of activities for Open Call***

FS4Africa Open Call duration for evaluators: June 2025 – July 2025

Eligibility check of the received evaluators' applications: August 2025 - September 2025.

Contracting with selected evaluators: September 2025– October 2025.

Evaluation of Open Call proposals by the external evaluators: November 2025

*Dates may be revised/ amended, subject to approval by EC services.

➢ **Evaluators' liability**

All evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and non-disclosure agreement with the FS4Africa consortium prior to the evaluation start.

By applying to the FS4Africa Call for evaluators and registration to the opencalls.fund, the expert:

- ➢ understands that submitting an application (registration) does not guarantee his/her selection as an evaluator for any of the open calls.
- ➢ understands that he/she will have to provide a signed Code of Conduct and Declaration of Honor (DoH) along with any other requested documents if he/she is selected to serve as an evaluator for a specific open call published on the OCH platform.
- ➢ confirms that the team in charge for each Open Call will ask him/her on an open call basis about time availability to accomplish the evaluation within the specified time frame for the given open call, to attend a briefing session (if required) and a debriefing session after the selection (if required). Timing will be provided for every open call.
- ➢ confirms the interest to be informed about the future opportunities to act as an evaluator on ongoing and upcoming open calls that will be conducted on OCH.
- ➢ assures that he/she will only evaluate the applications of applicants for whom she/he does not have a Conflict of Interest (CoI).

➢ **Admissibility**
- ➢ The applicant must be a European (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list HERE) (Note: if you are not a citizen of these countries, but a resident/taxpayer in one of these countries, you are still eligible to become an evaluator).
- ➢ Applications can be submitted at any time starting from June 2nd, 2025, and they should be submitted before July 31st , 2025.

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Applications must be submitted electronically via the opencalls.fund platform electronic submission system as indicated in this call, using the form provided inside opencalls.fund platform, and a CV, as .pdf, must be attached as part of the application. Paper or email submissions will NOT be accepted.

Applications must be complete for all parts, and CV should be readable, accessible and printable.

If the admissibility criteria are respected, then the evaluation of the expert will be performed by the Advisory Board or expert team of each project whose Open Call is conducted via opencalls.fund platform. To formalise the collaboration, if not specified differently, a service contract will be signed between **reframe.food** and the evaluators.

All selected evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and nondisclosure agreement prior to the evaluation start.

By applying for evaluators, interested applicants automatically accept the Guidelines in this Call for Evaluators and all the guidelines and requirements emerging from documentation included in the Open Call kit.

> #### Conflict of interest

Evaluators must not have a conflict of interest at the time of their appointment and must sign a contract with a declaration that no such conflict exists. They also must inform the consortium should such a conflict arise in any of the applications they have been assigned. When a potential conflict of interest is reported by the evaluator or brought to the attention of the consortium by any means, the project consortium will analyse the circumstances and any objective elements of information available. If the consortium concludes that there is conflict of interest, the evaluator will be excluded from the evaluation of that application. All potential conflicts of interest will be assessed carefully. Please see more info **here**.

> #### Confidentiality

Evaluators are bound by confidentiality, as all information relating to the assessment process is strictly confidential. They are not allowed to disclose any information about the applications submitted and results of the assessment and selection to anyone. They are also not allowed to use the ideas of the application for their own purposes.

Good luck and thank you for your interest.

We are looking forward to collaborating with you!

The FS4Africa OC Team

Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 2
Open Call text (Fiche)

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1 Introduction

This document provides guidance information regarding the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project, describing the eligibility and evaluation criteria. The document in its entirety and all associated documents of the Open Call kit must be read carefully before the submission of an application.

1.1 About FS4Africa

FS4Africa addresses the urgent call for improvements in policy, enforcement, food safety culture, trade and market access, innovation and research, and international collaboration and coordination for the informal sector on the African continent and decrease health and economic costs to society and foregone trade opportunities for a wide range of informal small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from farm to fork, such as local processors and street vendors.

With little empirical evidence to date of policy measures and interventions that incentivise positive contributions for informal groups, networks and associations, FS4Africa leverages effective entry points of digital and microbiome private sector led innovation and scaling up/out in four use cases embedded in an enabling environment and through the creation of additional co-benefits such financial inclusion, promoting innovation and start-ups, addressing the digital divide and creating market opportunities for a generally young, educated, tech-savvy, digitally mature, and remarkably resilient society. Another approach is to capitalize on the informal sector-adopted approach of microbiome-based alternatives to chemical and physical treatments, as well as preserving soil and plant microbial diversity. Under technical constraints, fermentation is also a proven and facile option for food preservation widely used in Africa.

1.2 FS4Africa Objectives

The overall objective of FS4Africa is to improve African food safety systems – with particular attention to the informal sector – through local market transformation enhancing food security and regional trade while reducing negative impacts on the environment, biodiversity, health, and society. This will be reached through the following specific objectives (SO):

➢ Gain a better understanding of the role of food safety by analyzing the enabling environment, local value chains and use cases generating data and evidence on trade actors in the informal sector
➢ Develop governmental policies, business concepts and tools that transform local markets to improve food safety in the informal sector and possible integration into the formal food system
➢ Co-develop and co-create solutions and business cases in multi-actor-based approaches for food safety
➢ Incubate, accelerate and upscale solutions through a network of Innovation Hubs involving and training local SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurs in view of lower cost for certification and conformity assessment
➢ Assess the impact of food safety solutions, reducing their risks, on food security, circularity, sustainability and biodiversity
➢ Embed the food safety solutions in strategic agendas for policy making and research by engagement with stakeholders and society

2 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

2.1 General Information

FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) aims to attract research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project.

The project will select at least 10 sub - projects in total providing Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), as a mechanism to maximise the project's impact and accelerate network expansion.

FS4Africa will only accept applications from **single applicants (no Consortia allowed)**. Applicants are expected to develop and implement innovative solutions that address the identified food safety challenges. This involves practical activities such as:

➢ **Testing and Validating Solutions**: Implementing proposed innovations in real-world settings to assess their effectiveness.

➢ **Enhancing Business Concepts**: Refining innovative business approaches to improve financial viability, ensure long-term sustainability, and enable scalable impact in food safety systems

Proposals should present novel, practical solutions that can be effectively implemented within the target communities ensuring that the solution addresses the specific challenges and conditions present in the African informal food sector as defined in the call.

Solutions must have the potential for expansion and adaptation across different regions or contexts.

Sub-projects should promote long-term benefits, considering environmental, economic, and social factors.

Solutions should aim to address challenges in areas such as:
➢ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
➢ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
➢ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
➢ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. Escherichia coli)
➢ Food adulteration

2.2 Specific requirements for the sub - projects

Single entities will receive funding for testing, validating and enhancing the business concepts and tools of the project or developing ideas and tools that contribute to sub - project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

Proposals must consist of original work by the applicants and their anticipated developments do not infringe upon any third-party rights. Any disputes or legal challenges stemming from third-party claims resulting from the sub-granted projects are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The FS4Africa consortium is not responsible for verifying the ownership authenticity of the proposed solution.

This requirement applies specifically to the **content of the proposal document**, not necessarily to the activities within the project. Applicants may incorporate **existing third-party technologies (e.g., detection equipment, software, or analytical tools) in their activities,**

provided they have the proper rights, permissions, or licenses to use them. However, applicants must not falsely claim ownership of intellectual property they do not develop.

Proposals must accomplish an iterative multi-actor innovation process in a real-life as leading principle for adequate involvement of a wide range of food system actors and relevant stakeholders (especially considering women and the diaspora) and engage them in developing and implementing realistic solutions aimed at enhancing food safety, particularly in the informal food sector.

Applicants will deliver their solution in English Language. All applications, deliverables, reports, and communications with the FS4Africa Open Call team are required to be submitted in English.

The FS4Africa Open Call 1 and Call for evaluators will be launched on Monday, June 2nd, 2025. Before assigning external evaluators, each proposal will be verified by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board (AB), for eligibility according to the predefined criteria of the OC. The proposal evaluation and sub-grant agreement preparation will take place between October 2025 and January 2026. Selected sub - projects will be launched in February 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until January 2027). The 12-month implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

➢ Phase 1 - Design (3 months / February 2026 – April 2026): Payment of 30% of the total grant [Deliverable: Activity plan];
➢ Phase 2 - Development (6 months / May 2026 – October 2026): Payment of 50% of the total grant [Deliverable: Results demonstration];
➢ Phase 3 - Validation (3 months / November 2026 – January 2027): Payment of the final 20% of the total grant [Deliverable: Report on market or community associated activities].

An initial timeline for FS4Africa Open Call 1 can be seen in the following figure. The dates may change due to unforeseen events and situations. Therefore, these are an indication of what is initially expected; the dates are to be confirmed by the FS4Africa team along the process and in agreement with the EC. The dates are not legally binding.

Figure 1: FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) timeline

2.3 Eligibility Criteria

FS4Africa aims to provide financial support to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and

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enhance the business concepts and tools of the project or develop ideas and tools that contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

FS4Africa will only accept applications from one entity per proposal (no Consortia allowed) and proposed solutions must fit within one of the FS4Africa Use Cases (as described in the section: Use Cases being developed within the FS4Africa project of the Applicants' Guide) or aim to address one of the following food safety challenges in Africa:

  ➢ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
  ➢ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
  ➢ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
  ➢ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. Escherichia coli)
  ➢ Food adulteration

Detailed eligibility criteria are described in the FS4Africa Open Call Applicants' Guide, Section 3.2 Eligibility criteria.

An automatic filtering to discard non-eligible proposals will be based on the following criteria:

  ➢ Legal entity established in countries in Africa (as defined in section 3.2.6 of the Applicants' Guide);
  ➢ The proposal is submitted by a single applicant (consortia are not allowed);
  ➢ Uniqueness of the proposal (one proposal per applicant)
  ➢ Proposals are not pre-selected in the other projects' open calls funded under the same topic (HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-20), i.e. UP-RISE
  ➢ Proposed work to be carried out after the selection process;
  ➢ Existing consortium members of the FS4Africa project and their affiliated entities are not eligible for the OC.
  ➢ The proposal must be submitted before the defined deadline, applying the requested submission procedure.
  ➢ Proposals shall only ask for funding for that part of the work that is not yet accomplished and will be carried out once having been selected for funding. Of course, this does not exclude the usage of e.g. results, IP, infrastructures or approaches already held by the applicants.
  ➢ All Applicants must have a valid VAT number and must be active and operational. However, in case having a VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided.

FS4Africa Open Call team reserves the right to ask for additional explanations from the applicants during the eligibility check.

Proposals that comply with these criteria are eligible to move on to the evaluation round.

2.4 Submission procedure

FS4Africa's Open Call for proposals will be submitted digitally through the opencalls.fund (OCF) platform. Interested Applicants should visit FS4Africa's website (https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/) for any updates and the FAQ section available in the (https://opencalls.fund/) as well as on the project website.

Submissions received through any other channel will not be considered and will be automatically discarded.

More details on obligations of beneficiaries can be found in Chapter 5 of the Open Call Applicants' Guide.

2.5 Origin of the funds

All sub-grantees will sign a dedicated Sub-grant Agreement with the FS4Africa Open Call Manager / Treasurer (RFF) and the FS4Africa coordinator (IITA). The funds provided to the Sub-grant Agreement originate from the funds of the European Project FS4Africa which is funded by the European Commission under Grant Agreement Number 101136916.

3 Points of contact

For all the information related to FS4Africa Open Call 1 please state your question on the FAQ section on the opencalls.fund or contact us at fs4africa@opencalls.fund.

Relever les défis de la sécurité alimentaire dans le des cas pratiques innovants

Appel à Projet 1 (AAP1) destiné aux acteurs de la recherche et des technologies

Annexe 2
Texte de l'appel à projet

Financé par
l'Union européenne

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1 Introduction

Le présent document fournit des informations d'orientation concernant l'Appel à Projet1 (OC1) de FS4Africa, destiné aux acteurs de la recherche et des technologies, afin de tester, valider et améliorer les concepts économiques et les outils du projet. Il décrit également les critères d'éligibilité et d'évaluation. Le document dans son intégralité, ainsi que tous les documents associés constituant le kit de l'appel, doivent être lus attentivement avant la soumission d'une candidature.

1.1 À propos de FS4Africa

FS4Africa répond à l'urgence de l' l'amélioration des politiques, de l'application de la réglementation, de la culture de la sécurité sanitaire des aliments, de l'accès aux marchés et au commerce, de l'innovation et de la recherche, ainsi que de la collaboration et de la coordination internationales dans les secteur informel du continent africain. L'objectif est de réduire les coûts sanitaires et économiques pour la société ainsi que les opportunités commerciales manquées pour un large éventail de petites et moyennes entreprises informelles, agricoles et alimentaires, telles que les transformateurs locaux et les vendeurs de rue.

Faute de preuves empiriques suffisantes concernant les mesures politiques et les interventions incitant les groupes informels à contribuer positivement, FS4Africa exploite des points d'entrée efficaces tels que l'innovation numérique et microbiomique menée par le secteur privé, avec une montée en puissance dans quatre cas d'usage inscrits dans un environnement favorable. Le projet vise également à générer des co-bénéfices tels que l'inclusion financière, la promotion de l'innovation et des start-up, la réduction de la fracture numérique et la création d'opportunités de marché pour une société généralement jeune, instruite, férue de technologie, numériquement mature et remarquablement résiliente. Une autre approche consiste à capitaliser sur l'adoption, par le secteur informel, de solutions basées sur le microbiome comme alternatives aux traitements chimiques et physiques, tout en préservant la diversité microbienne des sols et des plantes. Dans des conditions techniques contraignantes, la fermentation constitue également une option éprouvée et simple pour la conservation des aliments, largement utilisée en Afrique.

1.2 Objectifs de FS4Africa

L'objectif global de FS4Africa est d'améliorer les systèmes de sécurité sanitaire des aliments en Afrique – en accordant une attention particulière au secteur informel – grâce à la transformation des marchés locaux, renforçant ainsi la sécurité alimentaire et le commerce régional tout en réduisant les impacts négatifs sur l'environnement, la biodiversité, la santé et la société. Cet objectif sera atteint au moyen des objectifs spécifiques (OS) suivants :

➢ Mieux comprendre le rôle de la sécurité sanitaire des aliments en analysant les environnements propices, les chaînes de valeur locales et des cas d'usage pour générer des données et des enseignements sur les acteurs commerciaux du secteur informel ;

➢ Développer des politiques publiques, des modèles économiques et des outils transformant les marchés locaux afin d'améliorer la sécurité sanitaire des aliments dans le secteur informel et favoriser leur intégration dans le système alimentaire formel ;

➢ Co-concevoir et co-créer des solutions et des modèles économiques dans le cadre d'approches multi-acteurs pour la sécurité sanitaire des aliments ;

➢ Incuber, accélérer et déployer les solutions via un réseau de pôles d'innovation impliquant et formant des PME locales, des start-up et des entrepreneurs, en vue de réduire le coût des certifications et des évaluations de conformité ;

➢ Évaluer l'impact des solutions de sécurité sanitaire des aliments – et la réduction des risques associés – sur la sécurité alimentaire, la circularité, la durabilité et la biodiversité ;

➢ Ancrer les solutions de sécurité sanitaire des aliments dans les agendas stratégiques de la recherche et des politiques publiques grâce à l'engagement des parties prenantes et de la société.

2 Appel à Projet 1 (AAP1) destiné aux acteurs de la recherche et de la technologie

2.1 Informations générales

L'Appel à Projet 1 de FS4Africa vise à attirer des acteurs de la recherche et des technologies (start-up, PME, organismes de recherche et autres acteurs pluridisciplinaires) afin de tester, valider et améliorer les modèles économiques et les outils du projet.

Le projet sélectionnera au moins 10 sous-projets qui recevront un soutien financier en cascade mécanisme visant à maximiser l'impact du projet et à accélérer l'expansion du réseau.

FS4Africa n'acceptera que des candidatures **individuelles** (les consortiums ne sont pas autorisés). Les candidats sont invités à développer et à mettre en œuvre des solutions innovantes répondant aux défis identifiés en matière de sécurité sanitaire des aliments. Cela implique des activités pratiques telles que :

➢ **Tester et valider les solutions** : mise en œuvre des innovations proposées dans des conditions réelles afin d'en évaluer l'efficacité ;

➢ **Améliorer les modèles économiques** : affiner les approches d'affaires innovantes pour renforcer la viabilité financière, garantir la durabilité à long terme et permettre un impact évolutif des systèmes de sécurité sanitaire des aliments.

Les propositions doivent présenter des solutions novatrices et pratiques, pouvant être mises en œuvre efficacement au sein des communautés cibles, en veillant à ce qu'elles répondent aux défis et conditions spécifiques du secteur alimentaire informel africain tels que définis dans l'appel.

Les solutions doivent pouvoir être étendues et adaptées à différents contextes ou régions.

Les sous-projets doivent promouvoir des bénéfices à long terme, en tenant compte des facteurs environnementaux, économiques et sociaux.

Les défis susceptibles d'être abordés comprennent :

➢ Les problèmes de sécurité alimentaire associés au manque d'organisation de la chaîne de valeur, de traçabilité et d'authentification des aliments sûrs

➢ Contamination par les mycotoxines dans plusieurs cultures vivrières, notamment destinées à l'alimentation humaine et animale

➢ Résidus de pesticides dans les céréales et les légumes

➢ Contamination microbienne, en particulier contamination par Escherichia coli

➢ Falsification des aliments

2.2 Exigences spécifiques pour les sous-projets

Les entités individuelles recevront un financement pour tester, valider et améliorer les modèles économiques et les outils du projet, ou pour développer des idées et des outils contribuant aux objectifs des sous-projets, qui pourront ensuite être introduits sur le marché.

Les propositions doivent être des travaux originaux des candidats, et les développements prévus ne doivent pas enfreindre les droits de tiers. Tout litige ou action juridique résultant de réclamations de tiers incombent exclusivement au candidat ; le consortium FS4Africa décline toute responsabilité quant à l'authenticité de la propriété intellectuelle proposée.

Cette exigence concerne spécifiquement le contenu du document de proposition, et non nécessairement les activités du projet. Les candidats peuvent utiliser des technologies tierces existantes (p. ex. équipements de détection, logiciels ou outils analytiques) pour autant qu'ils disposent des droits, permissions ou licences nécessaires. Cependant, ils ne doivent pas revendiquer indûment la Propriété Intellectuelle d'une solution qu'ils n'ont pas développée.

Les propositions doivent mettre en œuvre un processus d'innovation itératif multi-acteurs en conditions réelles, garantissant l'implication adéquate d'un large éventail d'acteurs de la chaine alimentaire et de parties prenantes pertinentes (en particulier les femmes et la diaspora), et les mobiliser dans l'élaboration et la mise en œuvre de solutions réalistes visant à renforcer la sécurité sanitaire des aliments, surtout dans le secteur informel.

Les candidatures et tous les livrables devront être rédigés en anglais. Les candidatures, livrables, rapports et toutes les communications avec l'équipe de l'Appel à Projet FS4Africa devront être soumises **en anglais**.

Le lancement de l'Appel à projet 1 (OC1) de FS4Africa et de l'appel aux évaluateurs aura lieu le lundi 2 juin 2025. Avant de désigner des évaluateurs externes, chaque proposition sera vérifiée par le Conseil consultatif de l'OC FS4Africa (AB) afin de s'assurer de son éligibilité conformément aux critères prédéfinis. L'évaluation des propositions et la préparation des accords de sous-subvention se dérouleront entre octobre 2025 et janvier 2026. Les sous-projets retenus seront lancés en février 2026 et disposeront d'une période de mise en œuvre de douze mois (jusqu'en janvier 2027). Cette période de 12 mois sera divisée en trois phases:

- ➢ Phase 1 – Conception (3 mois / février 2026 – avril 2026): versement de 30 % du montant total de la subvention [Livrable : Plan d'activités];

- ➢ Phase 2 – Développement (6 mois / mai 2026 – octobre 2026): versement de 50 % du montant total de la subvention [Livrable : Démonstration des résultats];

- ➢ Phase 3 – Validation (3 mois / novembre 2026 – janvier 2027): versement des 20 % restants du montant total de la subvention [Livrable : Rapport sur les activités en lien avec le marché ou la communauté].

Une chronologie initiale de l'Appel à projet 1 de FS4Africa est présentée dans la schéma suivant. Les dates peuvent être modifiées en raison d'événements ou de situations imprévues; elles ne sont donc données qu'à titre indicatif et seront confirmées par l'équipe FS4Africa au cours du processus, en accord avec la Commission européenne. Ces dates ne sont pas juridiquement contraignantes.

Figure 1 : Chronologie de l'Appel à Projet 1 de FS4Africa

2.3 Critères d'éligibilité

FS4Africa entend fournir un soutien financier aux acteurs de la recherche et des technologies (start-up, PME, organismes de recherche et autres acteurs pluridisciplinaires) pour tester, valider et améliorer les modèles économiques et les outils du projet ou développer des idées et des outils contribuant aux objectifs du projet pour une mise sur le marché ultérieure.

FS4Africa n'acceptera qu'une seule entité par proposition (aucun consortium autorisé) et les solutions proposées devront soit s'inscrire dans l'un des cas d'usage FS4Africa (tels que décrits dans la section « Cas d'usage développés dans le cadre du projet FS4Africa » du Guide du candidat), soit viser à relever l'un des défis suivants liés à la sécurité sanitaire des aliments en Afrique :

➢ Problèmes de sécurité alimentaire associés au manque d'organisation de la chaîne de valeur, de traçabilité et d'authentification des aliments sûrs
➢ Contamination par les mycotoxines dans plusieurs cultures vivrières, notamment destinées à l'alimentation humaine et animale
➢ Résidus de pesticides dans les céréales et les légumes
➢ Contamination microbienne, en particulier contamination par Escherichia coli
➢ Falsification des aliments

Des informations détaillées figurent dans le **Guide du candidat**, section 3.2.

Un filtrage automatique éliminera les propositions non éligibles sur la base des critères suivants:

➢ Entité juridique : l'organisme candidat doit être établi dans un pays d'Afrique (tel que défini à la section 3.2.6 du Guide du candidat) ;
➢ La proposition est soumise par un seul candidat (les consortiums ne sont pas autorisés) ;
➢ Unicité de la proposition (une seule proposition par candidat) ;
➢ La proposition n'a pas déjà été présélectionnée dans d'autres appels à projets financés sur le même topic (HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-20), par exemple UP-RISE;
➢ Les travaux proposés seront réalisés après le processus de sélection ;

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➢ Les membres actuels du consortium FS4Africa et leurs entités affiliées ne sont pas éligibles pour cet appel ;

➢ La proposition doit être soumise avant la date limite définie, en respectant la procédure de soumission requise ;

➢ Les candidats ne doivent demander un financement que pour la partie des travaux non encore réalisée et qui sera exécutée après la sélection. L'utilisation de résultats, Propriété Intellectuelle, infrastructures ou approches déjà détenues par les candidats reste bien entendu autorisée ;

➢ Tous les candidats doivent posséder un numéro de TVA valide et être actifs et opérationnels. Si la législation nationale ne rend pas le numéro de TVA obligatoire, un numéro d'enregistrement délivré par l'autorité compétente (registre national des entreprises, tribunal de commerce ou équivalent) devra être fourni.

L'équipe de l'Appel à Projet FS4Africa se réserve le droit de demander des précisions supplémentaires aux candidats lors de la vérification d'éligibilité.

Les propositions satisfaisant à ces critères seront admises à l'étape suivante d'évaluation.

2.4 Procédure de soumission

Les candidatures devront être déposées **exclusivement en ligne** sur la plateforme **opencalls.fund**. Les candidats sont invités à consulter régulièrement le site de FS4Africa (https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/) et la FAQ disponible sur **opencalls.fund** pour les mises à jour.

Les soumissions reçues par tout autre canal ne seront **pas prises en compte**.

Pour plus de détails sur les obligations des bénéficiaires, voir le **Chapitre 5** du Guide du candidat.

2.5 Origine des fonds

Tous les sous-bénéficiaires signeront un accord de sous-subvention avec le gestionnaire de l'appel à Projet FS4Africa / Trésorier (RFF) et le coordinateur FS4Africa (IITA). Les fonds proviennent du projet européen FS4Africa financé par la Commission européenne (Accord de subvention n° 101136916).

3 Contact :

Pour toute question relative à l'Appel à projet de FS4Africa, veuillez consulter la FAQ sur opencalls.fund ou écrire à fs4africa@opencalls.fund.

Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 3
Hand out Summary

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1 Introduction

FS4Africa addresses the urgent call for improvements in policy, enforcement, food safety culture, trade and market access, innovation and research, and international collaboration and coordination for the informal sector on the African continent and decrease health and economic costs to society and foregone trade opportunities for a wide range of informal small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from farm to fork, such as local processors and street vendors.

With little empirical evidence to date of policy measures and interventions that incentivise positive contributions for informal groups, networks and associations, FS4Africa leverages effective entry points of digital and microbiome private sector led innovation and scaling up/out in four use cases embedded in an enabling environment and through the creation of additional co-benefits such financial inclusion, promoting innovation and start-ups, addressing the digital divide and creating market opportunities for a generally young, educated, tech-savvy, digitally mature, and remarkably resilient society. Another approach is to capitalize on the informal sector-adopted approach of microbiome-based alternatives to chemical and physical treatments, as well as preserving soil and plant microbial diversity. Under technical constraints, fermentation is also a proven and facile option for food preservation widely used in Africa.

2 FS4Africa Open Call 1

FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) aims to attract research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, and other multidisciplinary actors) to:

➢ test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project (built on FS4Africa existing UC topics) or
➢ develop ideas and tools that address the specific challenges of the FS4Africa project and contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

FS4Africa Open Call 1 will select at least 10 sub - projects in total providing Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), as a mechanism to maximise FS4Africa's impact and accelerate network expansion.

FS4Africa will only accept applications from one entity per proposal (no Consortia allowed). Each Open Call proposal should propose the following activities:

➢ A New Solution or Enhanced Solution
  o Applicants should propose either a completely new innovative solution addressing the food safety challenges in the African Informal Sector, or enhancing an existing solution, leveraging tools, business concepts, or frameworks already developed by the FS4Africa project. Solutions do not necessarily have to be tied to FS4Africa existing UC topics as long as they align with the broader goals of the project and address one of the following challenges in areas such as:
    ▪ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
    ▪ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
    ▪ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
    ▪ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. Escherichia coli)
    ▪ Food adulteration
➢ Testing with at least 10 participants
  o Outline a clear testing methodology to engage a minimum of 10 participants, such as (indicatively) farmers, SMEs, or other food supply chain actors.

- o Define metrics to measure the solution's effectiveness, scalability, and practicality in addressing food safety challenges.
- ➢ Demonstration in an event with at least 30 Stakeholders
  - o Plan and organise a public demonstration event to showcase the solution's functionality, outcomes, and benefits.
  - o Engage at least 30 stakeholders, including (indicatively) policymakers, industry representatives, researchers, and community leaders.
- ➢ Plan for Upscaling and Market Rollout
  - o Present a roadmap for scaling the solution to a broader audience or market.
  - o Identify potential barriers to scaling and propose solutions to overcome them (e.g., regulatory challenges, market entry barriers).

The FS4Africa Open Call 1 and the respective Call for evaluators will be launched in June 2025. The proposal evaluation and sub-grant agreement preparation will take place between October 2025 and January 2026. Selected sub - projects will be launched in February 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until January 2027). The 12-month implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

- ➢ Phase 1 - Design (3 months / February 2026 – April 2026): [Deliverable: Activity plan];

- ➢ Phase 2 - Development (6 months / May 2026 – October 2026): [Deliverable: Results demonstration];

- ➢ Phase 3 - Validation (3 months / November 2026 – January 2027): [Deliverable: Report on market or community associated activities].

The FS4Africa Open Call 1 will result in at least 10 sub - projects (max €60k euro per project). In total, a 600k Euro budget will be allocated to financial support to third parties.

Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 4

Applicants' Guide

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1 Introduction

This document provides guidance information regarding the FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project, describing the eligibility and evaluation criteria. The document in its entirety and all associated documents of the Open Call kit must be read carefully before the submission of an application.

1.1 About FS4Africa

FS4Africa addresses the urgent call for improvements in policy, enforcement, food safety culture, trade and market access, innovation and research, and international collaboration and coordination for the informal sector on the African continent and decrease health and economic costs to society and foregone trade opportunities for a wide range of informal small and medium-sized entrepreneurs from farm to fork, such as local processors and street vendors.

With little empirical evidence to date of policy measures and interventions that incentivise positive contributions for informal groups, networks and associations, FS4Africa leverages effective entry points of digital and microbiome private sector led innovation and scaling up/out in four use cases embedded in an enabling environment and through the creation of additional co-benefits such financial inclusion, promoting innovation and start-ups, addressing the digital divide and creating market opportunities for a generally young, educated, tech-savvy, digitally mature, and remarkably resilient society. Another approach is to capitalise on the informal sector's - adopted approach of microbiome-based alternatives to chemical and physical treatments, while also preserving soil and plant microbial diversity. Under technical constraints, fermentation is also a proven and facile option for food preservation widely used in Africa.

1.1.1 Use Cases being developed within the FS4Africa project

Use cases can be defined as open innovation environments in real-life settings. This user-driven innovation is fully integrated within the co-creation process of new services, products and societal infrastructures accomplished by involving multiple stakeholders from research, business, citizens, civil society organization and government. This process generates sustainable value for all stakeholders focusing in particular on the end-users to enable them to take an active part in the research, development and innovation process. The following principles are core within the use case methodologies: real-life setting, multi-stakeholder participation, user engagement, co-creation and a multi-method approach.

The following cases provide a variety of innovation experiments to test and co-create in real life the use of expert knowledge on food safety in an informal context. Four use cases underpin the development of food safety approaches for the informal sector:

No	Use Case title	Countries	Challenges addressed
1	Sustainable Aflatoxin Management through a Breeding and Food Convergence Innovation approach	Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya	Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
2	Reduction in the use and misuse of pesticides	Benin, Ghana, Nigeria	Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables

3	Safe and healthy vegetable and fish production through online platform and mobile communication	Nigeria, Cameroon	Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
4	Microbiological quality of tomatoes and leafy greens from farm to fork	South Africa	Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. *Escherichia coli*)

Use Case #1 Sustainable Aflatoxin Management through a Breeding and Food Convergence Innovation approach (Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya)

Background and objective: Use case 1 is targeted at aflatoxin control through (1) breeding for aflatoxin resistance in staple crops of maize and groundnut with vitamin E benefits in Kenya and (2) strengthening of collaborative networks sustainably through a food convergence innovation in Nigeria and Ghana. These approaches will utilise (a) microbiome approaches as part of a biocircular economy and (b) a system approach through the creation of interconnected pathways among stakeholders for knowledge-sharing, capability enhancement, sustainable networks among sectors related to aflatoxin management in the formal and informal sectors. The objective is to introduce mycotoxin management.

Proposed Solution: The proposed solution is to co-create a network among stakeholders to improve the flow and traceability of food crops that are safe from hazardous levels of aflatoxins. Following the system design, implementing the use of a digital interface to support the interconnection of multi-stakeholder partners, thus contributing to sustainable aflatoxin management approaches developed but currently not synchronised. The most highly prioritised action is to strengthen the capacity of value chain actors in aflatoxin management for improved public health and market access. Thus, the cost-effectiveness of the existing strategies/practices for aflatoxin control (including managing contaminated grains) will be assessed, ranked, and packaged into training modules.

Involved actors: Involved actors are those included in the Food Convergence Innovation – Nigeria Platform, Ghana Grains Council, Food and Drugs Authority (Ghana), and National Steering Committee for Aflatoxin Control and the Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospital Complex (OAUTHC) for bioassays (Nigeria).

Use Case #2 Safer food with less toxic pesticide residue (Benin, Ghana, Nigeria)

Background and objective: Use case 2 is targeted at promoting solutions that minimize the misuse of pesticides during production and in the post-harvest management of legumes and vegetables. The misuse of pesticides poses health risks to the consumers and harms the environment due to persistence in the environment and the development of resistance to pesticides, has led to an EU ban on cowpea imports from Nigeria. Partners within the living labs will receive capacity development on the use of hermetic storage including the use of PICS bags and other strategies to reduce the risk of dietary exposure to pesticide residues, persistence of pesticide residues in the environment, and antibiotic resistance to livestock from excessive exposure to pesticides.

Proposed Solution: Use case 2 makes improvements in postharvest processes for vegetables and grains, development of strategic pathways for pesticide management and resistance management. Proper pesticide and resistance management are important for maintaining effectiveness of pesticides. Through the living labs, capacity development on the use of improved postharvest management practices for grains and vegetables will be conducted. Also, the mechanism of resistance will be studied towards improvement in

resistant management. A microbiome approach would be to understand the molecular basis of resistance of several organisms to pesticides. Promotion of hermetic storage that is suitable for retailers, improved understanding of antibiotic resistance in selected scenarios will be conducted. PICS bags are commercially available, but systems and strategies to promote more adoption require development, particularly for informal sector retailers.

Involved actors: The One Health Unit of the IITA has started research (with partners including ILRI, the World Vegetable Centre (AVDRC) in detection, control of pesticide residues and determining the effect of these on antimicrobial resistance. The use case involves consumers and farmers as main end users of the safety strategies.

Use Case #3 Safe and health vegetable and fish production through an online platform and mobile communications (Nigeria, Cameroon)

Background and objective: Aquaculture is increasingly being adopted as a means to efficiently produce highly nutritious protein-rich food (fish, crustaceans, molluscs) from low-value inputs. The effluents of aquaculture operations are usually rich in nutrients hence could be used to fertilize vegetables grown in hydroponic facilities. Circulating systems would allow for cycling between such components (fish, vegetables) within a single closed-loop facility. The proposed use case will seek to ensure the safety of the water recirculated within Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RASs) growing both cultured fish and vegetables, and products harvested from these facilities for use as food. This may particularly be an issue if chemicals such as antibiotics have been used during production or if certain pathogens accumulate.

Proposed Solution: Certification of the hydroponics facility and the derived vegetables as well as seafood for compliance with hygiene standards will be strived for, in combination with comprehensive information about the production process being made available to end customers of the produce. In addition, microbiome-based solutions will be pursued to maintain fish health so as to render antibiotics and other unwanted chemical treatments redundant.

Involved actors: Actors involved include ADC, UniBw M, University of Ibadan, technology providers for the aquaculture/hydroponics facilities, lab testing facilities for measuring the pathogenic and chemical load of the water and products within the facility, a women's cooperative involved in raising the produce, and a community of fish farmers.

Use Case #4 Microbiological quality of tomatoes and leafy greens from farm to fork (South Africa)

Background and objective: Tomatoes produced and sold by smallholder farmers are prone to contamination with bacterial pathogens such as *Escherichia coli* and *Salmonella* spp. due to unhygienic conditions. Such an event can happen during both the pre- and post-harvest stages of production. In order to avoid this, farmers are faced with challenges such as contaminated water, poor hygiene and sanitation and a lack of infrastructure.

Proposed Solution: Long-term surveillance for pathogens within the water-plant nexus along the supply chain could be part of the solution, with control points on the farm and at the point of retail, and analyses performed by laboratories. This would yield valuable information for the design of risk management schemes. In addition, water quality monitoring on the farm could help ensure the safety of the water-treated produce. For the smallholder farm, this information can help to formulate a hazard analysis and control approach that is still technically feasible. Supplementary tools would include the use of an AI-enhanced knowledge platform being developed with the project and accessible through mobile devices, so that, for example, adapted risk mitigation strategies can be applied by the smallholder. Also, microbiome-based solutions for the detection of the pathogens will be explored.

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Involved actors and relevant data: UP and the regional authorities overseeing agriculture will be involved with the training of farmers and collection of samples, respectively.

1.2 FS4Africa Objectives

The overall objective of FS4Africa is to **improve African food safety systems – with particular attention to the informal sector – through local market transformation enhancing food security and regional trade while reducing negative impacts on the environment, biodiversity, health, and society**. This will be reached through the following specific objectives (SO):

➢ Gain a better understanding of the role of food safety by analysing the enabling environment, local value chains and use cases generating data and evidence on trade actors in the informal sector

➢ Develop governmental policies, business concepts and tools that transform local markets to improve food safety in the informal sector and possible integration into the formal food system

➢ Co-develop and co-create solutions and business cases in multi-actor-based approaches for food safety

➢ Incubate, accelerate and upscale solutions through a network of Innovation Hubs involving and training local SMEs, start-ups and entrepreneurs in view of lower cost for certification and conformity assessment

➢ Assess the impact of food safety solutions, reducing their risks, on food security, circularity, sustainability and biodiversity

➢ Embed the food safety solutions in strategic agendas for policy making and research by engagement with stakeholders and society

1.3 FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1)

1.3.1 Approach & Planned Open Calls Realisation

FS4Africa aspires to improve African food safety systems – with particular attention to the informal sector – through local market transformation enhancing food security and regional trade while reducing negative impacts on the environment, biodiversity, health and society.

The financial support to third parties in FS4Africa will be in the form of a grant awarded after a call for proposals. The FS4Africa consortium will launch two Open Calls:

1) **Open Call 1 (OC1)** addressed to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project **(which is the objective of the present Applicants' Guide)**

2) **Open Call 2 (OC2)** addressed to innovation hubs in order to provide online training to the use cases and projects from the 1st open call. They will provide mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling.

In order to fuel the growth trajectory of food safety solutions, FS4Africa will launch the 2 Open Calls providing Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) to at least at 15 sub-projects in total, as a mechanism to maximise the project's impact and accelerate network expansion. In particular, 10 sub-projects will be selected for the Open Call 1 (up to 600k Euro – up to 60k euro for each third party) and 5 sub-projects for the Open Call 2 (up to 200k Euro- up to 40k euro for each third party).

In total, 800k euro budget is allocated on financial support to third parties via 2 Open Calls.

Open Calls	Total Amount	Sub-Project Size	No of Projects
OC1	600k Euro	up to 60k Euro	≥10

OC2	200k Euro	up to 40k Euro	≥5

Table 1: FS4Africa Open Calls Budget

The funding rate of the eligible costs is 100% and applies to all beneficiaries.

To minimise administration and financial errors, each selected single entity will receive the funding on a lump sum basis, in compliance with EC's Guidelines about lump sum grants in Horizon Europe and according to the terms of the contract signed between it and FS4Africa. A payment calendar tied to milestones, such as reports and corresponding deliverables, will be set in advance according to the phases described in the Applicants' Guide. Implementing this approach, rather than a payment tied to complex administrative justifications, will decrease the administrative burden of the Open Call. **No pre-financing is foreseen**, and payments will follow the ''General eligibility conditions for lump sum costs" according to the EU Grants: AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement: V2.0 – 01.04.2025 and specifically Article 5 and 6.

Open Call adheres to the principles which govern the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) mechanism of the European Commission and especially the General Conditions specified in Annex 13 (General Annexes) of the HE Main Work Programme 2021–2022 and the AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, articles 6.2.D.1 and 9.4.

1.4 Purpose and Objectives of Open Call 1 (OC1)

The purpose of the OCs is to provide solutions for the improvement of food safety in the informal sector and ensure better access to nutritious food for urban and rural populations, build innovation ecosystems to bring together relevant public and private sector actors, researchers and society.

In this context, Open Call 1 (OC1) aims to provide financial support to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations and other multidisciplinary actors) to:

➢ test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project (built on FS4Africa existing UC topics) or

➢ develop ideas and tools that address the specific challenges of the FS4Africa project and contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

1.5 Call Expected Outcome

Through Open Call 1 (OC1), ≥ 10 (at least ten) additional projects will be funded to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project.

The FS4Africa Open Call seeks innovative solutions to enhance food security and resilience in African communities. Single entities are invited to develop and implement solutions that address specific challenges within the food system.

Applicants are expected to collaborate with local stakeholders to ensure that solutions are contextually relevant and effectively address the unique challenges faced by African communities.

Each Open Call proposal should propose the following activities:

➢ **A New Solution or Enhanced Solution**
  ○ Applicants should propose either a completely new innovative solution addressing the food safety challenges in the African Informal Sector, or enhancing an existing solution, leveraging tools, business concepts, or frameworks already developed by the FS4Africa project. Solutions **do not necessarily have to be tied** to FS4Africa existing UC topics as long as they align with the broader goals of the project and address one of the following challenges:

✓ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food
✓ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed
✓ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables
✓ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. *Escherichia coli*)
✓ Food adulteration

➢ **Testing with at least 10 participants**
  o Outline a clear testing methodology to engage a minimum of 10 participants, such as (indicatively) farmers, SMEs, or other food supply chain actors.
  o Define metrics to measure the solution's effectiveness, scalability, and practicality in addressing food safety challenges.

➢ **Demonstration in an event with at least 30 Stakeholders**
  o Plan and organise a public demonstration event to showcase the solution's functionality, outcomes, and benefits.
  o Engage at least 30 stakeholders, including (indicatively) policymakers, industry representatives, researchers, and community leaders.

➢ **Plan for Upscaling and Market Rollout**
  o Present a roadmap for scaling the solution to a broader audience or market.

  o Identify potential barriers to scaling and propose solutions to overcome them (e.g., regulatory challenges, market entry barriers).

OC solutions are expected to start at TRL4 and reach TRL6[1] by the end of the project.

To summarise:

Open Call	➢ OC1 addressed to research and technology stakeholders
Purpose	➢ Provide financial support to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project or develop ideas and tools that contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market
Budget	➢ 10 projects * 60.000€ = 600.000,00€ (one entity per proposal)
KPIs	➢ No. of solutions per proposal (new or enhanced): 1 ➢ No. of participants engaged in testing the solution per proposal: ≥10 ➢ No. of demonstrating events per proposal: 1 ➢ No. of stakeholders engaged in demonstrating event per proposal: ≥30 ➢ No. of plans per proposal for upscaling the solutions and roll them out into the market: 1

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[1] in accordance with the [EU TRL scale](#)

2 Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

2.1 General Information

FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) aims to attract research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations, and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project.

The project will select at least 10 subprojects (covering all 5 challenges mentioned above) in total providing Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP), as a mechanism to maximise the project's impact and accelerate network expansion.

FS4Africa will only accept applications from **one entity per proposal (no Consortia allowed)**. Applicants are expected to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project or develop ideas and tools that contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market. This involves practical activities such as:

> - **Testing and Validating Solutions**: Implementing proposed innovations in real-world settings to assess their effectiveness.

> - **Enhancing Business Concepts**: Refining innovative business approaches to improve financial viability, ensure long-term sustainability, and enable scalable impact in food safety systems

Proposals should present novel, practical solutions that can be effectively implemented within the eligible African countries ensuring that the solution addresses the specific challenges and conditions present in the African informal food sector as defined in the call.

Solutions must have the potential for expansion and adaptation across different regions or contexts within Africa.

Projects should promote long-term benefits, considering environmental, economic, and social factors.

2.2 Specific requirements for the projects

Single entities will receive funding for testing, validating and enhancing the business concepts and tools of the project or developing ideas and tools that contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

Proposals must consist of original work by the applicants and their anticipated developments do not infringe upon any third-party rights. Any disputes or legal challenges stemming from third-party claims resulting from the sub-granted projects are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The FS4Africa consortium is not responsible for verifying the ownership authenticity of the proposed solution.

This requirement applies specifically to the **content of the proposal document**, not necessarily to the activities within the project. Applicants may incorporate **existing third-party technologies (e.g., detection equipment, software, or analytical tools) in their activities, provided they have the proper rights, permissions, or licenses to use them**. However, applicants must not falsely claim ownership of intellectual property they do not develop

Proposals must accomplish an iterative multi-actor innovation process in a real-life environment as leading principle for adequate involvement of a wide range of food system actors and relevant stakeholders (especially considering women and the diaspora) and engage them in developing and implementing realistic solutions aimed at enhancing food safety, particularly in the informal food sector.

Applicants will deliver their solution in English Language. All applications, deliverables, reports, and communications with the FS4Africa Open Call team are required to be submitted in English.

The FS4Africa Open Call and Call for evaluators will be launched on Monday, June 2nd, 2025. Before assigning external evaluators, each proposal will be verified by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board (AB), for eligibility according to the predefined criteria of the OC. The proposal evaluation and sub-grant agreement preparation will take place between October 2025 and January 2026. Selected projects will be launched in February 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until January 2027). The implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

➢ Phase 1 - Design (3 months / February 2026 – April 2026): Payment of 30% of the total grant [Deliverable: Activity plan];

➢ Phase 2 - Development (6 months / May 2026 – October 2026): Payment of 50% of the total grant [Deliverable: Results demonstration];

➢ Phase 3 - Validation (3 months / November 2026 – January 2027): Payment of the final 20% of the total grant [Deliverable: Report on market or community associated activities].

An initial timeline for FS4Africa Open Call can be seen in the following figure. The dates may change due to unforeseen events and situations. Therefore, these are an indication of what is initially expected; the dates are to be confirmed by the FS4Africa team along the process and in agreement with the EC. The dates are not legally binding.

Figure 1: FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1) timeline

2.3 Submission procedure

FS4Africa's Open Call for proposals will be submitted digitally through the opencalls.fund (OCF) platform. Interested Applicants should visit FS4Africa's website (https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/) for any updates and the FAQ section available on the opencalls.fund as well as on the project website.

Submissions received through any other channel will not be considered and will be automatically discarded.

Documents required in subsequent phases will be submitted via dedicated channels indicated by the FS4Africa consortium in the contracting phase. (e.g. via email).

In case multiple versions of the same application are submitted, only the last version will be evaluated. All the previous ones will not be considered and will be discarded.

Throughout the entire process, the confidentiality of applicants' identities and the contents of the proposals will be rigorously upheld. Any details pertaining to the proposed solution will be handled with the utmost discretion.

By applying to FS4Africa Open Call, Applicants (single entities) automatically accept the terms and conditions of the Open Call as described in the Open Call Kit.

2.4 Language

English is the official language for the FS4Africa Open Call. Applications submitted in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language throughout the whole execution of the FS4Africa project. This means all requested contributions for application (documents of the OC kit) must be submitted in English to be eligible. In the case of official documents as a proof of the legal existence of the applicant, they can be submitted in original language, however if it is deemed essential to facilitate the eligibility check, Applicants may be requested to provide additional documentation (i.e., a translation of the relevant sections of the official document into English—this does not have to be a formal, certified translation) in a timely manner.

2.5 Documentation format

Any document requested by the Applicants in any of the phases (e.g. submission, eligibility check) must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing. The structure of the proposal template provided must be followed when preparing the proposal and should not exceed the limit of **10 pages**. All tables, figures, references, and any other element pertaining to the application must be included as an integral part of the application and are thus counted against this page limit. Excess pages will not be considered during the evaluation of the proposal. The cover page, the Table of Contents (ToC) and the Budget Tables are not included in the limit of the 10 pages. Removing explanatory text, located below the paragraph sub-titles in the proposal template, is allowed.

The reference font for the body text of applications is Arial and the minimum font size allowed is 11 points. A minimum paragraph spacing of 6 pts and a minimum of single line spacing is to be used. This applies to the body text, including text in tables. Text elements other than the body text, such as headers, foot/end notes, captions, formulas, may deviate, but must be legible. The page size is A4, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) must be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers).

Incomplete applications or applications that do not comply with these requirements will be excluded from evaluation as non-eligible.

2.6 Origin of the funds

All sub-grantees will sign a dedicated Sub-grant Agreement with the FS4Africa Open Call Manager / Treasurer (RFF) and the FS4Africa coordinator (IITA). The funds provided to the Sub-grant Agreement originate from the funds of the European Project FS4Africa which is funded by the European Commission under Grant Agreement Number [101136916], and remain therefore, property of the EU until the balance is paid, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners of FS4Africa. This relation between the sub-grantees and the European Commission through the FS4Africa project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees with the European Commission. It is the responsibility of the sub-grantees to fulfil these, and of the FS4Africa consortium partners to inform them on these.

More details on the obligations of sub-grantees can be found in Chapter 5.

3 Proposal Submission and Selection

All Open Call selected beneficiaries must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the present Section (Proposal Submission and Selection), sign and submit the same documents. **At the time of submission**, **Applicants** must submit the following documents per case:

SMES:

> ➤ Declaration of Honour. The document must be filled in appropriately, signed by each entity's legal representative and stamped (with the institution's stamp if applicable).

> ➤ SME Declaration: Declares that the Applicants are SMEs according to EC standards. The document must be filled in appropriately, signed by SMEs legal representative and stamped (with the SMEs stamp if applicable).

Research Organisations:

> ➤ Declaration of Honour. The document must be filled in appropriately, signed by each entity's legal representative and stamped (with the institution's stamp if applicable).

> ➤ A confirmation from a responsible authority/registry (e.g., Commercial court or similar). Any official document from the respective registration authority is acceptable.

Private entities (NGOs, etc.):

> ➤ Declaration of Honour. The document must be filled in appropriately, signed by each entity's legal representative and stamped (with the institution's stamp if applicable).

> ➤ Any official document from the respective registration authority or any official document as proof of their legal existence at the moment of application is acceptable.

Public organisations:

> ➤ Declaration of Honour. The document must be filled in appropriately, signed by each entity's legal representative and stamped (with the institution's stamp if applicable).

Important:

As a general rule, all documents that require to bear stamps and signatures must be signed by the legal representative of the Applicant. **In the case of parties coming from a country where the use of stamps is not mandatory, it is required to provide relevant justification documents in English.** E-signatures are also acceptable and in this case the existence of stamps is not required. PDF Advanced Electronic Signatures (PadES) and CMS Advanced Electronic Signatures (CadES) are acceptable e-signature formats for the FS4Africa OC.

Although there is no requirement for letters of support, Applicants can include references about their existence in their proposal.

During the contracting phase, all selected Applicants must provide Annex 8 - Bank account information and three signed copies of the Sub-grant Agreement (indicative model given as Annex 9), which will be sent to them following the evaluation phase.

3.1 Open Call Publication

The FS4Africa Open Call 1 will be published on the EU Funding and Tenders portal, and FS4Africa website (https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/), it may also be publicised via the FS4Africa project partners' websites/ dissemination portals on Monday, June 2nd, 2025 and it will remain open until Tuesday, September 30th, 2025, at 17:00 CET. The OC will be widely communicated through social media channels and the FS4Africa partners' networks and channels.

The publication will be supported by the Open Call Kit, which includes the following documents:

➢ **Open Call Fiche**

➢ **Open Call Hand Out Summary**

➢ **Open Call Applicants' Guide**, (present document).

➢ **Open Call Proposal template**, word document to be completed by the Applicant, saved, and submitted as .pdf in the application phase.

➢ **Open Call Budget template**, excel document to be completed by the Applicant, saved and submitted as .pdf in the application phase.

➢ **Open Call Documents per case (refer to Section 3):**

o Declaration of Honour (DoH), which confirms the ability of the single entity to execute the sub-project (if selected), exclusion of conflict of interest, etc. (signed and submitted as .pdf in the submission phase)

o SME Declaration, which informs on the legal entity status securing that the applicants are eligible for the OC (in terms that they are SMEs according to the EC rules).

o Official document from the respective registration authority

➢ **Bank account information**, which collects information of single entities bank accounts where the FS4Afeica payments will be transferred to (only for selected beneficiaries, it's applicable only at the contracting stage).

➢ An **indicative Sub-grant agreement contract**, just as a reference for the Applicants (applicable only at the contracting stage and subject to changes by the Treasurer only).

➢ Interested Applicants have to regularly check the FAQ section in the opencalls.fund (OCF) platform /FS4Africa OC tab

3.2 Eligibility Criteria

FS4Africa aims to provide financial support to research and technology stakeholders (start-ups, SMEs, research organisations and other multidisciplinary actors) to test, validate and enhance the business concepts and tools of the project or develop ideas and tools that contribute to project's objectives which can then be introduced to the market.

3.2.1 Overall eligibility criteria

FS4Africa will only **accept applications from one entity per proposal (no Consortia allowed)** and proposed solutions must fit within one of the FS4Africa Use Cases (as described in the section: Use Cases being developed within the FS4Africa project) or aim to address one of the following food safety challenges in Africa:

➢ Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food

➢ Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed

➢ Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables

➢ Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. *Escherichia coli*)

➢ Food adulteration

An automatic filtering to discard non-eligible proposals will be based on the following criteria:

➢ Legal entity established in countries in Africa (as defined in section 3.2.6);
➢ The proposal is submitted by a single applicant (consortia are not allowed);
➢ Uniqueness of the proposal (one proposal per applicant)
➢ Proposals are not pre-selected in the other projects' open calls funded under the same topic (HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-20), i.e. UP-RISE
➢ Proposed work to be carried out after the selection process;
➢ Existing consortium members of the FS4Africa project and their affiliated entities are not eligible for the OC.
➢ The proposal must be submitted before the defined deadline, applying the requested submission procedure.
➢ Proposals shall only ask for funding for that part of the work that is not yet accomplished and will be carried out once having been selected for funding. Of course, this does not exclude the usage of e.g. results, IP, infrastructures or approaches already held by the applicants.
➢ All Applicants must have a valid VAT number and must be active and operational. However, in case having VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided.

FS4Africa Open Call team reserves the right to ask for additional clarifications from the applicants during the eligibility check.

Proposals that comply with these criteria are eligible to move on to the evaluation round.

The Advisory Board will be formed to run the eligibility check of the submitted proposals and select the external experts who will evaluate the proposals.

3.2.2 Definition of Research and Technology stakeholders eligible for FS4Africa Open Call

Research and Technology stakeholders[2] are defined as non-profit organisations whose core mission is to produce, combine and bridge various types of knowledge, skills and infrastructures to deliver a range of research and development activities in collaboration with public and industrial partners of all sizes. These activities aim to result in technological and social innovations and system solutions that contribute to and mutually reinforce their economic, societal and policy impacts.

3.2.3 Definition of a startup eligible for FS4Africa Open Call

A startup is an early-stage business entity that:

➢ Has recently been established: Typically, within the past 10 years.
➢ Focuses on innovation: develops or leverages innovative products, services, or business models.
➢ Is Scalable: Has potential for high growth, market expansion, or significant social impact.

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[2] https://www.earto.eu/about-rtos/

3.2.4 Definition of an SME eligible for FS4Africa Open Call

An SME is considered as such if it complies with the European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC[3], and the SME user guide[4]. In summary, the criteria which define an SME are the following:

➢ Independent, partner or linked enterprises, with financial and staff figures calculated in accordance with instructions given by Recommendation 2003/361/EC[5].
➢ It is a legal entity established and based in one of the EU Member States or an HE Associated country as defined in HE rules for participation (see section 3.2.6).
➢ Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 500.
➢ Annual turnover less or equal to €100 million.

If applicants are not sure whether they comply with the SME criteria, an online SME self-assessment tool is provided by the EC, for these purposes.

3.2.5 Definition of the "Informal Sector" term

The informal sector[6] may be broadly characterized as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and incomes for the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labour and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations - where they exist - are based mostly on casual employment, kinship or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees.

All economic activities by workers and economic units that are – in law or in practice – not covered or insufficiently covered by formal arrangements.

3.2.6 Definition of eligible countries

The Open Call 1 (OC1) is addressed to research and technology stakeholders established in **eligible countries in Africa.**

Important notice:

According to the EU Grants: List of participating countries (HE)[7], the following **Horizon Europe associated countries** (in Africa) are eligible to receive funding through FS4Africa Open Call 1 (OC1): Tunisia.

Until association agreements start producing legal effects either through provisional application or their entry into force, transitional arrangements may apply if provided for in the particular Horizon Europe Work Programme. The transitional arrangements apply with regard to the following countries and legal entities established in these countries, with which

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[3] European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:124:0036:0041:en:PDF
[4] SME definition: https://op.europa.eu/s/ouL1
[5] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:124:0036:0041:en:PDF
[6] https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Glossary:Informal_sector

[7] https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf

association negotiations are being processed or where association is imminent (listed in the alphabetical order):

1. Egypt (applicable to the entire Programme for award procedures implementing Union budget for the year 2025 and onwards)
2. Morocco (applicable for the entire Programme)

Participants (other third countries) from the following low - to middle - income countries (in Africa) are **automatically eligible** for funding[8]:

➢ Algeria, Angola

➢ Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi

➢ Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Côte d'Ivoire

➢ Djibouti

➢ Egypt (Arab Republic), Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia

➢ Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau

➢ Kenya

➢ Lesotho, Liberia, Libya

➢ Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique

➢ Namibia, Niger, Nigeria

➢ Rwanda

➢ São Tomé and Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan

➢ Tanzania, Togo

➢ Uganda

➢ Zambia, Zimbabwe.

The list is correct at the time of adoption of this Guide. Applicants are advised to consult the HE List of eligible countries on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal for an up-to-date list of these countries.

3.3 Eligible costs

The FS4Africa project follows the guidelines of the European Commission in terms of cost eligibility for financing within its open calls. Payments will follow the ''General eligibility conditions for lump sum costs'' according to the EU Grants: AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement: V1.0 DRAFT– 01.05.2024 and specifically Article 5 and 6.e.

As mentioned above (Section 1), each selected entity will receive the funding on a lump sum basis. To justify the lump sum, Applicants need to provide a detailed explanation with cost estimations. The cost estimations are subject to the basic eligibility rules of Horizon Europe,

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[8] Subject to the respect of EU restrictive measures (Please note that entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/05 are NOT eligible to participate in any capacity (including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties, if any).

that is the proposed budget may be adjusted to exclude costs that are deemed ineligible. If the evaluators find overestimated costs, this is recorded in the Evaluation Summary Report and will be reflected in a modified lump sum amount in the sub - grant agreement. If the sub-grantee does not agree with the amount of the grant offered, they are at liberty of withdrawing their proposal.

The following cost categories are considered eligible:

➢ **Personnel costs** – Costs of the personnel realising the work and preparing the deliverables/reports during each of the 3 phases. Applicants must calculate personnel costs according to the rules and regulations of their country and real labour market data regarding the relevant positions. For the proposal template, only the final amount allocated to personnel costs is necessary. Personnel costs are considered direct costs and can't be managed as indirect costs.

➢ **Subcontracting -** Subcontracting should be clearly justified. Costs must be reasonable and comply with the principle of sound financial management. Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. Applicants should ensure that there are sufficient details for the action tasks, the estimated budget, and the procedure that will be followed to ensure best value-for-money. Any kind of organisation could be subcontracted, provided that they are not part of the FS4Africa consortium. The evaluators will assess the scope and value-for-money aspects of subcontracting, and their assessment will be reflected in the score of each proposal. Subcontracting is allowed for up to a maximum of 25% of the proposed budget when properly justified. When submitting the proposal, Applicants should only write the total amount for subcontracting. Selected Applicants should follow the standards for subcontracting set by the European Commission, ensuring best value for money and absence of conflict of interest, during the project implementation. Procurement must comply with the national and European regulations applicable to each applicant's institution.

➢ **Purchase costs:**

   o **Travel costs** – Travel costs necessary for the execution of the sub-project.

   o **Equipment costs** – Borrowing or lending the necessary equipment is not eligible. Only depreciation costs for purchased equipment are eligible.

   o **Other goods & services** – Other goods and services include, for instance, consumables and supplies, dissemination (including open access), protection of results, certificates on the methodology, translations, and publications.

➢ **Indirect costs** - Indirect costs (overheads) could be up to 25% of the direct cost. Subcontracting is not included in the calculation of the 25% ceiling for indirect costs.

The budget must be filled in for each proposal using the excel template provided. Applicants will then save the excel sheet as pdf and upload it on the opencalls.fund platform.

Applicants should take into consideration that adequate budget must be allocated to dissemination activities (a minimum 7% of the funding will be allocated to the deployment of dissemination activities such as organisation of information/field days, workshops and informal events to promote the FS4Africa results).

Applicants **should explain and justify the budget (for each budget category separately).** For personnel costs, indicate the number of person months, and link such personnel effort to the contents (tasks, goals) of the proposal. If Applicants use subcontracting, must justify it, and specify the role of subcontractor.

Important:

In terms of financial monitoring of the sub-projects' implementation, no financial justification is required by the project, however the Subgrantee shall keep the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the Contract for at least three years after final payment. These shall be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the Grant Agreement.

3.4 Application process

3.4.1 Applicant's registration

Applicants should register at the FS4Africa Open Call page on the opencalls.fund platform. This will be the central interface for managing the proposal applications for the remainder of the Open Call.

The information on the FS4Africa Open Call will be available on FS4Africa website / Open Cal Section as well as on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal.

It is important to note that only individuals registered on the opencalls.fund platform will be in a position to apply for the FS4Africa Open Call and submit questions on the dedicated FAQ section on the opencalls.fund platform.

Questions can be submitted until September 25th, 2025 at 17:00 CET through email to the FS4Africa support team at fs4africa@opencalls.fund or the FAQ section of the opencalls.fund platform. Answers will be provided using the same channel through which the question was posed.

3.4.2 Application preparation

Applicants should follow the steps below:

1. Applicants must register on the platform prior to the submission of the proposal.

2. For the application preparation, applicants are requested to apply online and provide all necessary information. Applicants must submit all requested documents on the opencalls.fund platform. Incomplete submissions will not be accepted.

3. Applicants that do not accept the terms and conditions and do not sign and upload to the platform the completed documents per case (as mentioned in Section 3) in .pdf format, will not be able to submit the application.

4. Applicants must submit the required documents on time after uploading them and confirming that the complete application is online. Late submissions will not be accepted.

Important note: The platform supports only files in .pdf format.   The size of each file can be up to 10MB. Compressed files in .zip format are not acceptable.

5. In case applicants have any technical difficulties, they should contact the FS4Africa OC support team at: fs4africa@opencalls.fund

It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the application. Failure of the application to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays or working from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

Technical issues may occur with large documents in different formats. The FS4Africa project does not bear responsibility for technical problems at any stage. Make sure to check and test upload on time. If technical issues do arise, Applicants may contact the FS4Africa OC team for support, via email to: fs4africa@opencalls.fund until September 25th at 17:00 CET.

3.4.3 The application reception

Applications will ONLY be submitted via the opencalls.fund platform. The application reception will close at 17:00 CET (Brussels time) on September 30th, 2025.

3.4.4 Use of generative AI in proposal preparation

The FS4Africa project follows the same guidelines regarding generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) in proposal preparation as is stated in the applications for Horizon Europe projects.

Applicants are expected to exercise caution and carefully consider the use of generative AI in the preparation of their proposal. Content generated in such a manner should be thoroughly reviewed and validated by the applicant to ensure accuracy, appropriateness, and compliance with IP regulations. Applicants are fully responsible for the content of the proposal, including those elements generated by AI and must be transparent in disclosing which tools were used and how.

Especially, applicants must:

➢ Verify the accuracy, validity and appropriateness of AI generated content and citations, and correct any errors or inconsistencies

➢ Provide a list of sources used to generate the content and citations. Make sure sources are properly cited.

➢ Be aware of potential plagiarism. Check original sources to avoid plagiarism.

➢ Acknowledge the limitations of the tool, such as potential of error, bias and/or gaps

3.5 Evaluation process

3.5.1 Eligibility check

Once the Open Call is closed (September 30th, 2025) and before assigning the applications to external evaluators, each proposal will be checked against the overall eligibility criteria. During October 2025, the eligibility check will be carried out by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board (AB), consisting of representatives from: (i) project coordinator (IITA); (ii) dissemination, exploitation, communication and open call managing experts (RFF), (iii) incubation and acceleration program expert (ITC). Please note that only complete applications will be considered, those with missing or incomplete information will be discarded.

This procedural part of the evaluation will check the eligibility of the submitted proposals against the overall eligibility criteria according to section 3.2.1.

Proposals that do not comply with these criteria are not eligible to move on to the evaluation round.

During the eligibility check, the Applicants might be requested to provide additional explanations if their application raises questions such as, but not limited to, ambiguity of the information, inconsistencies which are obvious errors, among others. In that case, Applicants will have three (3) working days starting from the day after receiving the notification to provide clarifications or additional documents to complete their initial application. If the requested clarifications / documents are not provided at the specified time, their application will be discarded and will not move on to the evaluation round.

Important note: The designated contact person will be responsible for all communication during the eligibility phase. If further clarification is required, the Open Call (OC) team will notify the applicant via the email address provided. Failure by the contact person to respond within the specified deadline for submitting the requested clarifications will result in the rejection of the application, and the OC team will not be held accountable.

3.5.2 Remote Evaluation and key points

Each proposal will be reviewed by two (2) external evaluators with specific technical and/or business expertise related to the topics of the call. The evaluators will have to evaluate each proposal under the specific evaluation criteria.

All eligible proposals will be assessed by two expert evaluators against the following **award criteria**:

Concept and feasibility [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Proposed solutions must align with the Call objectives.

- ➢ Clarity, practicality of the concept and alignment with the timeline and budget.
- ➢ Relevance of proposal with the projects' Use Cases or the specific challenges of the FS4Africa project.
- ➢ Work plan coherence: Is the project plan well-structured, with clear tasks, milestones, deliverables, and timelines?
- ➢ Soundness of the proposed solution including the involvement of a wide range of food system actors and relevant stakeholders (especially considering women and the diaspora) and engage them in developing and implementing realistic solutions aimed at enhancing food safety, particularly in the informal food sector.
- ➢ Does the project promote diversity, equal opportunities, and environmental protection?

Technology readiness and innovation development [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Projects must demonstrate the maturity of the proposed solution.

- ➢ Technical feasibility: Is the proposed technology or method viable and implementable?
- ➢ Approach and methodology: Are the methods and processes clearly defined and appropriate for achieving the project goals?
- ➢ Innovation readiness level (TRL): Does the solution have the required maturity level (e.g., starting at TRL 4 and reaching TRL 6)?

Impact & Exploitation [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Applicants must demonstrate the project's potential to deliver measurable social, economic, or environmental benefits and outline strategies for dissemination and upscaling.

- ➢ Demonstration of impact on the FS4Africa ecosystem: Describe how the proposal aims to create an impact on target stakeholders (i.e. Informal Food Sector, Food System Stakeholders, Policy Makers and Regulators, Academic & Research Organisations, Innovation Hubs, Food Labs, General Public)

- ➢ Strategies for disseminating and exploiting the project's results such as commercialization, dissemination of knowledge, or policy influence.
- ➢ Long-term Value, Scalability: Assess if the project's outcomes can extend beyond the sub-project implementation, be scaled or adapted to other contexts

Organisational capacity and sufficiency in the team's background [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Applicants must provide credible evidence that the project delivery team has the necessary skills, resources and capacity to effectively deliver the project in the timeframe and budget as specified.

- ➢ Team Expertise and Roles: Does the team have the necessary technical, managerial, and domain-specific expertise?
- ➢ Quality of the team as a whole: including complementarity, gender balance and diversity
- ➢ Budget Allocation: Is the budget realistic, transparent, and appropriately allocated to project tasks?

foodsafety4africa.eu

> ➤ Use of Resources: Are the proposed resources, including equipment, data, and expertise, adequate and effectively utilised?
> ➤ Risk Management: Are potential risks identified, and is there a mitigation plan in place?

All award criteria have the same weight. Each award criterion can be scored from 1 to 5 with a threshold of 3 points in each category, and a minimum of 12 points in total.

Interpretation of scores:

1 - Poor. The criterion is inadequately addressed, or there are serious inherent weaknesses.

2 - Fair. The proposal broadly addresses the criterion, but there are significant weaknesses.

3 - Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, but a number of shortcomings are present.

4 - Very Good. The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but a small number of shortcomings are present.

5 - Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor

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A 'minor shortcoming' is an issue that relates only to a marginal aspect of the proposal with respect to the criterion and/or can easily be rectified (it will not impact the scoring).

A 'shortcoming' is a problem that relates to an important aspect of the proposal. It impacts the scoring but does not render the proposal inappropriate for funding, i.e. the proposal is still expected to lead to useful results with positive impact.

A 'significant weakness' means that the proposal addresses the criterion in a limited and/or not sufficiently effective way (will lower the score below threshold). This can also be the case when the proposal includes a large number of shortcomings, each one of them not rendering the proposal inappropriate for funding, though all together make the proposal not addressing the criterion sufficiently in an effective way.

In case the difference in total scores between evaluators is significant (>5), a consensus meeting between the two evaluators will be held to seek adjustments. In case the consensus meeting is unsuccessful, an online interview of the applicant by the external evaluators (a third external evaluator) will be conducted. The following criteria will be evaluated:

(i) confirmation of proposed solution (40%);

(ii) viability of proposed solution (30%);

(iii) reliability to reach exploitation milestones (30%).

External evaluators may also be requested individually to review their evaluation if their scores and comments for each criterion do not align (e.g., comments describing how excellent the proposal is with no shortcomings but a score of 1).

The Advisory Board will be formed to run the eligibility check of the submitted proposals and select the external experts who will evaluate the proposals.

The evaluators' scores for each criterion will be averaged, and these averaged scores will then be summed to calculate the total score.

Scores must pass the individual threshold AND the overall threshold if a proposal is to be considered for funding within the limits of the available call budget.

Important note: Proposals will be ranked by score, and the top ten will be funded. To ensure coverage of all FS4Africa food challenges, at least one proposal per challenge will be funded. If two or more top-scoring proposals address the same challenge, only the highest-scoring of those will be selected; the next proposal in the overall ranking that addresses a different challenge will take its place.

For example, suppose the top three proposals are: 1. Challenge 1 (Score A), 2. Challenge 1 (Score B, lower than A), 3. Challenge 3 (Score C). Proposals 1 and 3 will be funded, then continue down the list until we have ten proposals covering every challenge.

If more than one proposal shares the same score and is listed at the last place planned for funding, the proposals will be prioritised according to the scores they have been awarded for 'Concept and feasibility'. When these scores are equal, priority will be based on scores for 'Impact & Exploitation'. If the scores are equal, priority will be given to the score for 'Technology readiness and innovation development', followed by that of 'Organisational capacity, sufficiency in the applicant's background'.

Example: There are three proposals—Proposal A, Proposal B, and Proposal C—all achieving an overall evaluation score at the threshold for funding. Suppose that Proposal A and Proposal B have an overall score of 12 (the cut-off for funding), while Proposal C scores slightly higher and is already clearly in the funded bracket. To decide between Proposal A and Proposal B for the final funded spot, the following tie-breaker steps would be applied:

1. First, compare the 'Concept and feasibility' scores. If Proposal A received a 3.6 and Proposal B received a 3.4 in this category, Proposal A would be prioritised.
2. If both proposals had identical 'Concept and feasibility' scores, then the next step would be to review the 'Impact & Exploitation' scores. Suppose both proposals scored 3.5 there as well; then the tie-break would move to the next criterion.
3. Next, the 'Technology readiness and innovation development' scores would be compared. If Proposal A scored 3.2 and Proposal B scored 3.4 in this area, then Proposal B would take precedence.
4. Lastly, if all previous criteria were also equal, the decision would be based on the 'Organisational capacity, sufficiency in the applicant's background' scores.

This stepwise approach ensures that even when proposals have very similar overall scores, the selection committee can fairly prioritise the proposal that demonstrates the strongest potential in core areas of the evaluation process, as detailed in the Applicants' Guide.

All four criteria are equally weighted.

At the end of this phase, all proposals will be ranked based on their scores. If a decision still cannot be made, other factors related to the objectives of the OC may be considered to further prioritise proposals.

After completing this process, communication with the OC Advisory Board will be made by RFF, to present the status and propose the outcome of this process to the members. The FS4Africa consortium, with the approval of the EC, retains the discretion to select a higher or lower number of applications than initially scheduled.

All Applicants will receive their Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).

3.5.3 Redress procedure

Applicants may submit a **written request for redress** to the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board via email at fs4africa@opencalls.fund within five (5) working days of receiving the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). This request can be made if applicants believe there was a shortcoming in the way their proposal was evaluated, which may have affected the final decision on whether they were selected as beneficiary or not, or if they believe the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect.

A designated internal review committee (FS4Africa OC Advisory Board) of the FS4Africa project will examine the requests for redress.

The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests and an equal treatment of all applicants. Requests for redress must:

➢ Relate to the evaluation process or eligibility checks;

➢ Clearly describe the complaint and reasons for potential consideration;

➢ Be received within the time limit (5 working days) from the reception of the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR);

➢ Be sent by the same applicant's legal representative that submitted the proposal.

The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will review the complaint within five (5) working days and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence that a shortcoming(s) could have affected the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated.

The redress process is concerned with the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process:

➢ The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will not call into question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators.

➢ Any redress request that calls into question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators will be automatically rejected.

➢ A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that could have affected the final decision on whether to fund it or not. 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 to meet other criteria.

➢ The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. This score could be lower than the original score. Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board. All requests for redress will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

3.5.4 Contracting

Based on the evaluator comments in each ESR, the Advisory Board will start negotiations for the contract preparation with the representatives of the selected (winning) proposals (if shortcomings were identified and changes are needed in the proposals). If the negotiations do not finish successfully, the proposal will be rejected and the next highest ranked proposal will be selected. Contract preparation will go via an administrative and financial checking. On a case-by-case approach, a phone call or teleconference may be needed for clarification.

Reframe.food (RFF) will be assigned as the Treasurer and is committed to ensuring a competitive and transparent OC process, ensuring confidentiality, equal treatment and no conflict of interest.

The objective of the contract preparation is to fulfil the legal requirements between the FS4Africa consortium and every beneficiary of the call. The items covered will be:

- To validate the status of the Applicant, the following documents will be required from the Applicant:

    o **Legal existence:** Company Register, Official Gazette or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent. However, in case having VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided).

    o **Legal proof** that the applicant's organisation is not under liquidation or has filed for bankruptcy.

- **Bank Account Information:** The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a form signed by the legal representative and the bank representative. The account should be a business bank account of each beneficiary. The financial information should not be older than three months.

The Subgrantee assumes full responsibility on the bank account info they provide through Annex 8 – Bank account information. For instance, if they provide the wrong IBAN, and the Treasurer proceeds with the transfer to that account, they will assume responsibility for any costs related to the transfer (expenses with the return of the amount from the wrong bank account and/or expenses with the new transfer will be deducted from their grant transfer). Ultimately, in a worst-case scenario, if the Treasurer does not manage to recover the amount transferred to the wrong bank account, the beneficiary who provided a wrong IBAN will not be able to claim that payment.

The request, by the FS4Africa consortium, of the above documentation will be done within designated deadlines. The sub-project contract negotiations will be carried out from December 2025 to January 2026 (included). In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the application is automatically rejected and the next application in the reserve list is invited.

After successful negotiations, the legal representative of the open call winner Applicant will be invited to sign a contract, which will then be signed by the FS4Africa Open Call Manager / Treasurer (RFF) and the FS4Africa coordinator (IITA). The final list of accepted proposals will then be published.

4   Implementation of FS4Africa Open Call

4.1   Implementation timeline and activities

Selected projects will be launched in February 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until January 2027). The implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

- **Phase 1 - Design** [Deliverable: Activity plan] (February 2026 – April 2026) - Payment of 30% of the total fund

- **Phase 2 - Development** [Deliverable: Results demonstration] (May 2026 - October 2026) - Payment of 50% of the total fund

- **Phase 3 - Validation** [Deliverable: Report on market or community associated activities] (November 2026 – January 2027) - Payment of the final 20% of the total fund

In all selected projects, payments are deliverable based, meaning that the sub-grantees have to deliver a specific report after the end of each phase in order to receive the payment **(no pre-financing is foreseen).**

5 Applicants' responsibility

The selected Subgrantees are indirect beneficiaries of European Commission funding. As such, they are responsible for the proper use of the funding and ensure that they comply with the obligations set out in HE specific requirements as described in the "Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption (HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01) topic. The obligations that are applicable to the beneficiaries include (but are not limited to):

5.1 Conflict of interest

The Subgrantees must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Sub-grant Agreement could be compromised for reasons involving family, emotional life, political or national affinity, economic interest or any other direct or indirect interest ('conflict of interests'). At the same time, Applicants cannot be affiliated with FS4Africa consortium partners, nor can they be employees of the FS4Africa consortium partners. All potential conflicts of interest will be assessed carefully. Please see more info **here**.

They must formally notify the FS4Africa consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The FS4Africa consortium may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

If a Subgrantee breaches any of its obligations, the Sub-grant Agreement may be automatically terminated. Moreover, if the Sub-grant Agreement is terminated due to a breach made by a Subgrantee, the FS4Africa consortium reserves the right to suspend further payments to the Subgrantees sub-grantee and claim the full refund of all payments made to the Subgrantee up to date.

5.2 Ethics, Data Protection & Confidentiality

All subprojects should follow an "ethics by design"-way of working, whereby ethical and legal principles, on the basis of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), competition law compliance, absence of data bias are implemented since the beginning of the design process.

Once a project is selected for FSTP funding, regular monitoring and reporting will be conducted to ensure ongoing adherence to ethics principles. This monitoring mechanism contributes to the overall integrity and ethical excellence of the FS4Africa project and reinforces its commitment to ethical research and innovation.

During implementation of the sub-project and for at least five years after the final payment of the sub-project, the beneficiaries must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at subcontract signing time (confidential information').

If an OC beneficiary makes a request for a longer period of data protection and confidentiality, the European Commission and the FS4Africa consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial five years. This will be explicitly stated in the Sub-grant Agreement.

If additional information is identified as confidential during the sub-project execution or through verbal communication, it must be accepted by the FS4Africa coordinator and confirmed in

writing within 15 days of its disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may only use confidential information to implement the Sub-grant Agreement. The OC beneficiaries may disclose confidential information to the FS4Africa consortium and to the selected external reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Applicants must confirm that all proposed services, including the means of their delivery and upkeep, have been reviewed to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation on data protection, privacy, and fundamental rights.

OC beneficiaries will have to submit three deliverables (1. Activity plan, 2. Results demonstration, 3. Report on market or community associated activities) during the sub-project implementation. In these deliverables the beneficiaries will report any ethics measures in a dedicated chapter. The deliverables will be reviewed by the Advisory Board of the Open Call, while the appointed Ethics Advisor will examine and assess the ethics measures if needed.

Throughout the project's implementation, the FS4Africa Ethics Advisor will provide ongoing guidance and support to the FSTP projects. He will assist in guiding project implementers in addressing ethical challenges, ensuring continuous improvement in ethics compliance, and promoting a culture of ethical responsibility.

By implementing this proposed mechanism, FS4Africa aims to foster ethical conduct and responsible practices in all projects funded through the FSTP. It establishes a system of checks and balances, providing assurance that the ethical commitments of FS4Africa are upheld by external entities receiving financial support. This monitoring mechanism contributes to the overall integrity and ethical excellence of the FS4Africa project and reinforces its commitment to ethical research and innovation.

Personal data from individuals (such as name, last name, address, country of residence, phone number, email address) will also be gathered via the Open Call during the process of potential applicants' and evaluators' registration and application on the opencalls.fund platform (to post a question or apply to a specific open call or enter the pool of external evaluators).

The majority of the information (if not all of them) that will be required, for SMEs, start-ups, research organisations, NGOs as potential applicants, are already publicly available in business registries across Europe (i.e. owners' name, company address and email). No sensitive personal data will be collected (e.g. health status, race, sexual lifestyle, ethnicity, political opinions, religious or philosophical conviction, receipt of social support, victims of violence, criminal records and sexual life).

Personal information (such as IP address, device type, geographic location etic) may also be collected (automatically) for statistical reasons and to better understand the people who visit the opencalls.fund platform, where they come from and what content they are interested in the activities related to the Open Call, since personal information received will not be shared by default.

Access to the opencalls.fund platform is also feasible following a registration process and obtaining user credentials. With respect to the personal data protection collected during the Open Call, all collected data will be anonymized, encrypted and stored on a server, which will have server-side encryption. Only the required personnel (specifically assigned for this project) will have access to the data. GDPR rules will be applied for data protection.

According to the Grant Agreement, data will be kept for at least 5 years after the completion of the project (or 3 years for data related to Open Call grants of not more than EUR 60 000). However, the data will always be stored anonymously and will not be accessible by external third parties.

5.3 Promoting the action and giving visibility to the EU funding

The Subgrantees must promote the sub-projects, the FS4Africa project and its results, by providing the description of their project upon request from the FS4Africa Consortium and highlighting the financial support of the EC.

Unless the European Commission or the FS4Africa coordinator requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, communication activities of the beneficiaries related to the action (including media relations, conferences, seminars, information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via traditional or social media, etc.), dissemination activities and any infrastructure, equipment, vehicles, supplies or major result funded by the grant must:

- ➤ acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement:
  - o For communication activities: "This sub-project has received funding from the project FS4Africa (Grant Agreement number: 101136916) through its Open Call, funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme"
  - o For infrastructure, equipment and major results: "This [infrastructure][equipment][insert type of result] is part of a sub-project that has received funding from the project FS4Africa (Grant Agreement number: 101136916) through its Open Call, funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme
- ➤ display the FS4Africa logo

When displayed in association with other logos (e.g., of beneficiaries), the European emblem must be displayed at least as prominently and visibly as the other logos. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the Subgrantee is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page. Please note that in the case of FS4Africa, the co-funded logo is to be used as financial support is coming through the co-funded FS4Africa project.

Any publicity made by the Subgrantee with respect to the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or FS4Africa consortium are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the FS4Africa consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- ➤ the name of the Subgrantee,
- ➤ contact address of the Subgrantee,
- ➤ the general purpose of the sub-project,
- ➤ the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the sub-project; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received,
- ➤ the geographic location of the activities carried out,
- ➤ the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground,

- ➢ the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the subproject, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication,
- ➢ the publishable reports submitted to FS4Africa,
- ➢ any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and FS4Africa in the framework of the sub-project.

The Subgrantee shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and FS4Africa does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the Subgrantee representative, the FS4Africa consortium, if such permission is provided by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

5.4 Financial audit and controls

The European Commission (EC) will monitor that FS4Africa partners and the Subgrantees comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex A of the FS4Africa Grant Agreement and may take any action foreseen by the grant agreement in case of noncompliance vis à vis the beneficiary concerned.

Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the FS4Africa project and up to 2 (two) years after final payments, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). Such audits will be formally notified to the beneficiary concerned and will be considered to start on the date of the notification.

Such audits may cover financial, systemic and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The Subgrantee shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorised by it, with a view to verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise, complete and effective.

The Subgrantee shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the project (or 3 for grants of not more than €60,000.00). These should be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

In order to carry out these audits, the Subgrantee shall ensure that the EC´s services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the sub-project applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the sub-project. For on-the-spot visits, the beneficiary concerned must allow access to sites and premises (including for the external audit firm) and must ensure that the information requested is readily available. Information provided must be accurate, precise and complete and in the format requested, including electronic format.

On the basis of the audit findings a draft audit report will be drawn up and it will be formally sent to the Subgrantee concerned, which may make observations thereon within 30 days of receiving the notification to make observations. The Commission may decide not to consider

observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final audit report shall be sent to the beneficiary concerned within two months of expire of the aforesaid deadline.

Based on the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures which it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

Audits (including audit reports) will be in the language of the Sub-grant agreement.

5.5 Sub-project Communication

The Sub-grantee representative should:

➢ Provide any notices in writing to the FS4Africa consortium.

➢ Notify the FS4Africa coordinator immediately of any change of persons or contact details. The address list shall be accessible to all concerned.

➢ Notify the FS4Africa coordinator about the dissemination activities that the Open Call recipient will organise

5.6 Originality of the sub-granted projects

It is required that applications submitted are based on original works by the Applicants and that their foreseen developments are free from third party rights. The FS4Africa consortium is not obliged to verify the authenticity of the ownership of the foreseen products/services. Any issues delivered from third party claims that arise as a result of the sub-granted projects are on the sole responsibility of the applicant.

5.7 IPR ownership of the sub-granted projects

Each Subgrantee that generates results owns the attached Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) generated during the development process and will own results that are not IPRs. Each contractor is responsible for the management and protection of its IPRs and bears the costs associated with this.

The Subgrantees funded within the FS4Africa project will be the unique owners of the technologies created within the framework of their sub-granted projects. Parts of their works will be requested to be public for FS4Africa dissemination purposes.

5.8 Liability

The FS4Africa consortium and the European Commission cannot be held liable for any acts or omissions of the applicant in relation to the selected sub-granted project implemented by the Subgrantee. The FS4Africa consortium shall not be liable for any defaults of any products, processes or services created in the sub-granted project; including, for instance, anomalies in the functioning or performance thereof.

In case any damage is caused to a third party by the Subgrantee, the Subgrantee will assume full responsibility for the damage caused. In no way will the FS4Africa Consortium be responsible for any damages caused by the Subgrantee. Subgrantees shall bear sole

responsibility for ensuring that their acts within the framework of their sub-granted projects do not infringe third parties' rights.

5.9 Do No Significant Harm

Subgrantees must always respect the 'Do No Significant Harm Principle". This means that the subproject's methodology should be designed in a manner which does not significantly harm any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation. EU Taxonomy is a science-based classification system for determining whether an (economic) activity can be considered environmentally sustainable. It establishes six environmental objectives (as listed in Article 913 of the EU Taxonomy):

 ➢ Climate change mitigation

 ➢ Climate change adaptation

 ➢ The sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources

 ➢ The transition to a circular economy

 ➢ Pollution prevention and control

 ➢ The protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems.

while Article 17 specifies what can constitute a "significant harm" for these objectives. Thus, the regulation provides that no measure should lead to significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives within the meaning of Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation.

6 Checklist

1. **Is your proposal eligible?** The eligibility criteria are given in chapter 3 "Proposal Submission and Selection". Make sure that you satisfy the minimum participation requirements (entity from eligible countries).

2. **Is your proposal complete?** Have you completed all mandatory OC questions?

3. **Have you checked all technical details related to submission?** Difficulties with application and submission arising from technical aspects will not be taken into consideration by the FS4Africa project. Applicants should do test rounds and make sure to submit everything on time.

4. **Does your proposal fulfil questions requests/comments?** Proposals should be precise, concise and must answer requested questions, which are designed to correspond to the applied evaluation. Omitting requested information will almost certainly lead to lower scores and possible rejection.

5. **Have you maximised your chances?** There will be strong competition. Therefore, edit your proposal tightly, strengthen or eliminate weak points.

6. **Have you submitted your proposal before the deadline?** It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

7. **Have you provided the necessary annexes?**

8. **Have you described the dissemination activities as 7% of your budget?**

9. **Does your planned work fit with FS4Africa Open Call?** Check that your proposed work does indeed address the topics in this open call and addresses food safety challenges.

10. **Do you need further advice and support?** You can reach out to the FS4Africa Open Call team via mail to:fs4africa@opencalls.fund Technical team can provide assistance to the extent possible, up to September 29th, 2025.

7 Points of contact

All questions concerning the Call must be in writing and be stated on the FAQ section on the opencalls.fund platform or sent by e-mail to fs4africa@opencalls.fund. The deadline for asking clarification questions or requesting additional information is 17:00 CET on September 25th, 2025. The answers shall be given no later than 17:00 CET @ September 29th, 2025.

We strongly recommend Applicants to regularly visit the FAQ section to get valuable feedback for the preparation of their proposal.

Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 5
Declaration of Honour

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By signing this document, I declare that:

1. I am authorised to legally bind the legal entity named below, to the conditions stated in this form.
2. I and the business entity that I legally represent are fully aware and duly accept all rules and conditions as expressed in the documents and annexes related to the FS4Africa Open Call 1 and will fully respect any evaluation decision and application selection made under this Call.
3. All information provided in this declaration is true and legally binding.

Applying Business Entity Legal Representative Contact Information:

Title (Mr., Mrs., Dr.)	
Name	
Surname	
Business entity	
Position in the entity	
Full address	
Country	
Email address	
(Mobile) Telephone	
Signature and stamp (if applicable)	

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Declaration of Honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict of interest

By signing this declaration of honour, I declare that all provided information below is true and legally binding both for me and for the business entity that I legally represent:

1. I declare that the mentioned business entity is not in one of the following situations:
   a. it is bankrupt or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or is in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
   b. it or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgement which has the force of res judicata;
   c. it has been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify including by decisions of the European Investment Bank and international organisations;
   d. it is not in compliance with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which it is established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed, to be proved by the deliverance of official documents issued by the local authorities, according to the local applicable rules;
   e. it or persons having powers of representation, decision making or control over it have been the subject of a judgement which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity, where such illegal activity is detrimental to the Union's financial interests;
   f. is subject to an administrative penalty for being guilty of misrepresenting the information required by the contracting authority as a condition of participation in a grant award procedure or another procurement procedure or failing to supply this information or having been declared to be in serious breach of its obligations under contracts or grants covered by the Union's budget.

2. I declare that the natural persons with power of representation, decision-making or control over the above-mentioned business entity are not in the situations referred to in a) to f) above;

3. I declare that:
   a. Neither any person nor I that I know is subject to an FS4Africa conflict of interest;
   b. I have not made false declarations in supplying the information required by participation in the FS4Africa Open Call 1 or have failed to supply the information required;
   c. I am not in one of the situations of exclusion, referred to in the abovementioned sub-points a) to f) within point 1.
   d. I am aware and fully accept all FS4Africa conditions and rules as expressed in FS4Africa Open Call 1, namely in: Applicants' Guide, Declaration of conducting business, Bank account information.

4. I certify that the business entity that I represent:
   ● is committed to participating in the FS4Africa Open Call 1 sub-project, should my application get selected for funding;

- has stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain its activity throughout its participation in the FS4Africa Open Call 1 sub-project and to provide any counterpart funding necessary;
- has or will have the necessary resources as and when needed to carry out its involvement in the FS4Africa Open Call 1 sub-project.

5. I confirm that all proposed services, including the means of their delivery and upkeep, have been reviewed to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation on data protection, privacy, and fundamental rights.

6. I declare that the solution I am presenting in my application for the FS4Africa Open Call is not being funded by any other source from the budget of the European Union and that should my application be selected for funding in this Open Call, it will not be used to apply for other EU grants.

Full name:	Signature and stamp (if applicable)
On behalf of legal entity:	
Done at (place)_____ the (day)_____(month) 2025	

Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 6
SME Declaration

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1 Glossary

SME – an entity that complies with the following European Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC criteria:

- Headcount in Annual Work Unit (AWU) less than 250.
- Annual turnover less or equal to €50 million OR annual balance sheet total less or equal to €43 million

Dominant influence – An influence that can be exercised over a company to achieve the operating and financial policies desired by the holder of the influence, notwithstanding the rights or influence of any other party. If one organisation exerts such a dominant influence over a company, this company should be treated as a subsidiary of the organisation and consolidated into the group accounts of the organisation – in other words, it should be treated as a linked entity.

Holding – share of capital or voting rights, whichever is higher.

Partner enterprises - If holdings with other enterprises rise to at least 25% but not more than 50%, the enterprises in questions are treated as partner enterprises.

Linked enterprises – If holdings with other enterprises exceed the 50% threshold, these enterprises are considered linked enterprises.

Autonomous enterprise – If the enterprise is either completely independent or has one or more minority partnerships (each less than 25%) with other enterprises, it is considered an autonomous enterprise. These are also some cases where an enterprise is considered autonomous even if the holding thresholds of 25% and 50% are exceeded – if that percentage is held by the following categories of investors:

- i. Public investment corporations, venture capital companies, individuals or group of individuals with a regular venture capital investment activity who invest equity capital in unquoted businesses (''business angels''), provided the total investment of those business angels in the same enterprise is less than €1,250,000,
- ii. Universities or non-profit research centres,
- iii. Institutional investors, including regional development funds,
- iv. Autonomous local authorities with an annual budget of less than €10 million and less than 5,000 inhabitants

Consolidation – to consolidate means to combine assets, liabilities and other financial items of two or more entities into one. In the context of financial accounting, the term consolidate often refers to the consolidation of financial statements wherein all subsidiaries report under the umbrella of a parent company. In case an enterprise draws up consolidated accounts voluntarily, without being required to do so under the Seventh Directive (Council Directive 83/349/EEC), the enterprise is not necessarily linked and can be considered only a partner.

Headcount – The number of people who are employed by a company.

AWU (Annual Working Unit) - One AWU corresponds to one person who worked full-time in the enterprise in question or on its behalf during the entire reference year. The headcount is expressed in AWUs.

VAT Number – A unique number that identifies a taxable person (business) or non-taxable legal entity that is registered for VAT. Every country issues its own national VAT number.

Principal director – Chairman, CEO, Director-General or equivalent.

2 Declaration on information on the Legal Entity Status Precise identification of the applicant enterprise

Name or Business name

....

Address (of registered office)

....

Registration / VAT number

....

Names and titles of the principal director(s)

....

Type of applicant (see explanatory note)

Tick to indicate which case(s) applies to the applicant enterprise:

☐ Autonomous enterprise	In this case the data filled in the box below result from the accounts of the applicant enterprise only. Fill in the declaration only, without annex.
☐ Partner enterprise ☐ Linked enterprise	Fill in and attach the annex (and any additional sheets), then complete the declaration by copying the results of the calculations into the box below.

Data used to determine the category of enterprise

Calculated according to Article 6 of the Annex to the Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC on the SME definition:

Reference period (*)		
Headcount (AWU)	**Annual turnover (**)**	**Balance sheet total (**)**
(*) All data must be relating to the last approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis. In the case of newly established enterprises whose accounts have not yet been approved, the data to apply shall be derived from a reliable estimate made in the course of the financial year. (**) EUR 1,000.		

Important: Compared to the previous accounting period there is a change regarding the data, which could result in a change of category of the applicant enterprise (micro, small, medium-sized or big enterprise).	☐ No ☐ Yes (in this case fill in and attach a declaration regarding the previous accounting period).

Signature

Name and position of the signatory, being authorised to represent the enterprise:

....

I declare in my honour the accuracy of this declaration and of any annexes thereto.

Done at

....

Signature

EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE TYPES OF ENTERPRISES TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT FOR CALCULATING THE HEADCOUNT AND THE FINANCIAL AMOUNTS

I.   TYPES OF ENTERPRISES

The definition of an SME[1] distinguishes three types of enterprise, according to their relationship with other enterprises in terms of holdings of capital or voting rights or the right to exercise a dominant influence[2].

Type 1: Autonomous Enterprise

This is by far the most common type of enterprise. It applies to all enterprises which are not one of the two other types of enterprise (partner or linked).

An applicant enterprise is autonomous if it:

- does not have a holding of 25%[3]or more in any other enterprise,
- and is not 25%[3] or more owned by any enterprise or public body or jointly by several linked enterprises or public bodies, apart from some exceptions[4] ,
  and does not draw up consolidated accounts and is not included in the accounts of an enterprise which draws up consolidated accounts and is thus not a linked enterprise⌷

Type 2: Partner Enterprise

This type represents the situation of enterprises which establish major financial partnerships with other enterprises, without the one exercising effective direct or indirect control over the other. Partners are enterprises which are not autonomous, but which are not linked to one another.

The applicant enterprise is a partner of another enterprise if:

- it has a holding or voting rights equal to or greater than 25% in the other enterprise, or the other enterprise has a holding or voting rights equal to or greater than 25% in the applicant enterprise,
- the enterprises are not linked enterprises within the meaning defined below, which means, among other things, that the voting rights of one in the other do not exceed 50%,
- and the applicant enterprise does not draw up consolidated accounts which include the other enterprise by consolidation and is not included by consolidation in the accounts of the other enterprise or of an enterprise linked to it[5]

Type 3: Linked Enterprise

This type corresponds to the economic situation of enterprises which form a group through the direct or indirect **control of the majority of the voting rights** (including through agreements or, in certain cases, through natural persons as shareholders), or through the

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1 Henceforth in the text, the term "Definition" refers to the Annex to Commission Recommendation 2003/361/EC on the definition of SMEs.

2 Definition, Article 3

3 In terms of the share of the capital or voting rights, whichever is higher is applied. To this percentage should be added the holding in that same enterprise of each enterprise, which is linked to the holding company (Definition, Article 3 paragraph 2)

4 An enterprise may continue being considered as autonomous when this 25% threshold is reached or exceeded, if that percentage is held by the following categories of investors (provided that those are not linked with the applicant enterprise):

   a)   public investment corporations, venture capital companies, individuals or groups of individuals with a regular venture capital investment activity who invest equity capital in unquoted businesses ("business angels"), provided the total investment of those business angels in the same enterprise is less than EUR 1 250 000,

   b)   universities or non-profit research centres,

   c)   institutional investors, including regional development funds,

   d)   autonomous local authorities with an annual budget of less than EUR 10 million and less than 5000 inhabitants

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ability to exercise a dominant influence on an enterprise. Such cases are thus less frequent than the two preceding types.

In order to avoid difficulties of interpretation for enterprises, the Commission has defined this type of enterprise by taking over – wherever they are suitable for the purposes of the Definition – the conditions set out in Article 1 of Council Directive 83/349/EEC on consolidated accounts[5], which has been applied for many years.

An enterprise thus generally knows immediately that it is linked, since it is already **required** under that Directive to **draw up consolidated accounts** or is included by consolidation in the accounts of an enterprise which is required to draw up such consolidated accounts. The only two cases, which are however not very frequent, in which an enterprise can be considered linked although it is not already required to draw up consolidated accounts, are described in the first two indents of endnote 5 of this explanatory note. In those cases, the enterprise should check whether it meets one or other of the conditions set out in Article 3 paragraph 3 of the Definition.

THE HEADCOUNT AND THE ANNUAL WORK UNITS[6]

The headcount of an enterprise corresponds to the number of annual work units (AWU).

Who is included in the headcount?
- The employees of the applicant enterprise,
- persons working for the enterprise being subordinate to it and considered to be employees under national law,
- owner-managers,
- partners engaging in a regular activity in the enterprise and benefiting from financial advantages from the enterprise.

Apprentices or students engaged in vocational training with an apprenticeship or vocational training contract are not taken into account in the headcount.

How is the headcount calculated?

One AWU corresponds to one person who worked full-time in the enterprise in question or on its behalf during the entire reference year. The headcount is expressed in AWUs. The work of persons, who did not work the entire year, or who worked part-time - regardless of its duration - and seasonal work is counted as fractions of AWU. The duration of maternity or parental leaves is not counted.

3 ANNEX TO THE DECLARATION CALCULATION FOR THE PARTNER OR LINKED TYPE OF ENTREPRISE

Annexes to be enclosed if necessary:
- **Annex A** if the applicant enterprise has at least one **partner** enterprise (and any additional sheets)

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[5] Seventh Council Directive 83/349/EEC of 13 June 1983, based on Article 54(3)(g) of the Treaty and concerning consolidated accounts (OJ L 193, 18/7/1983, p. 1), as last amended by Directive 2001/65/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council (OJ L 283, 27/10/01, p. 28).

[6] Definition, Article 5.

- **Annex B** if the applicant enterprise has at least one **linked** enterprise (and any additional sheets)

Calculation for the partner or linked type of enterprise (see explanatory note):

Reference period[7]:			
	Headcount (AWU)	**Annual turnover (*)**	**Balance sheet total (*)**
1. Data[8] of the applicant enterprise or consolidated accounts (copy data from box B (1) in annex B)			
2. Proportionally aggregated data of all partner enterprises (if any) (copy data from box A in annex A)			
3. Added up data of all linked enterprises (if any) – if not included by consolidation in line 1 (copy data from box B(2) in annex B)			
TOTAL			
(*) €1,000			

The data entered in the "Total" row of the above table should be entered in the box "Data used to determine the category of enterprise" in the declaration.

4   ANNEX A - Partner enterprises

For each enterprise for which a 'partnership sheet' has been completed (one sheet for each partner enterprise of the applicant enterprise and for any partner enterprises of any linked enterprise, of which the data is not yet included in the consolidated accounts of that linked

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[7] All data must be relating to the last approved accounting period and calculated on an annual basis. In the case of newly established enterprises whose accounts have not yet been approved, the data to apply shall be derived from a reliable estimate made in the course of the financial year.

[8] The data of the enterprise, including the headcount, are determined on the basis of the accounts and other data of the enterprise or, where they exist, the consolidated accounts of the enterprise, or the consolidated accounts in which the enterprise is included through consolidation.

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enterprise), the data in the 'partnership box' in question should be entered in the summary table below:

BOX A

Partner enterprise (name/identification)	Headcount (AWU)	Annual turnover (*)	Balance sheet total (*)
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
TOTAL			
(*) €1,000			

(attach sheets or expand the present table, if necessary)

Reminder:
This data is the result of a proportional calculation done on the 'partnership sheet' for each direct or indirect partner enterprise.
The data entered in the "Total" row of the above table should be entered in line 2 (regarding partner enterprises) of the table in the Annex to the declaration.

5 PARTNERSHIP SHEET

1. Precise identification of the applicant enterprise

Name or Business name ....

Address (of registered office) ....

Registration/VAT number ....

Names and titles of the principal director(s)...

2. Raw data regarding that partner enterprise

Reference period			
	Headcount (AWU)	**Annual turnover (*)**	**Balance sheet total (*)**
Raw data			
(*) €1,000			

Reminder: These raw data are derived from the accounts and other data of the partner enterprise, consolidated if they exist. To them are added 100% of the data of enterprises which are linked to this partner enterprise, unless the accounts data of those linked enterprises are already included through consolidation in the accounts of the partner enterprise. If necessary, add "linkage sheets" for the enterprises which are not yet included through consolidation.

3. Proportional calculation

a) Indicate precisely the holding of the enterprise drawing up the declaration (or of the linked enterprise via which the relation to the partner enterprise is established) in the partner enterprise to which this sheet relates:

....
....

Indicate also the holding of the partner enterprise to which this sheet relates in the enterprise drawing up the declaration (or in the linked enterprise):

....
....

b) The higher of these two holding percentages should be applied to the raw data entered in the previous box. The results of this proportional calculation should be given in the following table:

'Partnership box'

Percentage:	**Headcount (AWU)**	**Annual turnover (*)**	**Balance sheet total (*)**
Proportional results			
(*) €1,000			

These data should be entered in Box A in Annex A.

6 ANNEX B - Linked enterprises

A. DETERMINE THE CASE APPLICABLE TO THE APPLICANT ENTERPRISE:

○ **Case 1**	The applicant enterprise draws up consolidated accounts or is included by consolidation in the consolidated accounts of another enterprise. (Box B(1))
○ **Case 2**	The applicant enterprise or one or more of the linked enterprises do not establish consolidated accounts or are not included in the consolidated accounts. (Box B(2)).

Please note: The data of the enterprises, which are linked to the applicant enterprise, are derived from their accounts and their other data, consolidated if they exist. To them are aggregated proportionally the data of any possible partner enterprise of that linked enterprise, situated immediately upstream or downstream from it, unless it has already been included through consolidation.

B. CALCULATION METHODS FOR EACH CASE:

In case 1: The consolidated accounts serve as the basis for the calculation. Fill in Box B(1) below.

Box B(1)

	Headcount (*)	Annual turnover (**)	Balance sheet total (**)
Total			

(*) Where in the consolidated accounts no headcount data appears, the calculation of it is done by adding the data from the enterprises to which the enterprise in question is linked

(**) €1,000

The data entered in the "Total" row of the above table should be entered in line 1 of the table in the Annex to the declaration.

Identification of the enterprises included through consolidation			
Linked enterprise (name / identification)	**Address (of registered office)**	**Registration / VAT number (*)**	**Names and titles of the principal director(s) (**)**
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
Total			
(*) To be determined by the Member State according to its needs			
(**) Chairman (CEO), Director-General or equivalent.			

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Important: Partner enterprises of such a linked enterprise, which are not yet included through consolidation, are treated like direct partners of the applicant enterprise. Their data and a 'partnership sheet' should therefore be added in Annex A.

In case 2: For each linked enterprise (including links via other linked enterprises), complete a "linkage sheet" and simply add together the accounts of all the linked enterprises by filling in Box B(2) below.

Box B(2)

Enterprise No.:	Headcount (AWU)	Annual turnover (**)	Balance sheet total (**)
1 (*)			
2 (*)			
3 (*)			
Total			
(*) attach one "linkage sheet" per enterprise			
(**) €1 000.			

The data entered in the "Total" row of the above table should be entered in line 3 (regarding linked enterprises) of the table in the Annex to the declaration.

7 LINKAGE SHEET

(only for linked enterprises not included by consolidation in Box B)

1. Precise identification of the applicant enterprise

Name or Business name ....

Address (of registered office) ....

Registration/VAT number ....

Names and titles of the principal director(s) ....

2. Data on enterprise

Reference period			
	Headcount (AWU)	**Annual turnover (*)**	**Balance sheet total (**)**
Total			
(*) €1,000			

These data should be entered in Box B(2) in Annex B.

Important: The data of the enterprises, which are linked to the applicant enterprise, are derived from their accounts and their other data, consolidated if they exist. To them are aggregated proportionally the data of any possible partner enterprise of that linked enterprise, situated immediately upstream or downstream from it, unless it has already been included through consolidation.

Such partner enterprises are treated like direct partner enterprises of the applicant enterprise. Their data and a 'partnership sheet' have therefore to be added in Annex A.

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Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 7
Proposal Template

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Table of Contents

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IMPORTANT: The reference font for the body text of applications is Arial and the minimum font size allowed is 11 points. A minimum paragraph spacing of 6 pts and a minimum of single line spacing is to be used. This applies to the body text, including text in tables. Text elements other than the body text, such as headers, foot/end notes, captions, formulas, may deviate, but must be legible. The page size is A4, and all margins (top, bottom, left, right) must be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers).   Incomplete applications or applications that do not comply with these requirements will be excluded from evaluation as non-eligible.

The structure of the proposal template provided must be followed when preparing the proposal and should not exceed the limit of 10 pages. All tables, figures, references, and any other element pertaining to the application must be included as an integral part of the application and are thus counted against this page limit. External evaluators are instructed to dismiss the pages after the 10th page from the evaluation. The cover page, ToC and Budget tables (Chapter 6) are not included in the limit of the 10 pages. Removing explanatory text in the proposal template, located below the paragraph sub-titles is allowed.

This information is mandatory and will be used by the evaluation committee to assess the suitability and expertise of the applicants.

1   General information

This information is mandatory and will be used by the evaluation committee to assess the suitability and expertise of the applicants.

1.1   General details

Proposal Title	
Proposal Acronym	

1.2 Executive Summary

Briefly describe your innovative solution (new or enhanced), its key objectives, and expected outcomes [max. 1000 characters]

Executive Summary	

1.3 Applicant Description

The email address provided will be used for all formal communication during the eligibility, evaluation and contracting phases.

Company/Organization name		
Country/ Full address		
VAT Number		
Type of partner (please select among the eligible categories)	**Research and Technology stakeholder**	☐
	Startup company	☐
	SME	☐
	Private entities (NGOs, etc.)	☐
	Public organisations	☐
Legal representative Name		
Legal representative email		
Contact Person		
Contact Person email		

2 Proposal description

2.1 General description

Please choose one of the following:

A. *The proposal builds on one of the project's established Use Cases (**Please select ONLY one** of the Use Cases that best fits your proposed solution. In case your proposed solution may address more than one Use Case, please choose the most prominent one.*

Use Case 1: Sustainable Aflatoxin Management through a Breeding and Food Convergence Innovation approach	☐
Use Case 2: Reduction in the use and misuse of pesticides	☐
Use Case 3: Safe and healthy vegetable and fish production through online platform and mobile communication	☐
Use Case 4: Microbiological quality of tomatoes and leafy greens from farm to fork	☐

OR

B. The proposal refers to a new innovative solution addressing one of the following food safety challenges in the African Informal Sector (**Please select ONLY one** of the food safety challenges *that best fits your proposed solution. In case your proposed solution may address more than one challenge, please choose the most prominent one).*

Food safety issues associated with weak channels for value chain organisation, traceability & authentication of safe food	☐
Mycotoxin contamination in multiple food crops including food and feed	☐
Pesticide residues in grains and vegetables	☐
Microbial contamination particularly contamination from coliforms (e.g. Escherichia coli)	☐
Food adulteration	☐

Briefly describe the background of your application and how the proposed solution addresses the food safety challenges in the African Informal Sector.

2.2 Objectives

Write the key objectives of the proposed solution. Identify the gaps and the data requirements necessary for understanding the underlying drivers of food safety challenges. Explain how your solution will lead to improved outcomes.

2.3 Work plan and activities

Provide a detailed work plan outlining key activities and a clear timeline. This work plan should address the 3 key phases of the implementation plan – Design, Development, Validation– as stated in the Applicants' Guide. Include a timeline or Gantt chart to illustrate key activities, milestones, and deliverables. Identify potential risks and challenges associated with your sub-project. For each risk, briefly describe your mitigation strategy and contingency plans.
Special attention should be paid to the following elements:
  ➢ *Testing with at least 10 participants*
    o *Outline a clear testing methodology to engage a minimum of 10 participants, such as (indicatively) farmers, SMEs, or other food supply chain actors.*
    o *Define metrics to measure the solution's effectiveness, scalability, and practicality in addressing food safety challenges.*
  ➢ *Demonstration in an event with at least 30 Stakeholders*
    o *Plan and organise a public demonstration event to showcase the solution's functionality, outcomes, and benefits.*
    o *Engage at least 30 stakeholders, including (indicatively) policymakers, industry representatives, researchers, and community leaders.*

2.4 Team

Please present your team members and provide information on their education, experience, skills and track record. Explain the technical and non‑technical capacities that qualify your team to develop and implement the solution. Explain briefly the competences and experience of your team and how they are relevant for the delivery of the proposed solution. Please refer to paragraph 3.5.2 of the Open Call Applicants Guide.

2.5 Expected results and deliverables

Describe the key expected results and deliverables that the proposal will achieve and deliver. Propose SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) indicators, where appropriate, to make the main objectives and expected results measurable.

Please keep in mind that there are already 3 mandatory deliverables, summarising each of the phases of the implementation and are tied with the payment. However, you can add additional deliverables in each of the implementation phases if you wish.

3 Business Impact

3.1 Business Challenge

Describe the business challenge and business potential. Demonstrate how the proposed solution will reach the end-users and state the estimated number of end-users. Explain the

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market opportunity within the African informal sector and how your solution meets an unmet need.

Special attention should be paid to the following elements:

> ➢ *Present a roadmap for scaling the solution to a broader audience or market.*
> ➢ *Explain how the solution can be scaled or adapted to other contexts.*
> ➢ *Describe any plans for commercialization or partnerships that will support the exploitation of results.*
> ➢ *Identify potential barriers to scaling and propose solutions to overcome them (e.g., regulatory challenges, market entry barriers).*
> ➢ *Describe how the proposed solution will remain financially viable and deliver impact beyond the 12-month sub-project.*

4 Technology impact

4.1 Description of applied technology

Please describe the technology or method you will be using in your solution, explaining its advantages and practical implementation. What are the benefits compared to other technologies / methods currently present?

4.2 Technology Readiness Level

Please describe the starting Technology Readiness Level (at least TRL 4) of the proposed solution in accordance with the EU TRL scale and explain how you will advance it to the target Technology Readiness Level (up to TRL 6).

5 Other aspects

5.1 Impact on FS4Africa ecosystem

Describe how the proposal aims to create an impact on target stakeholders (i.e., Policy makers and regulators, Food System stakeholders, Informal food sector, Academia & Research Organisations, Innovation Hubs, Food Labs, General public). Formulate a few important KPIs, with which the impact could be measured.

5.2 Impact on the African informal sector

Explain how your project aligns with regional or national policies aimed at transforming informal sectors and integrating them with formal systems.

5.3 Promotion of diversity, equal opportunities and environmental protection

Outline how your project promotes diversity, equal opportunities and environmental protection, ensuring alignment with the "Do No Significant Harm" principle. Formulate a few important KPIs, with which the impact could be measured.

5.4 Multi-actors' involvement

Describe to what extent the different actors / end-users are involved in the proposed solution. Explain how multi-actor collaboration will contribute to the development, testing, and scaling of your solution.

NOTE:
Proposals must consist of original work by the applicants and their anticipated developments do not infringe upon any third-party rights.

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6 Costs justification and funding

6.1 Deliverables List

No	Deliverable Name/Description	Type	Delivery Date	Phase	Overall Cost (€)[1]	Note
1	Deliverable 1: Activity Plan	R[2]	M03	Design		Cannot exceed 30% of the overall budget
2	Deliverable 2: Results demonstration	R	M09	Development		Cannot exceed 50% of the overall budget
3	Deliverable 3: Report on market or community associated activities	R	M12	Validation		Cannot exceed 20% of the overall budget
Total Deliverables Cost						100%

---

[1] It includes the overall costs associated with the respective deliverable (personnel, travel, equipment, other, subcontracting and indirect costs) in Euros
[2] Report

6.2 Budget and cost justification

Please use the Budget template (the excel file provided in the Open Call kit) to calculate the budget for your application. Prepare the budget, save the workbook and submit it as .pdf in the application phase. Please fill in only the green fields.

Applicants should take into consideration that adequate budget must be allocated to dissemination activities (a minimum 7% of the funding will be allocated to the deployment of dissemination activities such as organisation of information/field days, workshops and informal events to promote the FS4Africa results).

Note that all costs must be entered in EUR currency, in the full amount, e.g., €50,000.00. VAT is eligible as a cost, except when the beneficiary can deduct or refund the VAT.

Instructions

1. This file has been designed for preparing the budget for your project

Prepare the budget, save the workbook and submit it as .pdf in the application phase. Please fill in only the **green fields**

The following cost categories are considered eligible:

Personnel costs – Costs of the personnel realising the work and preparing the deliverables/reports during each of the 3 phases.

Subcontracting - Subcontracting is allowed for up to a maximum of 25% of the proposed budget when properly justified.

Travel costs – Travel costs necessary for the execution of the sub-project.

Equipment costs – Borrowing or lending the necessary equipment is not eligible. Only depreciation costs for purchased equipment are eligible.

Other goods & services – Other goods and services include, for instance, consumables and supplies, dissemination (including open access), protection of results, certificates on the methodology, translations, and publications.

Indirect costs: Indirect costs (overheads) could be up to 25% of the direct cost. Subcontracting is not included in the calculation of the 25% ceiling for indirect costs

A minimum 7% of the funding will be allocated to the deployment of activities such as organisation of info days, workshops and informal events to promote the FS4Africa results.

Please refer to paragraph 3.3 Eligible costs of the Open Call Applicants Guide.

Please note:

The present budget tables do not count against the page limit of 10 pages, but please try to keep it to 1 page.

Winning proposal may have up to 60k euro per project. Total cost should be equal to total deliverables cost.

(Proposal Title & Acronym): Budget Tables

Applicant's details

Legal name	
Address	
Country	
Legal Status	
Website link	
VAT	

	Total PM*	PM Rate	Total Cost (€)	Explanation & Justification
1. Direct Personnel costs**			€0.00	
2. Subcontracting (up to a maximum of 25% of the proposed budget. Please provide details of scope)		#DIV/0!		
3. Other Direct costs: Travel Costs (please provide details of travel expected)				
4. Other Direct costs: Equipment costs (please provide details of equipment costs expected)				
5. Other Direct costs: Other goods & services (for instance, consumables and supplies, dissemination, protection of results, certificates on the methodology, translations, and publications. Please provide details of what other costs apply to the project)				
6. Total Direct costs (sum of 1.-5 above)			€0.00	
7. Indirect costs (up to 25% of 6. not including 2. Subcontracting)		#DIV/0!		
8. Total costs (sum of 6. and 7.)			€0.00	
9. Requested funding (rate/amount)		#DIV/0!	€0.00	

Budget allocated to dissemination activities	
Justification	Please clearly justify the amount allocated to dissemination actiivities
% of the total budget	#DIV/0!

* Person Months

** Please fill in only the green fields

*** If red please revise

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Annex 8
Bank Account Information
(applicable only at the contracting stage)

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Bank account information form

ACCOUNT HOLDER INFORMATION

Name or Business name of sub-grantee	
Registration / VAT number	
Account Name Holder The name or title under which the account has been opened and NOT the name of the authorised agent	
Holder's Address	
Postcode	
Town/City	
Country	

Contact Person It does not need to be an authorised agent.	
Telephone	

BANK ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Bank Name	
Branch Address	
Postcode	

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Town/City	
Country	
IBAN number / Account number (Format example: ES76 2077 0024 0031 0257 5766)	
SWIFT code 8 to 11 characters	

BANK STAMP + SIGNATURE OF BANK REPRESENTATIVE The bank stamp + signature of the bank representative can be substituted by the attachment of a recent bank statement (less than 2 months).	DATE + SIGNATURE OF ACCOUNT HOLDER (**OBLIGATORY**)

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Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

Annex 9
Model Sub-grant Agreement
(*Indicative template, applicable only at the contracting stage*)

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Today, xx ………. 202x,

Contracting parties

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE (IITA), located at in IDI-OSE OYO ROAD, IBADAN 200001, Nigeria, VAT .... represented for the purpose of signing the Sub-grant Agreement by ...., ...,..., legal representative of IITA, as Coordinator of the FS4Africa consortium

Hereinafter referred as the **"Coordinator"**

and

REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIRIA (RFF), LEONTOS SOFOU 20, po box: 570 01, THERMI THESSALONIKI Greece, VAT 997017380, represented for the purpose of signing the Sub-grant Agreement by Manager, Grigorios Chatzikostas, legal representative of RFF

Hereinafter referred as the **"Open Call Manager/Treasurer"**

Of the one part, and

....................., established in ....,VAT ....represented by .... for the purpose of signing the Sub-grant Agreement

Hereinafter referred as the **"Subgrantee"**

Hereinafter collectively referred as the "Contracting Parties"

HAVE AGREED to the following terms and conditions including those in the FS4Africa Open Call 1 Annexes, as well as the submitted proposal and OC budget which form an integral part of this FS4Africa Sub-grant Agreement for Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders, (hereinafter referred as the "Contract").

General provisions

The European Commission (hereinafter referred as the "EC") and the Coordinator of the FSA4Africa consortium, have signed the Grant Agreement no 101136916 for the implementation of the project: Food Safety for Africa (Acronym: FS4Africa) within the framework of the Programme HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-20.

The Subgrantee has received the favourable resolution by the evaluators and therefore is entitled to receive funding and support according to the terms and conditions set out under this Sub-grant Agreement and in accordance with the FS4Africa Open Call 1 Applicants' Guide.

This Contract aims at defining the framework of rights and obligations of the Contracting Parties.

The funding received by the Subgrantee is the property of the EC. The Coordinator and the Open Call Manager/ Treasurer are mere holders and managers of the funds.

Article 1 - Entry into force and Termination of the contract

1.1 Entry into force

This contract shall enter into force on **01/02/2026**, subject to its signature by the last contracting party, the Coordinator/ Treasurer.

The Open Call Manager/ Treasurer shall sign this contract, only after the following documents have been received and checked:

- ➢ Copy of ID-card or Passport of legal representative(s) of all partners
- ➢ Copy of Company Register, Official Gazette or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number
- ➢ Proof of VAT registration: a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case having VAT number is not mandatory according to the national legislation of the applicant's country, a registration number from the respective national authority (National business registry, Commercial court or similar) must be provided).
- ➢ Legal proof that the applicant's organisation is not under liquidation or has filed for bankruptcy.
- ➢ Bank Account Information: The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a form signed by the legal representative and the bank representative. The account should be a business bank account of each beneficiary. The financial information should not be older than three months.

All documents shall be sent to the FS4Africa Consortium first via email to the following address: .... and will be checked.

Once the check is completed, the present contract will be sent to the Subgrantee for the signature of the legal representative. Afterwards, the Subgrantee will send the signed contract as original in three copies to the Open Call Manager / Treasurer for the signature of the legal representative.

The Contract will be sent via regular mail, to the following address:
- ➢ REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIRIA (RFF)
- ➢ LEONTOS SOFOU 20, po box: 570 01
- ➢ THERMI THESSALONIKI Greece

Attn: FS4AFRICA OC Team

The Open Call Manager/ Treasurer might opt to sign this contract via Validated ID or similar online platform. Finally, the three copies will be sent to the FS4Africa Project Coordinator for the signature of the legal representative. One copy will be returned to the **Subgrantee**. The original documents will be archived at the **Open Call Manager's/Treasurer** and the **Coordinator** offices.

All Contracting parties must sign the contract no later than **31/01/2026**.

The Subgrantee is solely responsible for the accuracy of all data provided to the FS4AFRICA consortium.

1.2 Contract termination

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This contract terminates in the event of unjustified withdrawal by the Subgrantee of the current fulfilment of its Contract obligations. "Unjustified withdraw" covers any situation out of "Force Majeure" qualification which determines the absence of performance of the Subgrantee's contractual obligations. In this particular case, it entitles the FS4Africa consortium the right to claim the Subgrantee the full refund of all payments made to the Subgrantee up to date.

Article 2 - Obligations and Responsibilities of the Subgrantee

The obligations and responsibilities of the Subgrantee are defined in detail in the FS4Africa Open Call 1 Applicants' Guide. The main obligations and responsibilities of the subgrantees are, but not limited to:

- ➢ Subgrantees are expected to collaborate with local stakeholders to ensure that solutions are contextually relevant and effectively address the unique challenges faced by African communities.
- ➢ Subprojects should develop either a completely new innovative solution addressing the food safety challenges in the African Informal Sector, or enhance an existing solution, leveraging tools, business concepts, or frameworks already developed by the FS4Africa project. Solutions **do not necessarily have to be tied** to existing UC topics as long as they align with the broader goals of the project. However, solutions should aim to address challenges in areas such as:
- ➢ Subgrantees should outline a clear testing methodology to engage a minimum of 10 participants, such as (indicatively) farmers, SMEs, or other food supply chain actors.
- ➢ Subgrantees should plan and organise a public demonstration event to showcase the solution's functionality, outcomes, and benefits engaging at least 30 stakeholders, including (indicatively) policymakers, industry representatives, researchers, and community leaders.
- ➢ Subgrantees should present a roadmap for scaling the solution to a broader audience or market, include strategies for adoption in other regions or sectors, focusing on sustainability and replicability
- ➢ Subgrantees should identify potential barriers to scaling and propose solutions to overcome them (e.g., regulatory challenges, market entry barriers), define clear pathways for rolling out the solution into the market and demonstrate how the solution will remain relevant and financially sustainable beyond the project's funding period.
- ➢ Subgrantees should include a clear action plan for environmental protection in the proposed project and a clear action for social inclusion (including but not limited to gender and vulnerable groups).
- ➢ Solutions must have the potential for expansion and adaptation across different regions or contexts.
- ➢ Subprojects should promote long-term benefits, considering environmental, economic, and social factors.
- ➢ Proposed solutions must demonstrate their innovative character at a high level of scientific and technological excellence.
- ➢ OC Smart Solutions are expected to start at TRL4 and reach TRL6 by the end of the project
- ➢ The developed solution must consist of original work by the applicants and their anticipated developments do not infringe upon any third-party rights. Any disputes or

legal challenges stemming from third-party claims resulting from the sub-granted projects are the sole responsibility of the applicant. The FS4Africa consortium is not responsible for verifying the ownership authenticity of the proposed solution.

➢ Subgrantees must implement the multi-actor approach, bringing together service providers alongside rural community organisations, action groups or networks with a demonstrated ability to connect to a large number of local communities and disseminate and exploit project results to best deploy the FS4Africa concept and create the biggest impact and benefits for the region and its stakeholders.

➢ Subgrantees will deliver their solution in English Language.

➢ Subprojects will be launched in February 2026 having an implementation timeframe of 12 months (until January 2027)

➢ In subprojects, payments are deliverable based, meaning that the sub-grantees have to deliver a specific report after the end of each phase in order to receive the payment (no prefinancing is foreseen).

➢ Subgrantees will have to submit three deliverables (1. Activity plan, 2. Digital smart solution demonstration, 3. Report on market or community associated activities) during the sub-project implementation. In these deliverables the beneficiaries will report any ethics measures in a dedicated chapter. The deliverables will be reviewed by the Advisory Board of the Open Call, while the appointed Ethics Advisor will examine and assess the ethics measures if needed

➢ Subgrantees must provide any notices in writing to the FS4Africa consortium.

➢ Subgrantees must notify the FS4Africa coordinator and Open Call Manager/Treasurer immediately of any change of persons or contact details. The address list shall be accessible to all concerned.

➢ Subgrantees must notify the FS4Africa Coordinator and Open Call Manager's/Treasurer about the dissemination activities that they plan to organise or participate in.

➢ Subgrantees must formally notify the FS4Africa consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The FS4Africa consortium may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline

➢ The Subgrantee shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the project (or 3 for grants of not more than €60,000.00).

➢ During implementation of the sub-project and for at least five years after the final payment of the sub-project, the subgrantees must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at subcontract signing time ('confidential information')

➢ The Subgrantees must promote the sub-projects, the FS4Africa project and its results, by providing the description of their project upon request from the FS4Africa Consortium and highlighting the financial support of the EC

➢ Subgrantees must collaborate with the FS4Africa consortium and adjust its operations according to the FS4Africa consortium guidance.

In order to receive the funding from the FS4Africa consortium and the payment calendar tied

to milestones approach for the 12-month implementation period, the Subgrantee must submit to the Coordinator and Open Call Manager/Treasurer the relevant deliverables:

a) Activity Plan by M3 (Payment of 20% of the total fund),

b) Digital smart solution demonstration by M9 (Payment of 50% of the total fund),

c) Report on market or community associated activities by M12 (Payment of the final 30% of the total fund).

All deliverables will be reviewed by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board (AB). Upon final acceptance of the deliverables, the Open Call Manager / Treasurer will proceed with the payments.
Upon final acceptance of their deliverables by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board, the Subgrantee must send the Request for Payment and a Certificate of Tax Residence to the Treasurer in order to receive the funding.

During the implementation of the sub-project and for five years after the end of the sub-project, the parties must maintain confidentiality for any data, documents or other material (in any form) identified as confidential at the subcontract signing time ('confidential information'). If a beneficiary makes a request for a longer period of data protection and confidentiality, the Commission and the FS4Africa consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial four years. This will be explicitly stated in the current sub-contract.
If additional information is identified as confidential during the project's execution or through verbal communication, it must be accepted by the coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of its disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may only use confidential information to implement the Agreement.

FS4Africa Open Call 1 Implementation Dates (M1 starts on 01/02/2026):

Step	Start	Completed
Open Call Project implementation	M1 (February 2026)	M12 (Jan 2027)
Project Implementation Phase 1 - Design	M1	M3
Project Implementation Phase 2 - Development	M4	M9
Project Implementation Phase 3 - Validation	M10	M12

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Article 3 – Breach of Contractual obligations

In the event of the breach of the contractual obligations by the Subgrantee, the FS4Africa consortium reserves the right to claim the full refund of all payments made to the Subgrantee up to date. The breach of the contractual obligations by the Subgrantee shall be determined by the FS4Africa Consortium. The provision of false or misleading declarations by the Subgrantee or any unsolved situation of conflict of interest constitute a non-exhaustive example of a breach of contractual obligations by the Subgrantee.

Article 4 - Financial contribution and financial provisions

4.1 Maximum financial contribution

The maximum financial contribution to be granted by the FS4Africa consortium to the Subgrantee shall not exceed the budget requested by the Subgrantee in the submitted proposal, which can be at max **€60,000** in total. This financial contribution will be given in three instalments.

4.2 Distribution of financial contribution

The financial contribution to be granted to the Subgrantee shall be distributed in accordance with the Open Call Applicants' Guide.

In any case, the financial grant to be paid will always be subject to:

➢ Reception of the relevant deliverable(s),
➢ A favourable resolution by the Open Call Manager responsible for assessing the subproject execution, namely the acceptance of deliverable(s),
➢ Reception of the Request for Payment and Certificate of Tax Residence (both electronically and in hard copy),
➢ The Subgrantee's Bank Account (Annex 4) matches the Instructions for payment issued by the bank of the Subgrantee,
➢ Payments to the Subgrantee will be made by the Treasurer. In particular:
  ● The Open Call Manager/ Treasurer reserves the right to withhold the payments in case the Subgrantee does not fulfil its obligations and tasks as per the Open Call Applicants' Guide.
  ● Banking and transaction costs charged by any of the banks related to the handling of any financial resources made available to the Subgrantee by the Open Call Manager/Treasurer shall be covered by the holder of the bank account which originated the cost. This means that the Open Call Manager/Treasurer bears the cost of transfers charged by their bank and the Subgrantee bears the costs of transfers charged by the bank of the Subgrantee.
➢ Payments will be released by the Open Call Manager/Treasurer no later than ten working days after the notification by the Project Coordinator.
➢ The Subgrantee is responsible for complying with any tax and legal obligations that might be attached to this financial contribution.

4.3 Payment schedule

The payment schedule is directly linked to the relevant stage of the Subgrantee's subproject as per the Open Call Applicants' Guide. Payments will be done separately to each partner directly from the Open Call Manager/Treasurer. All payments will be related to the acceptance of certain deliverables spread over the three phases, which will be evaluated by the Advisory Board.

Article 5 – Liability of the Subgrantee

Neither the Coordinator, nor the Open Call Manager /Treasurer, nor the EC can be held liable for any acts or omissions of the Subgrantee in relation to this Contract. At the same time, the Subgrantee is responsible for any act or omission that causes damage to the Coordinator, the Open Call Manager/Treasurer, and/or the EC in relation to this Contract. The Subgrantee is also solely responsible for any damages that might come to third parties as a result of the Subgrantee's activities.

The Subgrantee shall bear sole responsibility for ensuring that their acts within the framework of this Contract do not infringe third parties' rights. There is no joint liability between the Contracting Parties.

Article 6 – Confidentiality

With respect to all information of whatever nature or form as is disclosed between the Contracting Parties in connection with the subproject and identified in writing as confidential, the terms of this Article shall apply.

The Contracting Parties agree that such information is communicated on a confidential basis and its disclosure may be prejudicial to the owner of information.

Article 7 – Force Majeure

''Force Majeure'' shall mean, any unforeseeable exceptional situation or event beyond the Contracting Parties control, which prevents either of them from fulfilling any of their obligations under the Agreement, which was not attributed to error or negligence on their part, and which proves to be inevitable in spite of exercising all due diligence.

Any default of a service, defect in equipment or material or delays in making them available, unless they stem directly from a relevant case of force majeure, as well as labour disputes, strikes or financial difficulties cannot be invoked as force majeure.

The Contracting Parties shall take the necessary measures to limit any damage due to force majeure. They shall do their best to resume the implementation of the action as soon as possible.
No contracting party shall be considered to be in breach of its obligations and tasks if such breach is caused by Force Majeure. A Contracting Party will notify the other Contracting Parties of any Force Majeure as soon as possible. In case the Subgrantee is not able to overcome the consequences of Force Majeure within 10 (ten) days after such notification, the

FS4Africa consortium will decide accordingly, including the termination of the Contract.

Article 8 – Information and communication

The Subgrantees must promote the subproject, the FS4Africa project and its results, by providing the description of their project upon request from the FS4Africa Consortium and highlight the financial support of the EC.

Unless the European Commission or the FS4Africa Coordinator requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must:

- (b) acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement: For communication activities: "This sub-project has received funding from the project FS4Africa (Grant Agreement number: 101136916) through its Open Call, funded by the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme"
- (b) display the FS4Africa logo

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the Subgrantee is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page.

Any publicity made by the Subgrantee in respect of the subproject, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or FS4Africa project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the FS4Africa consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- ➢ the official name of the Subgrantee,
- ➢ contact address of the Subgrantee,
- ➢ the general purpose of the subproject,
- ➢ the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the subproject; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received,
- ➢ the geographic location of the activities carried out,
- ➢ the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground,
- ➢ the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the subproject, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication,

> ➤ the publishable reports submitted to FS4Africa, any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and FS4Africa in the framework of the subproject.

The Subgrantee shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and FS4Africa does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the subproject representative, the FS4Africa consortium, if such permission is provided by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the Subgrantee's security, academic or commercial interests.

Any publicity made by the Subgrantee in respect of the subproject accepted by the FS4Africa consortium, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the Project Coordinator, FS4Africa consortium or EC are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

FS4Africa consortium and EC shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium the following information:

> ➤ The legal name of the Subgrantee,
> ➤ Contact address of the Subgrantee,
> ➤ The general purpose of the project,
> ➤ The amount of financial contribution of the EC.

The Subgrantee shall ensure that all necessary authorizations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the Project Coordinator, FS4Africa consortium or EC does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the Project Coordinator on the behalf of the Subgrantee, the EC may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the Subgrantee's security, academic or commercial interests.

Article 9 – Data protection

9.1 Data protection obligation

The contracting parties have the obligation to abide by the Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (General Data Protection Regulation - GDPR) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data.

The processing of personal data shall be carried out lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner, collected for specific purposes and adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which it is processed.

The Subgrantee might use and process the data only for the purposes of this Contract and during the length of the Contract. Any unauthorised use is forbidden. In any event, neither the FS4Africa Project coordinator nor the Open Call Manager/Treasurer will be held responsible for any abusive use of data incurred by the Subgrantee.

The Subgrantee shall not try to re-identify anonymised data. If re-identification occurs, the Subgrantee commits not to use such data. The Subgrantee shall delete, at the end of this Contract, the data to which the Subgrantee has been granted access during the incubation process, except where an agreement is entered into with the Data Provider.

9.2 New data produced

The Subgrantee acknowledges that they will be the "data controller" of any new dataset of personal information that the Subgrantee may produce in the course of the FS4Africa project.

Article 10 – Financial audit and controls

The EC may, at any time during the implementation of the Project and up to five years after the end of the FS4Africa project (foreseen for 31 December 2027), arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including in the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF), on the Subgrantee. The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such audits may cover financial, systemic and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the Grant Agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The Subgrantee shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorised by it, with a view to verifying that the Grant Agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. The information and data must be precise, complete and effective.

The Subgrantee shall keep the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the Contract until 2031. These shall be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the Grant Agreement.

In order to carry out these audits, the Subgrantee shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the Subgrantee's offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the subproject. They shall ensure that the information is readily available on the spot at the moment of audit and, if so requested, the data be handed over in an appropriate form.

On the basis of the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorised representative to the Subgrantee concerned, which may make observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The EC may decide not to take into account observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the Subgrantee concerned within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

On the basis of the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures which it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules. In addition, the EC may carry out on-the spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the EC in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

Article 11 – Amendments

Amendments or changes to this Contract shall be made in writing and signed by the duly authorised representative of the Contracting Parties. Nevertheless, in the event the EC modifies the conditions, the FS4Africa Consortium partners will amend the Contract accordingly.

Article 12 – Language

The contract is drawn up in English language, which shall govern all documents, notices, meetings and processes relative thereto.

Article 13 – Applicable law

This Contract shall be construed in accordance with and governed by the laws of Belgium.

Article 14 – Settlement of disputes

If the Contracting Parties are unable to resolve a dispute amicably, such dispute will be finally settled under the Rules of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce by three (3) arbitrators in Brussels.

Each of the Contracting Parties to the dispute shall appoint one (1) arbitrator, and the three (3) arbitrators so appointed shall elect the presiding arbitrator. Should a Party to the dispute, which should appoint an arbitrator, fails to do so within fourteen (14) days of the delivery of the written notice, to do so from the other Party to the dispute or should the appointed arbitrators fail to reach agreement on the presiding arbitrator within fourteen (14) days after their appointment, such arbitrator shall be appointed in accordance with the Rules upon request of any of the Parties to the dispute.

The seat of arbitration shall be Brussels.

The Contracting Parties agree that the language of the arbitration, including oral hearings, written evidence and correspondence, shall be English.

A duly rendered arbitration award shall be final and binding on the Contracting Parties to the dispute. Each Contracting Parties to the arbitration conducted in accordance with this section hereof shall bear its own expenses incurred in connection with such arbitration, including fees

of its legal counsels. All other costs and expenses shall be apportioned between the Contracting Parties to the arbitration in accordance with the decision of the arbitrators.

Nothing in this Contract shall limit the Contracting Parties' right to seek injunctive relief or enforce an arbitration award in any applicable competent court of law.

Article 15 – Originality of the sub-granted projects

It is required that applications submitted are based on original works by the applicants and that their foreseen developments are free from third party rights. FS4Africa consortium is not obliged to verify the authenticity of the ownership of the foreseen products/ services. Any issues delivered from third party claims that arise as a result of the sub-granted projects are on the sole responsibility of the applicant.

Article 16 – IPRs

Each subgrantee that generates results owns the attached Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) generated during the development process and will own results that are not IPRs. Each contractor is responsible for the management and protection of its IPRs and bears the costs associated with this.

The Subgrantees funded within the FS4Africa project will be the unique owners of the technologies created within the framework of their sub-granted projects. Parts of their works will be requested to be public for FS4Africa dissemination purposes.

Article 17 – Do No Significant Harm

Subgrantees must always respect the 'Do No Significant Harm Principle". This means that the subproject's methodology should be designed in a manner which does not significantly harm any of the six environmental objectives of the EU Taxonomy Regulation. EU Taxonomy is a science-based classification system for determining whether an (economic) activity can be considered environmentally sustainable. It establishes six environmental objectives (as listed in Article 913 of the EU Taxonomy): → Climate change mitigation → Climate change adaptation → The sustainable use and protection of water and marine resources → The transition to a circular economy → Pollution prevention and control → The protection and restoration of biodiversity and ecosystems. while Article 17 specifies what can constitute a "significant harm" for these objectives. Thus, the regulation provides that no measure should lead to significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives within the meaning of Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation

AS WITNESS:

The Contracting Parties have caused this Contract to be duly signed by the undersigned authorised representatives in three (3) copies the day and year first above written:

For INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TROPICAL AGRICULTURE (IITA), the Project Coordinator	For REFRAME FOOD ASTIKI MI KERDOSKOPIKI ETAIRIA (RFF), the Open Call Manager/Treasurer
	Mr Grigorios Chatzikostas
…………………………..	Manager
Signature	Signature
	Done at_____ on / /202x
Done at _____ on / /202x	
	For …………………………, the Legal Representative
	Signature
	Done at_____ on / /202x

Addressing food safety challenges in the African informal sector through innovative strategies & use cases

Open Call 1 (OC1) addressed to research and technology stakeholders

**Annex 10
Frequently Asked Questions**

Co-funded by
the European Union

foodsafety4afica.eu

1. Where can I find more details on the Open Call? Any Guide for Applicants?

Open Call Kit (with all relevant documents and instructions) can be found on the FS4Africa website (https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/)

2. **Are consortia eligible to apply? Or this call is for single entities only?**

FS4Africa will only accept applications from a single entity per proposal (no Consortia allowed).

3. How many applications can one entity submit? And how many of them can be selected for funding?

Applicants can participate as single entities only and participate in the call with only one proposal. In case multiple versions of the same application are submitted, only the last version will be evaluated. All the previous ones will not be considered and will be discarded.

4. Can successful applicants receive payment in advance after contracting?

In all selected sub - projects, payments are deliverable based, meaning that the sub-grantees have to deliver a specific report after the end of each phase in order to receive the payment (no pre-financing is foreseen). First payment will take place after the submission and evaluation of the first deliverable as outlined in Section 4.1 Implementation timeline and activities of the Applicants Guide.

5. For how long will the platform accept proposals?

The platform will open for proposal submission on June 2nd, 2025, and it will remain open until 17:00 CET (Brussels time) on September 30th, 2025.

6. Are the sub-projects funded under Open Call 1 expected to participate in the training and mentoring activities of the Innovation Hubs selected in Open Call 2?

Yes. One of the core objectives of Open Call 2 is to support the use cases and the sub-projects funded under Open Call 1 through dedicated training, mentoring, and acceleration services. Participation in the training and mentoring activities by the Open Call 1 sub-projects is an integral part of their acceleration pathway.

Interested applicants after they register to the https://opencalls.fund/ platform can submit their additional questions to the designated tab FAQ.