



AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB

Open call – FSTP



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1. What is AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB?

AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB is a first-of-its-kind excellence hub in sustainable agriculture and circular bio-economy aimed at strengthening R&I capabilities and innovation ecosystems of 3 Widening countries, including one emerging ecosystem (PL, LV and UA). Building on experience of 2 more developed countries (ES and BE), and in particular on a frontrunner region (“Catalonia”), a leading European regional ecosystem in the field, we aim to respond to the common needs and challenges of these ecosystems, fully aligned with key strategic areas for the development of the smart specializations of these regions. By bringing together relevant European and regional actors, with track record in R&I ecosystems and bioeconomy, we aim at leveraging the q-helix innovation model by creating and strengthening links between academia, business, government and society:

- To promote and foster cross-border and interregional R&I cooperation, we will design and deliver a long-term R&I action plan, across key strategic R&I themes towards a sustainable and bio-circular agriculture;
- To enhance the R&I capabilities of 3 targeted Widening countries, we propose to design, pilot and scale up (TRL3-6) a pipeline of R&I business cases, driven by regional challenges and local innovative SMEs;
- To foster and promote transfer of knowledge and good practices across regions, we will deliver capacity building, training and networking activities for innovation and entrepreneurship diffusion as well as tailored mentoring module targeting the needs of an emerging ecosystem – UA;
- To promote entrepreneurship, provide support in bringing innovations to farmers, we will deliver an open innovation and entrepreneurship mentoring programme;
- To promote innovation, bio-circular and sustainable agriculture practices, we propose development of a cascade funding scheme to support SMEs engaged in the development and adoption of smart and circular technologies and innovation towards sustainable agriculture.

Project acronym	AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB
Project title	EXCELLENCE HUB FOR A SMART AGRICULTURE AND CIRCULAR BIOECONOMY TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE AGRIFOOD SECTOR IN WIDENING COUNTRIES (AND BEYOND)
Project number	101186869
Project duration	48 months
Overall budget	€5 995 825
Website	https://agri-biocircular-hub.eu

This table summarizes the facts about the project.

2. What is the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call offer?

Financial Support for Third Parties (FSTP), also known as “Cascade funding”, is a pivotal mechanism introduced by the European Commission to facilitate access to public funding for startups and SMEs. This innovative approach simplifies administrative processes, allowing these entities to swiftly develop and adopt innovations in agri-food and circular bioeconomy.

In the context of the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB project, FSTP funding plays a crucial role in promoting interregional innovation and investment in biofertilizers and circular bioeconomy solutions. By targeting assistance to at least 12 SMEs and startups, this initiative addresses prevailing market and technical challenges in the field, providing not only financial support but also technical, business, and innovation advisory services. This strategic funding mechanism is essential for fostering a sustainable agriculture sector, developing R&I ecosystems and bridging gaps between developed and less developed countries.

The *Open Call* is the competitive process in which eligible applicants apply to have access to the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB programme. Applications to the Open Call will be accepted from **22/05/2026** until **31/07/2026 (17:00 CEST Brussels time)**. After the selection is completed, selected applicants will be invited to sign the sub-grant agreement and enter the **AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Programme**.

The **call** will select 12 applications, each addressing one of the challenges outlined in [Section 3.2](#). Selected projects must propose innovative solutions that contribute to the investment project by addressing key needs, such as filling gaps in the value chain, enabling product and process testing and optimisation, or exploring new processing technologies.

In addition to the **lump sum grant funding of EUR 50 000**, beneficiaries will be in contact with an adviser, who will provide relevant support during project implementation.

The maximum grant amount of EUR 50 000 per proposal applies to all applications, i.e., regardless of whether they are submitted by an individual entity or a consortium of two entities.

The Open Call is divided into the following challenges (described in [Section 3.2](#)):

- **Challenge 1 - Circular nutrients and fertiliser independence**
- **Challenge 2 – Soil health and peat-free growing media**
- **Challenge 3 – Low-emission manure and residue valorisation**
- **Challenge 4 – Water-smart farming and runoff reduction**
- **Challenge 5 – Bio-based farm inputs and end-of-life solutions**
- **Challenge 6 - Data-driven IPM and input reduction**
- **Challenge 7 – Agricultural practices integrating bio-circular principles**

2.1 Rationale and Policy Alignment of the Open Call

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call is designed as a strategic instrument to support the objectives of the project and to address the key challenges identified in European and regional agri-biocircular innovation ecosystems. The use of Financial Support to Third Parties (FSTP) enables a flexible, fast, and impact-oriented mechanism to directly engage innovative SMEs and startups, which are often constrained in accessing traditional R&I funding schemes.

This Open Call contributes directly to the objectives of the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB project by accelerating the development, demonstration, and market uptake of bio-circular solutions aligned with regional smart specialisation strategies (RIS3) and local value-chain needs in Widening countries.

The Open Call is fully aligned with relevant European policy frameworks, including:

- The EU Green Deal and its objectives for climate neutrality and sustainable food systems.
- The EU Bioeconomy Strategy, promoting sustainable use of biological resources.
- The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), particularly with regard to environmental performance and innovation in agriculture.
- Horizon Europe priorities related to circular economy, sustainable agriculture, and SME innovation.

By supporting SMEs at TRL 4 and above, the Open Call addresses market failures related to the scale-up and validation of innovative solutions, fostering interregional cooperation and strengthening innovation capacity in less-developed ecosystems.

2.2 Expected Results and Key Performance Indicators

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call, FSTP, is expected to generate tangible technical, economic, and environmental results, contributing to the overall impact of the project.

Expected Results

- Support to at least 12 innovative SMEs or SME consortia developing bio-circular solutions.
- Demonstration, testing, or optimisation of innovative products, processes, or services at TRL 4–9.
- Strengthened integration of SMEs into regional and interregional agri-biocircular value chains.
- Increased readiness for market uptake and investment following the programme.
- Enhanced collaboration between SMEs, research organisations, and innovation ecosystems.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The performance of the Open Call will be monitored using the following indicators:

- Number of proposals submitted and evaluated per challenge and per eligible region.
- TRL progression achieved by supported projects.
- Number of pilots, demonstrators, or validated solutions.
- Participation in capacity building and mentoring activities.
- Reported environmental and economic impacts (e.g. resource efficiency, emission reduction, cost savings).
- Continuation or scale-up of projects beyond the funding period.

These indicators will support monitoring, reporting, and assessment of the Open Call's contribution to the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB objectives.

2.3 Communication and Dissemination of the Open Call

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Consortium will implement a targeted communication and dissemination strategy to ensure wide visibility of the Open Call among eligible SMEs and innovation actors.

Dissemination activities include:

- Publication of the Open Call on the project website and partner channels.
- Targeted outreach through regional innovation ecosystems and networks.
- Online information sessions and webinars.
- Use of social media and newsletters.
- Engagement with relevant clusters, accelerators, and SME support organisations.

Special attention will be given to outreach in Widening countries to ensure balanced participation and equal access to funding opportunities.

3. Who can apply and how?

3.1. Types of applicants

3.1.1. Eligible Applicants

The accepted applicants for the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call are:

- Legal SME¹ entities, start-ups or consortia of legal SME entities and/or start-ups.
- Relevant notes:
 - Please consult the [EU SME Definition](#) for details on what constitutes an SME.
 - A signed version of the Declaration of Honour and the SME Declaration will be requested during the contract preparation phase, as well as the Consortium Declaration of Honour (when applicable).
- Consortium Requirements:
 - SMEs may apply, either as a single applicant or as a leader or partner in a consortium.

3.1.2. Eligible regions

Legal entities established in any of the Widening countries/regions are eligible to participate in the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call:

- Poland: All country
- Latvia All country
- Ukraine: All country

¹ Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

3.1.3. Proposal TRL requirements

Innovative solutions proposed by eligible applicants must have a minimum TRL 4² and have the ambition to facilitate demonstration and accelerate market uptake and commercialisation by the end of the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB programme.

3.1.4. Multiple submissions

The following rules apply:

- Applicants may apply to different challenges.
- The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call will accept a maximum of 1 application per applicant per challenge.
- If an applicant submits more applications than the indicated amount, only the **first submitted** per challenge (as registered on the system) will be considered.
- Please note that only the highest-ranked proposal involving the same entity will be eligible for funding. Any additional proposals that include the same entity, regardless of their evaluation score, will be deemed ineligible for funding.

3.2. Types of challenges

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call is divided into seven challenges:

Table 1. AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call –Challenges

Number	Challenge name
1	Circular nutrients and fertiliser independence
2	Soil health and peat-free growing media
3	Low-emission manure and residue valorisation
4	Water-smart farming and runoff reduction
5	Bio-based farm inputs and end-of-life solutions
6	Data-driven IPM and input reduction
7	Agricultural practices integrating bio-circular principles

The challenges for financial support under the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call must primarily involve direct investment into the development, testing, or scaling of innovative solutions **with a minimum TRL 4**. Proposals are expected to move beyond purely analytical work and demonstrate concrete, hands-on activities, such as piloting technologies, optimising products or processes, validating new solutions in operational environments, or addressing key gaps in the agri-biocircular value chain. Funded activities should clearly contribute to the industry’s transformation and be ambitious in scope and impact.

² TRL 4 – technology validated in lab, TRL 5 - technology validated in relevant environment, TRL 6 – technology demonstrated in relevant environment, TRL 7 – system prototype demonstration in operational environment, TRL 8 – system complete and qualified, TRL 9 – actual system proven in operational environment

3.3. Types of projects

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call aims to fund **innovative projects** that will contribute to the development of existing or emerging bio-circular value chains, based on new products, solutions and services for testing and optimisation of products and production processes, or the exploration of new processing. Examples of fundable projects include:

- Development of new products and process optimisation solutions;
- Development of new processing methods & valorisation solutions;
- Implementation of pilot & demonstration projects.

3.4. Funding conditions

Any eligible entity, applying individually or as part of a consortium, will only be considered for **funding once**. Each application may receive a maximum grant amount of **EUR 50 000.00**. **The total amount requested must represent 100% of the project costs** (including indirect costs). All applications must include a justification for the planned expenses and required resources.

Eligible costs include personnel costs for project management, research and technical development, testing and piloting activities, and capacity building programme; communication, dissemination, and exploitation activities; travel (as required); project-specific equipment and consumables; and, costs related to IPR (such as patent filing) or regulatory compliance (if relevant to the project) provided they are directly linked to the implementation of the project.

The type of costs that may be reported include personnel costs, other direct costs, and indirect costs (7% of personnel and other direct costs). Subcontracting is eligible in this open call, up to 20% of the total project budget. Funds will be disbursed in **lump sums** at the beginning of the project (initial prefinancing payment) and at the end of the two (2) periods, pending the achievement of agreed-upon milestones and deliverables.

3.5. Application process

The **online submission platform** available at <https://www.f6s.com/open-call-for-funding-agri-biocircular/apply> will be the **single-entry point for all applications to the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call**. Interested applicants should register at the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB page. The relevant links and timings for the application process are provided in Table 3, but are subject to change.

Table 3. AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call Application Process and Timeline

Stage	Description	Timeline
Application	Fill in and submit the application, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication on the EU Funding & Tenders Portal and publication of the full FSTP Call package on https://www.f6s.com/open-call-for-funding-agri-biocircular/apply • Application technical proposal (using provided template) 	Launch date: 22/05/2026 Submission deadline: 31/07/2026 (17:00 Brussels time)

Stage	Description	Timeline
Admissibility and Eligibility check	The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Consortium performs internal admissibility and eligibility checks of the applications	01/08/2026 - 15/08/2026
Remote evaluation	An evaluation board reviews the received applications, scoring them based on the evaluation criteria. The experts rank the applications and select the top-ranked applications.	16/08/2026-30/09/2026
Announcement of the results	All applicants receive a written letter by email about the approval or rejection of their application. Successful projects will be published on the platform, and they will start the onboarding phase for the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Programme.	15/10/2026
Signature of sub-grant agreements	The sub-grant agreements between the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB consortium and the third parties are signed.	15/10/2026 - 15/11/2026

The submission date for applications is final. All other dates, including those of the programme, may be subject to change.

3.6. Other application requirements and considerations

- **Submission:** Applications must be submitted via: <https://www.f6s.com/open-call-for-funding-agri-biocircular/apply>
- Note: Submissions via any other means will not be accepted.*
- **Complete application:** All mandatory questions must be answered, and all requested documents must be uploaded. Incomplete applications will be disqualified.
- **Accept terms:** Applicants must agree to the application's terms and conditions.
- **Language:** All applications and programme communication must be in English.
- **Document format:** Unless otherwise agreed, all documents in all phases must be submitted electronically in PDF format without printing restrictions.
- **Deadline:**
 - Failure to apply by the submission deadline, regardless of cause (e.g., network issues, multiple browsers or windows), is not acceptable as an extenuating circumstance. Thus, it is recommended to apply well before the deadline.
 - Resubmissions are possible provided the call deadline has not passed, but are only guaranteed if requested at least 2 business days before the deadline, writing to the e-mail: agri-biocircular-hub_fstp@commercializationreactor.com
 - The deadline may be extended only in case of unforeseen submission platform technical issues. All applicants will be notified of the new deadline.
- **Review administrative documents:** Applicants are encouraged to get familiar with the documents that will be required in the contracting phase.
- **Notifications:** Applicants are encouraged to enable notifications for the programme in their profile settings to ensure communications regarding their application are received.

- **Applicants list:** A full list of applicants containing their basic information will be created for statistical and transparency purposes and shared with the European Commission.

Application package (max 12–15 pages + annexes)

A. Online form with administrative data.

B. Proposal – max. 15 pages (to be uploaded in PDF format):

1. Project Summary
2. Company & project team description
2. Problem & innovation.
3. Solution & work plan.
4. Impact & market.
5. R&I concept.
6. Budget & justification.

C. Annexes: Letters of interest (if any), mentor preference (optional), ethics checklist, de minimis/state-aid self-declaration, SME self-declaration, GDPR consent.

Note: *EU restrictive measures — Special rules apply for certain entities (e.g. entities subject to EU restrictive measures under Article 29 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) and Article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU)27 and entities covered by Commission Guidelines No 2013/C 205/0528). Such entities are not eligible to participate in any capacity, including as beneficiaries, affiliated entities, associated partners, subcontractors or recipients of financial support to third-parties (if any).*

4. How will applications be evaluated and selected?

The evaluation process consists of three key steps as presented in the figure below. Applications not meeting the eligibility criteria will be directly discarded. The leader of the applications rejected at the eligibility check step will be notified by email. Only eligible proposals will be considered for the following steps: technical evaluation and consensus group. Each application will be evaluated by a pool of up to **3 expert evaluators** who will be selected previously by AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB project based on their expertise in the fields covered by the call. The pool of experts will represent different regions covered by the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB project partners to ensure a fair and transparent selection process. Following the independent evaluations, a consensus meeting will be organised to close the evaluation process. The assessment period shall take place from 01/08/2026 till 30/09/2026. The results of the evaluation will be communicated to applicants at the end of the assessment period (not later than 15/10/2026).

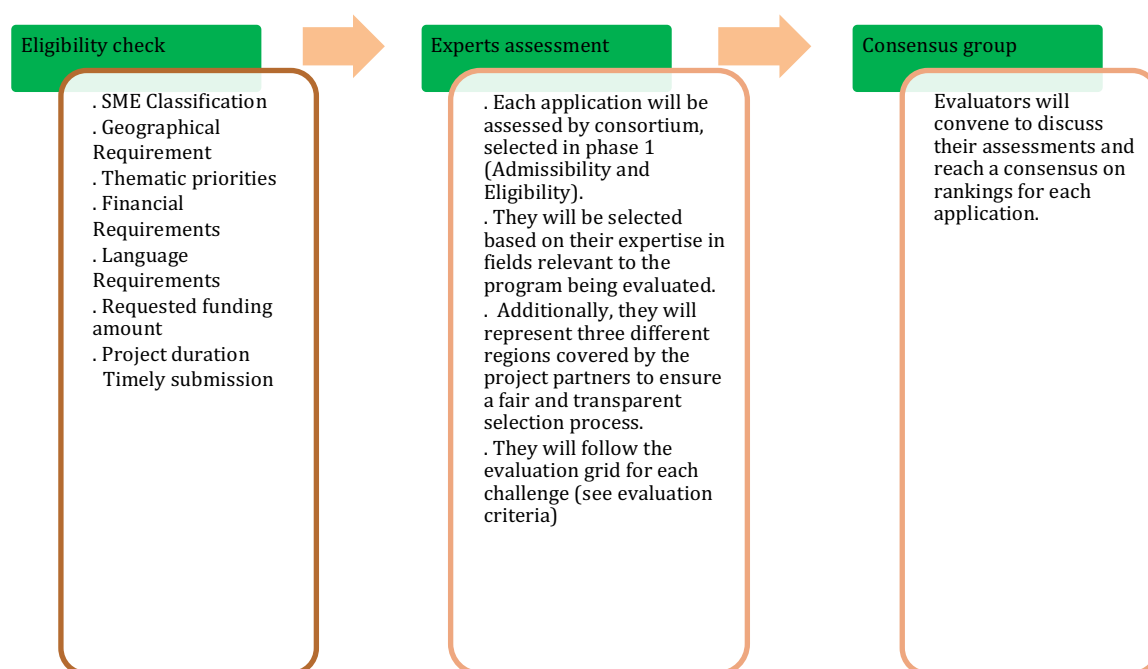


Figure 1: AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call submission and evaluation process



AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB reserves the right to request at any moment of the process additional information and/or documentation to clarify any doubts regarding the eligibility of the applicant(s) and/or the application.

4.1. Admissibility and Eligibility check

An initial admissibility and eligibility check will be done to filter out and discard non-eligible applications. An application is only considered eligible if it meets **all the eligibility criteria and**

requirements listed in [Section 3](#), related to: type of applicant(s), consortium, TRL level, regions, funding, language, and documentation, among others.

The eligibility check enables the establishment of a shortlist of applications to be evaluated in the next step of the evaluation process.

Applications marked as non-eligible (for not meeting one or more of the admissibility and eligibility criteria) will receive a rejection letter with a justification.

4.2. Remote Expert evaluation

The Internal Evaluation Committee is a collective body composed of individual members with relevant experience in the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB domains. The project will ensure the absence of any conflicts of interest.

4.2.1. Evaluation criteria & scoring

At least three experts (Evaluation Panel) will evaluate each application and will be distributed considering their expertise, and whenever possible, avoiding applications from their regions. Table 4 indicates the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call evaluation criteria and items to evaluate.

Table 4: AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call evaluation criteria

Criteria Name	Description
1. Excellence (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear and measurable objectives and goals ● High quality and innovative approach ● Strong leadership and team expertise ● Knowledge, technological and business expertise
2. Impact & Ambition (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential for significant change in industry, community & value-chain ● Ambition to create long-lasting and sustainable impact ● Potential for scalability and replication in other contexts ● Demonstrated commitment to achieving the intended impact ● Proven track record or evidence of previous impactful outcomes ● Potential for fostering positive social change or equity. ● Relevance to AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB investment cases
3. Implementation (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clearly defined roles and responsibilities ● Analysis of the technological and implementation capacity. ● Details on how the proposed value proposition will be implemented/developed with AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB support towards solution integration ● Timely execution of project plans and timelines ● Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to track progress ● Balanced team with valuable women's representation ● Commitment to delivering on stated objectives.
4. Budget and Value for money (25%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Efficient allocation and utilization of resources ● Leverage of other resources ● Clear link of costs to results

<p>5. Bonus points (up to +3 points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrable GHG reduction potential ● Farmer income resilience ● Address urgent societal challenges ● Strong exploitation potential
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Each criterion will be scored between 1 and 5. Table 5 details the scoring rationale applied to each criterion.

Table 5: AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call scoring rationale

Score	Rationale
1 / POOR	The proposal addresses the criterion inadequately, or there are significant weaknesses.
2 / FAIR	The proposal addresses the criterion broadly, but there are still several weaknesses.
3 / GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion well, but improvements are necessary.
4 / VERY GOOD	The proposal addresses the criterion very well, but some improvements are still possible.
5 / EXCELLENT	The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.

Each criterion will be divided into several sub-criteria, as indicated above (Table 4). Each sub-criterion will get a score between 1 and 5 (except criterion ‘5 Bonus Points’, whose score will be added to the final score). Half-point scores are not given for sub-criteria. The final score corresponds to the sum of the average of the three experts’ scores per criterion. Therefore, final scores may be decimal ranging from 3 to 15. **The sub-criterion “Relevance to AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB investment cases” will have a greater weighting (Table 4).**

The minimum threshold for each criterion will be **three (3) out of five (5)**, while the overall score threshold will be **nine (9) out of fifteen (15)**. Applications that do not meet the minimum thresholds (per criterion or overall score) will be excluded from the programme. This means that if a proposal receives less than 3 in one criterion or less than 9 overall score, it is automatically rejected.

Each expert will record their individual assessment using an Individual Evaluation Report. After the individual scoring by the expert evaluation board, the Open Call Management Team will:

- Check for large differences (over 2 points per criterion) between experts.
- If differences exist, experts meet to discuss and agree on scores.

A single **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)** will be prepared by the Evaluation Panel, representing opinions and scores on which the experts agree.

Note: *If required, the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB team reserves the right to organise interviews with selected applicants to either validate the assessment done by the experts or to clarify doubts regarding submitted proposals.*

4.2.2 Risk Management and Mitigation Measures

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Consortium has identified potential risks associated with the implementation of the Open Call and has defined mitigation measures to ensure its successful execution.

Identified Risk Mitigation Measures
Low number or insufficient quality of applications Targeted dissemination campaigns, dedicated info sessions and webinars, and direct outreach to SMEs in eligible regions
Geographical imbalance of applications Focused communication actions in Widening regions and support during application preparation
Conflicts of interest during evaluation Mandatory declarations of absence of conflict of interest and replacement of evaluators where necessary
Delays in project implementation by beneficiaries Milestone-based payments, continuous monitoring, and support by assigned advisers
Drop-out or underperformance of selected projects Use of reserve list and corrective actions through mentoring and programme review

Risk monitoring will be continuous throughout the Open Call and programme implementation phases.

4.2.3 Transparency and Equal Treatment

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call ensures transparency, fairness, and equal treatment of all applicants throughout the evaluation and selection process. All proposals are evaluated using the same eligibility criteria, evaluation framework, and scoring system. The evaluation process is fully documented to ensure traceability and accountability. Applicants receive written feedback through an Evaluation Summary Report, supporting transparency and learning. No preferential treatment is given based on prior involvement with the consortium or geographic origin, beyond the eligibility conditions defined in the call.

5. Ranking & selection

All applications will be ranked in a single list based on their overall score, which is calculated from the sum of the average scores given by the experts. Decimals will be taken into account to ensure accurate differentiation.

In case of a tie in overall scores, the following **tie-breaking criteria** will be used in this order:

- Criterion (1) Impact & Ambition
- Criterion (2) Excellence
- Criterion (3) Implementation
- Criterion (4) Budget and value for money

After applying these tie-break rules, if there are still proposals in the same position, priority will be given to those with a share of women and men in their team that is closer to 50/50, following European guidelines on gender equality³.

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>

All applicants at all stages of the evaluation will be informed of the result with an **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)** for eligible applications only.

The **top-ranked 12 project proposals (corresponding to 4 approved projects per Widening country)** will be invited to the contract negotiation phase. Up to 3 projects per challenge will be kept in a reserve list.

5.1.1 Appeals

Within three (3) working days of receiving (1) a rejection letter informing the application as non-eligible or (2) an ESR of non-acceptance, an applicant may submit a request for an appeal if they believe the results of the admissibility and eligibility checks have not been correctly applied, or if they feel that there has been a shortcoming in the way their application has been evaluated.

All requests for appeal must be sent to the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB team at agri-biocircular-hub_fstp@commercializationreactor.com and must:

- Focus on aspects concerning the evaluation of the application (e.g. admissibility and/or eligibility checks, evaluation procedure, etc), not their merits.
- Clearly describe the complaint.
- Be received within the time limit (3 working days) from the reception of a rejection letter, considering the application as non-eligible or the ESR information letter delivered.
- Be sent by the entity's legal representative who has also applied.

Note that the evaluation is carried out by highly qualified experts. AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB will neither question nor interfere with their original evaluation. Mere repetitions of the content of the application or disagreements with the result or reasoning of the technical evaluation will not be considered.



6. What happens after selection?

Selected applicants will be invited to the contracting stage, where administrative and financial details and documents are verified and validated.

Furthermore, to carry out mandatory Know Your Customer (KYC) checks, proof of residency and proof of ID from one or more members of the organisation(s) is required.

The steps of this stage are (see Table 9 in [Section 10](#) for complementary information):

1. Inclusion of comments (if any) provided in the Evaluation Summary Report as part of the sub-grant agreement (contract).
2. Validation of the entities based on the provision of the following documentation, available at <https://www.f6s.com/open-call-for-funding-agri-biocircular/apply> :
 - Formal proof of the entity's legal existence and tax activity.
 - Proof of the SME status, including the SME Declaration Form (Annex 6).
 - Declaration of Honour, for all participating entities, signed by the legal representative of the entity (Annex 4).
 - Consortium Declaration of Honour, signed by the legal representative of each consortium partner (if applicable) (Annex 5)
 - Financial Information Form (Annex 7).
3. Signing of the sub-grant agreement (Annex 3) between AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Consortium, represented by its Coordinator and the Lead Beneficiary.

Additional considerations:

- The sub-grant agreement (contract) is final and cannot be altered.
- Electronic digital signatures are required for signed documents (unless otherwise agreed).
- Deadlines for document submission will be provided, and will normally be concluded within two weeks.
- Failure to complete the negotiation in time will result in rejection.

7. What is the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Programme?

The awarded sub-granted projects will participate and benefit from the **AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Programme**. This includes an onboarding meeting, training activities, and a monitoring and control process during the project implementation.

7.1. Programme overview

The main objective of the programme is to provide sub-granted projects with **value-added services**, both technical and business-related, to ensure the successful development and impact of their projects. This is achieved through specialised training, group coaching, general webinars, and other resources to strengthen participants' skills and knowledge.

The programme is committed to ensuring the continuity of third-party actions through the implementation of **sustainability plan activities**. This involves establishing measures and actions that enable the selected sub-granted projects to continue their development and operation after the end of the initial funding phase. Through collaborations, meetings, workshops and events, an environment of cooperation and joint learning is promoted, where projects can share lessons learned, best practices and know-how.

In summary, the Programme will provide:

- **Financial support:** In the form of a lump sum, to deliver the work plan proposed in the applications.
- **Technical support:** Specialised guidance and assistance to implement their solutions. This support will be provided through the Capacity Building Programme.
- **Business support:** Projects will be offered comprehensive business guidance and support services in the form of mentoring, coaching, and networking opportunities. This support will be provided through the Capacity Building Programme.

7.1.1. Project Implementation Framework

The Project Implementation Framework includes two (2) periods of six months, detailed in Table 6 ([Section 7.2.1](#)). Each period culminates with the delivery of a progress report whose approval will lead to a payment of the grant. The funding programme will follow a **12-month implementation** period, with projects anticipated to commence activities around **September 2026**. Throughout the 12-month duration, project activities will be subject to ongoing assessment to ensure progress and alignment with objectives.

A mandatory study visit and an in-person workshop hosted at one of the project partners' facilities is also a key component of the programme, providing an opportunity for knowledge exchange and project collaboration. **Applicants should ensure that their proposed budgets adequately cover all costs associated with participation in this study visit.**

Note: Applicants are recommended to allocate 1 PM⁴ to the Capacity Building Programme and ensure provisions are made for the financial coverage of at least one project representative's participation in the study visit.

7.1.2. Capacity Building Programme

Funded applicants will participate in a support program that includes both inner and outer mechanisms. The inner support consists of mandatory monthly online workshops featuring business case presentations by project partners, followed by Q&A. One workshop will focus specifically on investment and business support. The program also involves a phased approach, covering technology, branding & networking, market strategies, and funding & investment. **The program culminates in a final mandatory in-person workshop at a project partner's facility, where participants will pitch their case.**

Note: Participation by at least one representative of the project in the Capacity Building Programme is compulsory, and attendance will need to be reported.

7.2. Programme review

Each project will go through **two reporting periods**, each one highlighting the end of a period (table 6). Beneficiaries of the sub-granted projects are required to submit a progress report at the end of each implementation period. The progress report will serve as a tool for monitoring the performance and evaluating the project at the end of each period. The progress report will consist of a table with the achievements in that period and the corresponding description.

The submission and approval of the progress report will trigger the **payment associated with each period** after having verified the achievement of the milestones and deliverables set for the period. Funding will be distributed in three instalments as follows:

Table 6: AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB - Review and Payments summary

Stage	Item	Description
Initial pre-financing	Requirement	Signature of the sub-grant agreement
	Result	Payment of 40% of the maximum grant amount
	Timeline	After entry into force
Period 1	Requirement	Submission of Progress Report #1
	Result	Payment ceiling of 70% of the maximum grant amount
	Timeline	M1 - M6
Period 2	Requirement	Submission of Progress Report #2
	Result	Payment of the balance
	Timeline	M7 - M12

⁴ Person-month

Reports must be submitted 7 working days after the end of each reporting period. During the reporting period, representatives of the beneficiary should be ready to present their work and answer questions.

After each successful reporting period and within 5 **working days**, the beneficiary should send the relevant payment request document.

7.3. Conflicts of interest

Applicants must declare any actual and/or potential conflict of interest with AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB during the selection process and/or during the project implementation. All cases of conflict of interest will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

7.4 Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

Solutions developed and results achieved by third parties belong to them. Applicants will remain the **sole owners of their respective IPRs and retain the IPR for their solutions.**

AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB complies with the fundamental ethical issues, particularly those outlined in the “European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity”.

- All applicants must submit a self-assessment ethics questionnaire, available in the Proposal Template
- If the applicant confirms the existence of potential ethical issues, they must contact the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Helpdesk for guidance, as required.
- AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB will verify the declaration's consistency with the application contents and may contact applicants to resolve any ethical issues.
- Applications that fail to properly address ethical issues or inadequately deal with privacy aspects will be rejected.

7.5 Data protection

In order to process and evaluate applications and manage project implementation, the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB consortium will need to collect Personal and Industrial Data.

- FNG Invest SIA will act as Data Controller for data submitted through the online submission platform for these purposes. Please see our privacy policy [here](#).
- Ilona Gulchak (e-mail: ilona.gulchak@commercializationreactor.com) has been appointed by FNG Invest SIA as Data Protection Officer (DPO), to ensure compliance with data protection regulations, such as the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), and that personal data is collected, processed, and stored securely.
- The platform's system design and operational procedures ensure that data is managed in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). For more information, see the full text of the Regulation: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>
- Each applicant will accept the terms to ensure compliance. Please check [here](#) to review the platform's privacy policy and data security policy.
- Note that the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB consortium must retain generated data until five years after the balance of the project is paid or longer if there are ongoing procedures (such as audits, investigations or litigation). In this case, the data must be kept until the conclusion.

7.6 Confidentiality

Confidentiality obligations:

- Selected applicants are required to maintain confidentiality of any project data, documents, invoices and other materials (in any form) during the implementation of the activities and for 5 years after project completion.

- This confidentiality period can be extended by agreement with the EC and the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB consortium.
- Information shared during the project, whether written or spoken, is only considered confidential if the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB agrees and confirms it in writing within 15 days.
- Confidential information must only be used for project implementation, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Any information shared during the application stage will be treated as confidential.

7.7 Dissemination and visibility of the EU funding

The beneficiary must promote the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) strategically and effectively, and to highlight the financial support of the EC, including on the official third-party website. The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Communication team will guide and support these communication activities to selected beneficiaries.

The project's dissemination strategy focuses on transparency, broad knowledge sharing and targeted communication. In disseminating the results, the primary objective is to reach the scientific community, industrial partners and the wider society, while ensuring that the relevance and value of the results are maintained in the long term. Information will be shared through various channels, including open-access publications, international conferences, workshops, and digital platforms such as social media and scientific repositories.

Dissemination is based on the following principles:

- Targeted communication: dissemination activities are planned and implemented based on the needs and expectations of stakeholders. Specific messages and relevant content will be created for different target groups, such as researchers, industry partners, decision-makers and the public, considering the most appropriate channels for receiving information.
- Transparency and openness: in line with the FAIR principles, we ensure that project results are discoverable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. This includes open access to research data and publications on platforms such as Zenodo or CORDIS, and attention to presenting the results in context so that they are understandable and easy to apply.
- Maximising scientific and societal impact: the project aims not only to advance the scientific community, but also to promote the social and economic impact of research results. To disseminate and apply innovative solutions, we will actively engage with industry, policy makers and civil society organisations to promote the practical exploitation of results.
- Sustainability: in dissemination, particular attention is paid to ensuring that the results remain accessible and usable in the long term. This includes appropriate archiving of content and the use of systems and tools to ensure continued access and reusability.

These principles ensure that dissemination is not limited to making the results available but actively contributes to extending the project impact, while supporting scientific and social innovation.

7.8 Gender Equality

Beneficiaries are required to promote gender balance in project teams and leadership roles, and to integrate the gender dimension into research and innovation activities where relevant. Public bodies and research organizations must have a Gender Equality Plan in place as an eligibility criterion. These measures help ensure inclusive, high-quality outcomes and contribute to the EU's commitment to equal opportunities for all.

7.9 Checks and reviews

The EC may, at any time during the implementation of the sub-project and up to five years after the end of the sub-project, arrange for a check and review activity to be carried out by external auditors, or by the EC services, including the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF). The procedure shall be deemed to be initiated on the date of receipt of the relevant letter sent by the EC.

There will be no financial checks, reviews, or audits to check costs, since beneficiaries have no obligation to document the costs incurred for the action. Checks, reviews, and audits will focus on the technical implementation of the action.

7.10 Ethics, Security and Do No Significant Harm (DNSH)

All activities funded under the AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Open Call must comply with Horizon Europe ethical principles and relevant European and national legislation. Applicants are required to identify and address any potential ethical issues related to their proposed activities, including data protection, environmental impacts, and health and safety considerations. An ethics self-assessment is mandatory as part of the application package. The Open Call adheres to the Do No Significant Harm (DNSH) principle, ensuring that funded activities do not cause significant harm to environmental objectives such as climate change mitigation, biodiversity protection, water resources, and pollution prevention. Proposals involving dual-use technologies or security-sensitive applications must clearly justify their relevance and compliance with applicable regulations. Projects that fail to adequately address ethical, environmental, or security considerations may be rejected.

8 Relevant links and contacts

The AGRI-BIOCIRCULAR-HUB Consortium will provide information to applicants via the online submission page, so that information is visible to all participants.

- Project website: <https://agri-biocircular-hub.eu>
- Online submission system:
<https://www.f6s.com/open-call-for-funding-agri-biocircular/apply>
- Open call application forms:
<https://www.f6s.com/open-call-for-funding-agri-biocircular/apply>
- Helpdesk: agri-biocircular-hub_fstp@commercializationreactor.com
- FAQ: agri-biocircular-hub_fstp@commercializationreactor.com

9 List of Eligible Regions

Table 7. List of eligible Regions

Country Code	Country Name	Region Name
PL	Poland	All Regions
LT	Latvia	All Regions
UKR	Ukraine	All Regions

10 Relevant Open Call definitions

Table 8. Acronyms & Definitions

Acronym	Explanation/ Definition
AWU	Annual Work Unit
DPO	Data Protection Officer
DSS	Digital Signature Services
EC	European Commission
EISMEA	European Innovation Council and SMEs Executive Agency
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
EU	European Union
FSTP	Financial Support for Third Parties
GA	Grant Agreement
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
IP	Internet Protocol
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IPR	Intellectual Property Rights
KYC	Know Your Customer
MS	Member State
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
OC	Open Call
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
PIC	Participant Identification Code
R&D	Research and Development
RTO	Research and Training Organisation
SME	Small and Medium-sized enterprises
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
VAT	Value Added Tax

Table 9. Terms & Definitions

Term	Definition
Applicant(s)	The legal entity or group of legal entities that intend(s) to submit or that applied to the Open Call.
Application Eligibility Criteria	Criteria used to assess if an application can be considered for the open call. Possible values (Yes/No).
Application Eligible or Non-Eligible	An application that is or is not compliant with the eligibility criteria.
Application Timestamp	Timestamp of the final submission of an application. If the application is reopened and resubmitted, the last date will be considered.
Financial Info Form	Form where the beneficiary provides information on the bank account to which payments will be made during the project implementation.
Beneficiary or 3rd Party	An entity or a consortium that applied for the open call that was accepted to be funded, and has signed, or is in the process of signing, a sub-grant agreement.
Consortium	A set of legal entities that are cumulatively responsible for implementing the project as defined in the Grant Agreement signed with the European Commission.
Consortium Declaration of Honour	Declaration where the applicants/ beneficiaries, participating as a consortium, declare they accept all conditions of the open call, acceleration process & programme; and agree - if applicable - on budget share. One CDoH is required for each sub-granted project.
Contract Deadline	Date and time until when the selected entities must provide contractual information.
Declaration of Honour (DoH)	Declaration where the applicant/ beneficiary declares they accept all conditions of the open call, acceleration process & programme. One DoH is required for each applicant/ beneficiary.
Application Form	Application form available at https://agri-biocircular-hub.eu
FSTP	Financial support to third parties. Payments made to entities that are not consortium members.
FSTP – Lump Sum	Payment made to the third party based on the achievement of a milestone.
Internal evaluation committee	A group of appropriately qualified persons of the consortium partners that are assigned the responsibility of performing evaluations or reviews at any stage of the open call implementation or programme.
Adviser	A person from the consortium who works closely with the beneficiary to foster communication with the consortium and assess the progress of the project. The adviser may be part of an evaluation committee.
Open Call	Competitive process to access a Programme.
Open Call and Programme deadlines	The project has planned the programme carefully, but unexpected things can happen. The deadline is fixed and will only change in case of unforeseen events. Other dates, including in the programme, are flexible and may be adjusted as needed, and communicated to all applicants.
Open Call close date	Date and time when applications close.
Open Call selection prioritisation	Rules used to order applications.

Term	Definition
Proof of Bank Account Information	The account where the funds will be transferred will be indicated via a specific form signed by the entity, individuals, and the bank owners. The holder of the account will be the entity/ individual. Provided using Annex 6.
Proof of Legal Existence	Company/ organisation register, official journal or other official document per country showing the name of the organisation, the legal address and registration number and a copy of a document proving VAT registration (in case the VAT number does not show on the registration extract or its equivalent).
Proof of SME Status	<p>Proof of the SME condition is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the applicant has been fully validated as an SME on the Beneficiary Register of the EC Participant Portal, the PIC number must be provided. • Provision of the signed (with a valid e-signature) SME Declaration (Annex 7): in the event the beneficiary declares being non-autonomous, the balance sheet and profit and loss account (with annexes) for the last period for upstream and downstream organisations are required. A Status Information Form may be requested, which includes the headcount (AWU), balance, profit & loss accounts of the latest closed financial year and the relation, upstream and downstream, of any linked or partner company. • Supporting documents: In cases where either the number of employees or the ownership is not clearly identified, any other supporting documents which demonstrate headcount and ownership, such as payroll details, annual reports, national regional association records, etc.
Score, Expert	<p>Unless otherwise stated, experts will rank each criterion with a score between 1 and 5. Half-point scores are not given. Score values will indicate the following assessments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1: Very poor. The criterion is addressed in an unsatisfactory manner. • 2: Poor. There are serious inherent weaknesses. • 3: Good. While the application broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting. • 4: Very Good. The application addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible. • 5: Excellent. The application successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.
Reserve List	Eligible applications that were not selected for funding which can be invited in case selected applications do not provide contractual data.
Schedule for payments to Beneficiaries	<p>All payments to beneficiaries depend on the successful review of deliverables/ reports at the end of each phase, and reception by the consortium of the corresponding payment request.</p> <p>All payments will be made with undue delay, preferably no later than 30 calendar days after receipt of the financial statement.</p>
Score, Per Committee	When the evaluation is made by a committee, the average score of each criterion can be a decimal.
Selected application	An application that was selected to participate in the Open Call Implementation.
SME	An incorporated enterprise that complies with the rules defined by the European Commission to be qualified as an SME ⁵
SME – Autonomous Enterprise	An autonomous enterprise is not a partner with or linked to another enterprise

⁵ https://single-market-economy.ec.europa.eu/smes/sme-fundamentals/sme-definition_en

Term	Definition
SME – Linked Enterprise	Linked enterprises are those that form a group through the direct or indirect control of the majority of voting rights of an enterprise by another or through the ability to exercise a dominant influence on an enterprise.
SME – Partner Enterprise	The enterprise holds a minimum of 25% (Capital or voting rights in another enterprise, or 25% (Capital or voting rights) are owned by another enterprise.
SME Declaration Form	Declaration where the SME status is assessed.
Start-up	Company younger than five years, with an innovative product and/or service and/or business model.
Sub-grant Agreement	Signed between the Project Consortium, represented by its Coordinator and the beneficiary. The sub-grant agreement will also include the comments (if any) of the application’s ESR to the work plan.