



CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Call reference: EUBA-EFSA-2025-PLANTS-02

Call title: Experimental protocols for estimation of pest survey parameters

Project/Process code: 04.01.28 Plant Health Monitoring

Budget line: 3210

Restricted to **the list of competent organisations** established by the Authority's Management Board in application of article 2 the Commission Regulation (EC) No 2230/2004 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 with regard to the network of organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's remit.

Brief description of the call objectives and key messages:

The objective of this call is to prepare experimental and statistical protocols to quantify key survey parameters, Method Sensitivity, Relative Risk and Design Prevalence, for their estimation in the process of designing delimiting surveys for the EU priority pests.



INDICATIVE PROCEDURE TIMETABLE

Milestone	Date ¹	Comments
Launch date	22/05/2025	Date of call publication on EFSA's website and Funding & Tender portal.
Deadline for applicants to raise clarification questions to EFSA	16/09/2025	If, after having read this Call for proposals and guide for applicants, you have any questions, you may address them to EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu by indicating the Call reference.
Deadline for EFSA to reply to clarification questions	18/09/2025	Replies will be provided on EFSA's webpage where this Call is published and which the applicants are requested to consult regularly.
Deadline for submission of proposals	24/09/2025 At 17:00 (CEST)	Applicants can submit proposals by following the instructions in section 3.1 of this call for proposals. All applications must be submitted through the EU Funding and Tenders portal, following the instructions provided. Hard copy paper applications will not be accepted.
Notification of the evaluation results	October 2025	Estimated <i>Attention: outcome of the present call will be communicated to all applicants to the e-mail address indicated in their proposal. Accordingly, applicants who have submitted proposals under the present call are strongly invited to check regularly the inbox in question.</i>
Grant agreement(s) signature	November 2025	Estimated

¹ All times are in the time zone of the country of the EFSA.



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ANNEXES

Annex 1: Draft grant agreement

The following documents (to be submitted with the proposal) are to be downloaded from the EU Funding and Tender portal, Submission Service. For details, see section 2 of this document 'Selecting proposal'.

Annex 2: Administrative Declaration

Annex 3: Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria

Annex 4: Declaration on honour on selection criteria

Annex 5: Selection criteria template (all requirements including CVs)

Annex 6: Award criteria template



1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND CONDITIONS²

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 36 (1) of the Regulation (EC) 178/2002³ of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, stipulates that the Authority shall promote the European networking of organisations operating in the fields within the Authority's mission. The aim of such networking is, in particular, to facilitate a scientific cooperation framework by the coordination of activities, the exchange of information, the development and implementation of joint projects⁴, the exchange of expertise and best practices in the fields within the Authority's mission. The list of competent organisations designated by the Member States, which may assist EFSA with its mission, is approved and regularly updated by EFSA's Management Board. The full list of Article 36 organisations can be found [here](#).

EFSA's founding regulation was amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain.

The Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004 of 23 December 2004 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of the European Parliament and Council Regulation (EC) 178/2002 with regard to the network of organisations operating in the fields within the EFSA's mission specifies in Article 4 that tasks may be entrusted by the Authority to organisations on the list of competent organisations.

The present call specifically focuses on the below tasks defined in Article 4(3):

1. disseminating best practices and improving methods of collecting and analysing scientific and technical data, particularly for the purposes of facilitating comparability and producing a Community-level summary.
2. collecting and analysing specific data in response to a common priority, in particular the Community priorities contained in the Authority's work programmes, and in cases where the Authority's scientific assistance is urgently needed by the Commission, especially in the context of the general plan for crisis management referred to in Article 55 of Regulation (EC) No 178/2002.
3. preparing the Authority's scientific opinions, including preparatory work relating to the assessment of authorisation dossiers.
4. sharing data of common interest, e.g. the establishing of databases.

Article 5(2) of the Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004⁵ of 23 December 2004 specifies that the financial support to the networking organisations shall take the form of subsidies (grants) awarded in accordance with the EFSA's financial regulation and implementing rules.

The present Call for proposals and guide for applicants (hereinafter referred to as "the Call") is procedurally governed by Title VIII of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2024/2509 of the European

² The applicant is reminded that this Call and guide for applicants contains a selection of the most important conditions for the grant implementation. For the full set of conditions, the applicant is invited to consult the draft grant agreement in Annex 1 of this Call.

³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:EN:PDF>

⁴ Project is frequently referred to in this Call as "action", in line with EU Financial Regulation terminology.

⁵ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:379:0064:0067:EN:PDF>



Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2024 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (recast) (OJ L, 2024/2509, 26.9.2024⁶).

This call is based on EFSA Founding regulation⁷ and EFSA's 2025 Work Programme for grants and operational procurements as presented in Annex XII of the Programming Document 2025-2027, available on the EFSA's website⁸.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

BACKGROUND

The mission of the EFSA Plant Health Monitoring team within the EFSA PLANTS Unit is to provide the EU risk managers (the European Commission, the European Parliament and the EU Member States) with scientific advice and scientific and technical assistance in the field of plant health. Since 2017, on requests of the European Commission, EFSA provides support to the EU Member States in the planning and execution of plant pest surveys for the Union Quarantine Pests.

The Plant Health Law (Regulation (EU) 2016/2031) defines a category of quarantine pests, the so called 'priority pests'. These plant pests are identified as the ones that could cause the most severe potential economic, environmental or social impact for the Union territory.

To assist the EU Member States to carry out robust and risk-based surveys for priority pests, the Toolkit for Plant Pest Surveillance⁹ developed by EFSA can be used. The toolkit includes survey guidelines, pest survey cards, and statistical software tools, including RIBESS+ and RiPEST. To apply these tools three survey parameters must be estimated¹⁰ i.e. the Method Sensitivity, the Relative Risk and the Design Prevalence. These parameters are difficult to estimate and vary for different pests, environments, and detection methods.

The aim of this call is to develop and validate protocols that can be used by Member States in the case of outbreaks of pests to estimate these parameters for their specific conditions and so assist with the planning of the delimiting surveys.

The **method sensitivity** is the probability that a truly positive inspection unit will be confirmed as positive¹¹. The method sensitivity has two components:

- *Sampling effectiveness* i.e. the probability of selecting an infested sample from an infested inspection unit (for example, for a plant pathogen, infection may be distributed heterogeneously within

⁶ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/req/2024/2509/oj>

⁷ Regulation (EC) 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety, as amended by Regulation (EU) 2019/1381 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the transparency and sustainability of the EU risk assessment in the food chain.

⁸ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-01/programming-document-2025-2027.pdf>

⁹ <https://efsa.europa.eu/plants/planthealth/monitoring/surveillance/index>

¹⁰ <https://efsa.europa.eu/plants/planthealth/monitoring/surveillance/index-guidelines>

¹¹ EFSA Glossary of terms for pest surveys. Available online:

<https://efsa.europa.eu/plants/planthealth/monitoring/surveillance/glossary>



a plant and the sampling effectiveness will depend on how many leaf samples are taken and where they are taken from). Also called field detection method sensitivity.

- *Diagnostic sensitivity* i.e. the probability that a truly positive sample will test positive, which is a characteristic of the laboratory test used in the identification process (this typically depends on the laboratory processes and techniques that are used to process a sample).

$$\text{Method sensitivity} = \text{sampling effectiveness} \times \text{diagnostic sensitivity}.$$

There are existing approaches to obtain and estimate the diagnostic sensitivity¹¹. Approaches to quantify sampling effectiveness are less well studied and are thus the focus of the current call. However, the organization awarded the grant should work in line with the recommendations and specifications provided by the EU Reference Laboratories in Plant Health designated by the European Commission¹², in consideration of the Diagnostic protocols developed by EPPO (European and Mediterranean, Plant Protection Organization) and the ISPM 27 (International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures) from the IPPC (International Plant Protection Convention) to identify appropriate approaches to obtain the diagnostic sensitivity for any proposed protocol so that the full method sensitivity can be determined.

The **relative risk** is an important parameter in the design of risk-based surveys. Many risk factors involve the distance to a particular risk location e.g. an entry point or an infested zone. To apply a risk factor in the survey design it is necessary to characterize the relative risk (compared to a baseline level of risk in the population) and the proportion of the overall target population in the survey area to which it applies. This depends crucially on the local spread capacity of the pest, which is a function of the dispersal ability of the pest, the host population and the environmental conditions for spread.

The **design prevalence** refers to the prevalence that the survey is designed to detect if the pest is present in the survey area. The design prevalence must be set in advance by the risk manager. In general, the lower the design prevalence the stronger the evidence for pest freedom but also the greater the survey resource required. The choice of design prevalence is thus a balance between resources available and the aim of the survey. A logical aim of a survey for a quarantine pest is to apply a design prevalence below which the pest can be eradicated. This may be determined using pest occurrence data and/or spread modelling approaches that capture different interacting factors which govern eradication success.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The objective of this call is to select a consortium of Art 36 partners to support EFSA with the preparation, testing and validation of experimental and statistical protocols to estimate the sampling effectiveness/field detection method sensitivity, Relative Risk and Design Prevalence for regulated pests in the EU. The parameters are defined in the EFSA general guidelines for pest surveillance¹³.

¹² <https://eur1planthealth.nl/>

¹³ EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), Lázaro E, Parnell S, Vicent Civera A, Schans J, Schenk M, Cortiñas Abrahantes J, Zancanaro G and Vos S, 2020. General guidelines for statistically sound and risk-based surveys of plant pests. EFSA supporting publication 2020:EN-1919.65 pp. doi:10.2903/sp.efsa.2020.EN-1919



1.3 TASKS, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES, MEETINGS AND PAYMENTS

Tasks	Description	Deliverables All report should be prepared using the EFSA templates for reports	Deadlines
Task 1: Grouping of pests	- Develop an approach to group pests that could share a same experimental protocol considering for example: - Pest biology, e.g. taxa, vectors, feeding - Host plants, e.g. agricultural, forests, urban environments - Detection methods, e.g. insect traps, spore trapping, visual detection, sniffing dogs - Other criteria might be relevant The approach should account for the variability of these criteria within the EU at MS level as well as the data availability. Several protocols might be needed to deal with different situations and might also be specific for each survey parameters. The proposed approach should allow to allocate each plant pest to a specific group.	Deliverable 1: Technical report	6 months from kick-off meeting
Task 2: Protocol design for each group defined in task 1	User friendly experimental protocols should be developed to support the MSs in the estimation of the parameters at local level for designing robust pest freedom surveys i.e. detection, delimiting and buffer zone surveys, providing - a clear characterisation of the data to collect - a clear guide for processing the collected data using statistical methods For estimating the sampling effectiveness: - observed monitoring data from outbreak areas - within or outside the EU - could be used; - experiments to measure the sampling effectiveness of different detection methods in specific locations could be designed; - the detection and sampling recommendations and specifications provided by the EFSA pest survey cards should be considered; - the existing diagnostic protocols should be considered (e.g. EU Reference Laboratories, EPPO and IPPC ISPM 27) For estimating the relative risk and design prevalence, the approaches should be defined, and different protocols may be developed depending on: - data availability, resulting in the use of simple models or more detailed species-specific spread models - data collection efforts	Deliverable 2.1: Experimental protocols for first half of the groups of pests defined in Task 1 for the estimation of the 3 survey parameters	Continuous delivery of outputs max 14 months after kick-off meeting
		Deliverable 2.2: Experimental protocols for second half of the groups of pests defined in Task 1 for the estimation of the 3 survey parameters	Continuous delivery of outputs max 22 months after kick-off meeting
The experimental protocols for each survey parameter defined in Task 2 should be implemented for pilot pests for each group of pests identified in Task 2. The pilot pest(s) for each group should be identified in discussion with EFSA and should be in the current list of priority pests.			



Task 3: Piloting and data collection	The data collection should be reported providing: - a description of the piloting activity including the data collection procedure and data collection conditions - the data collected	Deliverable 3: Report on protocol implementation for pilot pests focussing on the data collection	
Task 4: Piloting and validation of the protocols	The collected data should be analysed and processed, the report should include the following activities and results: - testing, adjustment and validation of the final protocols - practical field instructions for the implementation of such protocols addressing the data collection and data processing - the resulting estimated values of the 3 survey parameters for the pilot pests under the specific conditions.	Deliverable 4: Report on the processing of the data and estimation of the parameters	34 months from kick-off meeting
Task 5	The final report should summarise the project activities and deliverables of Tasks 1-2-3-4-5	Deliverable 5: Final project report	35 months from kick-off meeting
Subcontracting is allowed for task 3 i.e. data collection only. Please also refer to section 1.7 'Possibility of implementing contracts and subcontracting'.			

No.	Meetings	Deadline for finalisation
1	Kick-off meeting: Preferred option physical meeting in Parma – one day¹⁴ The kick-off meeting is regarded as the start of the project and takes place no later than two months after the signature of the grant agreement. At this meeting, details of the project will be discussed and the objectives, the final report structure and timeframe will be clarified. In particular, the beneficiary will explain and adjust their proposal to EFSA needs to meet the aims of the project. Minutes of the meeting shall be taken and provided to EFSA by the beneficiary. The presence at the kick-off meeting of a beneficiary's staff member responsible for technical/administrative/finance issues of the project is required as this will facilitate understanding by the beneficiary of the grant principles, related financial reporting requirements and significantly ease the technical and financial management of the grant agreement, both for EFSA and the beneficiary.	Within 2 months after entry into force of agreement.
2	Interim meetings: physical meeting in Parma – one day¹⁵ / teleconference The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the quality and completeness of the deliverables as well as any problems or difficulties (technical or financial) encountered during their preparation. Minutes of the meeting shall be taken and provided to EFSA by the beneficiary. Additional meetings may be organised at the request of either party.	Upon project needs (to be confirmed with EFSA).
3	Final meeting: physical meeting in Parma – one day¹⁶	36 months from kick-off meeting

¹⁴ One day = 8 hours, half day = 4 hours

¹⁵ One day = 8 hours, half day = 4 hours

¹⁶ One day = 8 hours, half day = 4 hours



	The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the deliverables as well as any problems or difficulties (technical or financial) encountered during the project.	
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No.	Payments	Linked to EFSA approval of deliverables No.
1	Pre-Financing payment 30% of the grant amount as specified in article 4.2 of the model grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals).	Paid to the beneficiary upon countersignature of the grant agreement.
2	Interim payment , 30% as specified in articles 4.2 of the model grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals).	Upon acceptance by EFSA of deliverables D1, D2.1 and D2.2.
3	Payment of the balance as specified in article 4.2 of the model grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals). The amount due as the balance payment is calculated by EFSA by deducting from the final grant amount the total amount of pre-financing and interim payment already made. The final payment is subject to the approval by EFSA of all the deliverables.	Upon acceptance by EFSA of deliverables D3, D4, D5 and after completion of the final meeting.

Deliverables must be drafted in English using the EFSA templates for reports and may be subject to publication at EFSA's discretion.

Please note that all reporting, minutes, outcome of the discussions could be submitted at EFSA's discretion to EFSA's Panel and Working Group members. Use of the grant deliverables may be subject to publication, subject to the terms and conditions set out in the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for proposals).

1.4 INFORMATION ON THE GRANT AGREEMENT

Applicants should note that the draft grant agreement is published with the call for proposals. If any applicant should have specific comments on the provisions of the draft grant agreement, these must be raised in a clarification, prior to the deadline for receipt of proposals so that a clear and transparent reply may be published for the benefit and information of all applicants.

The total amount EFSA has available to award grants under this call for proposals is € 500,000. Applicants should note that in the Funding and Tender opportunities portal submission service under Administrative Form (Part A) there is an obligatory field regarding the budget (section 3). Applicants must insert the total budget in the 'Requested grant amount' field.

1.4.1 Direct Agreement

This Call for proposals aims to conclude a Direct Agreement for the performance of the tasks described in these specifications for a fixed duration. The Agreement can be signed between the Authority and one or several partners.

The available budget for this Call for proposals is € 500,000 €.

The maximum duration of this Direct Agreement is 36 months from the kick-off meeting.

EFSA intends to fund one proposal following this Call. However, EFSA reserves the right not to award all the funds available at any cost, e.g. if the quality of submitted proposals will not be satisfactory.



Please note that EFSA reserves the right not to award any grant and/or to cancel the whole grant procedure at any time before the signature of the grant agreement without any compensation to be paid to the applicant.

	Deliverable 1	Deliverable 2	Deliverable 3	Deliverable 4	Deliverable 5
Total	50,000 €	250,000 €	120,000 €	50,000 €	30,000 €

1.5 ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS

To be eligible, applicants must be on the list of competent organisations designated by the Member States in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004. This list is regularly updated by EFSA Management Board and is available for consultation using this link <https://efsa.force.com/competentorganisations/s/>.

In order to achieve the main objective of the call, proposals can be submitted by **one eligible organisation or by a consortium of eligible organisations**. In case of a consortium, one of the partners must be identified in the proposal as the consortium leader. The applicant (consortium leader) is responsible for identifying consortium partners.

If you are searching for consortium partners, please contact your Focal Point at the following address: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/partnersnetworks/eumembers> (section: Focal Points members and observers).

1.6 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

For proper understanding of this call it is important to have clarity on the terminology regarding involved organisations and their roles.

Proposals submitted by a sole applicant:

- **The Applicant** submits the proposal to EFSA. There can be only one applicant in the proposal.

As soon as the grant agreement is signed, the applicant becomes the beneficiary. The beneficiary is liable for the technical implementation of the project as described in the proposal which becomes Annex 1 of the grant agreement.

The beneficiary:

- Communicates with EFSA;
- Receives and answers all claims EFSA might have in relation to the implementation of the project;
- Requests and reviews any documents or information required by EFSA and verifies their completeness and correctness before passing them to EFSA;
- Informs EFSA of any event that is likely to substantially affect the implementation of the project;
- Submits the deliverables and reports to EFSA;
- Requests and receives payments from EFSA.



Proposals submitted by consortium:

- **The Applicant** submits the proposal to EFSA on behalf of the consortium. The applicant is the leading entity of the consortium.
- **The Partner** is the other entity in the consortium. There can be a minimum of one partner or more partners.

Once the grant is awarded, the grant agreement is signed between EFSA and the applicant (leading entity of the consortium).

Partners do not sign the grant agreement directly but instead sign a mandate (template provided by EFSA) authorising the applicant to sign the grant agreement and any future amendments on their behalf.

As soon as the grant agreement is signed, the applicant becomes the Coordinator and partner/s become co-beneficiary/ies. The coordinator and co-beneficiary/ies are referred to as the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries are jointly and severally liable for the technical implementation of the project as described in the proposal which becomes Annex 1 of the grant agreement. If a beneficiary fails to implement its part of the project, the other beneficiaries become responsible for implementing that part.

The coordinator has the following important roles:

- Takes part in implementing the project;
- Monitors the action is implemented properly;
- Act as intermediary for communication between the consortium and EFSA;
- Receives and answers all claims EFSA might have in relation to implementation of the project;
- Requests and reviews any documents or information required by EFSA and verifies their completeness and correctness before passing them to EFSA;
- Informs EFSA and the partner/s of any event that is likely to substantially affect implementation of the project;
- Submits the deliverables and reports to EFSA;
- Requests and receives payments from EFSA and distributes the funds to partner/s without unjustified delays.

The coordinator may not delegate the above-mentioned tasks to the co-beneficiary/ies or subcontract them to any third party.

The other beneficiary/ies:

- Take part in implementing the project;
- Forward to the coordinator the data needed to draw up reports, financial statements and other documents required under the grant agreement;
- Inform the coordinator of any event or circumstances likely to substantially affect or delay the implementation of the project.

1.7 IMPLEMENTING CONTRACTS AND SUBCONTRACTING

Implementation contracts:

Where the implementation of the project requires the award of procurement contracts (implementation contracts), e.g. purchase of services and/or goods or equipment necessary for the implementation of the action, the beneficiary must award the contract to the entity offering the best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests. The beneficiary is



expected to clearly document the tendering procedure and retain the documentation for the event of an audit.

Entities acting in their capacity as contracting authorities within the meaning of Directive 2014/24/EU¹⁷ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting:

Sub-contractors are not consortium partners and are not party to the grant agreement. They do not have any contractual relationship with EFSA. Subcontractors are entities contracted by the beneficiary to carry out some specific tasks or activities. Subcontracting is allowed under these conditions:

- **Core tasks must not be subcontracted.** Only ancillary and assistance tasks can be subcontracted. As Union Quarantine pests are usually absent from the EU territory, subcontracting is allowed for collecting the data following the protocols in countries outside the EU when needed, however, the core tasks of planning, coordinating the project and reporting to EFSA cannot be subcontracted.
- Subcontracts must be awarded to the entity offering best value for money or the lowest price (as appropriate), avoiding conflicts of interests;
- Subcontracting must only cover the implementation of a limited part of the action;
- Recourse to subcontracting must be justified having regard to the nature of the project and what is necessary for its implementation;
- Tasks to be subcontracted must be identified in the proposal and be approved by EFSA before the signature of the grant agreement;
- Recourse to subcontracting during project implementation, if not envisaged from the outset in the proposal, is subject to prior authorisation in writing by EFSA. Approval may be granted as long as it does not entail a change to the grant agreement which would call into question the decision awarding the grant or be contrary to the equal treatment of applicants. No amendment is needed;
- The conditions applicable to the beneficiaries under Articles II.6 (*Confidentiality and security*), II.7 (*Processing of Personal Data*), II.8 (*Visibility of Union Funding*) of the grant agreement are also applicable to the subcontractor.

1.8 GRANT PRINCIPLES

The financial help provided by EFSA under this Call is a grant governed by the EU Financial Regulation referred to in part 1.1. Accordingly, the grant awarded following this Call must comply with the following principles:

The form of grant awarded under this Call is based on **financing not linked to the costs** of the relevant operations in accordance with Article 125 (1)(a) of the EU Financial Regulation. Grants financed in this way require the fulfilment of conditions set out in sector specific rules of Commission decisions or the achievement of results measured by reference to previously set milestones or through performance indicators.

The present call for proposals comes with an innovative and simplified grant management, where the grant amounts paid to the partner are based on the pre-defined sums which are not linked to the actual costs of the action. This means there is no need for co-financing from the partner, and no need for completion of estimated budgets or timesheets to record the work. The agreed sums are set at a

¹⁷ Directive 2014/24/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 February 2014 on public procurement and repealing Directive 2004/18/EC (OJ L 94, 28.3.2014, p. 65-242)



level designed to stimulate the mutually convenient partnership creation. The payment of agreed sums from EFSA will be carried out based on the acceptance by EFSA of the delivered work. If you have questions on this grant form, during the application period, please raise any clarification questions to EFSAProcurement@efsa.europa.eu.

The financial support provided by EFSA under this Call is a grant governed by the EU Financial Regulation referred to in part 1.1. Accordingly, the grant awarded following this Call must comply with certain grant principles established in the EU Financial Regulation, specifically:

- **Non-retroactivity:** A grant may be awarded for a project which has already begun only where the applicant can demonstrate in the grant application the need to start the action before the grant agreement is signed. In accordance with Article 196 of the Financial Regulation. The tasks entrusted by EFSA should not be performed before the signature of the grant Agreement.

Article 183(3) of the EU Financial Regulation specifically states that **the following grant principles are NOT applicable** where the grant takes the form of financing not linked to the costs pursuant to article 125(1)(a):

- **Co-financing:** In accordance with Article 193 of the Financial Regulation, grants shall involve co-financing.
- **No-profit:** In accordance with Article 195(3)(d) of the Financial Regulation, grants shall not have the purpose or effect of producing a profit within the framework of the project for the applicant or partner.
- **Non-cumulative:** In accordance with Article 194(3) of the Financial Regulation, in no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice from the EU budget.

1.9 ESTIMATED BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE COSTS

For the submission of a proposal under this Call for proposals, no estimated budget is required.

1.10 PUBLICITY

All beneficiaries are expected to follow the rules on visibility of EFSA funding set out in Article 17 of the grant agreement.

According to Article 38 of the EU Financial Regulation EFSA is bound to publish information on recipients of its grants at its website. Such publication shall take place no later than 30 June of the year following the financial year in which the grants were awarded and shall cover these data of the beneficiaries:

- name of the beneficiary
- address of the beneficiary
- subject of the grant
- amount awarded

With regards to publications of EFSA outputs that are integrating the preparatory work delivered in the context of this grant, EFSA and the beneficiaries could be mentioned in authorship lists indicating the respective affiliation of the authors to the organisations.



1.11 PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA IN RELATION TO GRANT PROCEDURES AND ANTIFRAUD STRATEGY

Processing of personal data by EFSA

Information on the processing of personal data by EFSA in the context of this grant procedure is available in the [Privacy Statement](#) on the EFSA website as well as in Article 15 of the draft grant agreement. Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by EFSA in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.¹⁸

Applicants should note that personal data as applicant or selected beneficiary may be registered in the Early Detection and Exclusion System (EDES) if you are in one of the situations mentioned in Article 138 of the Financial Regulation. For more information see the Privacy Statement on: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/explained/management/protecting/protect_en.cfm#BDCE).

Processing of personal data by the beneficiary

In case the implementation of activities under the grant agreement resulting from this call entails the processing of personal data, the beneficiary shall comply with the relevant rules in Article 15 of the Grant Agreement (Annex 1) as a data processor of EFSA.

Antifraud Strategy

Frauds involving EU funds have a particularly high impact on EFSA's and the EU's reputation. The current [EFSA Anti-Fraud Strategy](#) ("the Strategy") was adopted on 14 October 2021. In case of award of an EFSA contract/grant agreement, it is obligatory for the Project Manager to follow the [EFSA Anti-Fraud Module](#). It is the responsibility of the beneficiary to make sure the training has been followed before start of grant agreement implementation.

IT support for access to the module please contact: servicedesk@efsa.europa.eu

Request on the topic of anti-fraud please contact: ethics-integrity@efsa.europa.eu

1.12 PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS

In the general implementation of its activities and for the processing of grant procedures in particular, EFSA observes Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents.

1.13 OPEN ACCESS

EFSA is committed to the publication of grant outputs in the [Knowledge Junction](#) in order to improve transparency, reproducibility and evidence reuse. The Knowledge Junction runs on the EU-funded Zenodo research-sharing platform where uploaded items receive a unique Digital Object Identifier to make them citable. Any part of the output resulting from the action under this grant may be published (at EFSA's discretion) on the Knowledge Junction with attribution to the beneficiary.

1.14 HUNGARIAN PUBLIC INTEREST TRUSTS ESTABLISHED UNDER HUNGARIAN ACT IX OF 2021

Following the Council Implementing Decision (EU) 2022/2506, as of 16th December 2022, no legal commitments (including the grant agreement itself as well as subcontracts, purchase contracts, financial support to third parties etc.) can be signed with Hungarian public interest trusts established under Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity they maintain.

¹⁸ Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies and on the free movement of such data, and repealing Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 and Decision No 1247/2002/EC



Affected entities may continue to apply to calls for proposals. However, in case 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).

1.15 USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS AND MODELS FOR DRAFTING THE OFFER AND IN DELIVERING SERVICES

Applicants must clearly indicate in their application whether Large Language Models, such as ChatGPT, were utilised in the preparation of their proposal.

The use of the AI systems/models in the frame of implementation of this grant is allowed, however the applicant must specify such intention in their proposal in the description of the proposed methodology.

1. Requirements for AI system/model, in case those are proposed by the applicant:

The beneficiary using AI system/model in the implementation of this grant must adhere to Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 (hereafter: 'the AI Act')¹⁹. This regulation is already in force, however it becomes applicable in a gradual way. This regulation also stipulates the obligations of deployers of high-risk AI systems (Article 26). Under no circumstances may the prohibited AI practices (outlined in article 5 of the AI Act) be applied during the implementation of this grant.

A mandatory requirement for the use of AI system / model, and irrespective when relevant provisions of the AI Act become applicable, must be the compliance of the applicant/beneficiary with Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 April 2016 on the protection of natural persons with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data. In particular, Art. 24 of the EUDPR and Art. 22 of the GDPR provide data subjects with the right not to be subject to decisions based solely on automatic processing including profiling, **hence confirming the need for ensuring human oversight and validation for all activities and deliverables under this grant agreement.**

2. Information required for award criteria:

EFSA, as the contracting authority, is committed to ensuring that the quality of outsourced outputs/deliverables is not compromised by the use of Artificial Intelligence systems/models. As you prepare your proposal, please note that EFSA requires assurance that your reliance on AI technologies will not jeopardize the quality of outputs/deliverables to be provided to EFSA in the future in case your proposal is selected.

Due to the inherent risks associated with AI technologies, EFSA must have confidence in the ability of applicants to manage these risks effectively and in a trustworthy manner. To this end, applicants are requested to provide evidence that the use of AI systems/models will not only maintain, but ideally enhance, the quality of outputs/deliverables provided to EFSA.

¹⁹ Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 laying down harmonised rules on artificial intelligence and amending Regulations (EC) No 300/2008, (EU) No 167/2013, (EU) No 168/2013, (EU) 2018/858, (EU) 2018/1139 and (EU) 2019/2144 and Directives 2014/90/EU, (EU) 2016/797 and (EU) 2020/1828 (Artificial Intelligence Act), OJ L, 2024/1689, 12.7.2024 - <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/1689/oj>



By addressing this requirement, you will help EFSA to assess your ability to deliver high-quality outputs/deliverables while leveraging AI technologies in a responsible and controlled manner.

Accordingly, if the applicant intends to use AI system/model in grant implementation, the proposal must specify the following information:

- The purpose of the use of AI system/model;
- At which stage / for which output/deliverable AI system/model is to be used;
- The added value expected from the use of AI system/model compared to relying on traditional IT systems;
- The risks linked with the use of AI system/model and the mitigating measures put in place by the applicant;
- The indication on how the human oversight and quality validation will be guaranteed.

This information will be assessed in section 2.5 award criteria, under methodology, risk management and measures to guarantee quality of deliverables.

3. Other transparency requirements in use of AI:

For the sake of transparency, should generative AI systems/models such as Large Language Models (e.g. ChatGPT) have been employed in producing deliverables for EFSA, EFSA requires that the beneficiary inserts in the deliverable an explicit mention acknowledging the use of such AI systems/models and confirming human oversight and validation. This requirement applies to all deliverables in written or audio-visual formats, including but not limited to reports, images, videos and soundtracks.

The applicant must clearly indicate in their proposal whether generative AI systems/models such as Large Language Models (e.g. ChatGPT), were utilised in the preparation of their proposals.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW AI SYSTEMS/MODELS DURING GRANT IMPLEMENTATION

Introducing AI systems/ models into the grant implementation, if it was not part of the initial methodology explicitly foreseen in the call for proposals or in the application submitted by the beneficiary, equals to a change of the agreed delivery methodology. Therefore, any change is treated as any other methodology change: the beneficiary, **before starting to use such AI systems/models in the grant implementation** must first inform EFSA in writing of its intention to use AI systems/models. The beneficiary shall provide EFSA with the following information:

- The purpose of the use of AI system/model and of the added-value compared to initially proposed implementation method;
- At which stage of the process and/or for which specific tasks the AI system/model is to be used;
- The risks linked with the use of AI system/model and the mitigating measures put in place by the beneficiary;
- The indication on how the beneficiary will guarantee the human oversight and quality validation.



Only if EFSA agrees in writing to such a change of methodology, the beneficiary can start to use AI system/model for the implementation of the grant.

EFSA will only endorse request if the following conditions are met:

- EFSA receives convincing reassurance that the change of methodology will not have negative effect on quality of the outputs/deliverables;
- The change does not substantially alter the initial proposal.

EFSA reserves the right to refuse beneficiary's requests to use AI systems/models.



2. SELECTING PROPOSALS

The Evaluation Committee established by EFSA specifically for this call will evaluate the submitted proposals in five steps:

1. Verification of submission requirements (2.1)
2. Eligibility criteria (2.2)
3. Exclusion criteria (2.3)
4. Selection criteria (2.4)
5. Award criteria (2.5)

If the proposal fails at any step it is automatically excluded from further evaluation. EFSA may contact the applicant during the evaluation process if there is a need to clarify certain aspects or for the correction of clerical mistakes.

2.1 VERIFICATION OF SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

The following will be verified:

- proposal was submitted within the deadline for submission of proposals;
- administrative data is duly signed by the authorised representative;
- proposal is complete and includes all the supporting documents.

2.2 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Criterion No. 2.2	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Eligibility criteria
	The following requirements will be verified:
	• The applicant applies in a consortium with partner/s; • At the day of deadline for submission of proposals, the applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s are on the list of competent organisations designated by the Member States in accordance with Art 36 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004; • Applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s are involved in the execution of the project; • Subcontracting, if any, is justified in the proposal.
	Requested evidence:
	ADMINISTRATIVE DECLARATION Annex 2, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and partner(s) (if applicable) must complete and sign the form. The applicant must upload the signed form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.



2.3 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Criterion No. 2.3	Requirements and requested evidence
2	Exclusion criteria
	The following requirements will be verified:
	The applicant and partner/s must sign a declaration on their honour certifying they are not in one of the exclusion situations referred to in the Articles 138(1) of EU Financial Regulation.
	Requested evidence:
	THE DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON EXCLUSION CRITERIA Annex 3, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and the partner(s) must complete and sign separate forms. The applicant must upload the form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal. The consortium leader must convert all declarations on honour on exclusion for all partners into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.

2.4 SELECTION CRITERIA

A) Financial capacity

Criterion No. 2.4A	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Financial capacity
	The purpose of the selection criteria is to verify the financial capacity of the applicant and in case of consortium also of its partner/s.
	The applicant and its partner/s must have stable and sufficient financial resources to maintain their activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out. If the Authority considers that financial capacity is weak, it may: – request further information; – decide not to give pre-financing; – decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments; – decide to give pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee; – where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries. If the EFSA Authorising Officer considers that the financial capacity is insufficient, the application may be rejected.
	Requested evidence:
	Documents to be provided by the applicant: DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON SELECTION CRITERIA



	Annex 4, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. Only the consortium leader is required to complete and sign the form. The applicant must upload the form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal. • SIMPLIFIED FINANCIAL STATEMENT available here only required for private bodies if the grant requested from EFSA is >60.000 €. The template published with the Call should be completed for at least the last two closed financial years. • LETTER OF COMMITMENT: applicable only when another public body financially contributes to the project (body other than EFSA, applicant and its partners); to be signed by the contributing public body; it serves to confirm its commitment to financially contribute to the project; no template is provided by EFSA. The applicant must convert the Declaration on honour on selection criteria, the Simplified Financial statement (if applicable) and the letter of commitment (if applicable) into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.
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B) Professional and operational capacity

Criterion No. 2.4.B	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Professional and operational capacity:
	Requirements:
	The consortium as a whole, must have the professional resources, competencies and qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project: 1. Requirements for the consortium: Overall the expertise available in the consortium should cover the following fields: pest population dynamics, spread modelling, statistics, agronomy, plant pathology, entomology and field inspection and diagnostics. <u>Evidence requested for requirement 1:</u> evidence of a recently finalised research project (within the last 3/5 years) and of a new or ongoing research project, developed by one or several partners of the consortium, relevant to the topics of this grant, showing evidence of requirement 1 above. 2. Requirement for the team of experts: The team of experts (minimum 5 experts) provided by the consortium should cover the following fields of expertise: - o pest population dynamics, - o spread modelling, - o statistics, - o agronomy, - o plant pathology, - o entomology and - o field inspection and diagnostics. Experts involved in the tasks should provide CVs proving a university degree at post-graduate level:



	- For each field listed above, expertise within the consortium with a minimum a PhD degree should be demonstrated. - The other experts involved in the tasks should demonstrate minimum a master's degree relevant to the fields listed above and have at least 3 years of work experience. <u>Evidence requested for requirement 2:</u> - CURRICULUM VITAE of the experts involved in the project, including a brief description of the expertise and a list of publications relevant to the project for each person proposed. EFSA strongly recommends submitting the CVs in the EU CV format which can be accessed here. - In a tabular format, details on the team should be provided, indicating for each expert: the field of expertise, the staff profile, the name of the identified expert, consortium partner affiliation, role in the project. If individual team members are not yet identified, the staff profiles necessary for the project should still be indicated. 3. Requirements for the team coordinator: The team coordinator and the EFSA contact person should have: - an excellent level of spoken and written English (evidenced either by a certificate demonstrating at least level C.1 of the Common European Framework of References for Languages; or evidence of having worked for at least 5 years in a working environment where English is used for meetings, communications and producing written reports and scientific publications). - experience in project management using digital tools such as MS project or Teams Planner to ensure a swift communication with EFSA on the progress of the activities <u>Evidence requested for requirement 3:</u> - Detailed CVs of the Project coordinator(s) and of the EFSA contact person proposed for the assignment. - Official certificate of English proving a C1 level where applicable. 4. Environmental management (the answers to this section are for information purposes and will not be considered under any criteria, neither selection nor award criteria): Environmental protection is an integral part of EFSA's governance. EFSA has established, implemented and maintains a certified environmental management system in accordance with the international standard ISO 14001 and the European EMAS regulation. Environmental impacts of EFSA's activities are identified, managed and monitored in order to improve environmental performance. This commitment to environmental sustainability requires us to consider a life-cycle perspective when purchasing our services. For this reason, we are asking you some information on the environmental management of your activities, to be provided filling in Annex 5 (Selection criteria - Information on environmental management). <u>Evidence requested for requirement 4:</u> Annex 5 – Selection criteria, Information on environmental management
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	Requested evidence:
	For requirements 1 to 3 a template (Annex 5) is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. The applicant must upload the completed template (a single pdf document of all requirements including CVs), in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (DoIs) Template available here. EFSA may request Individuals DoIs for members of the project team having influence and/or control over scientific outputs, prior to and as a condition of grant agreement signature. The requirement to submit Individual DoIs will be specified in the award letter and will have to be provided and assessed by the EFSA Authorising Officer before and as a condition of grant agreement signature. <u>Only in case of subcontracting</u>, the applicant must provide Institutional DoIs for subcontractors which are not included in the Art.36 list. In this case, such declarations will need to be completed separately and submitted for each identified subcontractor. <u>Individual and institutional DoIs do not need to be provided with your proposal at this stage.</u> Please refer to EFSA's policy on independence and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management for more detailed information.

2.5 AWARD CRITERIA

Criterion No. 2.5	For the award criteria a template (Annex 6) is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. The applicant must upload the completed template (a single pdf document of all criteria) in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal. The award criteria serve to assess the quality of the proposals in relation to the objectives of the Call. Applicants must provide a detailed technical proposal addressing all points in this call for proposals and each of the quality award criteria. Repetition of mandatory requirements in the call for proposals without providing further detail will only result in a very low score. Applicants should propose an example they have developed of an experimental protocol indicating, its context and objectives, the different steps to implement it, the input values and the estimations resulting from its implementation with the corresponding assumptions.
1	Methodology proposed for implementation and quality of deliverables A detailed description of the approach proposed to meet the objectives of the call for proposal, that should show how the following tasks will be addressed: - Proposal for grouping of pests under the same protocols and rationale (10 points) - Standardised structure of the protocols (10 points) - Standardised approach for collecting the data (10 points) - Standardised method for processing the collected data (10 points)



	e) Testing and validation of the experimental protocols and related parameter estimation (including priority pests and locations choices) (10 points) If relevant, explain the purpose and the added value of the technological solution/software/AI model or AI system proposed. MAX 50 POINTS, MIN 35 POINTS
2	Project programme clarity a) Project description: phases, timelines for the project tasks completion, milestones per task, expected outcomes and deliverables, distribution of deliverables over time. (15 points) b) Project management: plan showing the dependencies between tasks and the resources connected to each task in a digital format (similar to Teams Planner or MS project) (15 points) MAX 30 POINTS, MIN 20 POINTS
3	Measures to ensure quality of the deliverables and risk management a) Description of the proposed specific quality assurance system put in place to ensure high-quality delivery of the requested deliverables. In case of use of AI technologies, description of quality assurance mechanisms put in place to guarantee the high quality of deliverables including application of human oversight. MAX 10 POINTS, MIN 8 POINTS b) Identification of risks and mitigation measures proposed to overcome/remedy them throughout the implementation of the services requested, including back-up persons. MAX 10 POINTS, MIN 7 POINTS

In order to be considered for a reserve list, the proposal must:

- score a minimum of 70 points out of maximum possible 100 points; and
- for criterion 1 score at least 35 points, for criterion 2 at least 20 points, for sub-criterion 3a at least 8 and for sub-criterion 3b at least 7 points of the points attributed to that criterion.

Proposals which have satisfied these quality thresholds will be ranked in a reserve list. The reserve list will be valid for six months from the signature of the feedback letter.

2.6 PROCESS FOLLOWING THE ASSESSMENT AGAINST AWARD CRITERIA

The applicant(s) will be notified, once the evaluation has been finalized, whether they are placed on the reserve list or not.

EFSA reserves the right to invite the 1st ranked applicant on the reserve list, to adapt its proposal based on the evaluators' comments in accordance with article 203(5) EU FR.

Following the successful conclusion of the adaptation phase, the award decision will be taken by EFSA. Subsequently, the grant agreement will be prepared.

If the 1st ranked applicant fails to adapt its proposal, EFSA reserves the right to reject the proposal. The budget made available in this way may be used for a project of the next ranked applicant on the reserve list.



3. SUBMITTING PROPOSALS

3.1 SUBMISSION MODALITIES

You must submit your proposal electronically via the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) before the time limit for receipt of proposals (indicated on page 2 of this call). A webinar showing step-by-step the use of the EU funding and Tender Portal for Grant submission on a pilot EFSA call is available at [this link](#) (from minute 15:39 to minute 45:55).

Registration in the Participant Register

Applicants submitting a proposal must be registered in the Participant Register - an online register of organisations and natural persons participating in European Commission's calls for tenders or proposals.

On registering, each participant obtains a Participant Identification Code (PIC, 9 - digit number) which acts as its unique identifier in the Participant Register. A participant needs to register only once – the information provided can be further updated or re-used by the participant in other European Commission's calls for tenders or calls for proposals.

At any moment during the grant procedure the Research Executive Agency Validation Services (hereafter the EU Validation Services) may contact the participant and ask for supporting documents on legal existence and status.

The requests will be made through the register's messaging system to the e-mail address of the participant's contact person indicated in the register. It is the responsibility of the participant to provide a valid e-mail address and to check it regularly.

The documents that may be requested by the EU Validation Services are listed in the [EU Grants and Tenders Rules on Legal Entity Validation, LEAR appointment and Financial Capacity assessment](#). Please note that a request for supporting documents by the EU Validation Services in no way implies that the grant application has been successful.

Submitting your proposal

The EU Funding & Tenders Portal allows applicants to respond to calls for proposals by preparing applications electronically in a structured and secured way and submitting proposals electronically.

To find more information on submitting your proposal, please read carefully the information on the page [Submit a proposal – electronic submission system](#). On the same page useful links to the [User guide of the submission system](#) and an [FAQ on proposal submission](#) are provided.

Make sure you submit your application on time: you are advised to start completing your application early. To avoid any complications with regard to late receipt/non-receipt of applications within the deadline, please ensure that you submit your application several hours before the deadline. It is not possible to submit an application after the deadline.



3.2 LANGUAGE OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Proposals may be submitted in any official language of the European Union. However, as EFSA's working language is English, the submission of proposals in English would speed up the evaluation process.

Please note that some supporting documents (e.g. CVs) are required. These supporting documents are an integral part of the proposal. If these supporting documents are in a language other than English, in order to facilitate and speed up the evaluation, it would be appreciated if a reliable translation of the relevant parts of the documents into English is provided with the proposal.

3.3 EXPECTED DURATION OF PROCEDURE

In accordance with Article 197(2) of the Financial Regulation, the maximum time-limits for the procedure are as follows:

- All applicants will be informed of the decision regarding their application within 6 months of the deadline for submission of proposals.
- Signature of the grant agreement will take place within 3 months from the date the successful applicant/s has/have been informed of the decision on their application.