



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

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

**Annex 4  
Applicants' Guide**



**Funded by  
the European Union**

[foodsafety4africa.eu](http://foodsafety4africa.eu)

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
1.1	About FS4Africa .....	4
1.1.1	Use Cases being developed within the FS4Africa project .....	4
1.2	FS4Africa Objectives .....	7
1.3	FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) – Approach and planned realisation .....	7
1.4	Purpose and Objectives of Open Call 2 (OC2).....	8
1.5	Open Call 2 (OC2) Expected Outcome.....	8
2	Open Call 2 (OC2) addressed to innovation hubs .....	10
2.1	General Information .....	10
2.2	Specific requirements for the projects.....	10
2.3	Submission procedure .....	11
2.4	Language.....	12
2.5	Documentation format .....	12
2.6	Origin of the funds .....	12
2.7	Opencalls.fund platform .....	13
3	Proposal Submission and Selection .....	13
3.1	Open Call Publication .....	13
3.2	Eligibility Criteria.....	14
3.2.1	Overall eligibility and exclusion criteria .....	14
3.2.2	Definition of Innovation Hubs eligible for the FS4Africa Open Call 2.....	15
3.2.3	Definition of eligible countries.....	16
3.3	Eligible costs .....	18
3.4	Application process .....	19
3.4.1	Applicant's registration .....	19
3.4.2	Application preparation .....	20
3.4.3	The application reception .....	20
3.4.4	Use of generative AI in proposal preparation .....	21
3.5	Evaluation process .....	21
3.5.1	Eligibility check.....	21
3.5.2	Remote Evaluation and key points .....	22
3.5.3	Redress procedure.....	26

3.5.4	Contracting .....	27
4	Implementation of FS4Africa Open Call .....	28
4.1	Implementation timeline and activities .....	28
5	Applicants' responsibility.....	28
5.1	Conflict of interest.....	28
5.2	Ethics, Data Protection & Confidentiality.....	29
5.3	Promoting the action and giving visibility to the EU funding .....	31
5.4	Financial audit and controls .....	32
5.5	Sub-project Communication.....	33
5.6	Originality of the sub-granted projects .....	33
5.7	IPR ownership of the sub-granted projects .....	33
5.8	Liability .....	34
6	Checklist.....	34
7	Points of contact .....	34

## List of Figures

Figure 1: FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) timeline .....	11
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## List of tables

Table 1: FS4Africa Open Calls Budget.....	8
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# 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 Open Call 1 (OC1), describing the eligibility and evaluation criteria. The document in its entirety and all associated documents of the Open Call 2 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.

### 1.1.1 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 and 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. <i>Escherichia coli</i> )

#### 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 members, National food regulation partners, Obafemi Awolowo Teaching Hospital Complex (SOGHIN-OAUTHC), Institute of Agricultural Research and Training, Obafemi Awolowo University, Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Members of the Ghana Aflatoxin Management Innovation Platforms in Upper West and Bono East Regions, Regulators and Agric: Extension officers in Upper West and Bono East Regions, CSIR- Food Research Institute, Nutrition and Food Science Dept., University of Ghana.

#### 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 both consumers and farmers and has negative impacts on the environment. High levels of pesticide residues, including prohibited substances, have also led to trade restrictions, such as the 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 in 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. FS4Africa partners will deliver capacity-building activities to farmers, processors, and other value chain actors on improved post-harvest management practices for grains and vegetables. Also, the mechanism of resistance will be studied towards improvement in resistant management. A microbiome approach will be used to understand the molecular basis of resistance of several organisms to pesticides. FS4Africa will promote the adoption of hermetic storage solutions, such as PICS bags, particularly among informal sector retailers. In parallel, FS4Africa will investigate antibiotic resistance in selected scenarios to better understand the risks associated with current storage and pesticide use practices.

**Involved actors:** International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI), FCI-Nigeria platform members, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. 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 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:** Hydroponics and/or aquaponics 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. In addition, microbiome-based solutions will be pursued to maintain fish health to render antibiotics and other redundant chemical treatments.

**Involved actors:** Actors involved include University of Ibadan, Rfisheries, Innovar Tech Nigeria Limited, Lollyp Agrifood Ventures, Alimosho market women cooperative, Bamenda University of Science and Technology.

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 fact, 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 by the project and accessible through mobile devices, so that, for example, adapted risk mitigation strategies can be applied by smallholders. Also, microbiome-based solutions for the detection of pathogens will be explored.

**Involved actors and relevant data:** Extension officers of the Gauteng Province Department of Agriculture (GDARD), smallholder farmers based in Gauteng province, University of Graz (Austria).

## 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 2 (OC2) – Approach and planned 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.

The first Open Call was launched in M18 (June 2025) and is currently in its implementation phase.

2) **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. They will provide mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling (**which is the objective of the present Applicants' Guide**).

To fuel the growth trajectory of food safety solutions, FS4Africa will launch the two Open Calls providing Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) to at least 15 sub-projects in total. These



will maximise the project's impact and accelerate network expansion. In particular, 10 sub-projects have already been selected for the Open Call 1 (up to 600 000 euro – up to 60 000 euro for each third party) and 5 sub-projects for the Open Call 2 (up to 200 000 euro - up to 40 000 euro for each third party).

In total, 800 000 euro budget is allocated on financial support to third parties via two Open Calls.

Open Calls	Total Amount	Sub-Project Size	No of Projects
OC1	600 000 Euro	up to 60 000 Euro	10
OC2	200 000Euro	up to 40 000 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, and according to the terms of the contract signed between the consortium and FS4Africa project. **No pre-financing is foreseen**, and the financial support is provided in the form of pre-defined lump-sum amounts according to the implementation phases of the sub-projects as described below, linked to the successful completion and acceptance of agreed deliverables. Implementing this approach, rather than a payment tied to complex administrative justifications, will decrease the administrative burden of the Open Call.

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 Horizon Europe Main Work Programme 2023–2025 and the AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, articles 6.2.D.1 and 9.4.

## 1.4 Purpose and Objectives of Open Call 2 (OC2)

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 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.

## 1.5 Open Call 2 (OC2) Expected Outcome

Through Open Call 2 (OC2), at least five additional sub-projects will be funded to provide online training to the use cases and sub-projects from the Open Call 1.

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](#).

**To summarise:**

**Open Call**

- OC2 addressed to innovation hubs

<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 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</li> </ul>
<b>Budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ 5 projects * 40.000,00€ = 200.000,00€ (one entity per proposal)</li> </ul>
<b>KPIs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ No of trainings to Open Call 1 projects per proposal: ≥2</li> <li>➤ No of training / mentoring activities for the use cases in collaboration with the other Open Call 2 projects: ≥4</li> </ul>

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

### 2.1 General Information

FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) aims to attract innovation hubs in order to provide online training to the use cases and projects from the Open Call 1.

The project will select at least 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 entities per proposal (no Consortia allowed)**. Applicants (single entities) are expected to provide mentoring and accelerating innovative business concepts, including social innovation and upscaling.

### 2.2 Specific requirements for the projects

Applicants (single entities) will receive funding for providing online training to the use cases and sub-projects from the 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 activities.

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 18<sup>th</sup> 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].

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.

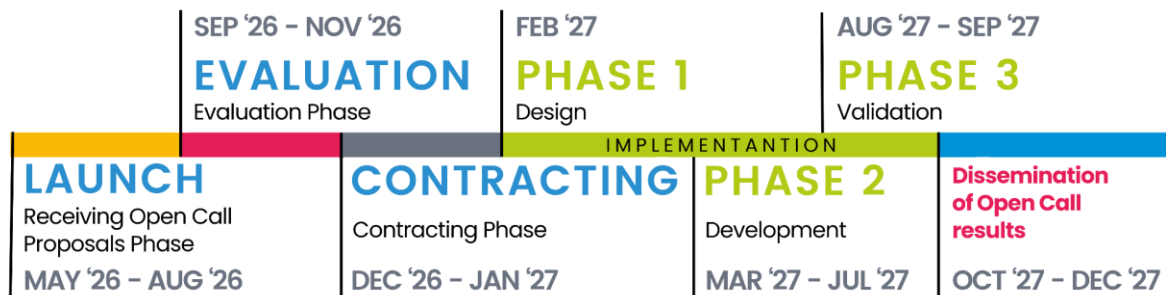


Figure 1: FS4Africa Open Call 2 (OC2) timeline

### 2.3 Submission procedure

FS4Africa's Open Call for proposals will be submitted digitally through the [opencalls.fund](https://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 on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) as well as on the project website.

**Applications received through any other channel 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 be discarded.

Throughout the entire process, the confidentiality of Applicants' (single entities) 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 2 Kit documents. This includes acceptance of the applicable provisions on ethics, data protection, and confidentiality, as detailed in Section 5.2. Applicants acknowledge that their personal data will be processed in accordance with the GDPR for the purposes of managing the Open Call. Further details on data processing, including data subject rights and contact information for the Data Protection Officer, are provided in Section 5.2 (Ethics, Data Protection and Confidentiality).

## 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 (single entities) 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 (single entities) during the application process must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing.** The provided proposal template (Annex 6) must be used when preparing the proposal and should not exceed the limit of **15 pages**. This includes all relevant tables, figures and references. Excess pages will not be considered during the evaluation of the proposal.

**Important Note:** The cover page and the Table of Contents (ToC) are not included in the limit of the 15 pages. Removing explanatory text, located below the paragraph sub-titles in the proposal template, is allowed. Also, the budget tables (Section 6) **do not count** towards the 15-page limit of the proposal.

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).

The provided budget template (Annex 7) must be used and should be submitted as a separate ".pdf". Applicants (single entities) should aim to limit the information to one page.

Incomplete applications or applications that do not comply with these requirements will be excluded from evaluation as non-eligible. **Applications that do not use the official proposal and budget template 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 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.

## 2.7 Opencalls.fund platform

The [opencalls.fund](https://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](https://reframe.food). The FS4Africa Open Call for Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) will be published through the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform.

## 3 Proposal Submission and Selection

All Open Calls Applicants (single entities) must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in the present Section (Proposal Submission and Selection), sign and submit the following documents.

The submission process on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) requires Applicants (single entities) to register to the platform and submit the application (proposal, budget, Declarations, supporting evidence for Innovation Hubs established outside Africa)

**At the time of submission, Applicants (single entities) must submit the Declaration of Honour** using the template provided (Annex 5). The document must be filled in appropriately, signed by the single 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 (single entities). **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 (single entities) can include references about their existence in their proposal.

**During the contracting phase**, selected Applicants must submit the following documents:

- Bank account information (Annex 8)
- Proof of legal existence
- Signed and scanned copy 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 2 will be published on the [EU Funding and Tenders portal](https://european-council.europa.eu/european-council/en/eu-funding-and-tenders-portal), the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform and the FS4Africa website (<https://foodsafety4africa.eu/open-call/>). It may also be publicised via the FS4Africa project partners' websites/ dissemination portals on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and it will remain open until Monday, August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2026, 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 2 Kit, which includes the following documents:

- **Open Call Fiche (Annex 2)**
- **Open Call Hand Out Summary (Annex 3)**
- **Open Call Applicants' Guide, (Annex 4 present document).**
- **Declaration of Honour (DoH) (Annex 5)**, 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 application phase)
- **Open Call Proposal template (Annex 6)**, word document to be completed by the Applicant, saved, and submitted as .pdf in the application phase.
- **Open Call Budget template (Annex 7)**, excel document to be completed by the Applicant, saved and submitted as .pdf in the application phase.
- **Bank account information (Annex 8)**, which collects information of single entities bank accounts where the FS4Africa payments will be transferred to (**only for selected beneficiaries, it's applicable only at the contracting stage**).
- An **indicative Sub-grant agreement contract (Annex 9)**, just as a reference for the Applicants (**applicable only at the contracting stage and subject to changes by the Treasurer only**).

Interested Applicants (single entities) have to regularly (e.g. once a week) check the FAQ section in the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) (OCF) platform /FS4Africa OC tab

## 3.2 Eligibility Criteria

### 3.2.1 Overall eligibility and exclusion 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);
- 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](https://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.



All supporting evidence must be merged and submitted as a single .pdf file. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the final uploaded file does not exceed the maximum file size permitted by the submission platform (up to 10MB).

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

- Existing consortium members of the FS4Africa project and their affiliated entities<sup>1</sup>
- 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.
- 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.

### **3.2.2 Definition of Innovation Hubs eligible for the FS4Africa Open Call 2**

For the purposes of this Open Call, an Innovation Hub (IH) is a structured organisation or formally established unit within a legal entity that provides systematic innovation support services to external beneficiaries.

Eligible Innovation Hubs may include, but are not limited to:

- Business incubators and accelerators
- Technology parks and science parks

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<sup>1</sup> 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.



- University-based entrepreneurship centres or technology transfer offices acting as innovation support units
- Digital Innovation Hubs
- Innovation agencies with structured incubation or acceleration programmes

Universities and research organisations are eligible only if they apply through, or clearly designate, a specific unit functioning as an Innovation Hub (e.g. entrepreneurship centre, incubation unit, accelerator programme, technology transfer office) and the proposed team demonstrates the capacity to deliver the required training/mentoring activities. A standard academic department, laboratory or research group without structured innovation support services does not qualify as an Innovation Hub.

Entities that are NOT considered Innovation Hubs under this Open Call include:

- Individual consultants or trainers acting alone
- Pure research departments without incubation or acceleration functions
- NGOs whose primary mission is advocacy or service delivery without structured innovation support programmes
- Companies whose core business is unrelated to innovation support services
- Entities without demonstrated experience in structured mentoring or incubation

The FS4Africa Open Call team reserves the right to request documentation demonstrating the Applicant's Innovation Hub status and operational capacity during the eligibility check.

### 3.2.3 Definition of eligible countries

For this Open Call, Applicants must be legally established in an eligible Horizon Europe country (EU Member States and associated countries) or in a low- to middle-income country that is eligible for funding under Horizon Europe (as described in this section). Regardless of the place of establishment, the proposed training/mentoring activities must primarily benefit and be feasible for actors involved in the FS4Africa Use Cases and Open Call 1 beneficiaries. Association to Horizon Europe is governed by the Horizon Europe Regulation 2021/6951. Legal entities from associated countries can participate under equivalent conditions as legal entities from the EU Member States unless specific limitations or conditions are laid down in the work programme and/or call/topic text. Such measures could include the limitation of participation in certain actions to legal entities established in the EU alone, or in the EU and specified non-EU countries, in order to safeguard the EU's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security. Limitations or conditions may also be attached to the participation of legal entities established in an eligible country, but which are controlled directly or indirectly by an ineligible country<sup>2</sup>. The eligibility will be clearly defined in the work programme. There could also be criteria on the place of establishment of the legal entity to take into account specific policy requirements or the nature and objectives of the action<sup>3</sup>.

Special rules also apply to entities covered by Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/05<sup>4</sup>:

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<sup>2</sup> Based on Horizon Europe Regulation article 22(5).

<sup>3</sup> Based on Horizon Europe Regulation article 22(6).

<sup>4</sup> Commission guidelines No 2013/C 205/05 on the eligibility of Israeli entities and their activities in the territories occupied by Israel since June 1967 for grants, prizes and financial instruments funded by the EU from 2014 onwards (OJEU C 205 of 19.07.2013, pp. 9-11)

**Legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in non-government controlled territories of Ukraine** — Given the illegal invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the involvement of Belarus, there is currently no appropriate context allowing the implementation of the actions foreseen in this programme with legal entities established in Russia, Belarus, or in nongovernment controlled territories of Ukraine. Therefore, even where such entities are not subject to EU restrictive measures, such legal entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity. This includes participation as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, third parties giving in-kind contributions, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third parties (if any). Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis for justified reasons.

**Measures for the protection of the Union budget against breaches of the principles of the rule of law in Hungary** — Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16 December 2022, no legal commitments can be entered into with Hungarian public interest trusts established under the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain. Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, as long as the Council measures are not lifted, such entities are not eligible to participate in any funded role (beneficiaries, affiliated entities, subcontractors, recipients of financial support to third parties, etc). In case of multi-beneficiary grant calls, applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

To be eligible for funding, applicants must be established in one of the following countries:

– the Member States of the European Union, including their outermost regions:

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

– the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) linked to the Member States:

Aruba (NL), Bonaire (NL), Curaçao (NL), French Polynesia (FR), French Southern and Antarctic Territories (FR), Greenland (DK), New Caledonia (FR), Saba (NL), Saint Barthélemy (FR), Sint Eustatius (NL), Sint Maarten (NL), St. Pierre and Miquelon (FR), Wallis and Futuna Islands (FR).

– countries associated to Horizon Europe<sup>5</sup> (reference year 2023<sup>6</sup>):

Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo<sup>7</sup>, Moldova, Montenegro, New Zealand, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Türkiye, Ukraine.

– the following low- and middle-income countries<sup>8</sup>: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt (Arab Republic), El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada,

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<sup>5</sup> The list is correct at the time of adoption of this Work Programme

<sup>6</sup> Considering that the grant is funded under budget appropriations of 2023 (topic *HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01-20: EU-Africa Union – food safety*) entities based in States that were not associated to Horizon Europe in 2023 are not eligible for funding.

<sup>7</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>8</sup> The list is correct at the time of adoption of this Work Programme

Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Korea (Democratic People's Republic), Kyrgyz Republic, Lao (People's Democratic Republic), Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Niue, Pakistan, Palau, Palestine<sup>9</sup>, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, Samoa, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Tonga, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic), Vietnam, Yemen Republic, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

### 3.3 Eligible costs

The financial support is provided as pre-defined lump-sum amounts per implementation phase, linked to the successful completion and acceptance of agreed deliverables as specified in the Sub-grant Agreement.

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

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<sup>9</sup> This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue

Procurement must comply with the national and European regulations applicable to each applicant's institution.

➤ **Purchase costs:**

- **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.

**Important:** The purchase of goods, works or services, subcontracting, financial support to third parties, equipment renting or leasing, personnel seconded against payment is not allowed with entities established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust. Furthermore, no contracts will be signed with Russian public bodies or public related entities under Horizon Europe.

The budget must be filled in for each proposal using the excel template provided (Annex 7). Applicants (single entities) will then save the excel sheet as pdf and upload it on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform. Applications that do not use the official Budget template will be discarded.

Applicants (single entities) **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 (single entities) 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 (single entities) should register at the FS4Africa Open Call page on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform. This will be the central interface for managing the proposal applications, evaluation and selection process.

All of the necessary information and documents are available on [FS4Africa website](https://www.fs4africa.eu) / [Open Call Section](#) as well as on the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#).

It is important to note that only registered users are able to access the FAQ section on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform and submit questions.

Questions can be submitted until August 26th, 2026, at 17:00 CET through email to the FS4Africa support team at [fs4africa@opencalls.fund](mailto:fs4africa@opencalls.fund) or the FAQ section of the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform. Answers will be provided using the same channel through which the question was posed.

### 3.4.2 Application preparation

Applicants (single entities) should follow the steps below:

1. Applicants (single entities) must register on the platform prior to the submission of the proposal.
2. For the application preparation, Applicants (single entities) are requested to apply online on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform and provide all necessary documents. Documents to be submitted include:
  - Proposal template (pdf)
  - Budget template (pdf)
  - Declaration of honour (pdf).
  - **(For Innovation Hubs established outside Africa only):** Supporting evidence demonstrating experience as described in Section 3.2.1. 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. All supporting evidence must be merged and submitted as a single .pdf file. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that the final uploaded file does not exceed the maximum file size permitted by the submission platform (up to 10MB).

**Incomplete submissions or applications not using the official templates provided, will not be accepted.**

3. Applicants (single entities) that do not accept the terms and conditions and do not sign and upload to the platform all the required documents will be automatically ineligible. Late submission will not be accepted. Note: applicants will be able to save their application and make any necessary changes until the submission deadline.

**Important note:** The platform supports only files in .pdf format. The size of each file can be up to 10MB. Compressed files (such as .zip, .rar, etc.) are **not acceptable**.

5. In case Applicants (single entities) have any technical difficulties, they should contact the FS4Africa OC support team at: [fs4africa@opencalls.fund](mailto: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 (single entities) may contact the FS4Africa OC team for support, via email to: [fs4africa@opencalls.fund](mailto:fs4africa@opencalls.fund) until August 26th, 2026, at 17:00 CET.

### 3.4.3 The application reception

ONLY applications submitted via the OCF platform will be accepted. The application reception will close at 17:00 CET (Brussels time) on August 31st, 2026. At this time, a full list of applicants will be generated and will include the basic information provided during registration. The full list will only be available to the Open Call Advisory Board in the context of the eligibility check, evaluation and contracting, and shared with the European Commission for



transparency. Additional nonidentifier information (e.g. country, type of applicant) will be collected for statistical purposes. Proposals and contact information will not be shared within the consortium without consent. Applicants will be expected to read and accept the privacy policy and accept the terms of the open call during the application process.

### 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 (single entities) 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 (single entities) 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 (single entities) are required to:

- Verify the accuracy, validity, and appropriateness of the content and any citations generated by the AI tool and correct any errors or inconsistencies.
- Provide a list of sources used to generate content and citations, including those generated by the AI tool.
- Double-check citations to ensure they are accurate and properly referenced.
- Be conscious of the potential for plagiarism where the AI tool may have reproduced substantial text from other sources. Check the original sources to be sure you are not plagiarising someone else's work.
- Acknowledge the limitations of the AI tool in the proposal preparation, including the potential for bias, errors, and gaps in knowledge

## 3.5 Evaluation process

The evaluation process is split into two (2) stages. The eligibility check and the remote evaluation. The eligibility check is to ensure that all of the administrative and procedural requirements are met. Proposals that meet the eligibility criteria move on to the technical evaluation carried out by the external evaluators of the OC.

### 3.5.1 Eligibility check

Once the Open Call is closed (**August 31st, 2026, 17:00 CET**) an eligibility check will be carried out to discard applications that do not meet the eligibility requirements. The application will proceed to technical evaluation if all requirements are met. Submitted Applications will be checked against the overall eligibility criteria set in Section 3.2.1.

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).

During the eligibility check, the Applicants (single entities) 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 (single entities) 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.

Applicants will be informed when the eligibility check is complete and whether or not they proceed to the remote evaluation.

**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

Proposals that pass the eligibility check will proceed to the technical evaluation. 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 evaluators will work independently and in accordance with the principles of impartiality, confidentiality, and absence of conflict of interest.

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

**Concept and feasibility** [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Applicants (single entities) should demonstrate how well the proposed training and mentoring concept aligns with the objectives of FS4Africa Open Call 2.

- **Alignment with FS4Africa and OC2 objectives:** Clarity of how the proposed activities support food safety improvements in the African informal sector through training, mentoring, acceleration and upscaling of use cases and OC1 sub-projects.
- **Relevance to use cases and OC1 beneficiaries:** Appropriateness of the proposed training content and mentoring approach for the specific needs of FS4Africa use cases and OC1 beneficiaries.
- **Feasibility and practicality:** Realism of the activity plan and coordination with other OC2 projects and OC1 beneficiaries.
- **Work plan coherence:** Clear structure of activities, milestones, deliverables and responsibilities across the three implementation phases (Design, Development, Validation).
- **Cross-cutting principles:** Consideration of inclusiveness (e.g. women, youth, diaspora), ethics, and environmental sustainability in the design of training activities

**Technology readiness and innovation development** [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Applicants (single entities) should demonstrate competence in supporting innovation progression and readiness.

- **Understanding of innovation maturity and scaling pathways:** Ability to support OC1 projects and FS4Africa use cases in moving from tested solutions towards adoption, replication, certification, or market readiness.
- **Approach and methodology:** Appropriateness of tools, frameworks, and methodologies used for mentoring (e.g. business modelling, social innovation, regulatory readiness, certification pathways, capacity building).
- **Fit with FS4Africa innovation context:** Relevance of the proposed approach to informal food systems, low-resource settings, and real-life African contexts.
- **Transferability and adaptability:** Capacity to tailor training and mentoring activities to diverse use cases, sectors and geographical contexts within FS4Africa.

**Impact & Exploitation** [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Applicants (single entities) should demonstrate the expected contribution of the proposal to the FS4Africa ecosystem



- **Expected impact on FS4Africa stakeholders:** Contribution to strengthening skills, capacities and networks of OC1 projects, use case partners, and informal food actors.
- **Contribution to food safety outcomes:** Potential of the proposed training and mentoring activities to support safer food practices, compliance, certification readiness, or improved governance in the informal sector.
- **Exploitation, upscaling and sustainability perspective:** Credibility of the approach to support long-term uptake, replication or continuation of results after the end of the OC2 sub-project.
- **Dissemination and knowledge sharing:** Quality of plans for sharing results, lessons learned and training materials within the FS4Africa ecosystem and beyond.

**Organisational capacity and sufficiency in the team's background** [Scoring 1-5; min 3] Applicants (single entities) should demonstrate the organisational strength and expertise to deliver high-quality training and mentoring activities within the given timeframe and budget.

- **Extend and relevance of the Applicants' capacity to operate in Africa:** Understanding of local contexts, challenges, and stakeholder needs, adequacy of delivery mechanisms (e.g. local partnerships, networks, infrastructure, language capacity) and robustness of the proposed approach to effectively engage and support African participants.
- **Team competence and complementarity:** Adequacy of the team's expertise in technical, business, social innovation, and capacity-building domains. Clarity of roles and responsibilities, including complementarity, gender balance and diversity
- **Operational and financial capacity:** Realism and transparency of the budget, alignment between resources and planned activities, and sound use of subcontracting where applicable.
- **Risk awareness and mitigation:** Identification of key implementation risks and feasibility of mitigation measures.

**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

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.

If consensus cannot be reached, a third independent evaluator will be appointed to assess the proposal. The evaluation will be based exclusively on the submitted proposal and will be evaluated against the defined award criteria.

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. This means that proposals with an average score less than **3** for any award criterion category will not be selected, regardless of their final score. Proposals with total scores lower than **12** will not be selected, even if they are the highest ranked.

**Important note:** Proposals will be ranked based on their final total evaluation scores, and the top five (5) proposals (at least) will be selected for funding.

### **Portfolio Coverage and Ecosystem Balance**

Following the completion of the remote evaluation, all eligible proposals will be ranked in descending order according to their final total evaluation score, provided that they have passed all individual criterion thresholds and the overall minimum score threshold.

To ensure balanced ecosystem support, selection will take into account both:

- Coverage across all four (4) FS4Africa Use Cases and
- Collective support to all Open Call 1 (OC1) sub-projects.

Where two or more higher-ranked proposals primarily target the same Use Case and the same OC1 sub-project(s), only the highest-scoring proposal among them will be selected at that stage.

For example, suppose the top three proposals are:

- **Proposal A** – targets Use Case 1 and Use Case 2; supports OC1 Sub-projects X and Y (Score: 16)
- **Proposal B** – targets Use Case 1 and Use Case 2; supports OC1 Sub-projects X and Y (Score: 15)
- **Proposal C** – targets Use Case 2 and Use Case 3; supports OC1 Sub-projects Y and Z (Score: 14)
- **Proposal D** – targets Use Case 3 and Use Case 4; supports OC1 Sub-projects Z and W (Score: 13)
- **Proposal E** – targets Use Case 4 and Use Case 1; supports OC1 Sub-projects W and V (Score: 12)

Proposal A and Proposal B target the same combination of Use Cases (1 & 2) and the same OC1 Sub-projects (X & Y). Only Proposal A (the higher-scoring one) is selected at that stage.

Proposal C introduces Use Case 3 and OC1 Sub-project Z, while Proposal D introduces Use Case 4 and OC1 Sub-project W, so both are selected for funding.

Proposal E introduces OC1 Sub-project V (still not yet supported). Proposal E is selected to ensure OC1 coverage, even though some of its Use Cases overlap with already selected proposals.

This process will continue sequentially down the ranking list until five (5) proposals are selected, ensuring balanced coverage of all FS4Africa Use Cases and OC1 sub-projects where possible.

In addition, before confirming the final list of selected proposals, the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will conduct a coverage mapping exercise based on the explicit targeting information provided in each proposal (i.e., identification of supported OC1 sub-projects and addressed Use Cases) to verify that all OC1 sub-projects and Use Cases are collectively supported by at least one selected proposal. If gaps are identified (i.e., an OC1 sub-project or Use Case remains unsupported), the next highest-ranked eligible proposal addressing the uncovered Use Case or OC1 sub-project may be prioritised, provided it meets all evaluation thresholds.

This coverage mechanism does not modify evaluation scores and serves exclusively to ensure balanced distribution of support across the FS4Africa ecosystem.

## 2. Tie-Break Rules

If two or more proposals share the same overall score and compete for the final available funding position, 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 3.5 and Proposal B received a 3 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 and Proposal B scored 3.5 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. Such factors include Portfolio balance / geographic coverage, complementarity with proposals already selected for funding, lower delivery risk at fixed budget/time.

After completing this process, communication with the OC Advisory Board will be made by reframe.food (RFF), to present the status and propose the outcome of this process to the members and confirm the final list of selected proposals. 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 (single entities) will receive their Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).

### 3.5.3 Redress procedure

#### Eligibility Check Results

Applicants (single entities) 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 eligibility check result notification if they believe the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect. The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will review these requests to ensure coherent interpretation and equal treatment of all Applicants (single entities). Requests **must relate specifically to eligibility checks, clearly describe the complaint, and include reasons for consideration**. Additionally, they must be submitted within the specified timeframe and by the legal representative of the applicant who submitted the proposal. The Advisory Board will examine the requests for redress within a reasonable timeframe taking into account the complexity of the case and the number of requests received. If evidence of a shortcoming is found that could have impacted the eligibility decision, appropriate corrective actions will be taken. The outcome of the redress review will be communicated to the applicant once the process has been concluded.

#### Remote Evaluation Results

Applicants (single entities) may submit a written request for redress regarding the evaluation process to the FS4Africa OC Advisory Board via email at **fs4africa@opencalls.fund** within **five (5) calendar days** of receiving the Evaluation Summary Report (ESR). This request can be made if Applicants (single entities) believe there was a shortcoming in the evaluation which may have affected the decision. The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will examine the requests for redress, ensuring equal treatment of all Applicants (single entities).

**Requests for redress must relate specifically to the evaluation process, clearly describe the complaint and reasons for potential consideration and be submitted within the five (5) calendar days timeframe by the legal representative of the applicant.**

The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will review the request within a reasonable timeframe taking into account the complexity of the case and the number of requests received. If there is clear evidence that a shortcoming(s) could have affected the final funding decision, partial or full re-evaluation may occur. The outcome of the redress review will be communicated to the applicant once the process has been concluded.

The final evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be considered definitive and could be lower than the original score. Only one request for redress per proposal will be accepted, and all requests will be treated with confidentiality.

**Important Note:** The FS4Africa OC Advisory Board will not question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators and any requests contesting this judgment will be automatically rejected.

### 3.5.4 Contracting

Based on the evaluator comments in each ESR, the Advisory Board will start for the preparation of the contract with the representatives of the selected (winning) proposals. If shortcomings were identified, adjustments are expected in the preparation of the contract. If a selected proposal fails to successfully finalise the preparation of the contract, the proposal will be rejected and the next highest ranked proposal will be selected (following the process described in Section 3.5.2 Remote Evaluation and key points). 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 clarifications.

Reframe.food (RFF) is assigned as the OC Manager / 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:
  - Copy of ID-card or Passport of legal representative(s) of the selected applicant's (Sub-grantee) organisation
  - 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 selected applicant's (Sub-grantee) organisation is not under liquidation or has filed for bankruptcy. If a formal "no liquidation/no bankruptcy" certificate is not mandatory in your country, an official statement or declaration confirming this (together with a translated extract in English) must be provided alongside an official letter in English confirming that the selected applicant's (Sub-grantee) is neither under liquidation nor in bankruptcy signed and stamped by your legal representative.
- Bank Account Information (Annex 8): 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 Sub-grantee 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 preparations will be carried out from December 2026 to January 2027 (included). In case preparations 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 preparations, the legal representative of the selected Applicant (Sub-Grantee) 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 on the FS4Africa website.

## 4 Implementation of FS4Africa Open Call

### 4.1 Implementation timeline and activities

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** [Deliverable: Training Activity Plan] (February 2027 - Payment of 20% of the total fund)
- **Phase 2 - Development** [Deliverable: Training Delivery Report] (March 2027 - July 2027) - Payment of 50% of the total fund
- **Phase 3 - Validation** [Deliverable: Final Report of the training activities] (August 2027 – September 2027) - Payment of the final 30% of the total fund

The Design phase will begin with an online kick off meeting that will be scheduled shortly after the selection of Applicants to introduce the sub-projects, become better acquainted with the FS4Africa project, and learn more about the implementation and monitoring process.

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 Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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 Horizon Europe specific requirements as described in the "[Fair, healthy and environmentally-friendly food systems from primary production to consumption \(HORIZON-CL6-2023-FARM2FORK-01\)](#)" topic.

### 5.1 Conflict of interest

The selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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 (single entities) 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 selected Applicant (Sub-grantee) 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 Sub-grantee, the FS4Africa consortium reserves the right to suspend further payments to the 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 from 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 the selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) make 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 selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) may disclose confidential information to the FS4Africa consortium and to the selected external reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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.

Selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) will have to submit three deliverables (1. Training Activity Plan, 2. Training Delivery Report, 3. Final Report of the training activities) during the sub-project implementation. In these deliverables the selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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.

Selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) will also be required to ensure the appropriate and confidential management of any personal or sensitive data related to participants involved in their sub-project activities. In addition, they must take all necessary measures to prevent any form of stigmatisation or unintended negative consequences for participants, including those that may arise from the identification of contamination risks or other sensitive findings.



Throughout the project's implementation, the FS4Africa Ethics Advisors will provide ongoing guidance and support to the FSTP projects. They 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' (single entities) and evaluators' registration and application on the [opencalls.fund](https://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 it) that will be required, for potential Applicants (single entities), 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 etc) may also be collected (automatically) for statistical reasons and to better understand the people who visit the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform, where they come from and what content they are interested in relating to the activities of the Open Call, since personal information received will not be shared by default.

Access to the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform requires prior registration and the creation of user credentials. During this process, personal data will be collected, processed and stored for the purposes of managing the Open Call, including application submission, evaluation, selection, and communication with Applicants.

A detailed Privacy Policy describing how personal data is collected, processed, stored, and protected will be made available on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform. The Privacy Policy will be accessible via a dedicated link (in the platform footer) and will be explicitly presented to Applicants and evaluators during registration and application submission.

During the application submission process, Applicants will be required to provide explicit consent to the processing of their personal data by actively selecting a dedicated consent checkbox (e.g. "I have read and agree to the Privacy Policy"). Applications cannot be submitted without providing this consent ensuring full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

The Privacy Policy will include comprehensive information on the types of data collected purposes and legal basis of processing, data retention periods, security measures, and data subject rights. It will also clearly indicate the contact details of the Data Protection Officer (DPO). Data subjects may contact the DPO at any time to exercise their rights under GDPR, including access, rectification, erasure, restriction of processing, and withdrawal of consent.

Applicants have the right to revoke their consent at any time by contacting the Data Protection Officer (DPO) whose contact details are provided in the privacy policy. Withdrawal of consent will result in the withdrawal of the application from the Open Call process, without affecting the lawfulness of processing carried out prior to withdrawal.

All collected personal data will be handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Data will be processed in a lawful, fair, and transparent manner and limited to what is necessary for the purposes of the Open Call.

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.

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 selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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, 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 under the sub-project must: **a) acknowledge EU support and display the European flag (emblem) and funding statement, b) display the FS4Africa logo, c) include the Open Call funding statement: “This sub-project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the FS4Africa project (Grant Agreement No. 101136916)”, d) include the following clarification: “This sub-project is supported through the FS4Africa Open Call, funded by the European Union’s Horizon Europe programme, and does not constitute direct funding from the European Union”, e) include the standard disclaimer: Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Research Executive Agency. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.**

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 European Commission 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 funded logo is to be used as financial support is coming through the funded FS4Africa project.

Any publicity made by the selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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 selected Applicant (Sub-grantee) 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 selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 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 selected Applicant (Sub-grantee) 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 selected Applicant (Sub-grantee) 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 three years from the end of the project. 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 selected Applicant (Sub-grantee) 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.

Based on 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 expiry 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 selected Applicant's (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 (single entities) 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 selected Applicant (Sub-grantee) 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 selected Applicants (single entities as Sub-grantees) 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.

## 6 Checklist

- 1. Is your proposal eligible?** The eligibility and exclusion criteria are given in chapter 3 "Proposal Submission and Selection".
- 2. Is your proposal complete?** Have all questions been addressed? 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.
- 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 (single entities) should do test rounds and make sure to upload and submit everything on time.
- 4. Have you used the official OC templates for the proposal, budget and supporting documents? Have all supporting documents been properly completed, signed and uploaded?** Applicants that do not use the official templates provided will be discarded.
- 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?** The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive
- 7. Does your planned work fit with FS4Africa Open Call?** Carefully read the Applicants' Guide and ensure that your proposal directly addresses the Open Call objectives.
- 8. Do you need further advice and support?** You can reach out to the FS4Africa Open Call team via mail to: [fs4africa@opencalls.fund](mailto:fs4africa@opencalls.fund). The Technical team can provide assistance to the extent possible, up to August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

## 7 Points of contact

All questions concerning the Call must be in writing and be stated on the FAQ section on the [opencalls.fund](https://opencalls.fund) platform or sent by e-mail to [fs4africa@opencalls.fund](mailto:fs4africa@opencalls.fund). The deadline for asking clarification questions or requesting additional information is 17:00 CET on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The answers shall be given no later than 17:00 CET @August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026. We strongly recommend Applicants (single entities) to regularly visit the FAQ section to get valuable feedback for the preparation of their proposal.