CALL FOR EVALUATORS

- About ECO-READY project

The ECO-READY project will develop a real-time surveillance system, an Observatory offered as an e-platform and as a mobile application. This will function as the necessary singular source of information, provide real-time assessments for the food system, and update forecasts frequently and consistently.

The Observatory will be available to society, policymakers, the scientific community, and the agri-food industry, and integrated with a network of at least 10 Living Labs (LLs), supported through the third-party funding process, covering all bio-climatic regions in Europe, forming the ECO-READY project knowledge infrastructure. ECO-READY will produce knowledge-based resilience strategies and develop tools that will be embedded on the Observatory.

The underlying principle behind the ECO-READY approach is, resilient dynamism, or tackling immediate problems and long-term challenges at the same time.

The Living Labs network that will be developed through the Open call, will facilitate 'concept to action' through the co-creation of scenarios addressing their regional needs, the development of policy recommendations, contingency plans, and resilience strategies, and embed them on the Observatory.

Furthermore, ECO-READY will develop an early warning system and decision support tools using innovative Artificial Intelligence based on holistic prediction models and Life Cycle Assessment results.

ECO-READY will ensure that European farmers and society's interests will be reflected in future policy-making and monitoring, through early-stage active engagement incorporating bottom-up recommendations, facilitated by the increased usership of the digital tools developed, and resulting in increased awareness for climate-adaptive and mitigating agri-food products. Furthermore, the Observatory smart application will include tools that will empower the citizens to actively engage in policy making, and interact directly with the scientific community, farmers, and industry and policy makers, thus driving change in consumption habits.

The ECO-READY Open Call will provide a significant opportunity to **engage agri-food stakeholders** interested in taking action to combat **food insecurity** and **climate change** in Europe. Though this network of Living Labs, ECO-READY will:

- ✔ Provide short- and long-term local case studies for resilience building strategies across a broad geographical distribution.

- ✔ Connect different types of Living Labs (LLs) (geographical, climatic, thematic) to share knowledge and tackle interdisciplinary problems related to food security and resilience.

- ✔ Form a lasting partnership between the network of Living Labs for data exchange.

o **ECO-READY Open Call**

ECO-READY will launch one (1) single Open Call providing financial support to third parties, to:
- attract existing Living Labs (LLs);
- to create a larger network of knowledge transfer surrounding the interrelated themes of climate change, biodiversity and food security in the context of resilience and
- to work in extension with the observatory.

What the Living Labs will do:
- Investigate product types (food products & crops) and create model-based scenarios.
- Test the scenarios relevant to climate-related challenges, such as: exposure to climate shocks, management of water and land resources etc.
- Contribute to the development of contingency plans for selected food products for ensuring food supply & security.
- Provide input to policy recommendations.

The sub-projects performed by the selected Living Labs will last for **24 months** and will be divided into **3 phases**:
- **Design-** Deliver an activity plan (May 2024 - October 2024)
- **Development-** Implement the activities/Demonstrate the results and outcomes (November 2024 - September 2025)
- **Impact-** Finalise activities and draft a sustainability plan (October 2025 - April 2026)

Targeted applicants:
Partners in the Living Labs (LLs) should be specialised in one or more of the following sectors:
- food security;
- biodiversity;
- climate change.

The LLs will be composed of 2-5 partners (at least 1 scientific /technical/ commercial and at least 1 community of users).

Examples of technical/ scientific / commercial partners: Universities, research centres, technology developers (private and public), food production companies etc.
Examples of communities of users: Farmers' cooperatives, consumers associations, civil society organisations etc.

o **Key numbers and date of the Open Call**

Total Open Call budget: 4 million
Budget per sub-project: up to 400,000 euro
Budget per partner of the LLs: 60,000-200,000 euro
Submission timeline of the Open Call for the LLs proposals: May 31st, 2023 – September 30th, 2023

o Open Call Hub platform

Open Call Hub (OCH) is a digital platform for application management for financial support to third parties and accelerator programs, developed and maintained by Foodscale Hub. The ECO-READY open call for financial support to third parties (FSTP) will be published through Open Call Hub.

- We are looking for evaluators!

o Evaluators profile

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

Evaluators must be:

- European -EU nationals Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to an EU Member as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list *HERE*).
- Experienced in the agrifood sector with academic, technical and/or industry knowledge surrounding agriculture, climate change, climate resilience, biodiversity and sustainability.
- Experienced in evaluating EC proposals or similar experience.

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

All evaluators must declare beforehand any known conflicts of interest and must immediately inform the ECO-READY Consortium staff if they detect a conflict of interest during the evaluation. The evaluator's contract also requires evaluators to maintain strict confidentiality with respect to the whole evaluation process. They must follow any instruction given by the ECO-READY Consortium to ensure this. Under no circumstance may an evaluator attempt to contact an applicant on his/her own account, during the evaluation process. Confidentiality rules must be adhered to at all times before, during and after the evaluation. All external evaluators will sign a confidentiality declaration.

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

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

- Alignment with the Call requirements
- Excellence of the application in relation to the objectives set out.
- Impact of the proposed work plan/activities on the ECO-READY ecosystem.
- Value created from the implementation of the proposed project and definition of the requested budget.
- Implementation in relation to the organisational capacity and allocation of resources of the applicants.

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

○ Financial Benefits

In the case of the ECO-READY project, external evaluators will participate in Living Labs selection. The evaluators daily rate amounts to 450€ and is based upon the EC rules. Two evaluators will be assigned to each proposal, with a projected capacity of **2 proposal evaluations per day**.

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

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

○ Evaluation procedure

All the activities will be performed individually on the Open Call Hub (OCH) platform; no physical meetings are planned. The evaluation process will start with a short briefing telco about the evaluation procedure with a special focus on the evaluation criteria. Then each proposal will be assigned to 2 evaluators and therefore for each proposal 2 individual evaluation reports will be written. Some specific cases might require the organisation of remote (online) consensus meetings between the evaluators in order to align evaluation reports (i.e., in case of large discrepancies between the marks given by the evaluators, or similar).

If a consensus between evaluators is needed, the debated proposals will be called for interviews by the external experts. External evaluators will be selected based upon their experience and their academic, technical and/or industry knowledge surrounding climate change, climate resilience, biodiversity and sustainability.

○ Evaluators selection process

Evaluators will be selected by the ECO-READY Monitoring Committee based on their competences and needs for each open call.

○ Expression of interest

If you are interested in being an evaluator, create an evaluator profile on the Open Call Hub, fill in all necessary fields and upload your CV (as .pdf) - the application shouldn't take you more than 5 minutes!

Apply here: LINK

Please **register as an evaluator** by checking the relative option.

Applicant ○ **Evaluator** ●

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

o Tentative timeline of activities for Open Call*

ECO-READY Open Call duration for evaluators: May 31st – June 30th, 2023.
Eligibility check of the received evaluators' applications: July 1st – July 15th, 2023.
Contracting with selected evaluators: July 16th– October 15th, 2023.
Evaluation of LLs proposals by the external evaluators: November 1st – January 31st, 2024.
Dates may be revised/ amended, subject to approval by EC services.

o Evaluators' liability

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

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

o Admissibility

- The applicant must be a European (EU nationals (Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions, as well as Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to EU Member) as well as nationals of Horizon Europe associated countries, full list *HERE*)

(Note: if you are not a citizen of these countries, but a resident/taxpayer in one of these countries, you are still eligible to become an evaluator).

- **Applications can be submitted at any time starting from May 31st, 2023, and they should be submitted before June 30th, 2023**.
- Applications must be submitted electronically via Open Call Hub electronic submission system as indicated in this call, using the form provided inside OCH, and a CV, as .pdf, must be attached as part of the application. Paper or email submissions are NOT possible.
- Applications must be complete for all parts, and CV should be readable, accessible and printable.

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

All selected evaluators will be required to sign a declaration of no conflict of interest and non-disclosure agreement with the representative of each project (coordinator, treasurer, etc.) prior to the evaluation start.

Conflict of interest

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

Confidentiality

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

<p align="center">**Good luck and thank you for your interest.**
We are looking forward to collaborating with you!
ECO-READY team</p>