

# Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network

## Applicants' Guide



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## 1. Introduction

This document provides guidance information regarding the ECO-READY Open Call including the eligibility and evaluation criteria. The document in its entirety and all associated Annexes must be read carefully for the submission of an application.

### 1.1 About ECO-READY

Food security in Europe relies on a complex holistic equilibrium that is the outcome of a multifactorial balance. To counterbalance and ameliorate the damaging effects on food accessibility for consumers, as well as the economic protection for producers, there is a compelling need to identify and quantify evident and hidden factors while quantifying their overall influence. Moreover, there is a need to deliver critical real-time data assessment; thus, enabling a realistic focus to predict vulnerabilities, provide ad hoc/long-term resolutions and ameliorate critical gaps in food supply changes.

The weaknesses of the existing food security monitoring practices were exposed by the current COVID-19 pandemic as noted by the United Nations that “the world does not have a singular source of information to provide real time assessments of people facing acute food insecurity with the geographic scale to cover any country of concern, the ability to update forecasts frequently and consistently in near real time, whereas the available early warning systems lack suitable indicators for monitoring the degradation of food systems.”

There are various types of data collected and pooled in databases, to mitigate climate change and address agri-food systems security and resilience. However, these data are not interconnected, and only moderately useful, per se, for the citizens or policymakers; to achieve their full potential, they need to be translated into “information” or “knowledge”, e.g., through visualizations, by generating new knowledge, through the identification of patterns, through the generation of alerts etc.

The EU committed to reduce net domestic greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% in comparison to the reference level of the year 1990. To reach these goals, governments need to mobilize the civil society, including both private companies and consumers, to change production and consumption patterns towards climate mitigation and resilience. Towards this direction, a recent EU survey illustrates the impact of COVID-19 on consumption patterns, with European consumers shopping closer to home or supporting local businesses.

At the same time, they make ‘greener’ choices’. However, consumers may not be able to make informed decisions if complete information on the sustainability aspects of food or its nutritional value are not available or if information is not reliable, which may lead to a behavioral change with negative results to climate change and food security. In addition to the above challenges, the European Commission’s science service (JRC) is questioning the current “linear” model of science for policy (“scientific silos”), introducing a new model called “Science for Policy 2.0”, attempting to put science at the service of complex, transversal policy issues, rather than keeping it in comfortable, well-defined, scientific boxes.

The EC JRC Science for Policy Handbook highlights that designing policies with the assumption that human behavior is rational can lead to suboptimal results. Far better is to resort to a more nuanced understanding of behavior, based on empirical evidence of how people behave in specific context (behavioral insights), and this evidence can be applied throughout the policy cycle.

## 1.2 ECO-READY Objectives

ECO-READY aspires to recognize, categorize, and dissect the drivers that affect food security across the European web. A holistic breakdown and assessment of direct/indirect factors across at least 10 Living Labs, through an open call for third party funding, located at strategic European regions will provide a base-to-top scheme framework and networking for decision making. Since each driver can generate oscillating imprints on the production line across regions and/or crop products, a clear demarcation of drivers and a 'per case' analysis will be conducted to quantify and model such stressors. ECO-READY will firstly identify these factors and manage them according to their cluster/input. Climate change and biological factors are anticipated to pose a profound effect at a global or regional scale since they can influence crop physiology, leading to yield collapse.

Still, in several EU regions, shifts of average temperature can provide a unique opportunity for the introduction of novel culture zones and the opportunity for consumers to select alternative staple sources. Climate change can also influence the population of phytopathogens, and thus unpredicted dangers can arise from plant-pathogen interactions risking crop yields. ECO-READY will provide a real-time surveillance system (a digital Observatory, offered as an e-platform and as a smart phone application) developed and customized for such occasions. ECO-READY will assess the influence of policies and climate change on socio-economic constraints that greatly fluctuate across member states, and produce targeted resilience and mitigation policies, addressing regional needs reflected by inputs of the Living Labs. The pressure for agricultural land use turnover (towards energy production, recreation, real estate) will be assessed and correlated to the number/area (ha) of holdings and the percentage of primary or secondary agriculture professionals.

The differential responses under identical stimuli of larger vs smaller agricultural units will be monitored, and the overall impact on food production systems will be demarcated. Changes in EU or third parties' tariffs as well as production costs due to imported energy (gas/oil) will be scrutinized, and their influence on specific crop yields and crop planting will be estimated, creating multispectral data for modeling.

**ECO-READY** aims to equip the European food system with the means to obtain the necessary resilient dynamism and consolidate food security for the European citizens through improving policy-making capacity, by understanding the interconnections between climate change, biodiversity, and food security.

**The overall objective of ECO-READY will be achieved through the following scientific and technological outputs:**

1. Establishment the ECO-READY project knowledge infrastructure, consisting of:
  - a. A digital Observatory available as an e-Platform and mobile (smart phone) application, available to society, policymakers, scientific community, and the agri-food industry.
  - b. A network of at least 10 Living Labs covering all bio-climatic regions in Europe for the co-creation and testing of outputs (2), (3), and (4).
2. Development of 50 quantified (modeled) scenarios (5 scenarios per LL), addressing the regional needs of the Living Labs.
3. Development of policy recommendations and contingency plans on the basis of the quantified scenarios and embed them on the Observatory.
4. Development of resilience strategies, as a result of (2) and (3) and embed them on the Observatory.
5. Development of an early warning system and decision support tools supported by the development of

innovative Artificial Intelligence based on holistic prediction models and Life Cycle Assessment results.

ECO-READY will ensure the European farmers and society's interests to be reflected in future policy making and monitoring, having them actively engaged in shaping policy recommendations from an early stage. This will be facilitated by the knowledge communicated via the digital observatory, especially through the smartphone app, increasing their awareness for climate-adaptive and mitigating agri-food products, and enabling them to become users of the tools that will be developed. In order to achieve civil society's direct involvement into the project, the Observatory smart application will be developed and launched to promote societal engagement and behavioural transformation; it will include tools that will enable the citizens to actively engage in policy making, and interact directly with the scientific community, farmers, industry and policy makers, thus driving change in consumption habits.

An overview of the ECO-READY conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1 below.

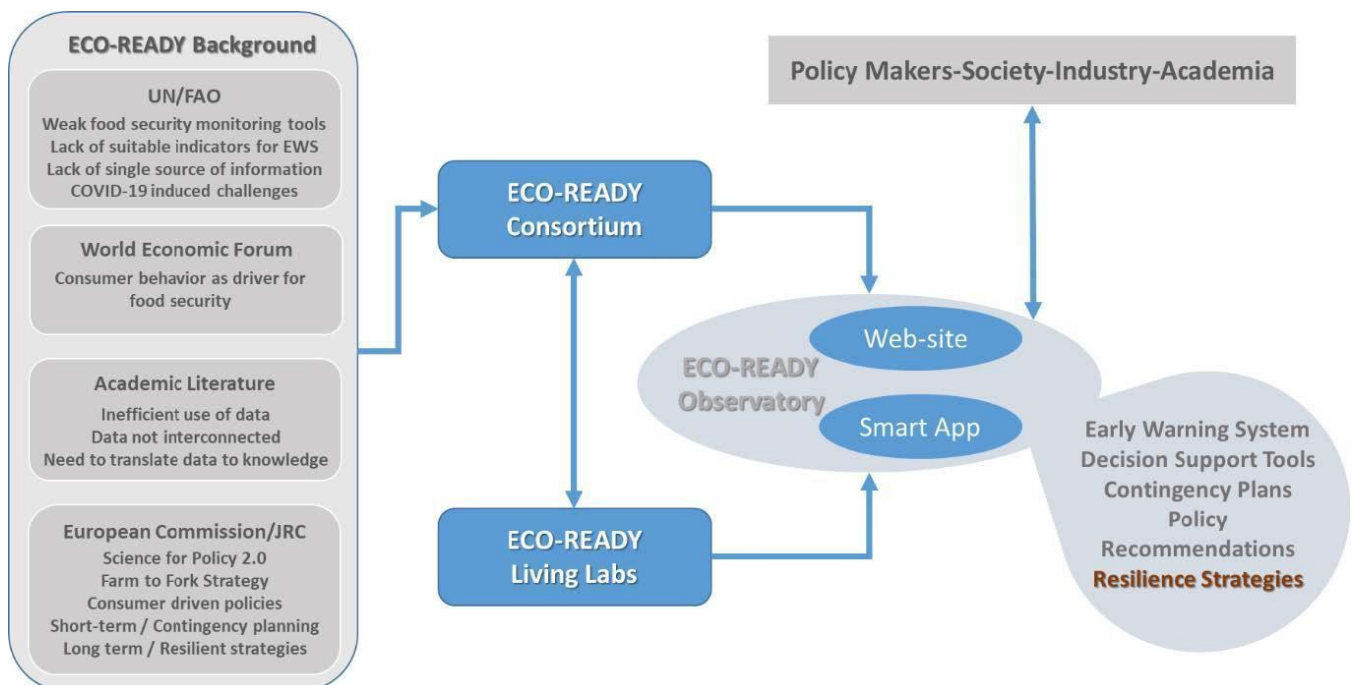


Figure 1 ECO-READY Conceptual framework

## 1.3 ECO-READY Open Call

### 1.3.1 Approach & Planned Open Call Realization

The ECO-READY consortium aims to use the funding for third parties as a mechanism to establish a Living Labs (LLs) network. This network of Living Labs will facilitate knowledge sharing, data collection related to food security, climate change and biodiversity to ultimately support European agrifood systems security and resilience and involve input from all relevant stakeholders. They will continue to serve this purpose beyond the lifespan of the project as an extension of the ECO-READY Observatory.

ECO-READY Open Call uses a horizontal strategy to attract living labs specialized in at least one of the distinct but interrelated themes of food security, biodiversity and climate change, as well as a vertical strategy to ensure broad spatial and temporal coverage. The Open Call will be inclusive of all types of LLs, including commercial, academic and community driven and selected projects will require the participation of at least 1 partner from the following categories:

- scientific/technical/commercial
- community of users.

Examples of technical/ scientific / commercial partners: Universities, research centers/ institutes, technology developers (private and public), food production companies etc.

Examples of communities of users: Farmers' cooperatives, consumers associations, civil society organisations, etc.

Throughout the course of the project, participants will participate in a total of 5 workshops to solidify connections, exchange knowledge, and showcase the exploitation pathways associated with the observatory.

A total of 4 million euro is allocated for financial support for third parties, which will result in the selection of minimum 10 Living Lab projects. Each project can receive up to 400k euro and each party within the project will have a budget between 60-200k euro.

*Table 1 Budget allocation*

Total Open Call Budget	Amount per project	Amount per partner of each project
4.000.000€	400.000€	60.000 -200.000 €

The ECO-READY open call adheres to the principles which govern the Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) mechanism of the European Commission and especially the General Conditions specified in Annex 13 (General Annexes) of the work programme 2021-2022 and the AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement, articles 6.2.D.1 and 9.4.

## 1.4 Purpose and objectives of the Open Call

The purpose of the Open Call is to develop a network of Living Labs that will be connected to the ECO-READY Observatory. The observatory will be a central platform of food security, biodiversity, and climate change expertise in Europe for central and local authorities, the society, and all agrifood stakeholders interested in taking action to combat food insecurity and climate change in Europe. A Communities of Practice (CoP) approach is at the center of the LL network and will help expand the reach of the observatory, facilitate data collection and engage a broad range of stakeholders in all of these domains. The participating LLs will benefit from connections with project-consorted research centers. The broader European community will benefit from the meaningful work that will be accomplished to improve monitoring and address other issues related to agro food security and resilience.

**Under the framework described above, the funding for third parties aims to:**

- Provide short- and long-term local case studies for resilience building strategies across a broad geographical distribution;
- Connect different types of 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 and the observatory for easier data collection and exchange.

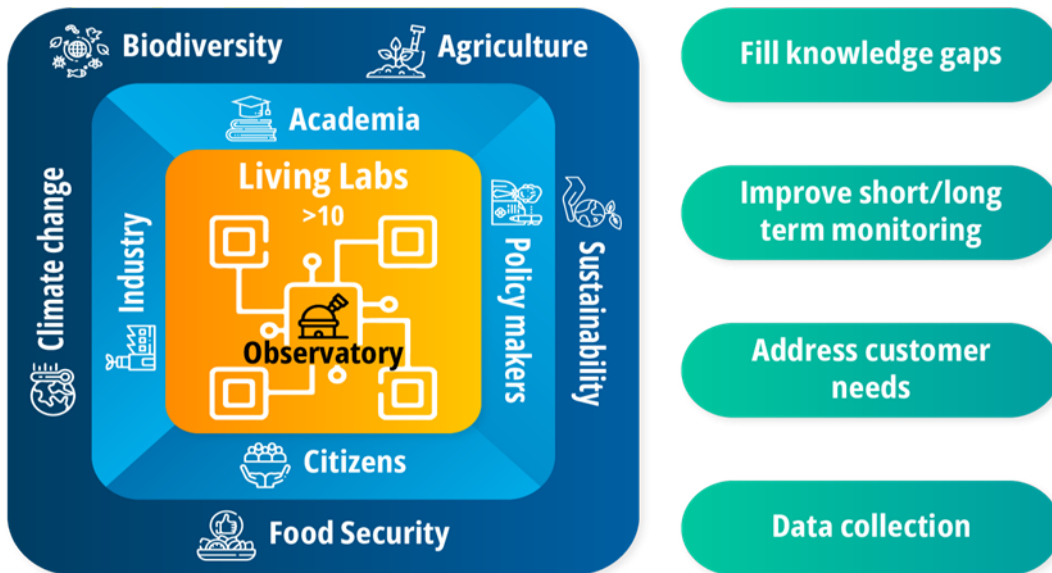


Figure 2 ECO-READY Ecosystem

## 1.5 Call Expected Outcome

The LLs selected from the Open Call will form a network to facilitate interdisciplinary knowledge sharing, data collection and monitoring of the short and long-term drivers of climate change that affect the agriculture sector. The LLs will represent commercial, scientific and community members aiming to become nodes of the ECO-READY Resilience Observatory e-platform, in order to maximize the scope and scale of data collected. Horizon Scanning, Environmental Scanning, Foresight Methods, Consequential and Social LCA will be implemented on the scenarios developed and modeled using global market equilibrium models and market analysis.

The LLs will operate as open innovation sites for experimentation and cooperation among the participating stakeholders and between the LL participants and the ECO-READY consortium, in finding solutions to context- and region-specific challenges of the given bioclimatic zones, that will lead in finding the innovations needed to solve the problems, thus would also promote rural development. Digital innovation connecting the LLs with the Observatory e-platform will facilitate cooperation among actors in living labs and foster the implementation of food system resilience approaches. Social innovation will also be at the core of the activities and is central in the LL concept for establishing a Living Labs Network.

## 2. ECO-READY Open Call - Establishing a Living Lab Network

### 2.1 General Information

The ECO-READY Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network aims to attract scientific, community and commercial stakeholders including (indicatively but not exclusively) **European public sector ministries and agencies for education, agriculture, environment, farmers, farm advisor**



**organizations, industry, retail and consumer representatives, research and innovation collaboration networks, academia and civil society organizations.**

The LLs must be composed of 2-5 partners. Selected projects will require the participation of at least 1 partner from the following categories:

- scientific/technical/commercial
- community of users.

Partners in the LLs should be specialized in one or more of the following sectors:

- food security,
- biodiversity,
- climate change.

The Living Labs will:

- Investigate product types (food products & crops) and create model-based scenarios. Each LL focuses only on one bioclimatic zone.
- 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 data-driven policy recommendations.
- Co design/ deploy awareness raising plans.
- Form a lasting partnership with the Observatory for easier data collection and exchange.

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- Finalize activities and draft a sustainability plan (October 2025-April 2026).

The Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network will be published on **May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023** and proposal submissions will be accepted till **September 30<sup>th</sup> 2023**. It is planned to finance at least **10** Living Labs projects. The total sum for the Open Call is **4.000.000,00 €**, and each Living Lab may ask for up to **400.000,00 €**. Each partner will have a budget between **60.000 - 200.000 €**.

Figure 3 below presents the provisional timeline during which each relevant phase of the ECO-READY Open Call will take place. The dates may change due to unforeseen events and situations. Therefore, these are an indication of what is initially expected; the dates are to be confirmed by the ECO-READY team along the process and in agreement with the EC and are not legally binding.



## LLs Timeline

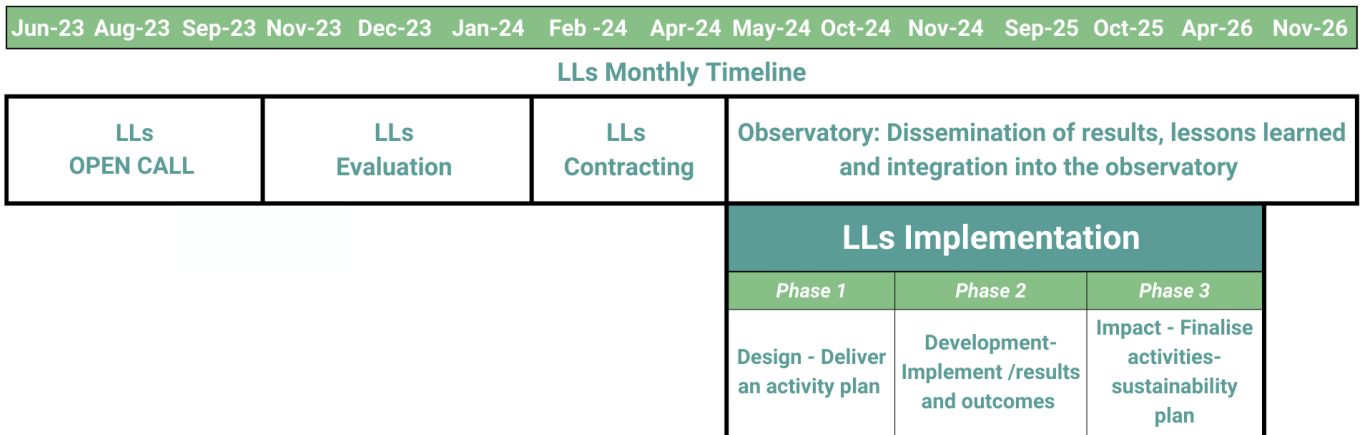


Figure 3 ECO-READY LLs Life Timeline<sup>1</sup>

### 2.2.1 Main Objectives of Living Labs

Living Labs are defined by the European Network of Living labs (ENoLL) as “user-centered, open innovation ecosystems based on systematic user co-creation approach, integrating research and innovation processes in real life communities and settings”. In other words, LLs are a participatory way to develop solutions to a problem. The ECO-READY LLs will provide the necessary regional transdisciplinary settings to bring together farmers, policymakers, scientists, social stakeholders, the agri-food industry and other interested partners in the co-design, monitoring and evaluation of new and existing agricultural practices and technologies on working landscapes to improve their effectiveness and early adoption.

Living Labs across a wide geographical range engaged within the interrelated but distinct domains of biodiversity, food security, and climate change, are expected to produce large volumes of quality data to support both short and long term observations, identify and fill knowledge gaps. More specifically, each LL testbed will be used to test scenarios and associated contingency plans and policies co-produced with ECO-READY expert partners.

The diversification of farming systems and adoption of agro-ecological practices in farming that would be triggered by the LLs partnerships will improve regional food systems security through e.g. carbon sequestration in soils, biodiversity enhancement, and landscape improvement. It would also foster relations between the farming sector and consumers by providing them with agro-ecological products, which would help moving towards more sustainable and resilient food systems, anchored in territories and closer to citizens, including at times of crisis.

LL partnerships will be required to include a community of users which will broaden stakeholder engagement and support the translation of data into useful knowledge for the public and policy makers. A minimum 7% of the LLs' funding will be allocated to the deployment of activities such as organization of info days, workshops and informal events to promote the ECO READY results.

<sup>1</sup> The dates may change due to unforeseen events and situations. Therefore, these are an indication of what is initially expected; the dates are to be confirmed by the ECO-READY team along the process and in agreement with the EC and are not legally binding.

The selected LLs will participate in three workshops to connect and share knowledge, whereas two workshops, focusing on the exploitation pathways will be organized to share the benefits and opportunities of joining the observatory network.

Eventually, the LLs will produce better informed policies and develop resilience strategies in a participatory manner to foster the resilience in the short- to long term at various geographic scales. The established network of Living Labs (LLs), will interact with the ECO-READY Observatory during and beyond the lifespan of the project. The Living Lab network will be sustained after the end of the project, as a network of local and regional hubs of knowledge generation. This network will be supported by joint horizontal and vertical strategy. The horizontal strategy will span over distinct thematic areas related to food security, biodiversity, and climate change, which are interrelated to each other, whereas the vertical will span over distinct spatial and probably temporal scales e.g. from a region up to a wider geographical level and from short-term up to long-term planning/strategies, or over distinct ecosystems, and agriculture and food production systems.

Furthermore, to establish the sustainability of the ECO-READY Observatory network, after the project's end, from each Living Lab one partner will take up the role of "exploitation actor". More specifically, the partner will participate in the activities related to the post-project sustainability of the ECO-READY LLs network.

### **2.2.2 Geographical distribution of the LLs network**

The ECO-READY project wants to assure fair representation of all EU agro-climate zones. For this reason, the selected LLs will operate in four distinct clusters representing four specific agro-climate zones in Europe (at least 3 LLs in Mediterranean and South-West, at least 3 LLs in Central-Eastern, at least 2 LLs in North-Western, and at least 2 LLs in Scandinavian and Baltic regions), as depicted in Figure 4. Particular emphasis will be given in regions that are at high risk in terms of natural resources.

Each applying Living Lab will have to focus on only one of the four bio-climatic regions as presented in Figure 4.

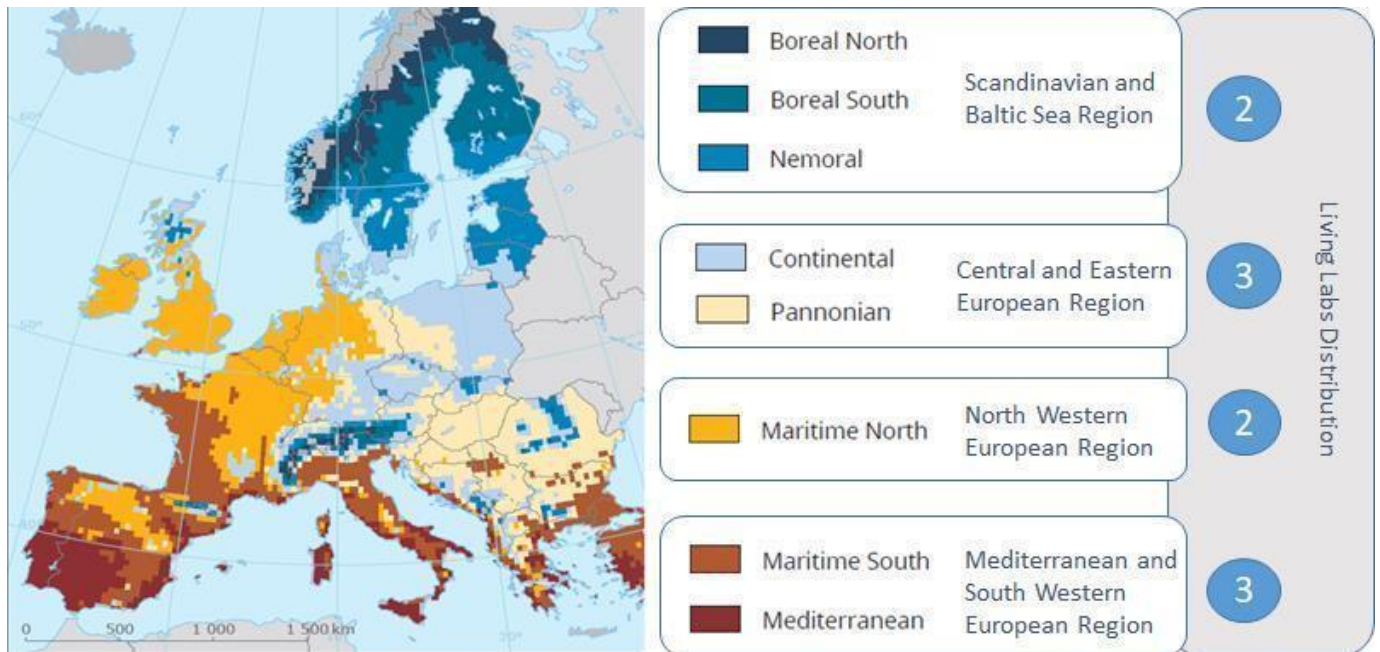


Figure 4 Bio-geographical coverage of the ECO-READY Living Labs network

### 2.2.3 Product Selection by each LL

Each LL is requested to investigate at least 5 product types and each proposal refers to one bioclimatic area. A two-dimensional selection approach must be applied to identify the products addressed by each LL. Products of regional importance will be investigated in each LL across at least two LLs in the same cluster, facilitating horizontal comparative studies, whereas commonly important products for all zones and clusters, will be studied by LLs across all clusters and vertically compared.

In this context, each LL needs to choose:

- At least **3 product types** from **group A** (products of importance for all zones and clusters), and
- At least **2 product types** from the specific **sub-group B** (products of regional importance) which corresponds to each regional cluster.

In the five categories of group A, LLs may select to investigate more than one product from a single category, e.g. both “poultry” and “pork” from the first category “Animal Products”; this still counts as 1 selection out of the 3 minimum obligatory selections.

Group A: Products of importance for all zones and clusters		
Please Select at least 3 product types from <b>group A</b>		
1. <b>Animal products</b> (beef, pig, poultry, goat, and sheep meat, milk and dairy products)	2. <b>Honey and apiculture</b>	3. <b>Animal feed crops</b> (e.g., pastures, alfalfa, barley)
4. <b>Fruits and vegetables</b> (e.g., apples, oranges, berries, peaches, tomatoes, salads, potatoes, carrots)	5. <b>Cereals and grains</b> (e.g., wheat, maize, barley, rice, rye, triticale, and oat)	
Group B: Products of regional importance		
Please Select at least 2 product types from the specific <b>sub-group B</b>		
Sub-group	Countries	Product types
<i>Mediterranean &amp; South Western Europe</i>	<i>Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Turkey, Greece, Italy, Malta, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Portugal, Serbia, Kosovo*, Slovenia, Spain, Cyprus, Israel, Tunisia, Morocco</i>	1. Fish and aquaculture
		2. Olives
		3. Legumes (e.g., beans, chickpeas and lentils)
<i>Central and Eastern Europe</i>	<i>Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Czechia, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Latvia, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus</i>	1. Red clover
		2. Sugar beets
		3. Sunflower
<i>North-Western Europe</i>	<i>Ireland, United Kingdom, Faroe Islands, Austria, France, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland</i>	1. Rapeseed
		2. Mushrooms and truffles
		3. Aquaculture
<i>Scandinavian and Baltic Sea Region</i>	<i>Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Sweden</i>	1. Fish (e.g. smoked fish)
		2. Sugar beets
		3. Rapeseed
*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.		

Figure 5 Products of importance for ECO-READY

In addition to the above, each LL may choose to investigate an **additional sixth product** of importance to the regional agricultural production and the regional food security system. Such products may include underutilized ancient and forgotten crops (e.g. emmer wheat, poppies, faro, flax, buckwheat, millet, sorghum, amaranth, etc.). The choice of a 6th product is optional, however if an applicant decides to opt for a 6th product, a justification of this choice should be clearly demonstrated in the proposal.

**It is essential to note that applicants will have to provide a clear understanding of the importance of the selected foods/ crops in regards with the food systems in the involved regions.**

## 2.3 Submission procedure

The entry point for submitting all proposals for the ECO-READY Open Call is the <https://opencallhub.eu/>.

Submissions received through any other channel will be automatically discarded.

Documents required in subsequent phases will be submitted via dedicated channels, which will be indicated by the ECO-READY consortium in the contracting phase.

## 2.4 Language

English is the official language for ECO-READY Open Call. Applications submitted in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language throughout the whole execution of the ECO-READY project. This means all requested contributions must be submitted in English to be eligible.

## 2.5 Documentation format

Any document requested in any of the phases must be submitted electronically in PDF format without restrictions for printing. When filling in the proposal template, make sure to keep the provided set formatting of the document. The allowed font type is "Arial" and the minimum font size is 11 points, the paragraph spacing 6pt and the line spacing single. The page size is A4, and all margins (top, bottom, left and right) must be at least 15 mm (not including any footers or headers). Proposals that do not comply with these requirements will be excluded from evaluation as non-eligible. do not exceed the defined maximum of 25 pages. External evaluators are instructed to dismiss the pages after the 25th page from the evaluation.

## 2.6 Origin of the funds

All sub-grantees will sign a dedicated Sub-grant Agreement with the ECO-READY consortium. The funds provided to the Sub-grant Agreement come directly from the funds of the European Project ECO-READY funded itself by the European Commission under Grant Agreement Number 101084201, and remain therefore, property of the EU until the balance is paid, whose management rights have been transferred to the project partners in ECO-READY. This relation between the sub-grantees and the European Commission through the ECO-READY project carries a set of obligations to the sub-grantees with the European Commission. It is the responsibility of the sub-grantees to fulfill these, and of the ECO-READY consortium partners to inform them on these.

More details on obligations of sub-grantees can be found in Chapter 5.

## 3. Proposal Submission and Selection

In the iteration of the Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network, ECO-READY will select a minimum of 10 Living Labs sub-projects. All Open Call selected finalists must meet the eligibility criteria outlined in this Section and sign and submit the same documents. At the time of application, all applicants must submit the following:

- Annex 1- Consortium Declaration,
- Annex 2- Declaration of Honour,
- Annex 3- Declaration of Conducting Business.

Please note that the submission proposal in the designated platform is done by one partner, the consortium leader. **Certain documents such as the Consortium Declaration, the Declaration of Honour and the Declaration of Conducting Business need to be filled in and signed by all LL partners, but will be uploaded during the proposal submission as one single pdf file.**

During the contracting phase, finalists of the ECO-READY Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network must also provide Annex 4- Bank account information and three signed copies of the Sub-grant Agreement for ECO-READY Open Call finalists (indicative model given as an Annex 6), which will be

given to them upon being declared a finalist applicant. All partners in the selected LLs will need to submit bank account information, as payments will be done separately to each partner directly from the ECO-READY consortium coordinator/treasurer. Likewise, the sub-agreement needs to be signed (in 3 copies) by all partners of the selected LLs.

Figure 6 presents the provisional timeline during which each relevant phase of the ECO-EADY Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network will take place. The dates may change due to unforeseen events and situations. Therefore, these are an indication of what is initially expected; the dates are to be confirmed by the ECO-READY team along the process and in agreement with the EC and are not legally binding.

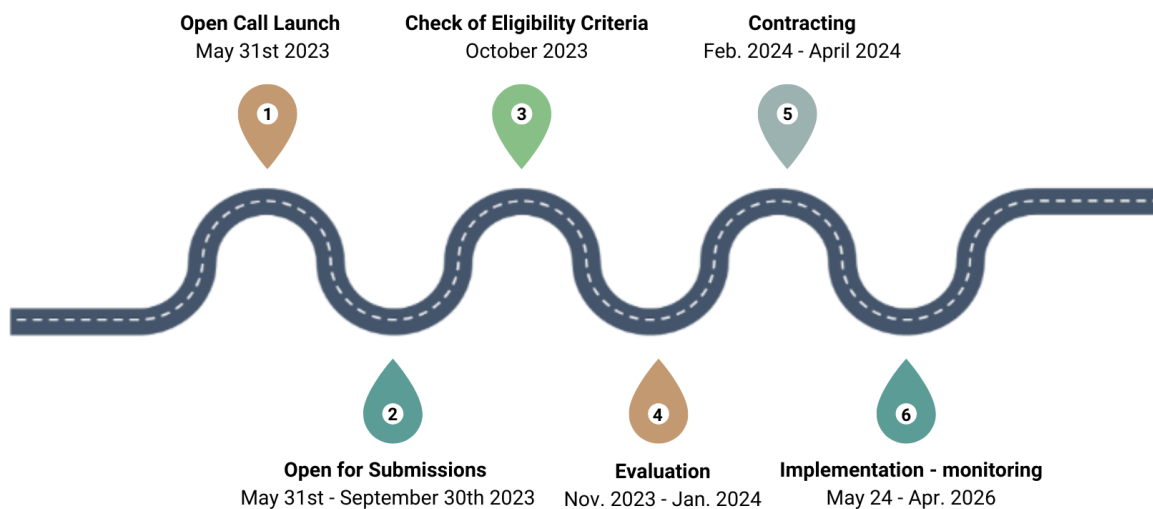


Figure 6 Timeline of the ECO-READY Open Call<sup>2</sup>

### 3.1 Open Call Publication

The ECO-READY Open Call will be published on the Funding and Tenders portal as well as on the beneficiaries' and ECO-READY websites, on May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2023 and it will remain open until September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, at 5 PM CET. The publication will be supported by the Open Call Kit, which includes the following documents:

1. Open Call text, which provides the scope and objectives of the open call.
2. Applicants' Guide, (present document).
3. Proposal template, word document to be submitted as a PDF in the application phase.
4. Consortium Declaration, which describes composition of each LL.
5. Declaration of Honour (DoH), which declares that all conditions of the Open Call are accepted by each legal representative of all partners of the LL.

<sup>2</sup> The dates may change due to unforeseen events and situations. Therefore, these are an indication of what is initially expected; the dates are to be confirmed by the ECO-READY team along the process and in agreement with the EC and are not legally binding.

6. Declaration of conducting business, which declares that the applicants are SMEs according to EC standards. In case of Research Institutes (RI), a confirmation from a responsible authority/registry (e.g., Commercial court or similar) should be submitted.
7. Bank account information, which collects information of all the applicant's bank account where the ECO-READY payments will be transferred to (only for winners of the Open Call).
8. Indicative Model sub-grant agreement, for information purposes only.
9. Frequently asked questions & answers published at the community feed of the specially dedicated channel for ECO-READY Project and Open Calls on the Open Call Hub Platform/ECO-READY OC tab, <https://opencallhub.eu/>.

## 3.2 Eligibility Criteria

ECO-READY Open Call aims to attract community, scientific and commercial members such as local authorities, scientific institutions, farmers associations, members of the agrifood industry, consumer cooperatives and society organizations, research and technology stakeholders (e.g., including EU ministries and agencies for education, agriculture, and environment, farmers and farm advisor organizations, industry, retail and consumer representatives, research and innovation collaboration networks, academia and civil society organizations, etc.).

### 3.2.1 Overall eligibility criteria

Overall eligibility criteria for the ECO-READY Open Call are:

- Open Call for LL's will be open to all legal applicants eligible for Horizon Europe funding.
- LL's must establish a consortium of 2-5 partners as described in the Consortium Declaration.
- The consortium must be composed of at least 2 partners (1 scientific/technical/commercial and 1 community of users).
- All applicants must have a valid VAT number and must be active and operational.
- Partners cannot participate in more than one consortium applying for the call by means of exclusion. If an applicant participates in more than one proposal, then all proposals will be considered as ineligible.
- Existing consortium members of ECO-READY project as well as their and their affiliated entities are not eligible for the Open Call of ECO-READY.
- The proposal must be delivered before the defined deadline, applying the requested submission procedure.
- Proposals shall only ask for funding for that part of the work that is not yet accomplished and will be carried out after having been selected for funding. Of course, this does not exclude the usage of e.g., results, IP, infrastructures or approaches already held by the applicants.
- Proposals need to align with the ECO-READY Open Call requirements concerning the choice of bio-climatic regions and products scope.



### 3.2.2 Definition of eligible countries

Association with Horizon Europe is governed by the Horizon Europe Regulation 2021/6951. Legal entities from associated countries can participate under the same conditions as legal entities from the EU Member States, unless specific restrictions or conditions are set in the work programme and/or call/topic text. Such measures could include the limitation of participation in certain actions to legal entities established only in the EU, or in the EU and specified non-EU countries, in order to safeguard the EU's strategic assets, interests, autonomy or security.

#### Important notice:

The Open Call adheres to the **Council Implementing Decision 2022/2506** that stipulates that legal commitments must not be entered into with any public interest trusts established on the basis of the Hungarian Act IX of 2021 or any entity maintained by such a public interest trust, concerning inter alia financial support to third parties. Consequently, the concerned Hungarian entities are excluded from receiving FSTP (financial support to third parties) from this Open Call. For further information please follow this [link](#).

According to the *EU Grants: List of Participating Countries (HE): V2.5 – 01.04.2023<sup>3</sup>*, besides the **EU Member States** (including their outermost regions, as well as **Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT)** linked to EU Member), the following **Horizon Europe associated countries** are eligible to receive funding through ECO-READY Open Call (listed in alphabetical order): Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Faroe Islands, Georgia, Iceland, Israel, Kosovo<sup>4</sup>, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine.

Additional countries that are eligible for funding are:

1. Morocco (applicable for the entire Programme).
2. United Kingdom (applicable for the entire Programme<sup>5</sup>). UK is eligible, but this is provided that the UK signs the association agreement before the signature of the sub-grant agreement.
3. Switzerland (funded through its own funding programme and budget).

Participants (other third countries) from the following low- to middle-income countries are automatically eligible for funding, as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023:

- Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Azerbaijan
- Bangladesh, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi
- Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia, Comoros, Congo (Democratic Republic), Congo (Republic), Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba
- Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic
- Ecuador, Egypt (Arab Republic), El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia
- Fiji
- Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana
- Haiti, Honduras

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<sup>3</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation\\_horizon-euratom\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/list-3rd-country-participation_horizon-euratom_en.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>5</sup> The UK will participate in all parts of the Horizon Europe programme with the only exception of the EIC Fund

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

### 3.3 Eligible costs

ECO-READY projects follow the guidelines of the European Commission in terms of cost eligibility for financing within its open calls. Payments will follow the “General eligibility conditions for lump sum costs” according to the *EU Grants: AGA — Annotated Model Grant Agreement: V1.0 DRAFT– 01.04.2023*<sup>6</sup> and specifically Article 5. The following cost categories are considered eligible:

1. **Personnel costs** – Costs of the personnel realizing the work and preparing the deliverables/reports after each of the 3 phases. Calculate personnel costs according to the rules and regulations of your country and real labor market data regarding the relevant positions. For the proposal template, only the final amount allocated to personnel costs is necessary. Personnel costs are considered direct costs and can't be managed as indirect costs.
2. **Travel costs** – Travel costs necessary for the execution of the sub-project.
3. **Equipment costs** – Borrowing or loaning of the necessary equipment is not eligible, only depreciation costs for purchased equipment are eligible.
4. **Other goods & services** – Other goods and services include, for instance, consumables and supplies, dissemination (including open access), protection of results, certificates on the methodology, translations and publications.
5. **Subcontracting** - Subcontracting should be clearly justified. Costs must be reasonable and comply with the principle of sound financial management. Coordination tasks cannot be subcontracted. You should ensure that there are sufficient details for: the action tasks, the estimated budget, the procedure that will be followed to ensure best value-for-money. Any kind of organization could be subcontracted, provided that they are not part of the ECO-READY consortium. The evaluators will assess the scope and value-for-money aspects of subcontracting

<sup>6</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/docs/2021-2027/common/guidance/aga_en.pdf)

and their assessment will be reflected in the score of each proposal. Subcontracting is allowed for up to a maximum of 25% of the proposed budget when properly justified. When submitting the proposal applicants should only write the total amount for subcontracting. Selected applicants should follow the standards for subcontracting set by the European Commission, ensuring best value for money and absence of conflict of interest, during the project implementation. Procurement should be done according to the national and European regulation that is applied to each applicant's institution.

6. **Indirect costs** - Indirect costs (overheads) could be up to 25% of the direct cost. Subcontracting is not included in indirect cost calculation.

In the submitted proposals, costs must be described by each LL partner. Applicants should take into consideration that at least 7% of their budget must be allocated to dissemination activities, focusing on spreading concise messages addressing challenges of each region.

### 3.4 Application process

#### 3.4.1 Applicants' registration

Interested applicants should register at the ECO-READY Open Call page on the <https://opencallhub.eu/>. This will be the central interface for managing the proposal applications for the remainder of the Open Call.

The information on the ECO-READY Open Call will be available at the specially dedicated page of the ECO-READY website, <https://www.eco-ready.eu/>, the ECO-READY beneficiaries' websites as well as the Funding & Tenders Portal.

It is important to note that proposals and all corresponding documents need to be submitted once by the LL lead partner. Nevertheless, all members of LLs can register on the Open Call Hub platform and submit questions on the dedicated FAQ section on the Open Call Hub platform.

#### 3.4.2 Application preparation

Please follow the steps:

1. The LL lead partner needs to register to the platform prior to the submission of the proposal.
2. For the application preparation, the applicants are requested to apply online and provide all necessary information. Applicants must submit all requested documents on this application platform.
3. Applicants that do not accept the terms and conditions and do not sign and upload to the platform the completed Consortium Declaration (Annex 1), Declaration of Honour (Annex 2) and the Declaration of Conducting Business (Annex 3), in PDF format, will not be able to submit the application. Later submissions of these documents will not be accepted. The above annexes need to be signed by all LL partners.
4. In case applicants have any technical difficulties, they should contact the FSH support team at [eco-ready@opencallhub.eu](mailto:eco-ready@opencallhub.eu) until September 28th at 17:00 CET (48 hours prior to the deadline).

**It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the application. Failure of the application to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays or working**

from multiple browsers or multiple browser windows, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the application as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.

Technical issues may occur with large documents in different formats. The ECO-READY project does not bear responsibility for technical problems at any stage. Make sure to check and test upload on time. If technical issues do arise, applicants may contact the ECO-READY team for support, via email: [eco-ready@opencallhub.eu](mailto:eco-ready@opencallhub.eu), until September 28<sup>th</sup> at 17:00 CET (48 hours prior to the deadline).

### 3.4.3 The application reception

Submissions will ONLY be done via the Open Call Hub platform ECO-READY tab on <https://opencallhub.eu/>. A full list of applicants will be drafted containing their basic information for statistical purposes and clarity (which will be also shared with the EC for transparency). **An application reception will close at 17:00 CET (Brussels time) on September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

## 3.5 Evaluation process

### 3.5.1 Eligibility check

Once the Open Call establishing a Living Labs Network Proposals has been closed (September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023), an eligibility check process will be carried out in order to discard non-eligible applications. During October 2023, the eligibility check will be carried out by the ECO-READY Monitoring Committee (MC), a team of consortium members with scientific and technical knowledge (AUTH), business and financial expertise (FSH) and consumer insight (Migros). Please note that only complete applications will be considered, those with missing or incomplete information will be discarded.

This procedural part of the evaluation will verify if:

- i) alignment with the Open Calls' objectives (LL composition, geo-graphical representation and products scope),
- ii) eligible legal entity of LL partners in eligible HE country,
- iii) proposal not pre-submitted in the other open calls,
- iv) all required documents are correctly submitted,
- v) timely and in accordance with the rules, submission.

(The full list is available in section 3.2.1 Overall eligibility criteria)

During the eligibility check the applicants might be requested to provide additional explanations if their application raises questions such as, but not limited to, ambiguity of the information, inconsistencies which are obvious errors, among others. In that case, applicants may be given 3 working days from the day of notification to correct or provide additional documents to complete their initial application. If the requested corrections are not provided in the time specified, their application will be discarded and will not continue to be evaluated.

### 3.5.2 Remote Evaluation

The evaluation will be done by a carefully selected pool of external reviewers. Each proposal will be reviewed by two different reviewers, with specific scientific expertise related to the topics of the call. Remote evaluation will be performed until the end of January 2023.

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

**1. Alignment-** Living Labs must align with the Call objectives.

- Partners in the LLs should be specialized in one or more of the following themes: food security, biodiversity, climate change.
- Description of the tasks that need to be completed in order to successfully execute the sub-project.
- Justification of importance of products chosen, for the food security system of the local region.

**2. Excellence-** Projects must demonstrate a clear set of objectives congruent with the goals of ECO-READY.

- Demonstration of excellence in the above themes.
- Demonstration of excellence in networking & partnerships.

**3. Impact-** Applicants must define a precise set of deliverables connected to these objectives.

- Demonstration of impact on the ECO-READY ecosystem. Describe how the proposal aims to create an impact on target stakeholders (i.e., consumers of food products; farmers, food processors, and retailers as "owners" of the food security problems; policy makers at local, regional, and central European level).
- Demonstration of impact on the attainment of the following objectives: improved modularity and biodiversity through incentivizing local production, improving responsive redundancy and reducing food losses.
- Demonstration of contribution to the development of resilient food systems (e.g. Eight qualities of Resilient Systems).

**4. Value-** Proposals must include a comprehensive budget definition including the amount of funding requested and how it will be spent, the implementation steps and consequently the value/ benefit.**5. Implementation-** Applicants must provide credible evidence that the project delivery team has the necessary skills, infrastructure and management experience to be able to deliver the project in the timescales and budget specified.

- Coherence and effectiveness of the work plan.
- Appropriateness of the skills and experience of the team. More specifically: relevant experience in EU funded projects, familiarity with EU agricultural, environmental, and climate policies (e.g. proximity to Natura 2000 sites, beneficiaries of CAP subsidies), ability to collect primary and secondary data for the environmental and the social LCA and willingness to share the socially-sensitive information, proven experience with stakeholder participatory approach for food security, biodiversity and climate foresight scenarios, demonstrated openness to implementing food production or farm economics in the context of experimentation and paradigm shifting approaches, capacity to perform social and environmental data analysis based on different scenarios.
- Quality of the team as a whole, including complementarity, gender balance and diversity.
- Necessary resources (e.g. availability of personnel, infrastructure, equipment) in order to participate in events/ workshops/ infodays/ behavioural experiments and engage with stakeholders.
- Access to diverse networks of various stakeholders connected to the project (e.g. farmers, food processors, policymakers, and members of the scientific community). Inclusivity and engagement with local and marginalized communities in the development of resilience strategies will also be considered.

**All award criteria have the same weight. Each award criterion can be scored from 1 to 5 with a threshold of 3 points in each category, and a minimum of 15 points in total.**

Following the evaluation process, proposals will be internally ranked based on the evaluation score. If a consensus between evaluators is needed, the debated proposals will be called for interviews by the external experts. All applicants will receive their Evaluation Summary Report (ESR).

**Important note:** Proposals will be ranked according to the 4 different zones and geographical coverage. In order to safeguard geographical coverage among the predefined 4 bioclimatic regions, if two proposals come from the same region, the one with the higher score will be selected whereas the next proposal in the ranking list will be considered provided that it comes from another country and that it is above threshold. The aim is within each bioclimatic cluster to have LLs representing distinct countries. For example, if we have three proposals within the same bioclimatic region ranked as follows: first from country X, second from country X and third from country Z, the first and third proposals will be selected.

### 3.5.4 Redress procedure

Within 5 working days of the reception of the ESR, applicants may submit a request for redress to the ECO-READY Monitoring Committee via the following mail: [eco-ready@opencallhub.eu](mailto:eco-ready@opencallhub.eu), if they believe there was a shortcoming in the way their proposal was evaluated, which may have affected the final decision on whether they were selected as beneficiary or not, or if they believe the results of the eligibility checks are incorrect. A designated internal review committee of the ECO-READY project will examine the requests for redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests and equal treatment of all applicants. Requests for redress must be:

- Related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks;
- Clearly describe the complaint and reasons for potential consideration;
- Received within the time limit (5 working days) from the ESR information letter delivered;
- Sent by the lead partner of the LL that submitted the proposal.

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence that a shortcoming(s) could have affected the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated by the internal review committee.

The redress process is concerned with the evaluation and/or eligibility checking process:

- The committee will not call into question the scientific or technical judgment of appropriately qualified experts.
- Any redress request that calls into question the scientific or technical judgment of appropriately qualified experts will be automatically rejected.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that could have affected the final decision on whether to fund it or not. This means, for example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway to meet other criteria.
- The evaluation score following any re-evaluation will be regarded as definitive. This score could be lower than the original score. Only one request for redress per proposal will be considered by the committee. All requests for redress will be treated in confidence.

### 3.5.5 Contracting

After the Open Call evaluation conclusion and projects selection, the ECO-READY Monitoring Committee assisting the project Coordinator, will start the contract preparation in collaboration with the winning applications' representatives. Contract preparation will go via an administrative and financial checking. On a case-by-case approach, a phone call or teleconference may be needed for clarification.

The objective of the contract preparation is fulfilling the legal requirements between the ECO-READY consortium and every beneficiary of the call. The items covered will be:

- To validate the status information of the Living Lab, the following documents will be required from all partners of the winning LLs:
  - **Legal existence:** Company Register, Official Gazette or other official document per country showing the name of the organization, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
  - Legal proof that the applicant's organization is not under liquidation or has filed for bankruptcy.
- **Bank Account Information:** The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a form signed by the legal representative and the bank representative. The account should be a business bank account of each beneficiary. The financial information should not be older than three months.

The Subgrantee assumes full responsibility on the bank account info they provide through *Annex 4 – Bank account information*. For instance, if they provide a wrong IBAN, and the ECO-READY team proceeds with the transfer to that account, they will assume any costs related to the transfer (expenses with the return of the amount from the wrong bank account and/or expenses with the new transfer will be deducted from their grant transfer). Ultimately, in a worst-case scenario, if the ECO-READY team does not manage to recover the amount transferred to the wrong bank account, the beneficiary who provided a wrong IBAN will not be able to claim that payment.

The request, by the ECO-READY consortium, of the above documentation will be done within designated deadlines. The sub-project contract negotiations will be carried out from February to April 2024. In case negotiations have not been concluded within the above period, the application is automatically rejected and the next application in the reserve list is invited.

The Sub-grant agreement will be signed between the ECO-READY consortium represented by the ECO-READY coordinator/treasurer, the Open Call Manager (FSH) and the legal representative of the Open Call winner.

## 4. Implementation of ECO-READY Living Labs (LLs)

### 4.1 Implementation timeline and activities

The implementation of sub-projects performed by the selected Living Labs will last for 24 months and will be divided into 3 phases:

- Phase 1: Design- Deliver an activity plan M1- M6

- Phase 2: Development- Implement the activities/Demonstrate the results and outcomes M7-M17
- Phase 3: Impact - Finalize activities and draft a sustainability plan M18-M24

Each of the 3 phases will be completed with submission of deliverables, which summarized the work done during that phase, namely an Activity plan resulting from Phase 1, Results demonstration/outcomes as a result of Phase 2, and Final report with sustainability plan as a result of Phase 3.

	Description	Funding	Deliverable
Phase 1 M1-M6	Design	30%	Activity plan
Phase 2 M7-M17	Development	40%	Demonstration results/outcomes
Phase 3 M18-M24	Impact	30%	Final report with sustainability plan

Figure 7 Implementation and activities

### Other implementation requirements

- LLs must show that they collaborate effectively with other Living Labs and relevant stakeholders.
- LLs must show willingness/interest to understand modeling results, work with the dashboards.
- Living Labs must show long-term commitment to the ECO-READY project, enabling the contribution to the development and refinement of resilience strategies over time.
- A minimum 7% of the LLs' funding will be allocated to the deployment of activities such as organization of info days, workshops and informal events to promote the ECO READY results.
- The selected LLs will participate in three workshops to connect and share knowledge, whereas two workshops, focusing on the exploitation pathways will be organized to share the benefits and opportunities of joining the observatory network.

## 5. Applicants' responsibility

The selected Subgrantees are indirect beneficiaries of European Commission funding. As such, they are responsible for the proper use of the funding and ensure that the beneficiaries comply with the obligations set out in the HE specific requirements as described in Land, ocean and water for climate action (HORIZON-CL6-2022-CLIMATE-01). The obligations that are applicable to the beneficiaries include (but are not limited to):

### 5.1 Conflict of interest

The Subgrantee representative must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the subproject is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). At the same time, applicants cannot be affiliated with consortium partners, nor can they be employees of the



consortium partners. All potential conflicts of interest will be assessed carefully. Please see more info [HERE](#).

They must formally notify the ECO-READY consortium without delay of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The ECO-READY consortium may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

If the Subgrantee representative breaches any of its obligations, the Sub-grant agreement may be automatically terminated. Moreover, if the Sub-grant Agreement is terminated due to a breach made by the Subgrantee, the ECO-READY consortium reserves the right to suspend further payments to the Subgrantee and claim the Subgrantee the full refund of all payments made to the Subgrantee up to date.

## **5.2 Ethics, Data Protection & Confidentiality**

During implementation of the sub-project and for five years after the end of the sub-project, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at subcontract signing time ('confidential information').

If a Subgrantee SME requests, the Commission and the ECO-READY consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial five years. This will be explicitly stated in the Sub-grant Agreement. If information has been identified as confidential during the subproject execution or only orally, it will be considered confidential only if this is accepted by the ECO-READY Coordinator and confirmed in writing within 15 days of the oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the Agreement.

The Subgrantee representative(s) may disclose confidential information to the ECO-READY consortium and to the selected reviewers, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Applicants must confirm that all proposed services, including the means of their delivery and upkeep, have been reviewed to ensure compliance with all relevant legislation on data protection, privacy, and fundamental rights.

## **5.3 Promoting the action and giving visibility to the EU funding**

The Subgrantees must promote the sub-project, the ECO-READY project and its results, by providing the description of their project upon request from the ECO-READY Consortium and highlight the financial support of the EC.

Unless the European Commission or the ECO-READY coordinator requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must:

- a. display the EU emblem,
- b. display the ECO-READY logo, and
- c. include the following text:

*For communication activities: "This project has indirectly received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under project ECO-READY (grant agreement No 101084201)".*

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use. It is subject to general third-party use restrictions which do not permit the appropriation of the emblem, or of any similar trademark or logo, whether by registration or by any other means. Under these conditions, the Subgrantee is exempted from the obligation to obtain prior permission from the EC to use the emblem. Further detailed information on the EU emblem can be found on the Europa web page.

Any publicity made by the Subgrantee with respect to the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or ECO-READY consortium are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the ECO-READY consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- the name of the Subgrantee,
- contact address of the Subgrantee,
- the general purpose of the sub-project,
- the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the subproject; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received,
- the geographic location of the activities carried out,
- the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground,
- the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the subproject, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication,
- the publishable reports submitted to ECO-READY,
- any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and ECO-READY in the framework of the sub-project.

The Subgrantee shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and ECO-READY does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the Subgrantee representative, the ECO-READY consortium, if such permission is provided by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

## **5.4 Financial audit and controls**

The European Commission (EC) will monitor that ECO-READY beneficiaries and the Subgrantees comply with the conditions for financial support to third parties set out in Annex 1 of the ECO-READY grant

agreement and may take any action foreseen by the grant agreement in case of noncompliance vis à vis the beneficiary concerned.

Moreover, the EC may at any time during the implementation of the ECO-READY project and up to 5 (five) years after the end of the ECO-READY project, arrange for financial audits to be carried out, by external auditors, or by the EC services themselves including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF). The audit procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC. Such audits may cover financial, systemic and other aspects (such as accounting and management principles) relating to the proper execution of the grant agreement. They shall be carried out on a confidential basis.

The Subgrantee shall make available directly to the EC all detailed information and data that may be requested by the EC or any representative authorised by it, with a view to verifying that the grant agreement is properly managed and performed in accordance with its provisions and that costs have been charged in compliance with it. This information and data must be precise, complete and effective.

The Subgrantee shall keep all sub-project deliverables and the originals or, in exceptional cases, duly authenticated copies – including electronic copies – of all documents relating to the sub-project contract for up to five years from the end of the project. These shall be made available to the EC when requested during any audit under the grant agreement.

In order to carry out these audits, the Subgrantee shall ensure that the EC's services and any external body(ies) authorised by it have on-the-spot access at all reasonable times, notably to the sub-project applicant offices, to its computer data, to its accounting data and to all the information needed to carry out those audits, including information on individual salaries of persons involved in the sub-project. They shall ensure that the information is readily available on the spot at the moment of the audit and, if so requested, that data be handed over in an appropriate form.

On the basis of the findings made during the financial audit, a provisional report shall be drawn up. It shall be sent by the EC or its authorised representative to the Subgrantee concerned, which may make observations thereon within one month of receiving it. The Commission may decide not to take into account observations conveyed or documents sent after that deadline. The final report shall be sent to the beneficiary concerned within two months of expiry of the aforesaid deadline.

On the basis of the conclusions of the audit, the EC shall take all appropriate measures which it considers necessary, including the issuing of recovery orders regarding all or part of the payments made by it and the application of any applicable sanction.

The European Court of Auditors shall have the same rights as the EC, notably right of access, for the purpose of checks and audits, without prejudice to its own rules.

In addition, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in accordance with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996 concerning on-the-spot checks and inspections carried out by the Commission in order to protect the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

## **5.5 Sub-project Communication**

The Subgrantee representative should:

- Provide any notices in writing to the ECO-READY consortium.
- Notify the ECO-READY coordinator immediately of any change of persons or contact details. The address list shall be accessible to all concerned.

- Notify the ECO-READY coordinator about the dissemination activities that the LL will organise. A minimum 7% of the LLs' funding will be allocated to the deployment of activities such as organization of info days, workshops and informal events to promote the ECO READY results. The selected LLs will participate in three workshops to connect and share knowledge, whereas two workshops, focusing on the exploitation pathways will be organized to share the benefits and opportunities of joining the observatory network.

## 5.6 Originality of the sub-granted projects

It is required that applications submitted are based on original works by the applicants and that their foreseen developments are free from third party rights. ECO-READY consortium is not obliged to verify the authenticity of the ownership of the foreseen products/services. Any issues delivered from third party claims that arise as a result of the sub-granted projects are on the sole responsibility of the applicant.

## 5.7 IPR Ownership of the sub-granted projects

Each Subgrantee that generates results owns the attached Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) generated during the development process and will own results that are not IPRs. Each contractor is responsible for the management and protection of its IPRs and bears the costs associated with this.

The Subgrantees funded within the ECO-READY project will be the unique owners of the technologies created within the framework of their sub-granted projects. Parts of their works will be requested to be public for ECO-READY dissemination purposes.

## 5.8 Liability

The ECO-READY consortium and the European Commission cannot be held liable for any acts or omissions of the applicant in relation to the selected sub-granted project implemented by the Subgrantee. The ECO-READY consortium shall not be liable for any defaults of any products, processes or services created in the subgranted project. Including, for instance, anomalies in the functioning or performance thereof.

In case any damage is caused to a third party by the Subgrantee, the Subgrantee will assume full responsibility for the damage caused. In no way will the ECO-READY Consortium be responsible for any damages caused by the Subgrantee. Subgrantees shall bear sole responsibility for ensuring that their acts within the framework of their sub-granted projects do not infringe third parties' rights.

## 5.9 Do Not Significant Harm (DNSH)

Subgrantees must always respect the 'Do Not Significant Harm Principle'. The Commission Communication on the European Green Deal introduced the green oath to 'do no harm'. The 'Do not Significant Harm' (DNSH) principle has been further specified in the EU Regulation on the establishment of a framework to facilitate sustainable investments, commonly defined as the 'EU Taxonomy Regulation'. Six environmental objectives are listed in Article 913 of the EU Taxonomy and Article 17 specifies what can constitute a 'significant harm' for these objectives. Thus, the regulation provides that no measure should lead to significant harm to any of the six environmental objectives within the meaning of Article 17 of the Taxonomy Regulation.

## 5.10 ECO-READY Observatory

The ECO-READY observatory will be a real-time surveillance system, for participants to interact and co-create knowledge surrounding resilience, climate change, biodiversity, food security and stakeholders behavior. The observatory will be offered as an e-platform and as a smart phone application developed and customized for such occasions. ECOREADY will assess the influence of policies and climate change on socio-economic constraints that greatly fluctuate across member states, and produce targeted resilience and mitigation policies, addressing regional needs, reflected by the inputs of the Living Labs. The digital Observatory will be available to society, policymakers, scientific community, and the agri-food industry.

The network of at least 10 Living Labs covering all bio-climatic regions in Europe, will contribute to the co-creation and testing of the following outputs:

1. Development of at least 50 quantified (modeled) scenarios, addressing the regional needs of the Living Labs (5 per LL);
2. Development of policy recommendations and contingency plans on the basis of the quantified scenarios that will be included in the Observatory;
3. Development of resilience strategies, as a result of (2) and (3) that will be included in the Observatory.

## 6. Checklist

- **Is your proposal eligible?** The eligibility criteria are given in chapter 3 “Proposal Submission and Selection”. Make sure that you satisfy the minimum participation requirements (entity from eligible countries).
- **Is your proposal complete?** Have you completed all mandatory OC questions?
- **Have you checked all technical details related to submission?** Difficulties with application and submission arising from technical aspects will not be taken into consideration by the ECO-READY project. Applicants should do test rounds and make sure to submit everything on time.
- **Does your proposal fulfill questions requests/comments?** Proposals should be precise, concise and must answer requested questions, which are designed to correspond to the applied evaluation. Omitting requested information will almost certainly lead to lower scores and possible rejection.
- **Have you maximised your chances?** There will be strong competition. Therefore, edit your proposal tightly, strengthen or eliminate weak points.
- **Have you submitted your proposal before the deadline?** It is strongly recommended not to wait until the last minute to submit the proposal. Failure of the proposal to arrive in time for any reason, including network communications delays, is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. The time of receipt of the message as recorded by the submission system will be definitive.
- **Have you provided the necessary annexes?**
- **Have you described the dissemination activities as 7% of your budget?**

- **Does your planned work fit with ECO-READY Open Call for establishing a Living Labs Network?** Check that your proposed work does indeed address the topics open in this call and addresses all OC issues.
- **Does your proposal address Biogeographical & Product Specialization?** Check that your proposed work does indeed address all the requested fields.
- **Does one of the participants from each Living Lab take up the role of “exploitation actor”, sustain LL after the project’s end, as part of the ECO-READY Observatory Network?**
- **Do you need further advice and support?** You can reach out to the ECO-READY Open Call team via [eco-ready@opencallhub.eu](mailto:eco-ready@opencallhub.eu) . Technical team can provide assistance to the extent possible, up to September 28th at 17:00 CET (48h prior to the deadline).

## 7. Points of contact

For all the information related to ECO-READY Open Calls please state your question on FAQ section on the Open Call Hub/ECO-READY OC Tab, <https://opencallhub.eu/> or contact us at [eco-ready@opencallhub.eu](mailto:eco-ready@opencallhub.eu)