



CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND GUIDE FOR APPLICANTS

Call reference: EUBA-EFSA-2024-BIOHAW-01

Call title: Pathway to animal welfare quantitative risk assessment: piloting a harmonised collection of welfare data in pigs.

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

Brief description of the call objectives and key messages:

The scope of this call is to select (existing and new) animal-based measures (ABMs) and related management-, resources- and environmental-based (so called 'context') data from sows and piglets and from different housing systems and practices, including slaughter, to collect in the field on a large scale and in a harmonised way across EU MSs. These data are to be used for developing a freely accessible prototype Database for analysing the correlation between ABMs and related context data and enabling future quantitative risk assessment of the welfare on-farm of sows and piglets.



INDICATIVE PROCEDURE TIMETABLE

Milestone	Date ¹	Comments
Launch date	23/05/2024	Date of call publication on EFSA's website and in the EU Funding and Tenders portal.
Deadline for applicants to raise clarification questions to EFSA	06/11/2024	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	08/11/2024	Replies will be provided on EFSA's webpage where this Call is published and which the applicants are requested to consult regularly.
Deadline for submission of proposals	14/11/2024 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	February 2025	Estimated <i>Attention: outcome of the present call will be communicated to all applicants to the e-mail address indicated in their proposal. Accordingly, applicants who have submitted proposals under the present call are strongly invited to check regularly the inbox in question.</i>
Grant agreement(s) signature	March 2025	Estimated

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



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ANNEXES

Annex 1: General model grant agreement

Documents to be submitted with proposals (to be downloaded from the EU Funding and Tender portal Submission Service, from 'Part B Templates', see also 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 (all requirements including CVs)

Annex 6: Award criteria template

Estimated budget template



1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY AND CONDITIONS²

1.1 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

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

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

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

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

1. collecting and analysing data with a view to facilitating risk assessment by the Authority, including assessment tasks in the field of human nutrition in relation to Community legislation, especially the compiling and/or processing of scientific data on any substance, treatment, food or feed, preparation, organism or contaminant which may be linked with a health risk, and the collection and/or analysis of data on the exposure of Member States' populations to a health risk associated with food or feed;
2. preparing the harmonisation of risk assessment methods;
3. sharing data of common interest, e.g. the establishing of databases.

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

The present Call for proposals and guide for applicants (hereinafter referred to as "the Call") is procedurally governed by Title VIII of Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2018/1046 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 July 2018 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union.

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

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

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

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



This call is based on EFSA Founding regulation⁶ and EFSA's 2024 Work Programme for grants and operational procurements as presented in Annex XII of the Programming Document 2024-2026, available on the EFSA's website⁷.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CALL

BACKGROUND

In the framework of the Farm to Fork (F2F) Strategy⁸, one of the priority areas of the European Commission is the revision of the animal welfare (thereinafter referred to as AW) legislation to address citizens' calls for higher welfare standards and a greener agriculture. The approval of a resolution⁹ on the F2F strategy by the European Parliament confirmed the high political interest on the matter. Stricter animal welfare standards are also among the sustainable agricultural practices highlighted in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030¹⁰ and in the Green deal¹¹.

In this context, EFSA envisages to develop by 2027 new quantitative and qualitative methodologies for its scientific AW assessments and implement by 2030 a standardised data collection activity to assess the welfare of several animal species.

To investigate which are the current limitations to this development and how they can be overcome, in 2022 EFSA outsourced the development of a roadmap for action, entitled "More Welfare: towards new risk assessment methodologies and harmonised animal welfare data in the EU" (Paulović et al., 2024¹²). Among the main conclusions drawn out by the roadmap analysis of the current state of play, gaps and challenges, it resulted that one of the areas to work on (refer to roadmap project proposal on "AW data across EU and shared platform to align existing data"), for fulfilling EFSA vision is the need of data and standardised collection methodologies across the EU Member States (hereafter referred to as EU MSs) in terms of animal categories, housing systems and practices.

⁶ 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.

⁷ <https://www.efsa.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2024-01/programming-document-2024-2026.pdf>

⁸ f2f_action-plan_2020_strategy-info_en.pdf (europa.eu)

⁹ TA MEF (europa.eu)

¹⁰ communication-annex-eu-biodiversity-strategy-2030_en.pdf (europa.eu)

¹¹ european-green-deal-communication_en.pdf (europa.eu)

¹² Paulović, Tea; Jong, Ingrid de; Ouweltjes, Wijbrand; Martin Valls, Gerard Eduard; Llonch Obiols, Pol; Ko, Heng-Lun; Kieffer, Victor; Lapeyre, Clara; Campana, Camilla; Wille, Hannah; Aleksandra Jasinska; Spoolder, Hans, 2024. Development of a roadmap for action for the project More Welfare: towards new risk assessment methodologies and harmonised animal welfare data in the EU. EFSA supporting publication 2024: 21(1):EN-8566. 163 pp. doi:10.2903/sp.efsa.2024.EN-8566.



Since 2004, the welfare of pigs on farm has been extensively investigated by EFSA (EFSA, 2004¹³, 2005¹⁴, 2007a¹⁵, b¹⁶, c¹⁷, 2014¹⁸; EFSA AHAW Panel, 2012a¹⁹, 2014²⁰, 2022²¹). EFSA has identified pigs as an ideal candidate for a pilot project aimed at assessing the pig population in the EU. This choice is due to the substantial number of pigs bred and slaughtered, as well as the diverse and representative husbandry systems across EU Member States.

Although several databases/research projects hosting information on pig welfare, and related animal-based measures (thereinafter referred to as ABMs) already exist and could be considered as potential valuable sources of data, as concluded from the roadmap project, many different welfare assessment protocols are applied for pigs across the EU. This indicates that currently there is still a lack of standardisation of pig welfare data, impairing in many cases a quantitative assessment of the welfare of pigs.

A limited amount of data on ABMs was also identified as a source of uncertainty for making quantitative conclusions in the EFSA 2022 Scientific opinion on the welfare of pigs on farm (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022); therefore, conclusions relied largely on expert opinion.

The roadmap highlighted the opportunity of focusing the welfare data collection towards specific animal categories. Sows, gilts and piglets have been identified as good animal models for the current project. Specifically, this call for proposals focuses on sows and piglets (hereafter the term 'sows' is used to describe both gilts and sows, unless otherwise specified) along all life stages between the period prior to service (i.e., early post-weaning period - for sows only) until weaning (Fig. 1). The animal category 'piglet' is intended as a pig from birth to weaning from a sow.

Existing data gaps for these two categories were identified in the EFSA 2022 Scientific opinion (SO) on the welfare of pigs on farm (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022), for example, i) when investigating the ABMs reported in the scientific literature for assessing the welfare implications related to the grouping of sows after weaning at different timing periods, and ii) in relation to the kind and amount of enrichment materials which elicit explorative behaviour in lactating sows and piglets and reduce the incidence of behaviours that are detrimental to animal welfare (such as tail biting or other abnormal behaviours). Too limited data were also identified about ABMs that can be monitored at slaughterhouses to assess on-farm welfare of sows (e.g., vulva lesions).

¹³ Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission related to welfare aspects of the castration of piglets. The EFSA Journal (2004) 91, 1–18.

¹⁴ EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare, 2005. Opinion of the Scientific Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) on a request from the Commission related to welfare of weaners and rearing pigs: effects of different space allowances and floor. EFSA Journal 2005; 3(10):268, 149 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2005.268.

¹⁵ Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission on Animal health and welfare in fattening pigs in relation to housing and husbandry. The EFSA Journal (2007) 564, 1–14.

¹⁶ Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from the Commission on Animal health and welfare aspects of different housing and husbandry systems for adult breeding boars, pregnant, farrowing sows and unweaned piglets. The EFSA Journal (2007) 572, 1–13.

¹⁷ Scientific Opinion of the Panel on Animal Health and Welfare on a request from Commission on the risks associated with tail biting in pigs and possible means to reduce the need for tail docking considering the different housing and husbandry systems. The EFSA Journal (2007) 611, 1–13.

¹⁸ EFSA (European Food Safety Authority), 2014. Assessment of documentation provided on the use of rubber slats in the flooring of pig holdings. EFSA Journal 2014; 12(12):3959, 43 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2014.3959.

¹⁹ EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW) Scientific Opinion on the use of animal-based measures to assess welfare of broilers. EFSA Journal 2012; 10(7):2774. [74 pp.] doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2774.

²⁰ EFSA AHAW Panel (EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare), 2014. Scientific Opinion concerning a multifactorial approach on the use of animal and non-animal-based measures to assess the welfare of pigs. EFSA Journal 2014; 12(5):3702, 101 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2014.3702

²¹ EFSA AHAW Panel (EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare), Nielsen SS, Alvarez J, Bicout DJ, Calistri P, Canali E, Drewe JA, Garin-Bastuji B, Gonzales Rojas JL, Gortázar Schmidt C, Herskin M, Michel V, Miranda Chueca MA, Padalino B, Roberts HC, Stahl K, Velarde A, Viltrop A, Winckler C, Edwards S, Ivanova S, Leeb C, Wechsler B, Fabris C, Lima E, Mosbach-Schulz O, Van der Stede Y, Vitali M and Spoolder H, 2022. Scientific Opinion on the welfare of pigs on farm. EFSA Journal 2022; 20(8):7421, 319 pp. <https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2022.7421>.

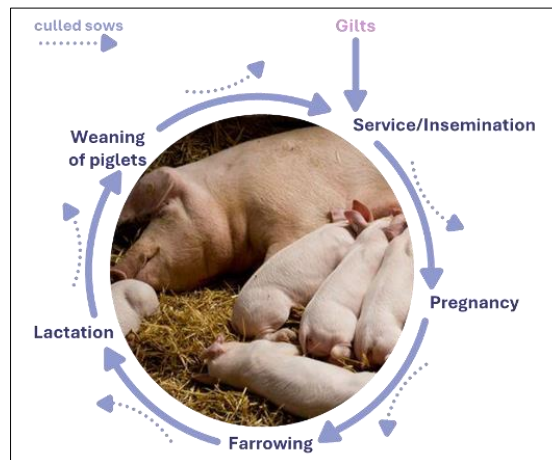


Fig. 1: Life stages of sows (including gilts and culled sows) and piglets object of the current call for proposals.

OBJECTIVES

The aim of this grant procedure is to conclude with a direct agreement for the execution of specific tasks over a clearly defined period as outlined in this call for proposals.

The overall purpose of the call for proposals is to pilot a harmonised and large-scale collection of welfare data from sows and piglets across EU MSs for enabling future quantitative risk assessment of the welfare of sows and piglets on farm. This activity is divided in 2 main parts:

1. to identify a set of (existing and, eventually, also new) ABMs and related context data used for assessing the welfare on farm of sows and piglets that can be collected in the field (on farm and, from culled sows, at slaughterhouses) on a large scale and in a harmonised way across several EU MSs, considering the different housing systems and practices, and
2. to develop a freely accessible and online-based database that contains the information on the selected ABMs and related context data collected from sows and piglets directly from the field (see point 1 above). Data collection will be done following a well-defined protocol implemented by trained field evaluators.

For this specific call, it is worth specifying that:

- the data collection should be organised considering, but not exclusively, the housing systems and practices, the highly relevant welfare consequences, the ABMs, including, for the sows, the ABMs for collection at slaughterhouses to monitor the level of welfare on farm, and the exposure variables (factors) identified and described in the EFSA 2022 Scientific Opinion on the welfare of pigs on farm (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022);

- the welfare data to collect are on ABMs and the related management-, resource- and environment-based (MB, RB, EB) data (so called 'context data') as defined in EFSA Guidance for Risk assessment in AW (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2012b²²) and in the roadmap (Paulović et al., 2024).

The primary goal is to develop a freely accessible, online-based database and to assist EFSA in analysing correlations between ABMs and related contextual data, thereby enhancing EFSA's capacity to respond to forthcoming inquiries from the European Commission, the European Parliament, or MSs.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

²² EFSA Panel on Animal Health and Welfare (AHAW); Guidance on risk assessment for animal welfare. EFSA Journal 2012; 10 (1):2513. 30 pp. doi:10.2903/j.efsa.2012.2513.



Specific objectives and sub-objectives are listed in the table below and have to be developed considering the information presented in EFSA Scientific Opinion on the welfare of pigs (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022) and the roadmap for action on More Welfare (Paulović et al., 2024).

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES	SUB-OBJECTIVES
1. Identify and select ABMs and related management-, resource- and environment-based context data for assessing on-farm welfare of sows and piglets.	1.1 Develop the methodology to identify and select ABMs and related context data
	1.2 Build a repository of the identified ABMs and related context data
	1.3 Selection of ABMs and related context data for primary field data collection
2. Develop a prototype database populated with ABMs and context data collected from the field on a large scale across EU MSs following a protocol and testing its effectiveness.	2.1 Development of a prototype database for primary field data collection
	2.2 Development of a protocol for a harmonised collection of field data
	2.3 Selection of the sampling units/establishments for conducting the primary field data collection across the EU MSs
	2.4 Selection of field evaluators and development of training programme for primary field data collection
	2.5 Pilot phase, protocol fine tuning and validation, and methodology
	2.6 Development of a data sampling plan and executing a large-scale primary field data collection

Objective 1. Identify and select ABMs and related management-, resource- and environment-based context data for assessing on-farm welfare of sows and piglets.

This objective focuses on identifying (*e.g.* via scientific projects, quality assurance schemes, etc) and collecting in a repository ABMs and related management-, resource- and environment-based (MB, RB and EB) context data that are used in the EU MSs and the United Kingdom to assess on-farm welfare of the following pig categories: sows (including gilts, along all life stages between the period prior to service (*i.e.*, early post-weaning period - for sows only) until weaning) and piglets (from birth up to weaning from a sow).

Existing ABMs that have been developed and applied, as detailed in scientific literature or in practice, are included in this database. Additionally, ABMs not yet documented in literature, or those that are new or under development, and deemed potentially valuable for assessing the welfare of sows and piglets on farms, may also be incorporated. From this initial repository, selected ABMs and corresponding contextual data will be chosen for the primary field data collection, as outlined in Objective 2.



Sub-objective 1.1 Develop the methodology to identify and select ABMs and related context data

Develop a comprehensive methodology to identify and compile existing, and potentially new, ABMs along with related MB, RB, and EB context data (hereafter referred to as context data) into a repository (see Sub-objective 1.2). This data is used on farms (and/or in slaughterhouses for sows) to monitor the welfare on farm of sows (including gilts) and piglets. The methodology should specify the tools and data sources for identification and provide a detailed explanation of the reasoning and process by which ABMs and context data will be selected from the complete initial repository (see Sub-objective 1.3) and incorporated into the primary field data collection outlined in Sub-objective 2.6.

Sub-objective 1.2 Build a repository of the ABMs and related context data.

Build a complete repository of the (existing and new) ABMs that have been identified and the related context data.

The repository should encompass all pertinent information necessary to characterize each ABM, known as 'metadata'. This includes the definition, description, interpretation, assessment methodology, and scoring system of the ABM. Additionally, it should contain supplementary context data related to management, environment, and resource characteristics, such as housing type and features, climate conditions, pen size, among others. The sources of all data included in the repository as well as data providers (owners) must be documented.

Sub-objective 1.3 Selection of ABMs and related context data for primary field data collection

Select ABMs and related context data from the repository built under Sub-objective 1.2 that will be used for primary field data collection activities (Sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6) for the selected pig categories and provide a detailed justification for the selection criteria.

The selected ABMs should be (or believed to be) valid for assessing sows and piglets' on-farm welfare along all life stages between the period prior to service (i.e., early post-weaning period - for sows only) to weaning from a sow and, as a minimum, include those that can be used to assess the highly relevant welfare consequences for sows (and gilts) and piglets identified in the EFSA 2022 SO on the welfare of pigs on farm (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022).

Note: It is recommended to focus on ABMs that are easy to collect (manually and/or automatically) and do not require invasive or laboratory techniques to be measured. If ABMs are included that may require invasive or laboratory techniques, these should be well justified.

The selected context data, as a minimum, should include the ones reported as 'exposure variables' in the EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022 (i.e., enrichment, space allowance, size of the pen/crate, crating time, time in the crate, grouping time) and other important variables such as: flooring type, climate conditions, feeding management. Information relevant for further characterising the animals, such as genetics, litter size and (functional) teat number, etc might also be considered.

Objective 2. Develop a prototype database populated with ABMs and context data collected from the field on a large scale across EU MSs following a protocol and testing its effectiveness.

This objective aims to develop a prototype database for managing ABMs and associated context data, collected through primary field data collection (Sub-objective 2.6). It involves harmonised collection of large-scale field data on selected ABMs (from Sub-objective 1.3) following a (Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)-like) protocol (Sub-objective 2.2) by trained evaluators (Sub-objective 2.4). The data will be gathered from a significant number and variety (e.g. housing systems and practices) of farms and slaughterhouses across the EU MSs.



Sub-objective 2.1 Development of a prototype database for primary field data collection

This sub-objective focuses on the development of a prototype database to be used to collect all primary field data from selected ABMs and related context data for the relevant pig categories (Sub-objective 2.6). The database should be freely accessible.

Sub-objective 2.2 Development of a protocol for a harmonised collection of field data

This sub-objective is dedicated to creating a detailed, standardized protocol (similar to a SOP and a check-list) for harmonized data collection of selected ABMs and context data from commercial pig farms and slaughterhouses across EU MSs (Sub-objective 1.3). Trained field evaluators (Sub-objective 2.4) will implement this protocol in chosen establishments (Sub-objective 2.3).

The protocol will be tailored to accommodate each production phase of the targeted pig categories, spanning from pre-service to weaning, and including the slaughtering of sows, as illustrated in Figure 1. It aims to be as concise as necessary to populate the database, with a clear explanation of its granularity.

For each selected ABM, the protocol will define:

- A precise definition, interpretation, and related context data.
- The target population and sample size, detailing the animal category and the number of individuals/pens assessed.
- The methodology for assessment, specifying techniques or tools used (e.g., videos, direct observation), conditions (e.g., during feeding or resting), and duration (e.g., 4 hours).
- The location and sample size for observations, such as farm or slaughterhouse.

Visual aids like figures or schemes may be incorporated to enhance clarity.

Final approval of the protocol by EFSA is required before training evaluators, and before initiating the piloting phase or main field data collection (sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6).

Sub-objective 2.3 Selection of the sampling units/establishments for conducting the primary field data collection across the EU MSs

This sub-objective focuses on detailing the selection of the establishments (housing systems (for collecting data from sows and piglets) and slaughterhouses (for collecting data from sows only)) where the evaluators of Sub-objective 2.4 will conduct the primary field data collection on ABMs and related context data under Sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6.

The selection of the establishments should be based on types and distribution of pig farms and housing systems and practices across the EU MSs and take into account different geographical areas and climate conditions (i.e., N, E, S, W) on a large scale; as a minimum, it should ensure representativeness of all housing systems and practices (e.g., mutilations) described in EFSA Scientific opinion on the welfare of pigs on farm (EFSA AHAW Panel, 2022). Criteria and justification for the selection of the establishments will be provided.

A list of the selected establishments (farms and slaughterhouses), including the location and husbandry system characteristics (housing systems and practices) will be provided; the use of schemes and maps is recommended to visualise the selection across the EU MSs.

Sub-objective 2.4 Selection of field evaluators and development of training programme for primary field data collection

This sub-objective involves selecting and training field evaluators who will execute the primary field data collection as outlined in Sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6, following the protocol developed under Sub-



objective 2.2. Criteria for choosing evaluators, including their background and expertise, must be clearly defined to justify their selection.

Additionally, measures must be in place to ensure that evaluators are available to perform all sampling activities within the specified timelines of these sub-objectives.

A detailed training program will also be established to maintain the quality of data collected. This program will include the training plan, duration, facilitators, and methodology. Additionally, measures must be in place to ensure intra- and inter- reliability of the field evaluators. While training can be conducted in multiple languages, English is preferred, and all training materials provided to EFSA will be in English. If training or data collection occurs in other languages, this must be specified, although all information submitted to the database (Sub-objective 2.1) must be in English.

Sub-objective 2.5 Pilot phase, protocol fine tuning and validation, and methodology

This sub-objective focuses on developing and implementing a detailed piloting phase of the data collection aiming at testing and fine-tuning the protocol (Sub-objective 2.2). The goal is to verify the successful development of Sub-objectives 2.1 through 2.4 and facilitate the transition to Sub-objective 2.6. The efficacy of the pilot phase must be demonstrated, potentially through a process validation report, to justify moving forward without revisions to the earlier sub-objectives.

Therefore, a comprehensive methodology for this pilot phase will be formulated, covering sample design, sample size per establishment and pig category, characteristics of the establishments, total number of evaluators and their distribution across establishments, sampling frequency, and timeline. Additionally, a robust validation procedure will be developed to ensure the protocol supports harmonized, reproducible, high-quality, and reliable data collection across EU MSs and various husbandry systems.

Sub-objective 2.6 Development of a data sampling plan and execute a large-scale primary field data collection

This sub-objective is dedicated to the development of a data sampling plan and the execution of a large-scale primary field data collection throughout EU MSs. This collection will focus on the ABMs and related context data previously selected from Objective 1, in establishments such as farms and slaughterhouses identified per Sub-objective 2.3.

The sampling plan will include detailed descriptions of the tasks to be carried out, integrating insights gained from Sub-objective 2.5 and incorporating any necessary revisions to deliverables from Sub-objectives 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4. Field collection of ABMs and context data will be conducted in accordance with this sampling plan, utilizing the evaluators trained under Sub-objective 2.4 using the protocol established in Sub-objective 2.2. Data gathered from this primary field collection will be used to populate the database described in Sub-objective 2.1.

The plan should, as minimum, include:

- a. sample design, with sample size calculation (e.g., the number of animals, the number of establishments, the number of field evaluators for executing the sampling in farms and slaughterhouses),
- b. sampling execution (e.g., frequency of sampling, timing, and evaluators' distribution across the sampling sites),
- c. update frequency (e.g., every 3-4 months) on the state of play of the sampling plan (location, timing, completion, pending, etc.),
- d. budget, logistics, and resources,
- e. estimation of the percentage of the establishment that will be visited after 6 and 12 months from the start of the primary field data collection to monitor the state of advancement of the sampling plan,
- f. quality and risk management considerations.



1.3 TASKS, DELIVERABLES, TIMELINES, MEETINGS AND PAYMENTS

Sub-Objectives and Tasks	Core task	Deliverables	Deadline
<p>Task 1: Prepare an inception report summarising the kick-off meeting and presenting the workplan of the entire project duration. agreed with EFSA.</p> <p>The inception report should also provide the selection criteria, number and selection process of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the establishments that will be visited for the primary field data collection under sub-objective 2.6 (Linked to sub-objective 2.3) - the field evaluators and the guarantees in place to ensure their availability. <p>The report should also include an updated Gantt chart of the tasks.</p>	Yes	<p>Deliverable 1: Inception report²³, containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - summary of the discussion and agreement from the kick-off meeting and presenting the workplan in agreement with EFSA of the entire project duration. - Detailed outline on the selection process to be followed, including geographical areas, climate conditions and characteristics (estimate number for each type of establishment: farms or slaughterhouses, housing systems and practices), of the establishments where sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6 will be conducted. - Detailed outline on the selection process to be followed, including relevant background requirements, expertise, and number of field evaluators that will conduct sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6. - Considerations for the guarantees to ensure availability of technicians in line with the execution. <p>The inception report shall be submitted in UK-English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the charts in MS-Excel format.</p> <p>After the submission of EFSA comments, a revised version of the report reflecting agreed changes will be re-submitted no longer than 15 days later.</p> <p>The inception report will be agreed by EFSA via written procedure within two weeks after its re-submission.</p>	Within 1 month from kick-off meeting
<p>Task 2: <i>Linked to sub-objective 1.1</i></p> <p>Develop a detailed methodology pertinent for addressing sub-objectives 1.2 and 1.3 (identification, collection and selection of ABMs and related context data)</p>	Yes	<p>Deliverable 2: Methodology report</p> <p>The Methodology report shall be submitted in English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the charts in MS-Excel.</p> <p>After the submission of EFSA comments, a revised version of the methodology report reflecting changes agreed at the interim meeting</p>	Within 1.5 months from kick-off meeting

²³ All reports shall be drafted according to the provided EFSA template for external scientific report.



		<p>1 will be submitted at the latest 15 days after the meeting has taken place.</p> <p>The methodology report will be agreed by EFSA via written procedure within two weeks after its re-submission.</p>	
<p>Task 3: <i>Linked to sub-objectives 1.2 and 1.3</i></p> <p>Build a repository of existing and new ABMs and related context data that can be used to assess on-farm welfare for the selected pig categories, and then, from the repository, select a relevant number of ABMs and context data that will be used for the primary field data collection under sub-objective 2.6.</p>	Yes	<p>Deliverable 3: Interim report 1, containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The approved methodology report. - The repository of existing and new ABMs and associated context data. - A justified selection of ABMs and related context data for primary field data collection. - The piloting phase plan. <p>The report shall be submitted in English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the charts in MS-Excel.</p>	Within 5 months from kick-off meeting
<p>Task 4: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.5</i></p> <p>Provide a detailed plan for the piloting phase, which includes amongst other relevant parameters, the number and type of sites, description of the sites, number of evaluators, timeline.</p>	Yes	<p>The repository should be submitted in XLSX/XLSM (MS-Excel) format.</p> <p>A revised version of the deliverable reflecting changes agreed at the interim meeting 2 will be submitted at the latest 15 days after the meeting has taken place.</p> <p>The selection of ABMs and related context data for primary field data collection, and the plan for the pilot phase should be agreed by EFSA via written procedure within two weeks after re-submission and before proceeding with the following tasks.</p>	
<p>Task 5: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.1</i></p> <p>Develop a prototype database that will be populated with the field data collected under sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6.</p> <p>The database must be designed and managed to ensure data quality also in terms of traceability.</p> <p>The database should be interoperable or exportable into other database formats; specifically, the database should be structured according to a data model and follow controlled terminologies that will take into account existing standards developed by EFSA and that can be adapted to specific needs.</p>	No	<p>Deliverable 4: Interim report 2, containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Database with detailed description of the technical characteristics and of the data that will be stored. - Detailed draft protocol for a harmonised primary field data collection of the selected ABMs and context data that will be stored in the database. <p>The database should be submitted in a format (e.g., XLSX/XLSM MS-Excel) that can operate with the expected amount of data, preventing data loss also due to technical issues.</p> <p>The report shall be submitted in English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format.</p> <p>A revised version of the deliverable reflecting changes agreed at the interim meeting 3 will be</p>	Within 8 months from kick-off meeting
<p>Task 6: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.2</i></p>	Yes		



<p>Develop a data collection (SOP-like and check-list) protocol for harmonised primary field data collection.</p>		<p>submitted at the latest 15 days after the meeting has taken place.</p> <p>The database, including structure, data model, controlled terminologies and format, and the draft protocol should be agreed by EFSA via written procedure within two weeks after re-submission and before proceeding with the following tasks.</p>	
<p>Task 7: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.3</i></p> <p>Identify the establishments where the primary field data collection will be conducted. Provide evidence showing geographical coverage, climate conditions balance, and representativeness and balance of types of housing systems and practices.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Deliverable 5: Interim report 3, containing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All the approved previous deliverables (2 to 4). - List of the establishments (farms and slaughterhouses) selected for the primary field data collection, with indication of the relevant information on the location, geographical area and husbandry system characteristics (type of housing system and practices) to ensure successful implementation of sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6; the use of schemes and maps is recommended to visualise the selection across the EU MSs. - Information and number of field evaluators selected, including relevant information to ensure successful implementation of sub-objectives 2.5 and 2.6. - Detailed training programme and training material for field evaluators. - Data collected during the pilot exercise included in the prototype database develop under sub-objective 2.1 (Deliverable 4). - Fine-tuning and validation report of: i) the protocol for collecting ABMs and context data (Sub-objective 2.2), ii) the piloting phase plan, iii) database structure and iv) training programme; all including consideration for refinements/lessons learned, conclusions and recommendations for the next steps. - Comprehensive data sampling plan. <p>The report shall be submitted in English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the charts in MS-Excel.</p>	<p>Within 13 months from kick-off meeting</p>
<p>Task 8: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.4</i></p> <p>Identify the field evaluators that will conduct the field data collection. Provide relevant information on the number of field evaluators per farm, availability and relevant experience for the task (considering EU general data protection regulation).</p>	<p>Yes</p>		
<p>Task 9: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.4</i></p> <p>Develop a training programme and the relevant training material to train field evaluators on the collection of selected ABMs and context data (sub-objective 1.3) in farms and slaughterhouses. The training programme should also include information on the duration, place, expertise and number of facilitators, as well as clearly outline the detailed methodology. Information on how to ensure intra- and inter- reliability of the field evaluators should be also provided.</p>	<p>No</p>		
<p>Task 10: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.4</i></p> <p>Training of the identified field evaluators</p>	<p>No</p>		



<p>Task 11: <i>Linked to sub-objectives 2.5</i></p> <p>Run a pilot exercise for the collection of ABMs and context data in selected establishments by the trained field evaluators. Assess the suitability of the protocol develop, the training of field evaluators and the easiness of use and suitability of the prototype database developed for storing the field data collected on ABMs and context data, to confirm moving to sub-objective 2.6.</p>	Yes	<p>The list of establishments should be submitted in XLSX/XLSM (MS-Excel) format.</p> <p>A revised version of the deliverable reflecting changes agreed at the interim meeting 4 will be submitted at the latest 15 days after the meeting has taken place.</p> <p>The list of establishments, any modifications and corrective actions proposed to the protocol developed under Sub-objective 2.2 and the data sampling plan should be agreed by EFSA via written procedure within two weeks after re-submission and before executing the primary field data collection.</p>	
<p>Task 12: <i>Linked to sub-objectives 2.6</i></p> <p>Considering outcome from task 11, for the selected pig categories, develop a data sampling plan for a large-scale primary field data collection on ABMs and context data in the identified establishments.</p>	Yes		
<p>Task 13: <i>Linked to sub-objective 2.6</i></p> <p>-Conduct the primary field data collection on a large scale across EU MSs and include them in the prototype database developed under sub-objective 2.1 - Prepare a draft final report</p>	Yes	<p>Deliverable 6: Draft final report, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft final report, including all approved deliverables (2-5) and complemented by a presentation of about 20 slides for future EFSA presentations on the highlights and outcomes of the project. - Draft final version of the database populated with field data on ABMs and context data collected under sub-objective 2.6. <p>The report shall be submitted in English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the charts and tables in MS-Excel. A presentation of maximum 20 slides should be submitted in English in MS-PowerPoint format together with its videorecording.</p> <p>A revised version of the deliverable reflecting changes agreed at the interim meeting 5 will be submitted at the latest 15 days after the meeting has taken place.</p>	<p>Within 34 months from kick-off meeting</p>
<p>Task 14: <i>Linked to all sub-objectives</i></p> <p>Prepare and present the final report and provide the final database.</p>	Yes	<p>Deliverable 7: The final report (max. 60 pages, excluding annexes), and the populated database.</p> <p>The final report shall report on all the completed tasks and should be updated according to the comments provided by EFSA and agreements reached during all interim meetings, it should include an executive summary.</p>	<p>Within 36 months from kick-off meeting</p>



		<p>The report shall be submitted in English in both MS-Word and Adobe Acrobat (PDF) format with the charts in MS-Excel and slides in Ppt format.</p> <p>The database designed in Task 5 (Deliverable 4) and populated with all field data sampled under sub-objective 2.6 shall be provided.</p>	
<p>Subcontracting is allowed for non-core tasks only. Tasks 5, 9 and 10 are considered non-core tasks. Please also refer to section 1.7 'Possibility of implementing contracts and subcontracting'.</p>			



No.	Meetings	Deadline for finalisation
<p>The beneficiary is responsible for organising all the meetings; minutes of the meeting shall be taken and provided to EFSA by the beneficiary within 5 working days after the meeting.</p>		
<p>All meetings are to be attended by at least the project manager and the expert/s responsible for the specific task/s under discussion, including sub-contractors, if applicable.</p>		
<p>Any issues or difficulties encountered during the project should be highlighted during these meetings.</p>		
1	<p>Kick-off meeting: teleconference – half day²⁴</p> <p>The kick-off meeting is regarded as the start of the project and must take place no later than 1 month after the signature of the grant agreement. At this meeting, details of the project will be discussed and the objectives, the tasks, the final report structure, deliverables and timeframe will be clarified. Minutes of the meeting shall be taken and provided to EFSA by the beneficiary within 5 working days after the meeting.</p> <p>During this meeting, in addition to the operational implementation, the administrative and financial matters related to contract implementation will be discussed; the presence at the kick-off meeting of a contractor'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.</p>	<p>Within 1 month after entry into force of agreement</p>
2	<p>Interim meeting 1: teleconference – half day The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Methodology report.</p>	<p>Within 2.5 months from kick-off meeting</p>
3	<p>Interim meeting 2: teleconference – half day The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the interim report 1.</p>	<p>Within 6 months from kick-off meeting</p>
4	<p>Interim meeting 3: teleconference – half day The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the interim report 2.</p>	<p>Within 9 months from kick-off meeting</p>
5	<p>Interim meeting 4: teleconference – half day The purpose of the meeting is to discuss the interim report 3.</p>	<p>Within 14 months from kick-off meeting</p>
6	<p>Interim meeting 5: teleconference – half day The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the draft of the final report and the preliminary results from the primary field data collection.</p>	<p>Within 35 months from kick-off meetings</p>
7	<p>Final meeting teleconference – half day The purpose of the meeting is to present results and final report</p>	<p>Within 36 months from kick-off meeting</p>
<p>In addition to the meetings above, a set of interim meetings can be scheduled with an agreed frequency (e.g., every 3-4 months) to monitor the state of advancement of the field data collection and discuss any preliminary results as well as any difficulties encountered during this activity (Task 13).</p> <p>Furthermore, <i>ad-hoc</i> meetings can be requested by EFSA or by the beneficiary in case of specific needs or in preparation of meetings listed above. The indicative duration of those <i>ad-hoc</i> meetings is two hours each.</p>		
No.	Payments	Linked to EFSA approval of deliverable No.

²⁴ One day = 8 hours, half day = 4 hours



1	Pre-Financing payment as specified in the general model grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals), Data Sheet section 4.2 Periodic reporting and payments.	Not linked to deliverables submission.
2	Interim payment , as specified in the general model grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals), Data Sheet section 4.2 Periodic reporting and payments.	5
3	Payment of the balance as specified in the general model grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for Proposals), Data Sheet section 4.2 Periodic reporting and payments.	All deliverables

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, including the populated database (deliverable 4), at EFSA's discretion will be subject to publication and dissemination in Zenodo²⁵ for free accessing also from third parties, subject to the terms and conditions set out in the draft grant agreement (Annex 1 of the call for proposals).

1.4 INFORMATION ON THE GRANT AGREEMENT

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

The total amount EFSA has available to award grants under this call for proposals is € 1.500.000. Applicants should note that in the Funding and Tender opportunities portal submission service under Administrative Form (Part A) there is an obligatory field regarding the budget (section 3). Applicants must insert the total budget in the 'Requested grant amount' field, without the need to show the split of the budget between partners (if applicable).

The complete estimated budget template is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal, from 'Part B Templates'.

1.4.1 Direct Agreement

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

The maximum budget EFSA has available is 1,500,000.00 €.

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

The project to be supported under this Call is co-financed by EFSA at maximum **90% of the total eligible project costs**. In addition, the maximum possible amount of EFSA grant for the project is **1.500.000 €**. In other words, the grant has double ceiling: the maximum amount and the reimbursement rate applied on the total eligible project cost. EFSA reserves the right not to award the grant agreement and to cancel the whole grant procedure at any time before the signature of the agreement without any compensation to be paid to the applicants.

The total amount of estimated eligible costs, as presented by the applicant in the estimated budget (see also part 1.9), and which serves as a basis for calculation of the initial EFSA grant, will be verified by EFSA during the evaluation of proposals. EFSA reserves the right to implement the necessary

²⁵ <https://zenodo.org/communities/efsa-kj/records?q=&l=list&p=1&s=10&sort=newest>



adaptations to the estimated eligible costs in case the [Rules on eligibility of costs](#) were not correctly applied by the applicant.

If the amount granted is lower than the funding sought by the applicant, it is up to the applicant to find supplementary financing or to reduce the total cost of the project without diluting either the objectives or the content.

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.force.com/competentorganisations/s/>.

In order to achieve the main objective of the call, proposals must be submitted by a consortium of at least **four eligible organisations**. 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/EU²⁶ must comply with the applicable national public procurement rules.

Sub-contracting:

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

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

1.8 GRANT PRINCIPLES

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

The form of grant awarded under this Call is grant based on a combination of the forms of grant in accordance with Article 125(1)(f) EU FR. Specifically, reimbursement of a specified proportion of the total eligible project costs actually incurred (Article 125 (1)(b), Unit costs for certain cost headings budget (Article 125(1)(c) and flat rate financing (Article 125(1)(e).

- **Co-financing:** In accordance with Article 190 of the Financial Regulation, grants shall involve co-financing. The resources necessary to carry out the project /action shall not be provided entirely by the grant. The project costs not covered by the EFSA grant must be financed from the applicant and partner/s resources. The applicant and its partner/s must

²⁶ 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)



therefore contribute financially to the project. Additionally, there may be also a financial contribution from another entity, but such an entity must be a public body. Contributions from the private sector are not permitted.

- **No-profit:** In accordance with Article 192 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. Profit is defined as a surplus of the receipts over the eligible costs incurred by the beneficiaries, at the time of request for payment of the balance. The receipts shall be limited to income generated by the project, as well as financial contributions specifically assigned by donors to the financing of the eligible costs. Where a profit is made, EFSA shall be entitled to recover a part of it in line with procedure foreseen in the Grant agreement. The verification of the non-profit rule does not apply to low value grants (≤ 60.000 €).
- **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 193 of the Financial Regulation, costs eligible for financing may not have been incurred prior to the date of submission of the grant application. No grant may be awarded retrospectively for a project already completed.
- **Non-cumulative:** In accordance with Article 191(3) of the Financial Regulation, in no circumstances shall the same costs be financed twice from the EU budget. To ensure this, the applicant shall indicate the sources and amounts of Union funding received or applied for the same project or part of the project or for its functioning during the same financial year as well as any other funding received or applied for the same project.

1.9 ESTIMATED BUDGET AND ELIGIBLE COSTS

The proposal must be accompanied by the estimated budget (available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal, from 'Part B Templates') which must be established in line with the [Rules on eligibility of costs](#). The estimated budget must show all the costs and income which the applicant considers necessary to carry out the project.

Estimated budget will have to be:

- sufficiently detailed to permit identification, monitoring and checking of the costs;
- balanced, i.e. total income and total costs must equal;
- consistent with the work plan;
- expressed in Euro.

1.10 PUBLICITY

All beneficiaries are expected to follow the rules on visibility of EFSA funding set out in Article II.8 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 in authorship lists indicating the affiliation to its organisation.

1.11 PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA IN RELATION TO GRANT PROCEDURES

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 II.7 of the draft grant agreement. Any personal data included in the Agreement must be processed by EFSA in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 2018/1725.²⁷

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 136 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 II.7.2 of the Grant Agreement (Annex 1) as a data processor of EFSA.

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 this case, co-applicants will be invited to remove or replace that entity and/or to change its status into associated partner. Tasks and budget may be redistributed accordingly.

²⁷ 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





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:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant must apply as part of a consortium of at least four partners; • On the proposal submission deadline, both the applicant and any partners in the consortium must be listed as competent organizations. This designation must be in accordance with Article 36 of Regulation (EC) 178/2002 and Commission Regulation (EC) 2230/2004, as designated by the Member States; • Applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s participate in the project financially; • Applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s are involved in the execution of the project; • Subcontracting, if any, is justified in the proposal and indicated in the estimated budget.
	Requested evidence:



	<p>ADMINISTRATIVE DECLARATION</p> <p>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.</p>
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2.3 EXCLUSION CRITERIA

Criterion No. 2.3	Requirements and requested evidence
2	Exclusion criteria
	The following requirements will be verified:
	The applicant and partner/s must sign a declaration on their honour certifying they are not in one of the exclusion situations referred to in the Articles 136-140 of EU Financial Regulation.
	Requested evidence:
	<p>THE DECLARATION ON HONOUR ON EXCLUSION CRITERIA</p> <p>Annex 3, available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal under Part B Templates. The applicant and the partner(s) (if applicable) must complete and sign separate forms. The applicant must upload the form in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal. If applying in consortium, the consortium leader must convert all declarations on honour on exclusion for all partners into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p>

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.
	<p>The applicant and in case of consortium also its partner/s must have stable and sufficient financial resources to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintain their activity throughout the period during which the project is being carried out, and • participate in its funding. <p>If the Authority considers that financial capacity is weak, it may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – request further information; – decide not to give pre-financing; – decide to give pre-financing paid in instalments;



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - decide to give pre-financing covered by a bank guarantee; - where applicable, require the joint and several financial liability of all the co-beneficiaries. <p>If the AO considers that the financial capacity is insufficient, the application may be rejected.</p>
	Requested evidence:
	<p>Documents to be provided by the applicant:</p> <p>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 Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 €. 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. <p>The applicant must convert the Declaration on honour on selection criteria, the Simplified Financial statement (if applicable) and the letter of commitment (if applicable) into one single pdf and upload the single document in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p>

B) Professional and operational capacity

Criterion No. 2.4.B	Requirements and requested evidence
1	Professional and operational capacity:



	Requirements:
	<p>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:</p> <p>1. Requirements for the organisation: The applicant should provide evidence of expertise of the organisation (at least 5 years) in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Animal welfare assessment: Expertise in assessing the welfare of pigs, specifically of sows, gilts, and piglets, both on farms and at slaughterhouses. This includes a thorough understanding of relevant regulatory requirements. - Project management: demonstrated experience in managing projects related to the field of the contract. This includes extracting information from literature, collecting and managing data related to the field of the contract, handling large volumes of information, conducting research, managing work programs, and producing summary reports. - Training program development: experience in creating training programs and courses specifically focused on animal welfare. - Collaboration with Competent Authorities: proven track record of collaboration with competent authorities in more than four EU MSs. - Networking and information management: experience in working with various information sources and maintaining networks of experts related to the topics addressed by the contract. - Engagement with the EU Reference Centre for Animal Welfare (EURCAW) specific to pigs: documented experience of collaboration with the EURCAW-pigs. - Partnership and consortium building: proven ability to build partnerships and form research consortia to enhance project outcomes. <p>2. Requirements for the team of experts:</p> <p>Please note that one expert can cover several fields of expertise. The team of experts to cover profiles from a. to f. should consist of at least 5 experts.</p> <p>Experts involved in the tasks should <u>as a minimum expertise</u> include:</p> <p>a. 1 senior expert acting as project manager with at least 5 years of experience in project management. Additionally, the project manager should have at least 1 year of experience in the area of animal welfare risk assessment or animal science. The project manager shall be responsible for the overall contact and the management and coordination of the implementation of all services requested by EFSA in this call for proposals. He/she will oversee the practical and administrative aspects of the work to ensure activities are implemented on time. The project manager will be the interface for all commercial and contractual matters and the overall contact point for the services requested by EFSA. He/she shall work and liaise with ensuring the coherence for the overall work, must be included overseeing control of delivered service, client orientation and conflict resolution. The project manager should have a proven track record in coordinating at least 2 similar large-scale projects (e.g., international EU-funded projects with budgets of at least €100,000) and multidisciplinary projects. Experience in managing teams of at least 5 people is also required.</p> <p>b. 1 senior scientist/expert with at least 7 years of expertise in animal welfare risk assessment methodologies and at least 3 years of experience in the field of sows and piglets on-farm welfare and the relevant regulatory requirements, and with experience in managing European-wide research projects. He/she should hold a PhD in Animal science or related fields, demonstrate a strong track record of independent research. The candidate must have authored at least 5 peer-reviewed publications on pig welfare in recognized scientific journals. The senior scientist will be responsible for ensuring high scientific standards in the methodologies used within the</p>



project. He/she is also responsible for maintaining the quality of project outputs and ensuring their timely delivery.

c. At least **1 mid scientist/expert**, with a at least 4 years of experience in assessing pig welfare at the farm level, including related data collections at both farms and slaughterhouses. The expert should be a post-doctoral researcher holding a PhD in Animal Science or in a related field. The expert should have a demonstrated capacity for independent research with a strong research track record and must have authored at least 3 peer-reviewed publications on pig welfare in recognized scientific journals. This expert will support the senior scientist in scientifically supervising the project and will closely supervise evaluators responsible for the primary field data collection. The expert should also have robust regulatory and scientific knowledge in the relevant field and be capable of assisting with project design, work stream planning, and managing scientific project calls.

Experts proposed for **profiles d., e. and f.** should prove a university degree (minimum Master degree) in the relevant fields, and in addition:

d. At least **1 mid expert** with at least 3 years of professional experience in data architecture and data managing. Responsibilities include the development and implementation of a prototype database for the project.

e. at least **1 mid expert** with at least 3 years of professional experience in developing training programs. Experience in training on animal welfare risk assessment is preferable. The role involves developing the training, including programs and materials for field evaluators.

f. at least **1 mid expert** with at least 3 years of professional experience in epidemiology. This expert will be responsible for designing the sampling plan for the primary field data collection.

g. A sufficient number (**at least 4**) of **junior scientists/experts** (e.g. master students, PhD students, research assistants, trainees, fellowships). They will conduct data collection activities at farms and/or slaughterhouses across different EU MSs (field evaluators). Experience in behavioural observation and animal welfare assessment at farm and slaughterhouse levels and related data collections is preferred. The number of junior scientists or experts should be adjusted based on the scope and geographical distribution of the proposed activities across EU MSs.

3. Requirements of English languages for the team of experts:

The senior and mid experts project team members (**experts a. to f.** - see section Professional capacity, above) must have individually a very good level of spoken and written standard UK English. For non-native speakers, this should be demonstrated by:

- (i) extensive experience (minimum 3 years) in international projects where English is the working language;
- (ii) OR at least 3 years of work/study in an English-speaking environment;
- (iii) OR certificate of English proving at least a C1 level;
- (iv) OR at least 2 publications written in English.

All experts should have fluent English language knowledge; experts carrying out the primary field data collection activities should be able to submit in English the information collected to the database.

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):



	<p>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.</p> <p>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).</p>
	Requested evidence:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 1 (requirements for the organisation):</u> <p>Annex 4 completed with a list of three major projects or publications to the subject matter of this contract, carried out in the course of the past 5 years;</p> <p>A list of 5 relevant peer-reviewed publications published by researchers affiliated to the entities applying to this call, published in the last 10 years, on pig welfare should be provided. Publications on the welfare of sows, gilts and piglets are considered more relevant for the purposes of this project.</p> • <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 2 (requirements for the team of experts):</u> <p>CURRICULUM VITAE (max three pages) of the experts and other staff to be involved in the project, including a brief description of the expertise and, where applicable, 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.</p> • LIST OF PROJECT TEAM MEMBERS NAMES – in addition to the CV's, the applicant should also summarise on one page, the names of the individual project team members and the expected role of the team member in the project (see Annex 5) • <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 3 (requirements for English language for the team of experts):</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed CVs of the Project team members proposed for the assignment (recommended 3 pages). EFSA strongly recommends submitting the CVs in the EU CV format which can be accessed here. • List of relevant publications or Official certificate of English proving a C1 level where applicable • <u>EVIDENCE REQUESTED FOR REQUIREMENT 4 (environmental management):</u> <p>Annex 5 – Selection criteria, Information on environmental management</p> <p>For requirements 2.4.B a template (Annex 5) is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. The applicant must upload the completed template (a single pdf document of all requirements including CVs), in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.</p> • DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (DoIs) <p>Template available here. EFSA may request Individuals DoIs for members of the project team having influence and/or control over scientific outputs, prior to and as a condition</p>



	<p>of grant agreement signature. The requirement to submit Individual DoIs will be specified in the award letter and will have to be provided and assessed by the EFSA Authorising Officer before and as a condition of grant agreement signature.</p> <p><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.</p> <p><u>Individual and institutional DoIs do not need to be provided with your proposal at this stage.</u></p> <p>Please refer to EFSA's policy on independence and the Decision of the Executive Director on Competing Interest Management for more detailed information.</p>
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2.5 AWARD CRITERIA

<p>Criterion No. 2.5</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The award criteria serve to assess the quality of the proposals in relation to the objectives of the Call.</p> <p>The applicant is requested to provide a document with the proposed workplan (recommended max 30 pages) explaining in detail how each task will be addressed. The plan (including scientific approach, logistics and estimated timelines) should cover all Tasks. The plan should be realistic, scientifically sound and provide an overview of the timelines and logistics for proposed implementation of work.</p> <p>The following award criteria are applicable in this call:</p>
<p>1</p>	<p>Project management, risk management and quality of the outputs (total 40 points)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project management overview how the project will be managed; the description has to consider task distribution among consortium partners and individual team members, both internally (i.e. within the consortium/team) and externally (communication with EFSA) including with possible subcontractors. The applicant should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide clarity of organisation of the project into work packages, including project phases, timelines, milestones, deliverables, providing a Gantt chart. Provide convincing evidence to ensure that the activities and milestones identified are feasible (MAX 8 points). b. Provide a clear and detailed information on distribution of the tasks among the project team members; in case of joint offer & subcontractors, clarity on who does what, when and why (justify why the partner/subcontractor is proposed to do the particular task/work-package) (MAX 7 points). c. Cost effectiveness and technical and financial consistency of the proposal: consistency between the proposed project and its estimated budget, e.g. how it reflects the task distribution/role of partners (MAX 10 POINTS); d. Provide clear and detailed information on the frequency and type of communication with EFSA and internal team communication (in case of joint



	<p>offers & subcontractors also the frequency and type of communication between partners and/or subcontractor), the role of project leader in the coordination and tasks allocation in relation to the methodology and tools proposed (MAX 5 points).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk management - The proposal should briefly describe risks and barriers foreseen in each task and respective proposed contingency plan in case of deviations (MAX 5 points). • Quality of the deliverables - This is to assess the quality assurance mechanisms put in place to guarantee the high quality of deliverables (e.g., role of the team leader, language quality check, technical review, etc.) (MAX 5 points).
2	<p>Workplan quality, methodology proposed for implementation and sample quality (Total 60 points)</p> <p>This is intended to assess the extent to which the project is described in detail and is of high quality, and the proposal provides an appropriate methodology, with convincing justification, and well-structured step by step explanation for addressing all objectives:</p> <p>Objective 1- Quality of the proposal on the identification and selection of (existing and new) ABMs and related context data to collect from the field for assessing the welfare on farm of sows and piglets with detailed justification for the selection criteria (MAX 14 points).</p> <p>Sub-objectives 2.1, 2.2 and 2.5 - Quality of the methodology to define and structure the database where all data collected with the primary field data collection will be submitted and stored and to develop a protocol for a harmonised primary field collection of the selected ABMs and related context data, as well as for developing the piloting phase with protocol fine tuning and validation (MAX 14 points).</p> <p>Sub-objectives 2.3 and 2.6 - Quality of the primary field data collection plan, that should be described in detail, including the selection of the establishments (farms and slaughterhouses) that will be visited. The proposal should guarantee geographical coverage, climate conditions balance, and representativeness and balance regarding types of housing systems and practices. The criteria that are used to choose the establishments need to be explicitly reported. The proposed sample plan should guarantee a large-scale data collection across the EU MSs (MAX 22 points).</p> <p>Sub-objective 2.4 – Quality and detailed description of the selection of the field evaluators that will conduct the primary field data collection, with clear justification for the selection and guarantees to ensure that the evaluators will be available to conduct all the sampling activities. The proposal should also detail the training programme and materials (MAX 10 points).</p>

The estimated budget template is available to download in the Funding and Tenders Portal. The applicant must upload the completed template in the relevant field under Part B and Annexes of the Funding and Tenders Portal.

The estimated budget submitted with the proposal is analysed by EFSA, to assess whether:

- it is realistic;
- it is consistent with the proposed project;
- the estimated budget is sufficiently detailed;
- the cost items are reasonably justified;



- to eliminate cost items which cannot be accepted according to the [Rules on eligibility of costs](#).

An overestimation or underestimation of costs, or missing justification of the costs, missing details, or detected inconsistency with the technical description of the project will have a negative impact on the evaluation score under the award criterion 1c.

If EFSA regards the estimated budget as realistic, consistent with the technical description of project, sufficiently detailed, well justified and established in accordance with the [Rules on eligibility of costs](#) and no modification is needed, it will become the approved estimated budget and the EFSA grant may correspond to the applicant's request. In some cases, the analysis of the estimated budget could result in EFSA suggesting reductions, e.g. need to correct the costs in line with the Rules on eligibility of costs. After the proposed modifications are agreed by the applicant and EFSA, the estimated budget, as modified, will become the approved estimated budget for the project.

The final EFSA grant will be determined based on actually incurred costs, in line with Article II.25 of the grant agreement.

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

2.6 PROCESS FOLLOWING THE ASSESSMENT AGAINST AWARD CRITERIA

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

EFSA reserves the right to invite the 1st ranked applicant on the reserve list, to adapt its proposal based on the evaluators' comments in accordance with article 200(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 194(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.



4. RULES ON ELIGIBILITY OF COSTS

1. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

The eligible costs of the project receiving an EFSA grant must be shown in detail in an estimated budget. EFSA will take the final decision on the nature and amount of the costs to be considered as eligible.

Estimated budget must be:

- sufficiently detailed to permit identification, monitoring and checking of the costs;
- balanced, i.e. total income and total project costs must be equal;
- consistent with the work plan;
- expressed in Euro.

Costs eligible for an EFSA grant are those that are:

- incurred during the duration of the project, with the exception of costs relating to audit certificates;
- indicated in the estimated budget of the project;
- necessary for the implementation of the project which is the subject of the grant;
- identifiable and verifiable, in particular being recorded in the accounting records of the beneficiary and determined according to the applicable accounting standards of the country where the beneficiary is established and according to the usual cost accounting practices of the beneficiary;
- complying with the requirements of applicable tax and social legislation;
- reasonable, justified, and comply with the principle of sound financial management, in particular regarding economy and efficiency.

Estimated budget – cost side:

- **Eligible direct costs:**
 1. Costs of personnel;
 2. Travel costs and subsistence allowances;
 3. Depreciation costs of equipment or other assets;
 4. Consumables and supplies;
 5. Workshops, seminar, conferences;
 6. Subcontracting;
 7. Eligible VAT;
 8. Miscellaneous costs are costs arising directly from the requirements imposed by the grant agreement.

The above categories represent an exhaustive list of possible eligible direct costs. However, if, for example, the project does not foresee costs for workshops / seminars / conferences, then this category of costs can be left empty in the estimated budget.

- **Eligible indirect costs** incurred in carrying out the project are eligible for a flat-rate funding capped at not more than 10% of the total eligible direct costs. If a beneficiary (partner in the consortium) already receives an operational grant from the EU budget its indirect costs are not eligible under the present call.

Estimated budget – income side:

- **Mandatory incomes:**



1. Grant requested from EFSA;
2. Applicant's financial contribution;
3. Partners financial contribution;
- **Optional incomes:**
 4. Financial contributions from other public bodies;
 5. Income generated by the project.

To be eligible, costs need to be incurred during the duration of the project, i.e. from the grant agreement entry into force and project deadline.

The eligible costs presented in the estimated budget must be as realistic as possible, except for eligible indirect costs which are a flat rate.

Once the project is implemented all the eligible actually incurred direct costs must be justified by supporting documents, e.g. invoices, timesheets, evidence of travel or presence at a meeting etc. EFSA reserves the right to ask any supporting document in order to verify that the costs declared as eligible were actually incurred and paid.

2. ELIGIBLE COSTS

2.1 ELIGIBLE DIRECT COSTS

"Direct costs" of the project are those specific costs which are directly linked to the implementation of the project and can therefore be attributed directly to it. They may not include any indirect costs²⁸. To be eligible, direct costs shall comply with the conditions of eligibility set out above in point 1.

2.1.1 COSTS OF PERSONNEL – Estimated Budget Excel, Sheet A.1

The costs of personnel working under an employment contract with the beneficiary or an equivalent appointing act and assigned to the project are considered eligible costs (comprising actual salaries plus social security contributions and other statutory costs included in the remuneration).

In line with the EU Financial Regulation, the salary costs of public officials will be considered as a direct cost of the beneficiary to the extent that they relate to the cost of activities which the relevant public authority as beneficiary would not carry out if the project concerned was not undertaken.

The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract may be assimilated to costs of personnel, provided that the following conditions are fulfilled:

- the natural person works under the instructions of the beneficiary;
- the result of the work belongs to the beneficiary

If the above conditions are not met, the amounts paid to the natural person shall be presented under the category "subcontracting".

IMPORTANT:

Staff assigned to the project must be classified in one of the [four](#) categories Manager, Researcher/Teacher/Trainer, Technical, Administrative. EFSA will check the correctness of the assigned category of each staff member from the CV's which will be provided by the beneficiary.

²⁸ Indirect costs are explained in section 2.2 below.



UNIT COSTS for personnel are shown in the table below. These costs are calculated based on EUROSTAT data, EFSA historical data, information received from other EC services and considering the annual labour costs per country. An annual revision of unit costs is done based on the application of the national inflation rates as published by [Eurostat](#). The updated unit costs will be applied to new Specific Agreements to be signed under a Framework Partnership Agreement already in force as of the date of the entry into force of this decision.

The **UNIT COSTS** per day for staff **must** be used when establishing the estimated budget and when declaring the incurred costs. **THE NUMBER OF DAYS** spent on the project (one day is composed of 8 working hours according to working day duration at EFSA) is to be indicated when establishing the estimated budget and when declaring the incurred costs.

The rate of the country in which the partner organisation is registered should be applied, independently of where the tasks will be executed (i.e. a staff member of an organisation of Country A working fully or partly in Country B will be budgeted on the basis of the rates of Country A).

The beneficiary must be able to justify the personnel costs at the end of the project by providing supporting documents (e.g. timesheets), if requested by EFSA.

The beneficiary shall ensure that CVs for all profiles (including technical and administrative staff) inserted in the budget are submitted together with the proposal for **direct** agreements. This will allow EFSA to check the correctness of the assigned role of each staff member. For those profiles for which the applicant reserves the right to recruit staff after the communication of the outcome of the call, CVs need to be provided to EFSA for checking the correctness of the assigned role as soon as the recruitment is complete.



UNIT COST PER DAY IN EUROS (September 2023)

Updated unit costs for staff - daily rates 2023

Country	Manager	Researcher Teacher Trainer	Technical	Administrative
Austria	500	337	272	216
Belgium	469	380	268	239
Bulgaria	73	66	50	34
Croatia	249	203	163	103
Cyprus	348	259	161	109
Czech Republic	227	127	92	72
Denmark	638	451	303	283
Estonia	135	108	71	52
Finland	472	278	224	173
France	468	378	277	230
Germany	543	339	274	222
Greece	222	142	104	92
Hungary	139	115	77	52
Ireland	443	367	268	199
Italy	477	313	231	183
Latvia	117	87	58	50
Lithuania	159	94	54	47
Luxembourg	584	383	309	261
Malta	135	113	88	66
Netherlands	462	374	263	209
Poland	170	102	75	56
Portugal	270	189	128	81
Romania	143	109	85	54
Slovakia	135	109	96	78
Slovenia	257	195	156	98
Spain	344	227	174	125
Sweden	417	335	276	212
Iceland (EEA Country)	416	378	326	210
Norway (EEA Country)	537	430	364	280



2.1.2 TRAVEL COSTS AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES – Estimated Budget Excel, Sheet A.2

All travel costs for missions, workshops/seminars/conferences must be included under Sheet A.2:

MISSIONS: travel costs and related subsistence allowances of staff and other persons taking part in the project are eligible. Kick-off, interim, final meetings and field trips (if any) are part of this category.

WORKSHOP/SEMINAR/CONFERENCE: travel costs for external participants and speakers (not staff employed by coordinator or partners) are eligible. As subsistence allowances are not foreseen for the participation of external participants in workshops/seminars/conferences, meals and accommodation for workshops must be inserted under the category “Miscellaneous” – Sheet A.6.

The daily subsistence allowances and travel costs of EFSA representatives shall not enter in the estimated budget because these costs are paid by EFSA directly to the staff concerned.

Travel costs

These unit costs must be applied when establishing the estimated budget and when declaring the incurred costs:

UNIT COSTS

Type of transport	Distance in road Km	Travel Unit cost
Car	Any distance	0.33 €/Km
Train	Any distance	0.40 €/Km
Flight	Any distance	500 €

If two or more staff members travel together sharing a car, the cost should be calculated only one time for the entire group of people. Insert the number of km for only one of the staff travelling by car and insert “shared” for all other staff traveling together.

Inter-continental flights are not included. They should be estimated on a case-by-case basis and declared on real incurred cost of flight ticket. The most economical fares must be sought (i.e., non-flexible economic class).

Daily subsistence allowances (DSA)

The DSA applies only for a mission to a place more than 50 km from the normal place of employment.

For travels related to workshops, the DSA is not applicable because costs of hotel accommodation and meals (lunch and dinner) are to be declared under item Miscellaneous costs (see article 2.1.5).

The amounts presented in the below table are calculated to cover the following expenses during a day of mission: accommodation, meals, local transport to reach airport/train station at the place of residence/employment and within the place of mission (car, parking, taxi and/or public transport), and sundry expenses, such as telecommunications costs (fax, internet).

The DSA is to be calculated according to the length of the mission: from the time of departure of the means of transport used until the arrival at the place of employment or home.

- </= 24 hours: full DSA;



- > 36 hours </= 48 hours: 2 x DSA, etc.

Missions to countries not mentioned in the below table shall be submitted to EFSA for an ex-ante agreement.

Country	€
Austria	234
Belgium	250
Bulgaria	192
Croatia	185
Cyprus	228
Czech Republic	194
Denmark	297
Estonia	185
Finland	255
France	282
Germany	225
Greece	194
Hungary	184
Iceland (EEA country)	245
Ireland	267
Italy	246
Latvia	189
Liechtenstein (EEA country)	175
Lithuania	186
Luxembourg	246
Malta	226
Netherlands	269
Norway (EEA country)	220
Poland	183
Portugal	184
Romania	198
Slovakia	174
Slovenia	201
Spain	216
Sweden	304
Switzerland (EFTA country)	220



2.1.3 DEPRECIATION COSTS OF EQUIPMENT OR OTHER ASSETS – Estimated Budget Excel, Sheet A.3

These costs are eligible if:

- the acquisition is strictly necessary for the performance of the project;
- those costs are recorded in the accounting statements of the beneficiary;
- the asset has been purchased in accordance with Article II.10 of the Grant agreement and it is written off in accordance with the international accounting standards and the usual accounting practices of the beneficiary.
- **Important:** The depreciation costs of equipment/software bought before the submission of the proposal can be taken into account in the estimated budget and when declaring the incurred costs but only for the portion covered by the period of the implementation of the proposed action. The percentage and the period covered by the depreciation costs should comply with the usual accounting practices of the beneficiary.

EFSA reserves the right to verify the correct application of the usual accounting practices of the beneficiary. In case the depreciation periods are not clearly indicated in those practices the following rules will be applied by EFSA:

- computer equipment (hardware) is written off over a period of 3 years,
- office furniture and equipment (photocopiers, fax, etc.) over 5 years, and
- specific computer software (not common software which is supposed to be covered by indirect costs) is covered in full.

The costs of rental or lease of equipment or other assets are also eligible, provided that these costs do not exceed the depreciation costs of similar equipment or assets and are exclusive of any finance fee.

Only the portion of the equipment's depreciation corresponding to the duration of the project and the rate of the actual use for the purposes of the project can be considered by EFSA as eligible. Consult the call for proposals for the maximum allowed duration of the project.

2.1.4 CONSUMABLES AND SUPPLIES – Estimated Budget Excel, Sheet A.4

The costs of consumables and supplies are eligible if:

- they are purchased in accordance with Article II.10 of the Grant agreement;
- they are directly assigned to the project.

Unlike the equipment, these are "consumables"²⁹, i.e. items that are not entered as fixed assets in the accounts (or inventory) of the beneficiary and are not written off. The term "directly assigned to the project" is important in order to avoid reimbursing the same cost twice by way of indirect costs. The nature of the project and the fact that the costs are specific to the project are key factors justifying direct cover of these costs.

All other items that are not "consumables" are to be inserted under "miscellaneous" (e.g. publication fees).

2.1.5 SUBCONTRACTING – Estimated Budget Excel, Sheet A.5

Costs entailed by subcontractors within the meaning of Article II.11 of the Grant agreement are eligible, provided that the conditions laid down in that Article and in the Call for proposals are met.

²⁹ For example: laboratory material, reagents, gloves, medicines, etc.



The costs of natural persons working under a contract with the beneficiary other than an employment contract and which cannot be assimilated to costs of personnel, as indicated in part 2.1.1, are to be declared in this section.

Core tasks³⁰ may not be subcontracted. Only ancillary and assistance tasks may be subcontracted.

2.1.6 MISCELLANEOUS COSTS– Estimated Budget Excel, Sheet A.6

GENERAL MISCELLANEOUS COSTS: These might be the costs arising directly from requirements imposed by the Grant agreement, e.g. dissemination of information, specific evaluation of the project, audits, translations, printing/copying, including the costs of any requested financial guarantees, provided that the corresponding services are purchased in accordance with Article II.10.

MISCELLANEOUS COSTS RELATED TO WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, CONFERENCES: This category of eligible costs is intended to cover costs linked to the organisation of a workshop, seminar or conference, in particular:

1. hire of premises;
2. hire of equipment;
3. interpretation (interpreters and hiring of booths);
4. translation costs in connection with workshop/seminar/conference;
5. catering (lunch and dinner) and accommodation costs for external participants and speakers
6. external speaker fee (intended for an expert coming from outside of beneficiary/consortium), max 500 € per speaker per day;
7. other costs (e.g. printing costs for documentation to be distributed to participants, various supplies, reception staff).

In case a contract is to be awarded within the context of a workshop, e.g. translation or preparation of documents, these services or supplies must be purchased in accordance with Article II.10 of the Grant agreement.

2.1.7 ELIGIBLE VAT

Duties, taxes and charges paid by the beneficiary, notably value added tax (VAT), are eligible, provided that they are included in eligible direct costs.

VAT is accepted as an eligible cost if it is not recoverable, and so declared on honour by the beneficiary in the estimated budget.

The eligible VAT cost should be declared in the same heading of the estimated budget in which the related cost is declared.

2.2 ELIGIBLE INDIRECT COSTS – Estimated Budget Excel, Summary sheet

"Indirect costs" of the project are those costs which are not directly linked to the implementation of the project and can therefore not be attributed directly to it. They may not include any costs identifiable or declared as eligible direct costs.

To be eligible, indirect costs shall represent a fair apportionment of the overall overheads of the beneficiary and shall comply with the conditions of eligibility set out in point 1.

³⁰ For example coordination of the grant



Unless otherwise specified, eligible indirect costs shall be declared on the basis of a flat rate of 10% of the total eligible direct costs. Eligible indirect costs may not include any eligible direct costs. The formula in the Summary of the estimated budget excel automatically calculates the eligible indirect costs at 10% of the inserted eligible direct costs.

The indirect costs are frequently of an administrative, technical and logistical nature, are cross-cutting for the operation of the beneficiary's various activities and cannot therefore be booked in full to the project for which the grant is awarded because this grant is only one part of those activities. Indirect costs comprise costs connected with infrastructures and the general operation of the organisation such as renting or depreciation of buildings and plant, water/gas/electricity, maintenance, cleaning, insurance, supplies, small office equipment such as toner, paper, stationary, communication and connection costs (phone, internet, fax, etc.), postage, and costs connected with horizontal services such as administrative and financial management, human resources, training, legal advice, documentation, IT, etc.

3. INELIGIBLE COSTS

In addition to any other costs which do not fulfill the conditions set out for eligible costs, the following costs shall not be considered eligible:

- return on capital;
- debt and debt service charges;
- provisions for losses or debts;
- interest owed;
- doubtful debts;
- exchange losses or costs of conversion;
- costs of transfers from the Authority charged by the bank of the partner;
- costs declared by the beneficiary in the framework of another action receiving a grant financed from the Union budget (including grants awarded by a Member State and financed from the Union budget and grants awarded by other bodies than the Authority for the purpose of implementing the Union budget); in particular, indirect costs shall not be eligible when the beneficiary already receives an operating grant financed from the Union budget during the period in question;
- contributions in kind from third parties;
- excessive or reckless expenditure;
- deductible VAT.

The ineligible costs, if any, must be declared in the Estimated Budget excel, Summary Sheet.

4. FLEXIBILITY WITH APPROVED ESTIMATED BUDGET

After the estimated budget of the project has been approved by EFSA (corrections are possible during the evaluation of the proposal) it becomes the approved estimated budget, and it will be attached to the Grant agreement. The approved estimated budget is based on estimates, and therefore it is normal that during the project implementation there might be a need to adjust it to reality or any unforeseen events.

The approved estimated budget may be adjusted by making transfers provided that such adjustments do not affect the basic purpose and the completion of the project is not jeopardised. No amendment is necessary for these transfers.

If the beneficiary wishes to replace a staff member by another employee, e.g. because of dismissal, maternity leave, long term sick leave of original staff member, a prior approval of EFSA should be sought and the new CV and individual declaration of interest (if DoIs are applicable) shall be provided. No amendment is necessary for these changes.