



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

**Open Call 2 (OC2) addressed to innovation
hubs**

**Annex 2
Open Call text (Fiche)**



**Funded by
the European Union**

foodsafety4africa.eu

1 Introduction

This document provides guidance information regarding the FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) addressed to innovation hubs in order to provide online training to the use cases and projects from the first open call, 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

The FS4Africa project addresses the urgent call to improve food safety systems in the informal sector across the African continent. It focuses on strengthening policy, enforcement, food safety culture, trade and market access, innovation, research, and international collaboration. It aims to reduce health and economic costs to society and unlock trade opportunities for informal small and medium-sized entrepreneurs along the food value chain, including local processors and street vendors.

There is currently limited empirical evidence on policy measures and interventions that effectively support informal groups, networks, and associations. In response, FS4Africa promotes innovative approaches based on digital and microbiome solutions, driven by private sector actors. These are implemented through four use cases within an enabling environment. The project also aims to generate additional benefits, including financial inclusion, support for innovation and start-ups, reduction of the digital divide, and increased market opportunities.

In addition, FS4Africa promotes microbiome-based alternatives to chemical and physical treatments, building on practices already adopted in the informal sector. These approaches contribute to safer food production while preserving soil and plant microbial diversity. The project also supports the use of fermentation as a practical and widely used method for food preservation in African contexts.

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 achieved 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 2 (OC2) addressed to innovation hubs

2.1 General Information

FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) aims to provide financial support to third parties (innovation hubs) to train use case partners and Open Call 1 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 project will select five (5) 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 (single entities) are expected to provide mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling.

Each Open Call 2 proposal must propose and implement a structured programme consisting of at least six (6) training–mentoring activities during the implementation period.

For the purposes of this Open Call, a “training–mentoring activity” is defined as a structured capacity-building intervention with clearly defined objectives, target beneficiaries, learning outcomes, delivery methodology, and follow-up actions.

Activities that consist solely of lectures without structured training - mentoring components, measurable outputs, or alignment with FS4Africa objectives will not be considered sufficient to fulfil the minimum activity requirements.

The required activities must include:

A. Support to Open Call 1 (OC1) Beneficiaries

Applicants must deliver at least two (2) training activities to support at least two (2) distinct Open Call 1 beneficiaries i.e. sub-projects (minimum two trainings in total, joint or dedicated sessions permitted). The two activities must involve at least two different OC1 sub-projects (i.e. not both activities mapped to the same OC1 beneficiary). The content should be tailored to the needs of the supported OC1 sub-projects and aligned with the relevant food safety challenges.

B. Support to FS4Africa Use Cases

Applicants must deliver at least four (4) training–mentoring activities targeting actors involved in one or more FS4Africa Use Cases in collaboration with other OC2 projects. Following selection, Open Call 2 sub-projects will coordinate among themselves, with support from the FS4Africa Executive Board (WP Leaders) and the Open Call team, through structured information exchange and alignment meetings to ensure balanced thematic coverage across all four FS4Africa Use Cases. Collaboration among OC2 sub-projects implies structured coordination of thematic focus, training design, delivery schedules, or mentoring approaches to ensure complementarity, avoid duplication, and maximise collective coverage of FS4Africa Use Cases.

Training–mentoring activities may take the form of online courses, webinars, interactive workshops, mentoring clinics, or other structured capacity-building formats. Joint or co-organised activities between OC2 sub-projects are optional but encouraged. Where such joint activities are implemented, they may count towards the minimum number (at least four) of required training–mentoring activities for each participating sub-project, provided that each sub-project's role and contribution are clearly defined.

The support will focus (indicatively) on:

- Refining value propositions and identifying target markets in African and European food systems;
- Strengthening business models, revenue streams, and financial sustainability beyond grant funding;
- Promoting social innovation approaches, including community engagement, gender inclusion, and local embedding;
- Identifying feasible upscaling and replication pathways;
- Enhancing market access, regulatory awareness, and ecosystem integration;
- Developing impact measurement and investment-readiness strategies.

The objective is to ensure that supported solutions are not only technically sound, but also economically viable, socially responsive, and scalable within real food system environments.

OC 1 sub-projects description is available [here](#).

2.2 Specific requirements for the sub - projects

Applicants (single entities) will receive funding for providing online training to the use cases and sub-projects from Open Call 1. They will provide mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling.

Proposals must consist of original work by the Applicants (single entities), 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 (single entities) may incorporate **existing third-party technologies in their activities, provided they have the proper rights, permissions, or licenses to use them**. However, Applicants (single entities) must not falsely claim ownership of intellectual property they do not develop.

Applicants (single entities) will deliver their training 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 2 and Call for evaluators will be launched on Monday, May 18th, 2026. Before assigning external evaluators, each proposal will be checked by the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board (AB), against the eligibility criteria set in the OC. The proposal evaluation and sub-grant agreement preparation will take place between September 2026 and January 2027. Selected projects will be launched in February 2027 having an implementation timeframe of 8 months (until September 2027). The implementation period will be divided into 3 phases:

- Phase 1 - Design (1 month / February 2027: Payment of 20% of the total grant [Deliverable: Training Activity plan];
- Phase 2 - Development (5 months / March 2027 – July 2027): Payment of 50% of the total grant [Deliverable: Training Delivery Report];
- Phase 3 - Validation (2 months / August 2027 – September 2027): Payment of the final 30% of the total grant [Deliverable: Final Report of the training activities].

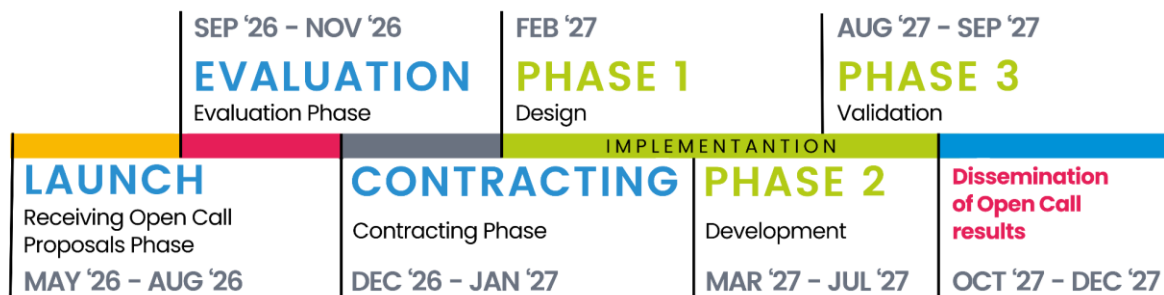


Figure 1: FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) timeline

2.3 Eligibility Criteria

FS4Africa aims to provide financial support to innovation hubs for providing online training to the use cases and sub-projects from Open Call 1. FS4Africa will only accept applications from one entity per proposal (no consortia allowed).

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

To be eligible, Applicants must meet all of the following conditions:

- Be a legal entity established in an eligible country under Horizon Europe (as defined in Section 3.2.3 of the Applicants Guide);
- Submit the proposal as a single Applicant (consortia are not allowed);
- Participate in only one proposal. **In particular for Universities and Research Institutions, the rule applies to each Department. Different departments of the same university or research organisation may participate in different proposals, provided that no single department participates in more than one application.**
- 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.

Important: Innovation Hubs established outside Africa are eligible to apply but must demonstrate prior operational experience in supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, incubation or acceleration activities in at least one African country, supported by at least one reference. Applicants must upload on the opencalls.fund platform supporting evidence demonstrating their experience as described above. This may include, where relevant, letters of reference / collaboration (signed), contracts, evidence of local presence (branch, partnership, MoUs), website links demonstrating activities, delivery infrastructure, contextual knowledge, or previous programme implementation in Africa. Failure to provide the required evidence will result in the proposal being declared ineligible.

The following entities are not eligible to participate in this Open Call (exclusion criteria):

- Existing consortium members of the FS4Africa project and their affiliated entities¹
- Entities involved in the implementation of the FS4Africa project or having a contractual or collaborative relationship with any FS4Africa consortium partner for the provision of services or activities under FS4Africa (including through implementation of the Use Case structure). Any such relationship constitutes a conflict of interest that may compromise the impartial and objective implementation of the sub-project.
- Single Applicants selected to be funded through the FS4Africa Open Call 1

Entities submitting more than one proposal (in such cases, all proposals submitted by the same Applicant will be rejected). **To be considered eligible, proposals must comply with the following requirements:**

- Be submitted before the defined deadline and follow the submission procedure described in Section 3.4 of the Applicants Guide.
- Be submitted using the official proposal, budget, and Declaration of Honour templates provided; If an Applicant does not use the FS4Africa Open Call 2 templates, the submitted proposal will be rejected.
- Proposed activities must be carried out after the selection process. Activities that have already been completed at the time of submission are not eligible for funding.
- 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 (single entities).

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.

The FS4Africa Open Call team reserves the right to ask for additional clarifications from the Applicants (single entities) during the eligibility check.

Only 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 (single entities) 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.

Applications received through any other channel will be automatically discarded.

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

¹ Affiliated entities (formerly called 'linked third parties') are entities with a (usually legal or capital) link to a beneficiary and which implement parts of the action and are allowed to charge costs directly to the grant.

funded by the European Union under Grant Agreement Number [101136916]. This relation between the sub-grantees and the European Union through the FS4Africa project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees with the European Union. It is the responsibility of the sub-grantees to fulfil these, and of the FS4Africa consortium partners to inform them on these and ensure that contractual obligations apply to Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) recipients.

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

3 Points of contact

For all the information related to FS4Africa Open Call 2 please state your question on the FAQ section on the opencalls.fund or contact us at fs4africa@opencalls.fund.