



GRANT CALL FOR PROPOSALS¹

AND GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Call reference: EUBA-EFSA-2026-PLANTS-01

Call title: Scientific and technical assistance on a foresight activity in the field of plant health to enhance crisis preparedness for the EU territory

Budget Line: 3210

Project/process code: EPA 04.01.28

This call is 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.

Applicants must check if they are included in the Art.36 list of competent organisations before submitting an application.

To understand more about EFSA's grants:

- Watch [this video](#) which explains the difference between procurement and grants;
- Consult [this infographic](#);
- To find out more about becoming an Art.36 organisation, consult the EFSA webpage '[Competent organisations in Member States](#)'.

Brief description of the call objectives and key messages:

EFSA has been conducting horizon scanning on plant pests since 2017 to support EU crisis preparedness and inform plant health policy decisions. This activity is mainly carried out through the EIOS system (<https://www.who.int/initiatives/eios>), with technical support from WHO and the JRC. Relevant information is screened daily and synthesised into monthly newsletters for EU risk managers.

Over the years, additional tools and tasks have been integrated, and a shift towards more advanced, foresight-oriented approaches has become essential.

This call aims to identify the most suitable partner to support the evolution of the horizon scanning mandate, including the development and implementation of methods and tools, and to strengthen the integration of plant health within the One Health framework.

¹ The SENSITIVE marking is applied to EFSA documents that need to be protected due to their sensitive nature. Mandatory handling instructions for SENSITIVE information are given at <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate-pubs/handling-sensitive-information-snc-issued-efsa>

INDICATIVE PROCEDURE TIMETABLE

Milestone	Date ²	Comments
Launch date	22/07/2026	Date of call publication on EFSA's website and Funding & Tender portal.
Deadline for applicants to raise clarification questions to EFSA	29/09/2026	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	01/10/2026	Question and answers will be published with the Call documents in the Funding & Tender portal, which the applicants are requested to consult regularly.
Deadline for submission of proposals	07/10/2026 At 17:00 (CET)	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 2026	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 signature	December 2026	Estimated

² All times are in the time zone of the country of the EFSA.

Table of Contents

1.	GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND CONDITIONS	5
1.1	LEGAL FRAMEWORK.....	5
1.2	BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL.....	6
1.3	TASKS, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES, MEETINGS AND PAYMENTS.....	9
1.4	INFORMATION ON THE GRANT AGREEMENT	14
1.5	ELIGIBLE ORGANISATIONS	14
1.6	ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.....	14
1.7	IMPLEMENTING CONTRACTS AND SUBCONTRACTING	16
1.8	GRANT PRINCIPLES	16
1.9	ESTIMATED BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE COSTS	17
1.10	PUBLICITY.....	17
1.11	PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA IN RELATION TO GRANT PROCEDURES AND ANTIFRAUD STRATEGY 17	
1.12	PUBLIC ACCESS TO DOCUMENTS	18
1.13	OPEN ACCESS	18
1.14	HUNGARIAN PUBLIC INTEREST TRUSTS ESTABLISHED UNDER HUNGARIAN ACT IX OF 2021	18
1.15	SYSTEMS	18
1.16	DIGITAL PRODUCTS	19
1.17	USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS AND MODELS FOR DRAFTING THE OFFER AND IN DELIVERING SERVICES	19
2.	SELECTING PROPOSALS	22
2.1	VERIFICATION OF SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS.....	22
2.2	ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA.....	22
2.3	EXCLUSION CRITERIA	22
2.4	SELECTION CRITERIA	23
2.5	AWARD CRITERIA.....	26
2.6	PROCESS FOLLOWING THE ASSESSMENT AGAINST AWARD CRITERIA	27
3.	SUBMITTING PROPOSALS	28
3.1	SUBMISSION MODALITIES	28
3.2	LANGUAGE OF THE PROPOSAL AND THE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS.....	29

3.3 EXPECTED DURATION OF PROCEDURE.....29**ANNEXES**

Annex 1: Draft grant agreement

Documents to be submitted with proposals (to be downloaded from the EU Funding and Tender portal Submission Service, see section 2 '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

Annex 6: Award criteria template

1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND CONDITIONS³

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Article 36 (1) of the Regulation (EC) 178/2002⁴ 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 projects⁵, 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. producing scientific data or works contributing to the risk assessment tasks, including assessment tasks in the field of human nutrition in relation to Community legislation, for which the Authority is responsible; this type of task must correspond to precise problems identified in the course of the work of the Authority, and in particular that of its Committee and permanent Scientific Panels, and must not duplicate Community research projects or data or contributions which it is the industry's duty to provide, especially in the context of authorisation procedures;
3. sharing data of common interest, e.g. the establishing of databases;

Article 5(2) of the Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004⁶ 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.

³ 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.

⁴ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2002:031:0001:0024:EN:PDF>

⁵ Project is frequently referred to in this Call as "action", in line with EU Financial Regulation terminology.

⁶ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2004:379:0064:0067:EN:PDF>

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 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, 26.9.2024⁷).

This call is based on EFSA Founding regulation⁸ and EFSA's applicable annual Work Programme for grants and operational procurements as presented in the Annex of the applicable Programming Document, available on the EFSA's website⁹.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

BACKGROUND

In view of DG SANTE's focus on crisis preparedness of the EU territory for new and emerging plant pests¹⁰, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has been performing a horizon scanning of plant pests (mandate number M-2017-0012) since January 2017. This work is supporting the European Commission and the Member States in the prioritisation of plant health legislative actions: for this reason, EFSA is requested to continue this activity for the next 5 years until the end of 2031 and the need for continuation of the activity will be re-assessed by the end of this period.

To satisfy this mandate, EFSA joined the EIOS initiative¹¹. EIOS, resulting from the collaboration between the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (JRC), uses advanced web scraping and AI-powered text mining to detect "weak signals"—early, fragmented indicators of potential public health threats.

The news and scientific information retrieved through the system are screened daily and, only if considered relevant, retained in preparation of the monthly newsletter targeted to the EU risk managers in order to summarise to them the most relevant signals of the month. A working group of external experts contributes to this activity by reviewing and validating the newsletter content. Another group of external experts performs the PeMo screening¹², a fast risk screening, on the most relevant emerging threats. These results are then combined in the newsletter that each month is published in the EFSA journal¹³ and the meetings tracked in the published minutes¹⁴.

The horizon scanning activity performed by EFSA has recently opened up to new approaches, in order to enhance foresight practices and deliver more timely signals. This need requires the capacity to stay updated on the new technologies and tools available, in a very quickly evolving scenario, considering also the importance of having these methods in line with the One Health approach.

⁷ <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2024/2509/oj>

⁸ 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.

⁹ All Programming Documents are available at this website: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/corporate-pubs/programming-documents>

¹⁰ Regulation (EU) 2016/2031 of the European Parliament and of the Council on protective measures against pests of plants

¹¹ <https://www.who.int/initiatives/eios>

¹² <https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.2903/j.efsa.2022.7025>

¹³ Newsletters available at:

<https://efsa.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/doSearch?Ppub=&content=articlesChapters&field1=Title&field2=Title&publication=&target=default&text1=Plant+Health+Newsletter+on+Horizon+Scanning&text2=&startPage=0&sortBy=Earliest>

¹⁴ Minutes available at: <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/wqs/plant-health/wg-plh-horizon-scanning.pdf>

Within this context, a number of side activities became part of the project, delivering new services and products:

- coordination of the EIOS community, in order to facilitate exchange of information and experience among national and international authorities.
- interactive dashboard to facilitate communication of the relevant signals.
- organisation of 4 workshops to cover the different aspects of this project (see reports¹⁵).
- trade tableau to identify relevant trends via commodities movement (under evaluation).
- PeMo platform freely accessible online to external users (under preparation).

OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

The objective of the grant agreement resulting from this call for proposals is to provide support to EFSA until the end of 2031 through the preparation of the monthly newsletters on media and scientific literature monitoring. In these documents, the beneficiary should report the most updated and relevant signals that were collected and reviewed on plant pests during each month. Even more importantly, the beneficiary should substantially contribute to investigating and implementing new approaches, methods and tools to reinforce the foresight activity in the field of plant health. This should be done in line with the One Health approach and optimizing existing frameworks whenever possible.

Furthermore, the beneficiary will support EFSA in the communication of results to different public and via different channels.

The achievement of three specific objectives is required:

A- Supporting EFSA in the preparation of the monthly newsletters

- Integrate the EFSA Horizon scanning team, ensuring regular communication with EFSA, JRC, WHO, EFSA WG members and external experts, other contractors by co-organising and actively participating to online WG meetings. The online meetings with the horizon scanning WG members take place on a monthly basis via web with a duration of 2 hours, and the contractors participate as hearing experts, as visible from the minutes published on the EFSA website <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2025-01/wg-plh-horizon-scanning.pdf>. The activity connected to the meetings organisation and participation, requires the active involvement of the contractor in
 - o the agenda and other working files preparation before the meeting,
 - o sharing of files with participants, amending files and contributing to discussion during the meeting, and
 - o finalisation of the document(s) after the meeting.
- Daily screening of the articles retrieved on EIOS.
- Selection of the relevant articles: review of articles.
- Regular check and validation of sources, selection criteria and keywords in order to keep the system up to date.
- Support, when needed, to the application and revision of the PeMo scoring activities.
- Support, when needed, to communication of the monthly newsletter to the European Commission and Member States
- Continuous improvement of the newsletter to ensure the details on the emerging threats are clearly identified and accessible

All the results of the above-mentioned activities will be included in the monthly newsletters.

¹⁵ Reports of first <https://zenodo.org/records/13939336> and second workshop <https://zenodo.org/records/15696756>

In addition to the above-mentioned online WG meetings, for fulfilling these activities, the beneficiary may be invited to participate and contribute to web meetings organised by EFSA or by third parties (e.g. WHO, JRC, etc), whenever required.

For this reason, the beneficiary should provide support to EFSA in:

- **Deliverable A.1:** monthly draft newsletter for EFSA's final review.
- **Deliverable A.2:** maintenance and improvement of existing tools¹⁶(dashboard¹⁷, PHoRiS¹⁸, EIOS categories update, EIOS sources, etc). As a minimum: monthly updates of online tools.

B- Supporting EFSA in the development of new methods and tools for plant pest horizon scanning

This activity requires the beneficiary to:

- Be informed and updated on the approaches and applications conceived in the foresight domain, beyond plant health only.
- Participate and actively contribute to activities (e.g. online conferences, workshops, meetings) concerning the development of a plant health ontology and taxonomy-driven categories hierarchy within the EIOS system¹⁹.
- Participate and actively contribute to activities in support of the EIOS system (testing of new tools, involvement in WGs).
- Contribute to the creation of tools and feeding of existing ones (e.g. dataset behind dashboard, PeMo platform, trade tableau and others).

For fulfilling these activities, the beneficiary may be invited to participate and contribute to meetings organised by EFSA or by third parties such as WHO or JRC, as required.

For this reason, the beneficiary should provide support to EFSA in:

- **Deliverable B.1:** the development and update of plant health ontology.
- **Deliverable B.2:** the management and improvement of existing tools, e.g. trade tableau.
- **Deliverable B.3:** identification of needs for new tools and methods, whenever necessary, upon agreement with EFSA.
- **Deliverable B.4:** identification and integration of risk drivers and other signals in the EIOS systems.
- **Deliverable B.5:** review of foresight approaches and investigation on their applicability in the field of plant health.
- **Deliverable B.6:** case study on the use of trade data for identification of new risks related to the entry of alien pests into EU territories.

C- Supporting EFSA in the communication and dissemination of the EFSA horizon scanning toolkit for plant health

¹⁶ EFSA reserves the right to request the beneficiary to use new tools other than the ones specified, if the approach or tools change.

¹⁷ EFSA Plant Health: Horizon Scanning Dashboard <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/en/powerbi/plant-health-horizon-scanning-dashboard>

¹⁸ Details on the tool: <https://zenodo.org/records/10066271>

¹⁹ See for example the presentation by Luigi Spagnolo at the Third International Workshop on Horizon Scanning for Plant Health <https://zenodo.org/records/20425717>

This activity will be particularly devoted to sharing the Horizon Scanning approach with third parties and to the further development of the toolkit: e.g. dashboard, database, IT platforms (JRC and EFSA) with EFSA stakeholders including national and international organisations.

For this reason, the beneficiary should provide support to EFSA in:

- **Deliverable C.1:** Organisation of the regular web meetings of the EIOS PLH Community and technical support to its members.
- **Deliverable C.2:** Contribution to the organisation of meetings, events and workshops whenever necessary, online or in presence (agenda, participants selection, supporting material, animation, reporting).
- **Deliverable C.3:** Contribution to the communication in scientific fora (posters and oral presentations in scientific events, scientific publications), webinars, EFSA events (e.g. network and panel meetings).

For fulfilling these activities, the beneficiary may be invited to participate and contribute to events organised by EFSA or by third parties such as WHO or JRC, as required.

1.3 TASKS, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES, MEETINGS AND PAYMENTS

Objective	Tasks	Deliverables	Deadline
Objective A	Task A.1: i) Review and selection of the relevant signals identified on EIOS. ii) Sharing of the draft with WG members and EFSA prior the monthly online WG meeting. iii) Selection of the pest species for the PeMo screening. iv) Participation to monthly WG meetings with experts (via web as described in section 1.2, objective A). v) Finalisation of the draft newsletter after the meetings and final review. vi) Preparation of the draft for the PAFF committee. vii) Finalisation of the newsletter for publication.	Deliverable A.1: Timely publication of one newsletter per month, with the agreed format in the agreed workspace in line with EFSA requirements, that could be revised during the grant agreement.	Monthly following signature of the Grant Agreement
	Task A.2: Integration of articles and publications not retrieved via EIOS. Regular check and validation of sources, selection criteria and keywords in order to keep the system up to date.	Deliverable A.2: regular check, at least once a month.	Monthly following signature of the Grant Agreement

	Monthly check and update of the dashboard content.		
Objective B	Task B.1: Definition of a plant health ontology within the One Health framework applicable in the EIOS system. Even if preliminary, the proposal should take into account the views of a working group of experts, including JRC and WHO, and those of the EIOS community members.	Deliverable B.1: report on a proposal for the plant health ontology including its definition, design and validation.	Draft report 24 months from kick-off meeting
	Task B.2: The maintenance of existing tools is an essential activity, given the frequency of new publications and quickness of evolution in the working process. For the same reasons, regular improvements are also expected in order to keep relevant tools and results.	Deliverable B.2 Management (maintenance and improvement) to existing tools. When changes are substantial, they should be described in a report. The dashboard would require at least monthly updates aligned with the newsletter publication. The beneficiary shall provide an excel file annually, which demonstrates all changes and improvements made, however minor.	Annual report on management activities
	Task B.3: Contribute, where necessary and upon agreement with EFSA, to the development of new tools and methods. This activity focuses on the conceptual design phase, including the identification of needs, the definition of objectives, and the specification of tasks and functionalities to be included in the tools. The beneficiary is expected to contribute to determining what the tools should do and which functionalities should be prioritised, but is not expected to carry out any technical development or produce IT components. No software development expertise is required. The development of new branches of activity within the foresight context is both likely and essential to ensure the continued relevance of deliverables.	Deliverable B.3: development and management of new tools and processes.	Annual report
	Task B.4: Identification and integration of risk drivers and other signals in the EIOS systems. This activity should be done in a continuative manner for the whole duration of the contract.	Deliverable B.4: Adapt the use of EIOS to risk drivers and other new relevant signals. The beneficiary shall record on an excel file all the new categories created on EIOS and provide an annual report summarizing the evolution and increasing integration of risk	Annual report

		drivers within the plant health domain of EIOS.	
	Task B.5: Review of existing methodologies for foresight and investigation of their applicability within EFSA plant health domain.	Deliverable B.5: The beneficiary shall deliver an annual report summarising the most recent approaches and creating a repository of practical applications and case studies.	Annual report
	Task B.6: Case study on the use of trade data to identify potential threats, considering the possibility to combine it with EIOS data and other sources of signals.	Deliverable B.6: running of the case study and publication of the report.	18 months from kick-off meeting
Objective C	Task C.1: Organisation of the regular web meetings of the EIOS PLH Community and technical support to its members. Usually, 2 meetings per month with the other 'superusers' and 1 meeting per month (repeated twice during the same date) with the whole community. In addition, ad hoc web meetings are expected, to provide technical support on the use of the tool to new members. EFSA plays a central role in the maintenance and growth of the EIOS PLH Community, therefore guaranteeing the regular meeting of its members and animating activity and discussion is crucial to the wellbeing of the EIOS system itself.	Deliverable C.1: Invitations sent to EIOS Community members to the regular meetings, preparation of agenda, notes and tasks distribution, chairing of the meeting.	One month from kick-off meeting
	Task C.2: Contribution to the organisation of meetings, events and workshops whenever necessary, online or in presence. Apart from the routine activity, EFSA is frequently required to organise <i>ad hoc</i> events and meetings related to the project.	Deliverable C.2: Contribution to the organisation of meetings, events and workshops whenever necessary, online or in presence. Involvement could be at different levels, from agenda to ppt preparation, however, as for all previous tasks, the organisation refers to content and not to administrative tasks (e.g. room or travel booking).	As required
	Task C.3: Communicating on the project and sharing knowledge and experience with interested parties is required in order to maintain visibility, relevance of outputs and efficacy of the methods. In order to do so, different	Deliverable C.3: Provision of an annual report on the outreach activities which summarises the contribution to the communication in scientific fora (posters and oral presentations in scientific events, scientific publications), webinars, EFSA events (e.g. network and panel meetings).	Annual report

	ways of sharing information on the project should be considered and put in place: - Drafting of posters and material for oral presentations in scientific events, - Drafting of manuscripts for scientific publications, - Contribution to webinars, - Engagement to EFSA events - etc. Applicants should be aware that the cost of in-person participation to events is not reimbursed separately under the grant agreements.		
Subcontracting is not permitted for the tasks under this grant agreement as all tasks are considered "core tasks"			

No.	Meetings	Deadline for finalisation
1	Kick-off meeting: Physical meeting in Parma – one day²⁰ to be attended from the beneficiaries side, as a minimum by the coordinator. It is at the discretion of the beneficiary to have more team members in physical attendance but costs for such attendance will not be reimbursed separately and are expected to be covered by the total amount of the grant agreement. The kick-off meeting is regarded as the start of the project and must take place no later than one month after the signature of the grant agreement. At this meeting, details of the project will be discussed and the objectives, the final report structure, deliverables and timeframe will be clarified. 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 administrative/finance issues of the project is advised as this will facilitate understanding by the beneficiary of the grant principles, related financial reporting requirements and significantly ease the financial management of the grant agreement, both for EFSA and the beneficiary.	1 month after entry into force of agreement
2	Interim meetings: Teleconferences - to be attended from the beneficiaries side, as a minimum by the coordinator. It is at the discretion of the beneficiary to have more team members in attendance at these online meetings. The purpose of these meetings are to discuss the interim deliverables ensuring that they are prepared in line with EFSA quality standards and to share any problems or difficulties (technical or financial) encountered during the preparation. Minutes of the meeting shall be taken and provided to EFSA by the beneficiary.	As required
3	Annual meeting: (duration: 1 week)	No later than 12 months from the Grant

²⁰ One day = 8 hours, half day = 4 hours

	Physical meeting in Parma with possibility for online attendance for some of participants. To be attended from the beneficiaries side, as a minimum by the coordinator in-person. It is at the discretion of the beneficiary to have more team members in physical attendance but costs for such attendance will not be reimbursed separately and are expected to be covered by the total amount of the grant agreement. At least once a year the beneficiaries should organise at least one week at EFSA premises: this time will be mainly dedicated to training on the last developments of toolkits and future tools, team building, meetings with other partners in the project.	Agreement signature.
4	Final meeting: Physical meeting in Parma – half day²¹ to be attended from the beneficiaries side, as a minimum by the coordinator. It is at the discretion of the beneficiary to have more team members in physical attendance but costs for such attendance will not be reimbursed separately and are expected to be covered by the total amount of the grant agreement. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss / review the whole activity and share reciprocal experiences, views, suggestions to further improve the quality of results and use of resources.	59 months from kick-off meeting
No.	Payments	Linked to EFSA approval of deliverable No.
1	Pre-Financing payment as specified in the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the Call for Proposals), Data Sheet section 4.2 Periodic reporting and payments. 1 pre-financing payment of 15% (120,000 EUR) of the total grant amount payable after entry into force of the grant agreement.	1
2	Interim payments annually, as specified the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the Call for Proposals), Data Sheet section 4.2 Periodic reporting and payments. 1st interim payment of 136,000 EUR due January 2028 (end of year 1) 2nd interim payment of 136,000 EUR due January 2029 (end of year 2) 3rd interim payment of 136,000 EUR due January 2030 (end of year 3) 4th interim payment of 136,000 EUR due January 2031 (end of year 4)	2
3	Payment of the balance as specified in the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the Call for Proposals), Data Sheet section 4.2 Periodic reporting and payments. Final payment of 136,000 EUR due January 2032 (end of year 5)	3

Deliverables must be drafted in English 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).

²¹ One day = 8 hours, half day = 4 hours

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.

This Call for proposals aims to conclude a Direct Grant Agreement for the performance of the tasks described in these specifications for a **fixed duration of 5 years** from the entry into force of the agreement. The Agreement can be signed between the Authority and one or several partners.

The total amount EFSA has available to award a grant under this call for proposals is € **800,000 [eight hundred thousand euros]**. 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.

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.

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.my.site.com/competentorganisations/s/competentorganisation/CompetentOrganisation_c/00B1v000009LqfIEAS

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/EU²² must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting:

Subcontracting is not permitted under this call for proposals.

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 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:

²² 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)

- **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, the beneficiary could be mentioned as coauthor in authorship lists indicating the affiliation to its organisation.

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 2018/1725.²³

²³ 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

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 11 December 2025. In case of award of an EFSA contract, it is obligatory for the Project Manager to follow the [EFSA Anti-Fraud Module](#). It is the responsibility of the contractor to make sure the training has been followed before start of contract 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.

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).

In case of multi-beneficiary grant calls, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

1.15 SYSTEMS

The development of IT Systems is not applicable to this grant.

1.16 DIGITAL PRODUCTS

The deliverables under this grant do not require the purchase of digital products such as web pages, websites and apps. In the event that any would be developed within the context of this grant agreement, they shall be produced in adherence with EFSA's Corporate identity and with the Digital design and usability guidelines:

EFSA Corporate identity: link [here](#).

EFSA Digital design and usability guidelines: link [here](#).

1.17 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')²⁴. 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, Article 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 the present contract.

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.

²⁴ 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>

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.

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 (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 for grant application form is duly signed by the authorised representative of the applicant;
- 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:
	• 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;
	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
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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, the partner(s) and subcontractors (if applicable) must complete and sign separate forms (section A). ONLY IN CASE OF SUBCONTRACTING: The applicant must provide the Declaration on Honour, section C. Confirmatory statement of professional conflicting interest to be completed only by the subcontractor(s) if the subcontractor is a legal entity (i.e. company/organisation) not included in the Article 36 list of competent organisations. The applicant must upload the Declaration on Honour in the relevant field under <i>Part B and Annexes</i> of the Funding and Tenders Portal. If applying in consortium and/or with subcontractors, the consortium leader must convert all declarations on honour on exclusion into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under <i>Part B and Annexes</i> 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 in case of consortium also 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 applicant (or consortium leader if applicable) is required to complete and sign the form. The applicant must upload the form in the relevant field under <i>Part B and Annexes</i> 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. • AUDIT REPORT only required for private bodies, if the grant requested from EFSA is >750.000 €, as referred to in the Articles 199 of EU Financial Regulation. In the event of an application grouping several applicants (consortium), the threshold applies to each applicant. If the audit report is not available AND a statutory report is not required by law, a self-declaration signed by the applicant's authorised representative certifying the validity of its accounts for the last 2 years available must be provided. The audit report should be produced by an approved external auditor certifying the accounts for the last two years available, where such an audit report is available or whenever a statutory report is required by law. The authorising officer responsible may, depending on a risk assessment, waive the obligation of providing an audit report for education and training establishments, and in the case of agreements with several beneficiaries, for applicants who do not bear any financial responsibility or who have accepted joint and several liabilities. • LETTER OF COMMITMENT: applicable only when another public body financially contributes to the project (body other than EFSA, applicant or in case of consortium, 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 <i>Part B and Annexes</i> of the Funding and Tenders Portal.

B) Professional and operational capacity

Criterion No. 2.4.B	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Professional and operational capacity:
	Requirements and requested evidence:
	The applicant or in case of a consortium, the consortium as a whole, must have the professional resources, competencies and qualifications necessary to complete the proposed project:



	1. Requirements for the organisation: The applicant must have extensive and demonstrable experience in the use of web scraping tools, and (at least 5 years) in the field of horizon scanning/foresight. <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 1:</u> Evidence should be submitted for a finalised activity (within the two years prior to the deadline for proposals under this call which clearly demonstrates use of web scraping tools and at least 5 years of experience in the field of horizon scanning/foresight. The evidence could be a report (or publication or written reference) that clearly documents the involvement of the organisation in the activity. Applicants should also provide evidence of a new or ongoing project relevant to the subject matter of this grant call. 2. Requirements for the team of experts: Each expert involved in the tasks should have a University degree at post-graduate level (minimum master's degree) covering at least one of the fields related to the topic of the call. In addition, the team coordinator should have a degree in one of the above-mentioned fields and at least 5 years of professional experience in at least one of the following fields: agronomy, plant pathology, entomology and/or pest risk assessment. In addition, at least one member of the team must demonstrate at least 3 years of experience in the performance of literature search & literature review and data extraction and integration. Finally, at least one member of the team should have experience in the use of EIOS and/or Semantic Modelling and Knowledge Representation. <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 2:</u> Detailed CVs of the Project team members proposed for the assignment, showing evidence of requirement 2 above, including a brief description of the expertise and a list of publications relevant to the project for each person proposed. If individual team members are not yet assigned for the proposed project, applicants should provide details of the staff profiles necessary for the project. The CVs should be provided in the EU CV format which can be accessed here. LIST OF PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS NAMES – the applicant should also summarise in one page, the names of the proposed individual project team members and the profile covered. 3. Requirements for the team of experts: The team of experts must have overall/each expert individually an excellent level of spoken and written standard English. For non-native speakers, this should be demonstrated by an Official certificate of English proving a C1 level OR at least 3 years of activity requiring communication and publications in English. <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 3:</u> Detailed CVs of the Project team members proposed for the assignment, showing evidence of requirement 3 above. The CVs should be provided in the EU CV format which can be accessed here. Applicants are requested not to submit photographs of staff representatives or consultants, in application of the data minimisation principle (Art. 4.1.c of the EUDPR).
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	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 For requirements 1-3 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 <i>Part B and Annexes</i> of the Funding and Tenders Portal.
	<u>DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (DoIs)</u> <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. Please refer to EFSA's Independence policy and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management for more detailed information. <u>DoIs do not need to be provided with your proposal at this stage.</u>

2.5 AWARD CRITERIA

If any part of the technical proposal has been drafted using artificial intelligence or in case artificial intelligence is foreseen for implementation of services, this should be described in the relevant award criteria, as deemed appropriate. Please refer to section 1.17 of this call for proposals.

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. The following award criteria are applicable in this call
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1	The extent to which the project is described in detail, including the quality of the proposed methodology with particular reference to the following: a) Detailed proposal for producing the monthly horizon scanning deliverables (newsletter and dashboard) MAX 15 POINTS; b) Detailed proposal of new foresight activities (beyond current newsletter) within the field of plant health. MAX 20 POINTS; c) Proposal for the development of an ontology for plant health within the horizon scanning context and protocol for its implementation MAX 15 POINTS; d) Proposal for the inclusion of risk drivers within the foresight activity for plant health. MAX 15 POINTS; e) Proposal for the development of a case study combining the use of EIOS with trade data analysis MAX 10 POINTS. Total max. points for criterion 1: MAX 75 POINTS
2	<u>Project programme description clarity and graphic representation</u>, including phases, clear timelines for the project tasks completion, detailed milestones per task (e.g. via a project Gantt chart), expected outcomes and deliverables, proposed contingency plan in case of deviations from the project programme, description of identified risks and proposed mitigating actions, if any. MAX. 10 POINTS
3	Description of <u>specific quality assurance measures</u> proposed for the project to guarantee high quality of deliverables and task allocation within the team. MAX. 15 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;

Proposals which have satisfied this quality threshold 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 applicants 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.