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Annex A Guideliens for Applicants

DRG4Food – Open Call #1
[HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-10] Project #: 101086523

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Executive Summary

This document contains essential information for the first open call for proposals under the DRG4Food project, known as DRG4Food Open Call #1. It encompasses information on application conditions, eligibility, assessment criteria, and the obligations of successful applicants. This open call aims to involve various entities, including SMEs, startups, research and technology organizations, universities, as well as non-profit research organizations, with a special emphasis on civil society institutions and consumer associations. These entities are expected to carry out pilot projects involving various digital innovations in responsible technology for the food sector, guided by Digital Responsibility Goals. Their commitment is instrumental in enriching the DRG4Food Trust Stack, which comprises technology tools and enablers. In addition to the guidelines provided in this document, applicants should consider all associated annexes when preparing and submitting their proposals.



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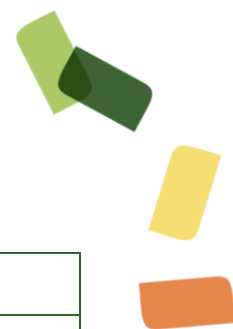
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History of Changes

Version	Date	Change	Page(s)
1.0	9 October 2023	Full version of the Guidelines for Applicants	
1.1	3 November 2023	Clarification on the eligibility of Swiss entities.	18

Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
EC	European Commission
ESR	European Union
ESR	Evaluation Summary Report
DRG	Digital Responsibility Goals
HE	Horizon Europe
OCT	Overseas Country and Territory
RTO	Research and Training Organisation
SME	Small and medium-size enterprises
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
VAT	Value Added Tax



1. Background: Introduction to DRG4Food

Boosting Trust, Transparency, and Responsibility in the Food System with Digital Solutions

Food safety and security, sustainability, and food waste reduction are at the heart of Europe's food strategy. To address these challenges and promote trust, transparency and responsibility in the food chain, the EU-funded DRG4FOOD project aims to develop and demonstrate a set of innovative solutions.

This set of innovative solutions encompasses a well-structured open funding program, primarily concentrating on piloting scientifically and technologically advanced solutions in the domains of food tracking, personalized nutrition, and consumer food choices, with the potential for rapid scalability.

As a consortium, we maintain the idea that technology is not an end in itself but rather a tool for empowerment, providing the means to achieve a wide range of valuable and innovative use cases. Currently, technology development primarily caters to the needs of corporations and authorities, a limitation that risks perpetuating or further exacerbating a lack of trust within the markets that they serve. To address this, we advocate for a more diverse and human-centric perspective, which we believe will lead to the emergence of new use cases and technology development that can contribute to a more sustainable ecosystem that is 'trustworthy by default'.

DRG4FOOD will design for trust, responsibility, privacy and user sovereignty by setting new standards for a data-driven food system aligned with the European Digital Rights and Principles and the Digital Responsibility Goals (DRGs). The programme is built upon a clear strategic roadmap for a new virtual food system, technological enablers, solution demonstrations, a structured funding programme with open calls, and measures to guide and support the stakeholders involved.

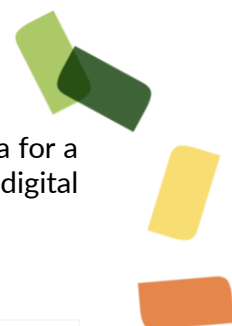
The underlying challenges

DRG4FOOD looks at two sets of challenges: those pertaining to the food system and those related to digital solutions. Trust has been a longstanding issue in the food industry. In fact, "consumer trust in the food market is imperative for continued growth, [as] minor declines in trust can have major effects, given that food has profound impacts on health" (EIT Health, 2020).

The other challenge is that of a rogue digital world in an ever-increasing complex technological, social and economic landscape. To think that the adoption of new technologies is contributing to making our lives easier, less complex and more sustainable currently requires a strong belief. Yet, given a legacy of data breaches, data misuse and manipulation, identity theft and biased AI decisions, technology adoption today is viewed with growing scepticism. In fact, the 2020 Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report: Trust in Technology reveals that trust in tech, globally, is down 4 per cent year after year, particularly in sectors like AI, IoT and 5G.






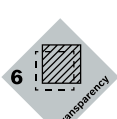

To truly design for trust, the entire chain of activities and underlying assumptions towards developing technology must be based on fundamental values like responsibility, privacy and user control—especially when dealing with valuable and sensitive food data. The starting point, thus, needs to be the user and their values rather than a business model or (legitimate) state interests.

The Digital Responsibility Goals (DRGs): a framework for more digital responsibility



Similar to how the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) enable a common agenda for a more sustainable planet, the Digital Responsibility Goals (DRGs) seek to promote digital technologies embedded in universal rights and values.

Table 1 The seven Digital Responsibility Goals, Identity Valley


	<p>DRG#1 - DIGITAL LITERACY: Digital Literacy and unrestricted as well as competent access to digital services and infrastructure are prerequisites for the sovereign and self-determined use of digital technologies.</p>
	<p>DRG#2 - CYBERSECURITY: Cybersecurity protects systems against compromise and manipulation by unauthorized actors and ensures the protection of users and their data - from data collection to data utilization. It is a basic prerequisite for the responsible operation of digital solutions.</p>
	<p>DRG#3 - PRIVACY: Privacy is part of our human dignity and a prerequisite for digital self-determination. Protection of privacy - with consistent purpose limitation and data minimization - allows users to act confidently in the digital world. Privacy by design and default enable responsible data usage. Users are given control and providers must account for how they protect privacy.</p>
	<p>DRG#4 - DATA FAIRNESS: Non-personal data must also be protected and handled according to its value. At the same time, suitable mechanisms must be defined to make data transferable and applicable between parties. This is the only way to ensure balanced cooperation between different stakeholders in data ecosystems.</p>
	<p>DRG#5 - TRUSTWORTHY ALGORITHMS: Once data has been collected, it must be processed with the aim of trustworthiness. This is true for simple algorithms as well as for more complex systems up to autonomously acting systems.</p>
	<p>DRG#6 - TRANSPARENCY: Proactive transparency for users and all other stakeholders is needed. This includes transparency of the principles that underlie digital products, services, and processes, and transparency of the digital solution and its components.</p>
	<p>DRG#7 - HUMAN AGENCY AND IDENTITY: Especially in the digital space, we must protect our identity and preserve human responsibility. Preserving the multifaceted human identity must be a prerequisite for any digital development. The resulting digital products, services, and processes are human-centered, inclusive, ethically sensitive, and sustainable, maintaining human agency at all times.</p>

These seven guiding principles serve as a framework for a digital ecosystem that prioritises human identity, social cohesion and trust. Developed through a multistakeholder approach with experts from various fields, the DRGs are designed to reduce complexity in our increasingly digitised lives and make responsible behaviour in the digital world visible, comparable and comprehensible.

For these reasons, DRGs will serve as terms of reference and governance tools for building and operating responsible technology for a data-driven food system in the context of this project.



Table 2 DRG Guiding Criteria, Identity Valley

DRG#1  Digital Literacy	DRG#2  Cybersecurity	DRG#3  Privacy	DRG#4  Data Fairness	DRG#5  Trustworthy Algorithms	DRG#6  Transparency	DRG#7  Human Agency & Identity
Information offered for digital products, services, and processes must be designed individually and in a way that is suitable for the target group.	Developers, providers and operators of digital products, services and processes assume responsibility for Cybersecurity. Users also bear a part of the responsibility; thus awareness (see DRG#1) is essential in that context.	Operators and providers of digital products, services, and processes must take responsibility for protecting the privacy of their users.	When collecting data, proactive care is taken to ensure fair representation of the context in which it is collected.	Algorithms, their application, and the datasets on which they are used or trained are designed to provide a maximum of fairness and inclusion.	To gain the trust of users, organizations establish transparency about their digital business ventures and solutions - for the final digital products, services, and processes as well as the organization, business models, data flows, and technology behind them.	The preservation of the multifaceted human identity is a basic requirement and must be the basis for any digital development. The resulting digital approaches are always user centric. They respect personal autonomy and dignity, and limit commoditization.
Access to digital products, services, and processes must be reliable and barrier-free.	Developers, providers, and operators of digital solutions are responsible for appropriate security measures and are constantly developing them further. Products, services, and processes are designed from the outset to be resistant to compromise and abuse by unauthorized actors.	When dealing with personal data basic principles of data protection are respected, in particular strict purpose limitations and data minimisation.	In digital ecosystem structures, the mutual exchange of data between all parties involved must be clearly described and regulated (data governance). The goal must be fair participation in the benefits achieved through the exchange of data.	The individual and overall societal impact of algorithms is regularly reviewed and the review documented. Depending on the results, proportional measures must be taken.	Transparency is implemented in interactive communication (for example, between providers and users), and mechanisms for interaction are actively offered.	Sustainability and climate protection must be part of digital business models and implemented in practice (especially in accordance with the UN Sustainable Development Goals).
Acceptance of digital products, services, and processes must be proactively considered in design and operation. This includes measures on equity, diversity & inclusion.	A holistic view and appropriate implementation of cybersecurity are considered along the lifecycle, value chain, and the entire service, resp. solution.	Privacy protection is considered throughout the entire lifecycle and should be considered as default setting.	Developers, providers, and operators of digital solutions must clearly define and communicate the purpose with which they use and process data (including non-personal data).	The results of algorithmic processing are comprehensible and explainable. Where possible results should be reproducible.	The use of digital solutions is designed to be transparent wherever there is a digital interaction between people and the digital solution (for example, the use of chatbots).	Digital products, services, and processes promote responsible, non-manipulative communication. Where possible, communication takes place unfiltered.
Education on the opportunities and risks of the digital transformation is essential - everyone is entitled to education on digital matters.	Developers, providers, and operators of digital products, services, and processes must account for how they provide security for users and their data - while maintaining necessary trade secrets and information security.	Users have control over their personal data and its use - this includes the rights to access, rectify, erase, restrict processing, avoid automated decision-making and ensure data portability.	The "FAIR" data principles are satisfied, especially for use cases relevant to society as a whole - "FAIR" stands for Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable.	AI systems must be robust and designed to withstand subtle attempts to manipulate data or algorithms.	In addition to transparency for users, transparency should also be provided for other stakeholders (e.g., businesses, science, governments) – while maintaining the necessary business secrets and information security.	Digital technology always remains under human authorship and control - it can be shaped throughout its deployment.
Education and information offered should be designed to create awareness of related topics such as sustainability, climate protection, and diversity/inclusion (e.g., along UN SDGs) where applicable.	Business, politics, authorities, civil society and science must collaboratively shape the framework for cybersecurity with appropriate objectives and measures. This requires open and transparent cooperation	Providers must account for how they protect users' privacy and personal data - while maintaining necessary trade secrets and information security.	Data providers must be equipped with mechanisms to control and withdraw their data - they shall be able to have a say regarding the usage policies.	AI systems must be designed and implemented in such a way that independent control of their mode of action is possible.	Organizations must outline how they will make transparency verifiable and thus hold themselves accountable for their actions in the digital space.	Technology may only be applied if it is of use to individuals and mankind and promotes the wellbeing of humanity.



How do they work?

Think of the DRGs as having three layers (see Figure 2), each fulfilling a different purpose and guiding different parts of society.

The top layer is the visual part of the DRG framework (see Figure 2). Each goal stands for one dimension of the digital world we need to improve to build a more trustworthy ecosystem. On this layer, the complexity of the digital world is condensed into a recognisable icon to make the problem area in which we need to take action easy to grasp for everyone.

The middle layer ‘contains’ the guiding criteria, providing instructions for businesses and developers on how to act to build a more trustworthy digital ecosystem and conform to the respective goal.

The bottom layer consists of practical indicators and metrics that can be used to evaluate to what extent, for example, a specific web application complies with the guiding criteria. This layer enables us to quantify responsible behaviour.

This layered approach ensures that the DRGs are comprehensive, actionable, and measurable, enabling stakeholders to align their efforts and track their progress towards building a more responsible and trustworthy digital ecosystem.

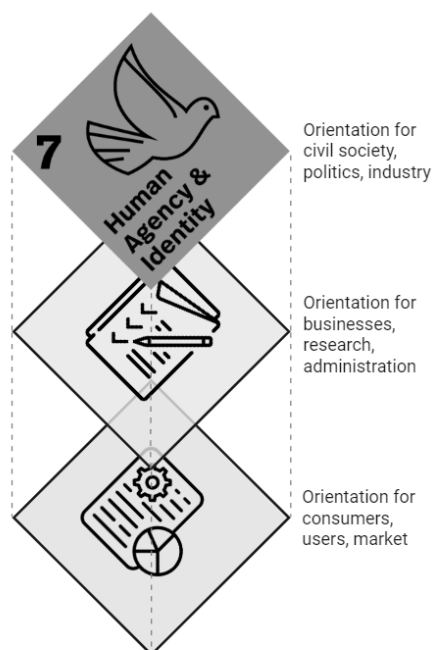


Figure 1 DRG layers, Identity Valley

What are the expected impacts?

- *Pre-empting negative effects of digitalisation*

By underpinning the design process and development of digital solutions with guidance based on the DRGs, the project aims to pre-empt any negative consequences. This follows the logical assumption that as soon as a technology is already on the market and established, it becomes exponentially harder to ‘repair’ any potentially damaging qualities. For example, Facebook, founded in 2004, continues to pose challenges in 2023 as we try to mitigate its negative effects (e.g., misinformation, harm to the mental health of teenagers, privacy infringements, etc.).

- *Responsible technology as a viable business model*

Demand for digital technology that can be ‘trusted’ is on the rise. DRG4FOOD can serve as an incubator for a prototypical business model for trusted technology—not only for participants in the project’s open call but potentially also for a trustworthy digital ecosystem beyond the food sector.

- *Higher adoption of digital technology for the benefit of citizens*

Data shows that there is a correlation between trust in technology and adoption. It can be reasonably assumed that digital technology that is verifiably trustworthy creates lower hurdles for adoption, especially when sensitive data, e.g. consumer health data, is involved.

How are the DRGs implemented?



The project team has developed the 'Digital Responsibility Playbook' based on the guiding criteria of the DRGs and the specific requirements of the data-driven food system (e.g. the challenges of exchanging health data using nutritional apps).

The playbook will be used by:

- Potential open-call participants to tailor their proposals to the expectations of the DRG4FOOD open call.
- Selected open-call participants to guide the development of their digital solutions,
- The DRG4FOOD consortium to compile enablers for the 'Responsible Technology Toolbox.'
- The DRG4FOOD consortium complements the 'DRG4FOOD Roadmap to Digital Responsibility' with a policy tool to be shared with decisionmakers.

1.1. DRG4Food Open Calls

The primary objective of the two DRG4Food Open Calls is to encourage, inspire, and actively support pilot projects guided by the Digital Responsibility Goals. These projects are carefully designed to address the needs of end-users and consumers while demonstrating significant market potential, thereby delivering substantial benefits to the European economy and society.

These Open Calls resonate with DRG4Food's core goals, which encompass various objectives:

- **Objective 1:** Creating a roadmap for a novel data-driven food system grounded in principles of openness, sovereignty, fairness, and trust.
- **Objective 2:** Pioneering a new paradigm for successful data-driven food applications rooted in principles of openness, user-centricity, sovereignty, and trust, spanning from ideation to operation.
- **Objective 3:** Crafting human-centric, decentralized, and trustworthy electronic food system technology enablers, consisting of baseline technologies.
- **Objective 4:** Demonstrating innovative services and applications within a virtual food system.

These objectives collectively drive DRG4Food's mission to promote innovation and the development of responsible data-driven solutions in critical food industry domains, such as **Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices**.

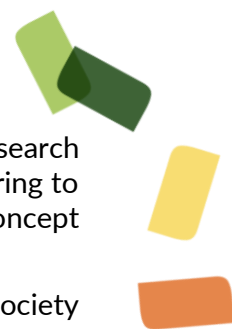
DRG4Food leverages an extensive network and ecosystem. It utilizes Open Calls as a powerful tool for providing financial support to external entities, accelerating network expansion. This initiative is a collaborative effort involving the digital responsibility community, the food sector, and key stakeholders in the European landscape.

The total funding pool for DRG4Food Open Calls consists of €1,900,000, provided on an equity-free basis.

The budget designated for Open Call #1 amounts to €950,000, while the remaining €950,000 is allocated for Open Call #2, scheduled for launch in June 2024. Each pilot project is required to submit a proposal application with a budget ranging from a minimum of €150,000 to a maximum of €300,000. Through a rigorous selection process, it is expected that a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 6 projects will be selected for support in Open Call #1.

DRG4Food welcomes a diverse range of entities, including:

- Innovative SMEs, startups, and other agrifood tech entities interested in piloting responsible data-driven solutions in the areas of Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices.



- Research and technology organizations (RTOs), universities, and non-profit research entities, both public and private, dedicated to advancing technology while adhering to principles such as openness, user-centricity, sovereignty, and trust, from initial concept development to real-world implementation.
- Technology adopters and users within the food sector, especially civil society institutions like NGOs and consumer associations, tasked with assessing and validating innovative solutions that align with their requirements and digital responsibility objectives.

The selection process for the Open Call #1 is closely guided by the Digital Responsibility Playbook and focused on the successful implementation of a diverse range of digital innovations with the technical maturity level applicable for launch in the DRG4Food toolbox – effectively being publically available for future utilization in the development and pilot of Digitally Responsible Solutions within the food sector.

The deliverables from Open Call #1 will embody **Responsible Technology Enablers** through the development, validation and documentation of core innovative capabilities most applicable, or even essential, for the development of digitally responsible solutions in the food chain. An intended key success factor will be the further integration of these enablers into the later Open Call #2 projects which extends DRG4FOOD's focus towards guiding the development of **Responsible Data-driven Solutions** in the selected food domain use case areas of **Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices**.

The Open Call #1 accelerator program spans 6 to 12 months and combines on-site activities with online sessions, offering a customized package of lectures, workshops, personalized expert mentoring, and group coaching for each sub-project. Each consortium is assigned a dedicated end-to-end mentor who guides them through the program, sets objectives, and monitors progress. Participants also benefit from and are required to contribute to the DRG4Food Toolbox, which encompasses foundational technologies. These invaluable resources offer essential support, facilitating the expedited development of sustainable and impactful data-driven innovations in alignment with DRGs (Digital Responsibility Goals).



2. General Information

This document offers essential insights into DRG4Food - Open Call #1. DRG4Food Open Call #1 is designed to attract a diverse range of entities, including SMEs, startups, research and technology organizations (RTOs), universities, civil society institutions, and consumer associations. The primary objective of this open call is to encourage the development of responsible data-driven solutions that empower citizens, promote data rights, and contribute to the establishment of sustainable food systems. The focus is on fostering innovation in the food sector while adhering to Digital Responsibility Goals and principles.

2.1. Terms and Definitions

This section provides definitions for terms used in the Open Call documentation. Unless specified otherwise, the meaning of a term is as described in this section.

Table 3 Definitions of persons, entities, and committees

Term	Definition
DRG4Food Project Consortium	A group of legal entities collectively responsible for executing the DRG4Food project as outlined in Grant Agreement number 101086523.
Applicant	An organization that plans to submit or has already submitted a proposal to the DRG4Food pilot program in collaboration with at least one or two other entities.
Beneficiary	A group of organizations that have submitted a proposal to the pilot program, obtained funding approval, and are in the process of finalizing or have already signed a sub-grant agreement
Evaluator	An expert invited by DRG4Food Project Consortium to help assess proposals submitted to the funding program. Such experts must be free from conflicts of interest and are obligated to adhere to a confidentiality agreement.

Table 4 Definitions of the funding programme

Term	Definition
DRG4Food Pilot Program	The program within which this open call operates. It's shaped by the documents and templates prepared by the DRG4Food consortium, as detailed in section 4.1. The funding program encompasses two main components: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The open call for submissions, review process, contract drafting, and finalization. 2. Execution which consists of three stages (for the chosen beneficiaries).
Proposal Preparation	Timeframe during which applicants can submit their proposals for the open call. Every open call has a set deadline that is strictly adhered to.



and Submission Phase	
Evaluation Phase	Time span in which the DRG4Food Project Consortium, along with external experts, reviews and ranks the submitted applications. Once this phase concludes, all applicants are informed about the outcomes of the evaluation.
Contract Finalization & Signing Phase	Timeframe during which the selected beneficiaries and the DRG4Food Project Consortium finalize administrative processes to sign the sub-grant agreement and arrange necessary administrative paperwork.
Implementation Phase	<p>The sub-project is divided into distinct phases, each with its own defined duration. These phases are structured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 1 - Setup and Planning: This initial phase lasts for 1 month. • Phase 2 - Innovation R&D and Piloting: This phase extends over a range of 3 to 8 months. • Phase 3 - Scaling Up: The final phase spans from 1 to 3 months. <p>Upon the completion of each phase, the sub-project undergoes a formal review conducted by an internal evaluation team. This review evaluates the sub-project's progress and assesses its alignment with the predefined objectives.</p>

2.2. DRG4Food Open Call #1 Challenge Areas

This chapter outlines the challenge areas for proposal submission, with each application exclusively directed toward one of the three proposed challenges. These areas are described to specify the expectations for DRG4FOOD Open Call #1, along with illustrative examples. It's important to note that these examples serve as clarifications rather than limitations, offering guidance to better understand the expectations without confining the scope to just those aspects or technologies.

2.2.1. Food Tracking

This challenge area places its emphasis on technologies related to food traceability, encompassing the entirety of the food system, from farm to fork. Technological proposals within this context should take into account both environmental aspects such as CO2 emissions, waste generation, and water and land use, as well as societal considerations, including fair income for farmers. The proposed solutions should possess the capability to mitigate food fraud, validate adherence to geographical indications or botanical/zoological origins, and guarantee the accuracy and verifiability of information presented on consumer labels.

In this challenge area, DRG4FOOD has identified baseline enabling technologies that could be developed through submitted proposals. However, it's important to note that this list is not exhaustive, and other baseline technologies that effectively address the described challenge area are not excluded. Please understand that the text below gives examples of potential technologies and should not be viewed as a definitive or exhaustive list.

- Internet of Things (IoT) applications
- Sensors and portable devices for monitoring and control
- Blockchain and Digital Ledgers
- Artificial Intelligence



- RFID-tags and digital labels.

2.2.2. Targeted Nutrition

This challenge area is centered around baseline technology enablers aimed at shaping and providing targeted dietary and nutrition recommendations through a personalised approach towards more healthy diets. This approach takes into account various personal variables, including behavioral and emotional factors associated with food consumption, individual dietary preferences and limitations, lifestyle choices, and more. It also considers factors such as personal personal beliefs, religious choices, weight management goals, environmental sustainability considerations, and other relevant aspects.

The proposals should aim to assist individuals in enhancing their dietary choices. This includes ensuring that the recommendations offered are nutritionally balanced, considering factors such as the adequacy of micronutrient intake and overall food balance. Furthermore, proposals should address the goal of reducing the risk of or preventing non-communicable diseases and encouraging the adoption of healthier lifestyles. Additionally, there should be a focus on the scientific accuracy and affordability of the recommendations put forth.

For this challenge area, DRG4FOOD has identified the following technologies that could be developed in the submitted proposals. However, it's important to note that this list is not exhaustive, and other technologies or applications that effectively address the described challenge area are not excluded. Please understand that the text below provides examples of potential technologies, and it should not be seen as an exclusive or definitive list.

- Apps allowing different types of interactions with users, i.e., for improving the communication between patients and practitioners; improve diets, etc.
- AI related tools, such as AI-based methods for providing personalised advices
- Zero-knowledge proof technologies
- Tools allowing bottom-up and peer2peer interactions.

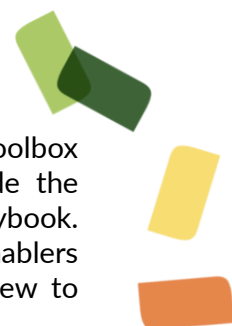
2.2.3. Consumers' Food Choices

This challenge area places its focus on baseline enablers that can enhance consumers' literacy and knowledge about the consequences of their food choices. The aim is to empower consumers to make healthier and more sustainable dietary selections, while also ensuring that these options remain affordable and delicious. By achieving this, consumers can take positive steps to improve their health and contribute to the transition towards more sustainable diets. The proposed solutions may be directly accessible to consumers or used with the guidance of professionals such as dietitians or nutritionists. Additionally, they may also be applicable to other stakeholders in the food supply chain, such as producers or retailers. Regardless, the primary beneficiaries of these solutions are consumers.

In this challenge area, DRG4FOOD has singled out specific technologies that could potentially be developed through submitted proposals. However, it's essential to emphasize that this list is not comprehensive, and other technologies or applications capable of effectively addressing the described challenge area are not ruled out. Please keep in mind that the text below offers examples of potential technologies, and it should not be perceived as an exclusive or conclusive list.

- Apps, for instance the ones that could be used during shopping activities
- AI technologies
- Food sensors, i.e., the ones providing a "real-time" status of the food
- GPS-based solutions
- Visualization tools and UX/UI design.

2.3. DRG4Food Toolbox and Enabling Technologies



A key reference for the DRG4FOOD Open Call #1 is the Responsible Technology Toolbox being iteratively curated throughout the DRG4FOOD program to proactively guide the development and implementation of technology and solutions according to the DRG playbook. The output of Call #1 will further complement the toolbox with suitably mature base enablers (as in order to be implemented in a pilot solution) particularly developed with a view to innovating responsible solutions in the food chain.

Modern software development has undergone a significant transformation in recent years, driven by the rapid advancement of technology, with innovations in system, network and architecture approaches, as well as the widespread adoption of open-source software with various licensing approaches. This evolution has given rise to new methodologies, tools and practices that have revolutionized the way software and solutions are developed, deployed, and maintained. Contemporary development effectively consists of different “Lego bricks” that are brought together as a combined solution and enabling technical architecture to develop new and innovative solutions.

These reference architectures, software components, or reusable libraries and frameworks, play a crucial role in modern software development. These components provide a foundation of baseline technologies that developers can integrate and build upon, saving time and effort that can be refocused on building the unique and specific aspects of their end solutions, rather than reinventing the wheel to get there.

An initial definition of the technologies for base enablers has emerged from an ongoing Map&Gap analysis as the following:

- Decentralised identities
- Disposable identities
- Self-sovereign identities
- Distributed ledger technology/blockchain
- Verifiable credentials
- Zero-knowledge proofs
- Privacy-enhancing technologies (PET)
- Responsible AI methods
- Other technologies (to ensure the inclusion of new technologies that might emerge during the coming years or that can be applied to the food & nutrition sector.

The DRG4FOOD toolbox aims to encompass enablers for the Definition, Design, Development and Deployment of software and solutions. While the baseline technology enablers are primarily focused on solution design and development this fits into a broader product lifecycle perspective relevant for ensuring DRGs can be maintained over time; enabling key design, development, and deployment (CI/CD and DevSecOps) aspects such as interoperability and automation, quality and cybersecurity as well as operations and business models (such as licensing, launch and maintenance) to be adequately aligned. Further modernization complementary to the DRGs are also considered through processes, protocols, platforms and tools such as for example containerization, (data) communication, repositories, automated code quality and testing, synthetic data, cryptography and decentralized data storage etc.

Table 5 Product Lifecycle perspective

Define	Design	Develop	Deploy
Planning	User Interfaces	Code / Design	Launch
Feasibility	System Interfaces	Integration	Support
Analysis	Network requirements	QA/Security testing	CI/CD
Prototype	Databases	Documentation	Maintenance



2.4. DRG4Food – Mandatory Requirements for Digital Responsibility

In order to verify if proposals for the DRG4FOOD Open Call #1 are contributing to a trustworthy digital ecosystem mandatory requirement in relation to the DRG framework were established.

These mandatory requirements for call participants were elaborated by the DRG4Food Project Consortium considering the most relevant scenarios of potential misalignments between the design of digital technologies and the interests of users in the realm of an evolving virtual food system.

Hence, call participants of Open Call #1 will be asked i) how their proposed enabling baseline technology is concretely enabling the realisation of at least one DRG and/or guiding criterion (i.e. how can the finalised technology be used to make a more trustworthy digital ecosystem a reality) ii) which specific plans and measures will be taken to comply with a predefined set of requirements of digitally responsible software development for the proposed enabling baseline technology, namely:

1. Team expertise in secure software design/cybersecurity;
2. Evaluation of cybersecurity threats, strategies for their mitigation;
3. Privacy by default and transparent, secure and user-friendly handling of personal data, where applicable;
4. Dataset integrity and potential dataset bias mitigation strategies, where applicable;
5. Facilitation of granular user control over data, where appropriate, and the establishment of comprehensive transparency measures, including data flows, technology, conflicts of interest, and business models;
6. Clarity and explainability of algorithmic output, where relevant, and assessment and mitigation of algorithmic bias, where applicable.

2.5. Means of submission

All proposals for DRG4Food Open Call #1 must be submitted through the dedicated DRG4Food page on the F6S platform. Access the page at: <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1>.

Submissions made through other channels will be automatically rejected.

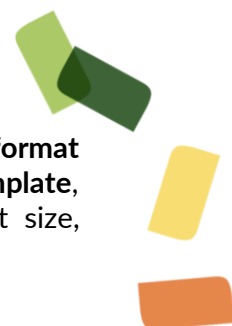
Any additional documents that may be required in later stages will be submitted through specified channels as communicated by the DRG4Food Project Consortium during the contracting phase.

2.6. Language

English is the official language for DRG4Food Open Call #1. Submissions made in any other language will not be evaluated. Throughout the entire execution of the DRG4Food accelerator program, English is the only official language. This implies that all requested deliverables must be submitted in English to be considered eligible.

2.7. Mandatory Documents. Format of Documentation

As part of your proposal submission, you must upload the following mandatory documents: Annex B - Technical Proposal, Annex C – Applicant Declaration of Honour (applicable to all entities), Annex D – Consortium Declaration of Honour, and Annex E – SME Declaration. You can download the document templates from the Call Page at <https://drg4food.eu/open-calls/>.



All documents requested in any of the phases must be submitted electronically in **PDF format** without printing restrictions. When completing the **Annex B: Technical Proposal Template**, ensure that the provided formatting of the document, including margins and font size, is maintained, and do not exceed the specified maximum of 12 pages.

2.8. Data Protection

To process and assess applications, DRG4Food will gather personal and industrial data. The handling of data submitted via the F6S platform for this purpose will be managed by INOSENS who shall act as data controller for the personal data collected in the purpose of carrying out the Open Call. The F6S platform's structure and operational protocols ensure that data management aligns with the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (EU) 2016/679 (GDPR). The processing of personal data carried out for the purpose of creating and using the F6S platform shall be considered an independent processing of personal data and shall be covered with the measures enumerated in the entity's privacy policy referred to below.

Importantly, it's worth noting that, in accordance with the data minimization principle, DRG4Food requests only the essential information necessary for conducting the evaluation processes or executing the funding program. The 'Annex G: Bank Account Information Form' and 'Annex F: Sub-grant Agreement Template' serve as reference materials and will only be requested if the applicant is accepted into the program.

For further details, please visit <https://www.f6s.com/privacy-policy> to review the F6S platform's data privacy policy and security measures and <https://drg4food.eu/> to review DRG4food's privacy notice.

2.9. Origin of the Funds

Chosen applicants will enter into a specific Sub-grant funding agreement with the DRG4Food consortium. **The financial resources tied to this Sub-grant funding agreement originate from the European project DRG4Food's funds and, as such, remain EU property until the final payment. The management rights to these funds have been transferred to DRG4Food project partners under the European Commission Grant agreement ID: 101086523.**

As outlined in **Annex E: Sub-grant Funding Agreement Template**, this connection between the sub-grantees and the EC via the DRG4Food project imposes certain obligations on the sub-grantees in relation to the EC. The responsibility lies with the sub-grantees to fulfill these obligations, while the DRG4Food consortium partners ensure they are communicated and understood.

2.10. Timeline

Submissions for the **DRG4Food Open Call #1** will be open from **October 9th, 2023, at 5:00 PM CET Brussels time**, until **December 11th, 2023, at 5:00 PM CET Brussels time**.

Proposals must be submitted before the deadline. No changes or modifications to proposals will be accepted after the call closes.

3. Eligibility Criteria

DRG4Food is calling for consortia comprised of 2-3 entities with diverse expertise to present proposals that showcase the power of data-driven innovation in reshaping the food system, emphasizing openness, sovereignty, fairness, and trust.

The subsequent criteria pertain to the eligibility of applicants, funding, and the nature of the proposals.



1. Proposals must be submitted strictly via the F6S platform's dedicated page for DRG4Food – Open Call #1: <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1>.
2. Must align with the specified target audience outlined in section 3.1..
3. Applicants need to be located in one of the countries deemed eligible in section 3.1.3.
4. All applications and accompanying documents must be provided exclusively in English.
5. Proposals are expected to submit the DRG4Food – Open Call #1 Technical Proposal Template (Annex B) and comply with its key guidelines.
6. The mandatory attachments include Annex C: Declaration of Honor, Annex D: Consortium Declaration of Honor and Annex E: SME Declaration Form.

3.1. Applicants' and Consortium Eligibility

For eligibility in the DRG4Food Open Call #1, all applicants and consortia must fulfill the criteria outlined in this section.

3.1.1. Types of Applicants

DRG4Food - Open Call #1 seeks to support projects developed by a consortium consisting of 2 to 3 partners, with a Coordinator leading the effort.

The following types of entities can apply together in a consortium:

- **Micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including startups**, as defined by EU law in accordance with EU recommendation 2003/361¹, developing data-driven solutions in the areas of Food Tracking, Personalised Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices.
- **Research and technology organisations (RTOs) and universities, and other non-profit research organizations**, whether public or private, working on advancing the state-of-the-art and addressing challenges—rooted in principles such as openness, user-centricity, sovereignty, and trust—from idea generation to real-world application.
- **Technology adopters/users in the food sector, particularly civil society institutions (e.g., NGOs) and consumer associations**, that will be testing and validating innovative solutions that meet their requirements and align with digital responsibility goals.

3.1.2. Consortium Requirements

To be eligible, consortia must comprise 2 to 3 entities, with either an SME or RTO serving as the consortium coordinator. It is mandatory for one of the partners to be an RTO or university, and if applicable, a third partner can be selected from a pool of SMEs, startups, RTOs, NGOs, or consumer associations.

Together, they must demonstrate their ability to engage users and contribute to the central mission of advancing digital transformation and data-driven innovation, with a particular emphasis on **data rights** and **Digital Responsibility Goals**. This is achieved through concise research cycles aimed at identifying and nurturing the most promising ideas.

- When there are 2 partners, one of them must be an SME (or startup), and the second partner must be an RTO. The selection process gives priority to advanced research to accelerate the entry of these projects into the market. It's vital to emphasize that this Open Call explicitly excludes apps and services that do not incorporate a research component into their innovation.
- When there are 3 partners, the third partner may be an SME (or startup), an NGO, or a consumer association (but three SMEs are not eligible).

¹ EC recommendation for Small and Medium- sized Enterprises (SMEs) 2003/361/.
https://ec.europa.eu/growth/smes/sme-definition_en



Note: All entities within the consortia must have verifiable VAT registration, which will be requested as part of the Declaration of Honour (Annex C). Unincorporated startups, even if the Coordinating entity on a particular application is registered, are not eligible.

Individual natural persons or entities applying alone are not eligible.

3.1.3. Eligible Countries

Eligibility is limited to applicants legally established in the following countries, collectively referred to as "Eligible Countries":

- The Member States (MS) of the European Union (EU), including their outermost regions.
- The Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) linked to the Member States²;
- Countries associated with Horizon Europe, as specified in the [List of Participating Countries in Horizon Europe](#), based on the latest publication by the European Commission (Version 2.6 – August 1st, 2023).

UK applicants are eligible based on the conditions established by the European Commission for participation in Horizon Europe at the time of the call's deadline.

Swiss entities are welcome to participate as Associated Partners, however, they will not receive funding from DRG4Food and should secure financing from SERI or through their existing third-party main project funds.

Note: As per [the European Commission's statement](#), organizations based in Russia are not eligible. DRG4Food retains the authority to modify these conditions in accordance with alterations to EU laws, directives, or regulations.

Broadly, the DRG4Food Open Call #1 aligns with the regulations established by the European Commission for the Horizon Europe R&D Programme concerning geographical coverage, eligibility criteria, and exclusions. These Horizon Europe rules hold precedence in this context.

Please be aware that if the selected applicant undergoes a change in its registration status to a country that is not eligible for funding (such as being acquired by a non-eligible country from North/South America, Asia) during the contracting or implementation phases, the applicant may face disqualification or contract termination.

3.1.4. Conflict of Interest

Applications will **not be accepted** from entities who are partners (beneficiaries) or affiliated entities/linked-third parties in the DRG4Food consortium or who are formally linked in any way to them. Any entity with a previous formal and legal connection to a DRG4Food beneficiary (e.g., spin-off), will not be accepted, unless a minimum of 2 years (as of 1 January 2023) has passed since the termination of the link.

Applicants must **not have any current and/or potential conflict of interest** with the DRG4Food Open Call #1 selection process and during the whole programme. Applicants must formally and immediately notify the DRG4Food coordinator of any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation.

All cases of **conflict of interest will be assessed case by case**. Applicants must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective evaluation and implementation of the project is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties, or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

² Entities from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT) are eligible for funding under the same conditions as entities from the Member States to which the OCT in question is linked.



If a conflict of interest is discovered and confirmed at the time of the evaluation process, the proposal will be considered as **non-eligible and will not be evaluated**.

3.1.5. Number of Proposals per Applicant. Multiple Submissions.

Given the competitive nature of this call and the need for each applicant organisation to focus on a single specific topic, the following guidelines should be noted:

- a) Only one proposal per applicant organisation is allowed for submission to this call, and only one proposal per applicant organisation will undergo evaluation.
- b) If an applicant organization submits multiple proposals, only the last one received (as determined by the system timestamp and irrespective of the challenge to which the proposal is being submitted) will be taken into consideration for evaluation.
- c) If the last submitted proposal is declared non-eligible or does not meet the evaluation threshold, the previously submitted proposals will not be considered for evaluation.
- d) In exceptional circumstances, research institutes, universities, and other non-profit research organizations are allowed to submit up to two applications from different groups or departments within the same entity. Each group or department must use a different F6S user account. However, it's important to note that only one proposal per applicant (legal entity) will be eligible for funding.
- e) Applicant organisations who receive funding through Open Call #1 are not eligible to apply for additional funding in DRG4Food Open Call #2.

3.2. Financial Eligibility

The budget allocated for Open Call #1 is €950,000. Any remaining budget will be utilized for Open Call 2.

The following financial conditions apply for proposals to be eligible:

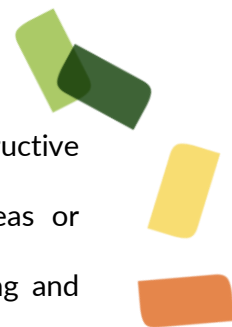
- The project budget can be between €150,000 and must not exceed €300,000.
- The total amount requested (not exceeding €300,000) must represent 100% of the total project costs, and cover personnel costs, other direct costs, and indirect costs (25% of personnel and other direct costs).
- All proposals must provide justifications of the planned costs and resources of the project following the guidelines and calculation rules provided in Annex B: Technical Proposal Template.

Upon project approval, lump-sum payments will be made after each of the three sprints, subject to the successful achievement of agreed-upon milestones and deliverables.

DRG4Food project follows the guidelines of the European Commission in terms of cost eligible for financing within its open calls. According to the [EU Grants AGA – Annotated Grant Agreement: V1.0 DRAFT- 01.04.2023](#) the following cost categories are considered eligible: project management activities; research activities; technical developments; testing and piloting activities; communication and promotion activities; travel (as required). **Subcontracting is not eligible in the DRG4Food Open Call #1.**

Additionally, the following types of activities are envisioned to qualify for financial support if they are cost-effective and directly contribute to the DRG4Food objectives and the DRG criteria set out in the call:

- **Developing and implementing pilot solutions** aimed at advancing alternative approaches to food system data sharing.
- **Advanced research** that can be rapidly brought to the market, focusing on understanding user requirements, and enhancing usability through inclusive design.



- **Design and development of open-source software**, including validation or constructive inquiry into existing or novel technical solutions.
- **Software engineering** efforts directed towards adapting to new usage areas or enhancing software quality.
- **Formal security proofs, security audits, setup, and design** of software testing and continuous integration.
- **Documentation** creation for researchers, developers, and end users.
- **Standardization activities** to align with recognized industry or technical standards.
- **Necessary measures** to support broader deployability, such as packaging solutions.
- **Participation in technical, developer, and community events** like hackathons, IETF, W3C, etc., including costs related to admission fees, travel, and subsistence.
- **Other activities** that are related to maintaining robust software development and deployment practices.
- **Project management** activities.
- **Out-of-pocket costs** associated with infrastructure essential for achieving the above objectives.

3.3. Other Conditions

Each applicant must confirm:

- Its project is based on the original works and going forward any foreseen developments are free from third party rights, or they are clearly stated;
- The project is based on work that has not been developed and offered as a commercial product or solution;
- It is not under liquidation or is not an enterprise under difficulty according to the [European Commission Regulation No 651/2014, art. 2.18](#);
- The participating organisations should not have been declared bankrupt or have initiated bankruptcy procedures;
- The organisations should not have convictions for fraudulent behaviour, other financial irregularities, and unethical or illegal business practices;
- It is not excluded from the possibility of obtaining EU funding under the provisions of both national and EU law, or by a decision of both national or EU authority.
- The project does not receive double funding from any other sources.

Important: Beneficiaries who receive financial support from DRG4Food via the open call will not become formal parties to the DRG4Food Grant Agreement. There is no need to modify the DRG4Food Grant Agreement to include the selected beneficiaries.



4. Open Call Submission, Selection, and Negotiation Process

Proposals submitted to the DRG4Food Open Call #1 undergo a single-stage submission process and are evaluated in two steps.

4.1. Proposal Preparation and Submission

The submission process for proposals to the DRG4Food Open Call #1 will follow the steps outlined in this section.

The **open call starts on October 9, 2023**. The proposal submission deadline is **December 11, 2023, at 5:00 PM CET (Brussels time)**.

4.1.1. Registration of Applicants

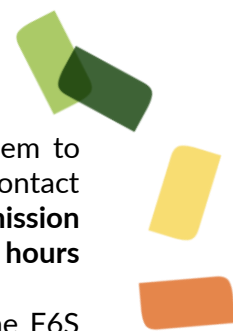
Applicants interested in submitting proposals must be registered on the DRG4Food F6S page (<https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1>). The F6S platform will serve as the primary interface for proposal management throughout the Open Call. Submissions made through any other channel will not be considered eligible.

A comprehensive applicant list will be compiled, including their essential details for statistical purposes and transparency. This list will also be shared with the European Commission to ensure transparency.

4.1.2. Preparation of Proposals and Mandatory Documentation

When preparing their proposal, applicants should take into account the following:

1. All applicants are required to fully complete the online application and provide responses to all mandatory questions. Additionally, they must upload all required documents exclusively through the following link: <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1>.
 - **Application Form:** This includes administrative questions that should be completed directly on the F6S platform at <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1>. It also encompasses general questions for statistical purposes. In addition, you are required to specify the primary challenge that your proposal will address, both on the application form and within the technical proposal.
 - **Mandatory Documents:** The following documents are required to be included with your application for submission:
 - **Annex B - Technical Proposal:** This should be submitted in PDF format exclusively. It outlines the project and is organized into several obligatory sections. Please take note that the technical annex offers guidance on the essential elements to be covered.
 - **Annex C – Applicant Declaration of Honour** (applicable to all entities);
 - **Annex D – Consortium Declaration of Honour;** and
 - (a) **Annex E – SME Declaration** (applicable to SMEs). These documents must be submitted along with the application form on F6S.
 - Applicants who do not agree to the terms and conditions and fail to provide the necessary information will not meet the eligibility criteria.
2. The following document templates are provided for reference and will only be requested if the applicant is accepted into the DRG4Food pilot program: **Annex F: Sub-grant Funding Agreement Template** and **Annex G: Bank Account Information Form**.
3. **Applicants are strongly advised to submit their proposals well in advance of the deadline.** If an applicant identifies an error in the proposal and the call deadline has not



yet passed, they may request the DRG4Food project consortium to allow them to resubmit the proposal. To request resubmission, please contact opencalls@drg4food.eu. **However, DRG4Food cannot guarantee that a resubmission will be possible if the request is received by the DRG4Food team less than 72 hours before the open call deadline.**

4. The open call deadline will not be extended unless a significant issue with the F6S platform renders the system inaccessible. If an extension is granted, all applicants will receive notification.
5. Failure to submit a proposal on time, regardless of the reason, such as network communication delays or working from multiple browsers or browser windows, will not be considered an extenuating circumstance. The timestamp recorded by the submission system will serve as the definitive time of receipt for the application.

4.1.3. Proposal and Solution TRL

Proposals must meet specific Technology Readiness Level (TRL) criteria. The TRL level at the time of submission should be a minimum of 4 or 5, and the proposed technology should have the potential to advance to TRL 7.

To support this, proof of the current TRL level must be included with the proposal submission. This information should comprise prototypes, data, test/trial feedback, consumer assessments, or any other relevant evidence that demonstrates the achievement of significant milestones at the preceding TRL level.

4.1.4. Data and Personal Data Management

The DRG4Food project is dedicated to upholding citizens' rights to personal data sovereignty, and this commitment extends to all participants in DRG4Food Open Call #1.

Applicants who submit proposals to the open call are expected to fully respect personal data rights and comply with relevant data protection regulations, notably the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). To facilitate this, applicants must adhere to the mandatory Digital Responsibility Goals (see 2.4), including the appropriate utilization of the Toolbox, as outlined in 2.3.

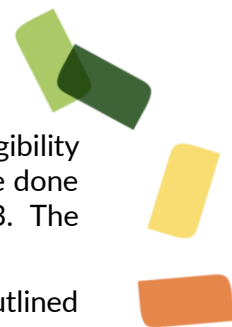
For pilot projects, it is essential to outline how they plan to handle and store personal data that cannot be accommodated within the data lake. Additionally, the proposal should address ethical and security considerations, as specified in Annex B. A comprehensive data management plan will be required and will undergo revision during the initial stages of the pilot, with guidance and support provided by the DRG4Food consortium as needed.

The selected projects will need to align the data they produce, as much as possible, with the FAIR data principles. Thus, the data shall aim to be Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable. These principles aim to provide a framework to ensure that research data is categorized and organized in an easily findable way, accessible to as many interested persons and entities as possible using metadata, easily transported from a terminal to another via the use of widely used filetypes, and easily reusable by research communities.

4.2. Proposal Evaluation and Selection

The evaluation of proposals is carried out by the DRG4Food project consortium, assisted by independent external experts. The DRG4Food project consortium takes care to ensure that the process remains fair and adheres to the principles delineated in the European Commission's regulations concerning proposal submission and evaluation.

4.2.1. Phase 1 – Eligibility Check



After Open Call #1 ends on December 11th, 2023, at 5:00 PM CET Brussels time, an eligibility check will be conducted to remove applications that don't meet the criteria. This will be done by DRG4Food's Open Call Manager and Treasurer (INOSENS) in December 2023. The eligibility check will confirm if the proposal meets the following criteria:

- a. Does the proposing consortia fulfill the consortium formation requirements as outlined in section 3.1? [Yes/No]
- b. Are the applicants legal entities established in an eligible Horizon Europe country and eligible for funding under Horizon Europe rules, as detailed in section 3.1.3 of this Guidelines for Applicants? [Yes/No]
- c. Does the proposal directly align with the Participation Tracks of DRG4Food Open Call #1, namely, Food Tracking, Targeted Nutrition, and Consumers' Food Choices, as defined in section 2.2? [Yes/No]?
- d. Has the participation rule, as defined in section 3.1.5, been followed regarding the number of proposals per applicant and multiple submissions, and confirm that there was no double submission of the proposal? [Yes/No]
- e. Is the proposal complete and submitted in English, including all required documents, and in accordance with the provided guidelines? Have all necessary documents, namely Annex B: Technical Proposal, Annex C: Applicant Declaration of Honor, Annex D: Consortium Declaration of Honor, and Annex E: SME Declaration, been correctly submitted? [Yes/No]
- f. Was the submission exclusively made through the F6S platform and within the specified deadline (11th December 2023, 5:00 PM CET Brussels time)? [Y/N]

As part of the eligibility check, applicants may be asked to provide further clarifications if their application raises concerns. These concerns could include issues such as ambiguity in information, apparent inconsistencies, and clear errors, among other possibilities.

In such instances, applicants will typically have a window of 3 working days from the date of notification to correct the situation or supply supplementary documents to finalize their initial application. If the requested corrections are not provided within the specified timeframe, their application will be considered non-eligible and will not proceed to the evaluation stage.

Non-eligible proposals will receive a rejection letter explaining the reasons (a to f) for their non-eligibility. Additional feedback will not be provided.

After the eligibility check, a shortlist of proposals will be generated for evaluation in the next phase of the process, Phase 2 – Remote Evaluation.

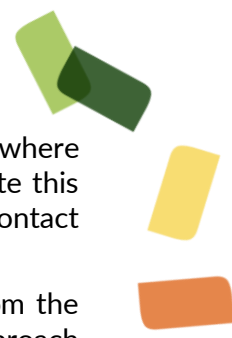
4.2.2. Phase 2 – Remote Evaluation

The evaluation process for the DRG4Food Open Call #1 involves collaboration between the DRG4Food Project Consortium and independent experts. To streamline this process and ensure efficiency, the F6S platform (<https://f6s.com/>) will be used.

Evaluators will be selected through a Call for Expressions of Interest, where experts with relevant expertise in the domains addressed by the Open Call and experience in evaluations will be invited to participate. These experts will be evaluated based on their qualifications, and a pool of evaluators will be established. The most highly qualified experts will be invited to evaluate the submitted proposals.

Evaluators will conduct their assessments independently, separate from their roles within their respective organizations, countries, or any other affiliations. They are committed to upholding principles of independence, impartiality, and objectivity throughout the evaluation process, maintaining professional conduct at all times.

Evaluators are bound by strict confidentiality, both before and after the evaluation process. They will enter an expert contract that includes instructions for maintaining confidentiality and



avoiding conflicts of interest before commencing their evaluation tasks. In cases where evaluators become aware of any conflicts of interest, they must promptly communicate this information to the DRG4Food Open Call Team. Importantly, experts should not initiate contact with applicants independently during the evaluation process.

Each proposal submitted for evaluation will be assessed by a pair of experts, one from the DRG4Food Project Consortium and another external evaluator. This collaborative approach ensures a thorough and fair evaluation of all proposals.

The assessment is conducted based on the following criteria:

Table 6 DRG4Food Open Call #2 description of evaluation criteria

Evaluation criteria (EC)	Description
<p>EC1. Technology Excellence and Innovation</p>	<p>(a) Alignment with DRG4Food challenges, promoting trust, citizen engagement, and user sovereignty, guided by DRGs, in line with EU’s FOOD 2030 policy.</p> <p>(b) Quality, relevance, and advancement of the state of the art for developing data-driven applications and addressing challenges related to responsibility, user-sovereignty, and trust in technology. building and operating responsible technology for a data-driven food system</p> <p>(c) Clarity, robustness, relevance, excellence, innovation, and novelty of the project objectives and concept.</p> <p>(e) Feasibility and rationale for advancing the TRL within the proposed project timeframe for a successful market launch.</p> <p>(f) Engagement of citizens/end users in co-designing features, solution development, and piloting/testing of the proposed data-driven solution.</p> <p>(g) Ethical and legal considerations associated with the proposed work and how they will be addressed.</p> <p>(h) Willingness to contribute to the DRG4Food toolbox with open source solution(s).</p>
<p>EC2. Data Responsibility, Transparency, and Alignment with DRGs</p>	<p>(a) Team expertise in secure software design/cybersecurity;</p> <p>(b) Evaluation of cybersecurity threats, strategies for their mitigation;</p> <p>(c) Privacy by default and transparent, secure and user-friendly handling of personal data, where applicable;</p> <p>(d) Dataset integrity and potential dataset bias mitigation strategies, where applicable;</p> <p>(e) Facilitation of granular user control over data, where appropriate, and the establishment of comprehensive transparency measures, including data flows, technology, conflicts of interest, and business models;</p> <p>(f) Clarity and explainability of algorithmic output, where relevant, and assessment and mitigation of algorithmic bias, where applicable;</p> <p>(g) Potential to enable the realisation of at least one DRG and/or guiding criterion.</p>
<p>EC3. Business Viability, Scalability, and Impact</p>	<p>(a) Identification and demonstration of Unique Selling Points (USPs) aligned with user needs, market research, and a clear value proposition for consumers.</p> <p>(b) Comprehensive market fitness assessment, including competitor analysis.</p> <p>(c) Credibility of the business value model, financial projections, and a robust commercialization strategy for quick scaling to European and international markets.</p> <p>(d) Quality of measures for result communication and exploitation, including Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) management, and the well-defined and committed role of the exploiting party.</p>
<p>EC4. Consortium Capability, Team</p>	<p>(a) Clarity and feasibility of the work plan.</p> <p>(b) Clearly defined and monitorable milestones for progress measurement, as well as appropriateness and feasibility of deliverables.</p>



Qualifications, and Resource Allocation	(c) Comprehensive management procedures, including risk assessment and mitigation. (d) Adequate allocation of human and financial resources aligned with objectives. (e) Demonstrated consortium expertise, competences (e.g., technical, marketing, business), collaborative strength, and synergies of consortium for development and commercialization.
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The evaluation process will use a scoring scale ranging from 1 to 5 for each criterion, without allowing for half-point scores. Each score will correspond to specific criteria and their associated rationale, as outlined in Table 4.

Table 7 DRG4Food Open Call #1 scoring rationale

Score	Rationale
1 / POOR	The proposal addresses the criterion in an inadequate manner 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.

The final score, including scores for each criterion, is determined by calculating the average of the scores provided by the evaluators. A minimum threshold of three (3) is set for each criterion, meaning that any criterion with a score below three is not in the conditions of being funded.

Each evaluator will document their individual assessments of each proposal through an Individual Evaluation Report (ISR). Subsequently, the Evaluation Panel will compile an Evaluation Summary Report (ESR) reflecting the consensus opinions and scores agreed upon by the evaluators.

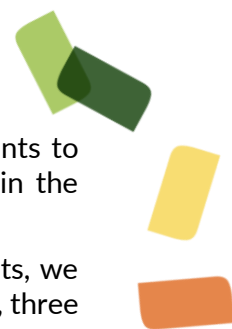
4.2.3. Phase 3 – Ranking of Proposals and Selection

Upon completion of the remote evaluation process, all proposals will be consolidated into a unified list and ranked accordingly. The primary criterion for ranking proposals will be their overall score, which is derived from the average scores provided by the evaluators. In cases where multiple proposals share the same ranking position, tie-breaking procedures will be implemented. These tie-breaks will prioritize proposals with the highest scores in specific criteria, following the subsequent order:

- EC3. Business Viability, Scalability, and Impact
- EC1. Technology Excellence and Innovation
- EC2. Data Responsibility, Transparency, and Alignment with DRGs
- EC4. Consortium Capability, Team Qualifications, and Resource Allocation
- Date of submission: Proposals submitted earlier will be prioritized.

If, after applying the tie-break rules, there are still proposals that remain in the same position, priority will be given to those with a more balanced gender representation in the consortium, aligning with European guidelines on gender equality³.

³ <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffcb06c3-200a-11ec-bd8e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en/format-PDF/source-232129669>



The DRG4Food team retains the authority to conduct interviews with chosen applicants to address any inquiries regarding their submitted proposals and to provide assistance in the evaluation process.

Based on the available budget of EUR 950,000 and the budget requests from applicants, we will select and invite 3-6 proposals to enter the contract negotiation phase. Additionally, three proposals will be placed on a reserve list.

Each applicant will receive the following via email:

- An **Evaluation Summary Report (ESR)**, which includes the evaluation results and feedback. The ESR will be sent after approval by the DRG4Food consortium and the evaluators.
- An **evaluation letter** indicating the decision, whether the proposal has been accepted, rejected, or placed on the reserve list, along with instructions on the subsequent steps, such as negotiations or reserve list status.

4.2.4. Scientific misconduct and research Integrity

Issues of scientific misconduct and research integrity are taken very seriously. In line with the Horizon Europe Rules for Participation, appropriate action such as disqualification of the application, termination of the Grant Agreement Preparation phase or, if the Grant Agreement has been signed, the implementation of liquidated damages and financial penalties, suspension of payments, recoveries and termination of the Grant Agreement, will be taken against any applicants/beneficiaries found to have misrepresented, fabricated or plagiarised any part of their proposal.

4.3. Redress Procedure

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

A redress request can only be made on procedural grounds, supported by clear evidence for the complaint.

In such a case, the review committee, comprising at a minimum TWINDS as the Project Coordinator, INOSENS as the Open Call Manager and Treasurer, and Privanova as Ethics and Legal Manager will examine the applicant's request for a redress. The committee's role is to ensure a coherent interpretation of such requests, and equal treatment of applicants. Requests for redress must:

- Be related to the evaluation process or eligibility checks.
- Clearly describe and provide evidence of the procedural grounds for your complaint (in English).
- Sent by the entity's legal representative that has also submitted the proposal.

The committee will review the complaint and will recommend an appropriate course of action. If there is clear evidence of a shortcoming that could affect the eventual funding decision, it is possible that all or part of the proposal will be re-evaluated. Please note:

- This procedure is concerned only with the general evaluation and/or eligibility checking process. The committee will not question the scientific or technical judgement of the evaluators.
- A re-evaluation will only be carried out if there is evidence of a shortcoming that affects the final decision on whether to fund the proposal or not. This means, for



example, that a problem relating to one evaluation criterion will not lead to a re-evaluation if a proposal has failed anyway on other criteria.

- Provide a clear description and evidence of the procedural grounds for your complaint.
- The request sender must be the legal representative of the entity that submitted the proposal.

Kindly note that anonymous complaints or those lacking the specified information will not be taken into consideration.

You will receive the findings of the review committee within 2 days of receiving the redress request. If a final response cannot be provided at that time, the reply will specify when a response will be given.

Only a single request for redress per application will be reviewed by the committee. If multiple redress requests are submitted, only the first one received will be taken into consideration. If an application is approved for re-evaluation, it will undergo re-evaluation promptly and before the contract preparation phase.

In the case that an application subject to the redress procedure is re-evaluated and achieves a higher evaluation score, it will be included in the final overall ranking. Moreover, if the application under the redress procedure secures a higher rank than the last application on the initial funding list, it will be declared the winner.

4.4. Sub-project negotiation and onboarding

Subsequently, following the completion of the evaluation for Open Call #1 and the subsequent selection of sub-projects, the DRG4Food Open Call Manager and Treasurer (INOSENS), in conjunction with the project Coordinator (TWINDS), will initiate the contract preparation phase. This collaboration will involve working closely with the designated representatives of the chosen sub-projects. The process will involve thorough administrative and financial checking (and may include technical or ethical/security negotiations) taking into account evaluators' comments. Depending on individual circumstances, arrangements might be made for a phone call or teleconference to address specific points of clarification on a case-by-case basis.

The primary goal of this contract preparation process is to ensure compliance with the legal requirements governing the relationship between the DRG4Food consortium and each beneficiary of Open Call #1. The items covered will be:

Inclusion of the comments in the Evaluation Summary Report of the proposals and mapping to the Sub-grant agreement (contract).

Proof of legal existence

- Submit documents such as the Company Register, Official Journal entries, or related records that show the organization's name, legal address, and registration number.
- If applicable, include a copy of a document validating Intra EU VAT registration, particularly if the VAT number isn't evident on the registration extract or equivalent.
- Provide legal proof confirming that the applicant's organization is not undergoing liquidation or bankruptcy proceedings.

Bank Account Information Form

The designated account for fund transfers must be specified using a financial information form, which should be signed by the relevant entity, and bank account holder. Normally, the



account holder will be the coordinator of the chosen project, representing a consortium of legal entities. The financial information should not be older than three months.

It's important to note that the Subgrantee bears full responsibility for the accuracy of the bank account information provided through Annex G. In the event of, for instance, an incorrect IBAN being provided, resulting in the DRG4Food team proceeding with a transfer to that account, any costs associated with the transfer (including expenses for returning the funds from the incorrect bank account and/or expenses for initiating a new transfer) will be deducted from their grant transfer. In the unlikely circumstance that the DRG4Food team is unable to recover the funds sent to the incorrect bank account, the beneficiary responsible for the erroneous IBAN will not be eligible to claim that payment.

Subgrant Agreement

This agreement is signed in three copies by the representative of the beneficiary/beneficiaries, followed by the Open Call Manager and Treasurer (INOSENS), and finally, the Coordinator (TWINDS) representing the DRG4Food Project Consortium. Please carefully review the contents of the document presented in Annex F.

The DRG4Food Consortium requires this information within specified deadlines. Failure to meet the requested deadlines will result in the immediate termination of the agreement process. Sub-project negotiations should be completed within a 2-week timeframe. In cases of significant reasoning, the DRG4Food Open Call Manager (INOSENS) may grant an additional week. If negotiations are not concluded within the stipulated timeframe, the application will be automatically rejected, and the subsequent application from the reserve list will be considered.



5. DRG4Food Pilot Program

5.1. Mentors

Each sub-project will be assigned at least one mentor. The mentor will communicate with the sub-project on a regular basis and order to overview the progress and provide technical or business advice.

5.2. Reviews

During every stage of sub-project implementation, a thorough review will be carried out by the DRG4Food review committee. This committee comprises, at a minimum, TWINDS in the role of Project Coordinator, INOSENS serving as the Open Call Manager and Treasurer, and Privanova responsible for Ethics and Legal matters.

Sub-project coordinators are required to submit all relevant deliverables at least one (1) week prior to the scheduled review, ensuring adequate time for evaluation.

After receiving the deliverable, it will be evaluated by the DRG4Food review committee, which will include an online meeting. During this review, members of the sub-project consortium will be expected to present their work, address inquiries, and demonstrate their pilot project. The feedback provided may entail requests for adjustments to the deliverable. Upon formal acceptance of the deliverable, the DRG4Food Project Coordinator will notify the Treasurer, facilitating the release of payment.

5.3. Payments

Each sub-project selected through the open call will be awarded funding through a lump sum arrangement, as outlined in the contract between the DRG4Food project consortium and the chosen project representative. More specifically, each sub-project deliverable will be associated with a predetermined cost, clearly specified in the sub-contract. This cost represents the total amount designated for each third party within the project consortium for their respective activities. Once a deliverable undergoes review and receives a favorable evaluation, its associated cost becomes eligible for payment. In cases where deliverables are not accepted during a review, they will be re-evaluated in the subsequent review cycle. If the final review cycle determines non-acceptance, the cost of these deliverables will not be disbursed to the sub-project, and their cost will be automatically deducted from the subcontract.

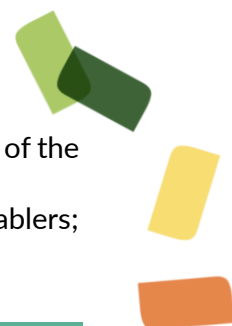
Based on the results of the review and acceptance of respected deliverables, payment will be made towards the subgrantees in the following modalities:

Phase 1 - Setting up and planning for a trustworthy data-driven food system

- **Duration:** 1-month;
- **Activities:** deliver a detailed Detailed Pilot Specification and Design Report, including objectives, milestones, KPIs, timeline & distribution of resources;
- **Deliverable:** Report on the activity plan;
- **Support:** Review proposed sub- project workplan and alignment with the DRG4Food project to benefit from its technology enablers;
- **Funding released:** Up to 30% of the sub-project budget.

Phase 2 - Digital responsibility-driven innovation, research and piloting

- **Duration:** 3-8 months;
- **Activities:** Implement workplan defined in Phase 1, including delivery of proposed solution and its piloting;



- **Deliverable:** Pilot Implementation and Validation Report on the technical aspects of the solution developed and piloted;
- **Support:** Technical support on the integration of DRG4Food technology enablers; support in addressing technical issues;
- **Funding released:** Up to 50% of the sub-project budget.

Phase 3 - Scaling up – Bring your digital solution to market

- **Duration:** 1-3 months;
- **Activities:** Present to external actors the results achieved and prepare a commercialization/business sustainability strategy;
- **Deliverable:** A comprehensive report in the form of a business plan, encompassing the Business Value Model and Market Entry Strategy. This report will outline the conducted activities and provide a strategy for ensuring sustainability beyond the project's completion;
- **Support:** Business support in identifying activities (e.g., business modelling) and actors (e.g., investors) to support commercialisation and the business strategy;
- **Funding released:** Payment of final 20% of the sub-project budget.

Payment from the DRG4Food project (Treasurer) to the sub-project will be facilitated through the sub-project coordinator organization. It's important to note that the DRG4Food project is not responsible for verifying or monitoring the actual disbursement of funds to individual consortium participants. Instead, the sub-project coordinator bears the responsibility of distributing the funding to consortium members in accordance with the sub-contract terms that have been agreed upon. This distribution should align with the funding allocation per deliverable and per party as specified in the sub-contract.

5.4. Support Services offered by DRG4Food to Third Parties

5.4.1. DRG4FOOD Guidance, Materials and Tools for Digital Responsibility

Receive access to a repository of hand-picked resources to support the development of responsible technology and compliance with the DRG framework, including resources such as comprehensible governmental guidelines, industry best practices, standards, research findings, and tools for evaluation, providing a diverse and integrated view.

5.4.2. DRG4Food Toolbox

The DRG4FOOD toolbox is at the heart of the DRG4FOOD project; selecting and referencing available technology enablers and solutions that have been mapped to a framework of digital food system (technical) capabilities and requirements focused on the projects key use cases.

In line with building the responsible technology toolbox, call 1 of the open calls is focused on building enablers to develop responsible solutions in the food chain. Call 2 is focused on building the actual solutions.

See more details in the DRG4Food document D5.1 Requirements for Virtual Food Systems.

5.4.3. Business Guidance and Investor Readiness

Receive customized coaching and mentoring from experienced teams throughout your pilot project. Building meaningful connections in the business world, sharing industry insights, forging valuable relationships, and acquiring essential knowledge are essential elements for success. Our program smoothly guides you toward investor readiness by assisting with business planning, investment strategy, sales, and team development.



5.4.4. Communication Support

DRG4Food offers extensive visibility, promotional assistance, and networking prospects within the DRG4Food project ecosystem. Selected third-party innovators will enjoy access to communication resources and co-branding materials, be showcased on the DRG4Food project website, have the chance to be interviewed and promoted through diverse media platforms, receive invitations to participate in prestigious events, and join a vibrant network of innovators, investors, industry players, and government authorities.



6. Additional Considerations

The Subgrantees selected for this initiative are recipients of indirect funding from the European Commission. Consequently, they bear the responsibility to appropriately utilize the provided funding and ensure that all beneficiaries adhere to the obligations outlined in the specific requirements of Horizon Europe, as outlined in the overarching HORIZON program section HORIZON.2.6 - Food, Bioeconomy Natural Resources, Agriculture and Environment. (This pertains to the topic: HORIZON-CL6-2022-GOVERNANCE-01-10 - Piloting approaches and tools to empower citizens to exercise their "data rights" in the field of food and nutrition.)

Comprehensive specifics and guidelines regarding all beneficiary responsibilities are outlined within the sub-grant agreement.

6.1. Responsibilities of Beneficiaries

6.1.1. Conflict of Interest

The Subgrantee representative must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the subproject is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests'). At the same time, applicants cannot be affiliated with consortium partners, nor can they be employees of the consortium partners. Additionally, they should not serve as members of the DRG4Food Ethics Advisory Board. All potential conflicts of interest will be subject to thorough evaluation.

If a conflict of interest is discovered and confirmed at the time of the evaluation process, the proposal will be considered as non-eligible and will not be evaluated.

In cases where any situation constituting or potentially leading to a conflict of interests arises, it is mandatory to promptly inform the DRG4Food consortium. Immediate measures must be taken to rectify the situation. The DRG4Food consortium retains the authority to assess the appropriateness of the measures taken and may require additional corrective actions within a specified timeframe.

If the Subgrantee representative breaches any of its obligations, the Sub-grant agreement may be automatically terminated. Moreover, if the Sub-grant Agreement is terminated due to a breach made by the Subgrantee, the DRG4Food consortium reserves the right to suspend further payments to the Subgrantee and claim the Subgrantee the full refund of all payments made to the Subgrantee up to date.

6.1.2. Financial Audit and Controls

At any point during the sub-project's execution and up to five years post its conclusion, the European Commission (EC) retains the authority to arrange external audits, reviews, or checks. These may be conducted by independent auditors or EC services, including the European Anti-Fraud office (OLAF).

The audit process commences upon receipt of the relevant EC letter and encompasses financial, systemic, and other aspects related to grant agreement execution. These audits are conducted confidentially.

The Subgrantee is obliged to provide the EC with comprehensive and accurate information and data upon request. This information ensures verification of proper grant agreement management and compliance with its provisions, including precise cost charging. The Subgrantee must maintain all sub-project deliverables and necessary documents, including authenticated electronic copies, for up to five years after the project's end. These materials should be available for EC review during audits.



To facilitate audits, the Subgrantee must allow EC services and authorized external bodies on-the-spot access to relevant locations, computer and accounting data, and all essential audit information. Such data must be readily available and may need to be provided in a suitable format.

Based on financial audit findings, a preliminary report will be drafted and shared with the concerned Subgrantee. They will have one month to provide observations, with any subsequent observations or documents potentially not considered after this deadline. The final report will be delivered to the concerned beneficiary within two months of the aforementioned deadline.

The EC will take necessary actions based on audit conclusions, including the issuing of recovery orders for payments made and the application of applicable sanctions.

The European Court of Auditors holds similar rights as the EC, particularly access rights for checks and audits, while following its own regulations.

Furthermore, the EC may carry out on-the-spot checks and inspections in line with Council Regulation (Euratom, EC) No 2185/96 of 11 November 1996, which aims to safeguard the European Communities' financial interests against fraud and other irregularities.

6.1.3. Promoting the Action and Visibility of EU funding

Subgrantees are required to actively promote their sub-projects, the DRG4Food project, and its results. This involves providing their project descriptions upon the DRG4Food Consortium's request and highlighting the financial support from the European Commission.

Unless otherwise specified by the European Commission or the DRG4Food coordinator, or if not feasible, any communication endeavor related to the project (including electronic media, social platforms, etc.), any publicity including presentations at conferences or seminars, any informational or promotional materials (such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations), and any infrastructure, equipment, and significant outcomes financed by the grant must adhere to the following guidelines:

- a) Display the EU Emblem
- b) Display the DRG4Food Logo
- c) Include the Following Text:

"This project has indirectly received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under project DRG4Food (grant agreement No 101086523)."

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

Any publicity made by the Subgrantee with respect to the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author's views and that the EC or DRG4Food consortium are not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the DRG4Food consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- the name of the Subgrantees,
- contact addresses of the Subgrantee,



- the general purpose of the sub-project,
- the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the subproject; after the final payment, and the amount of the financial contribution actually received,
- the geographic location of the activities carried out,
- the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground,
- the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the subproject, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication,
- the publishable reports submitted to DRG4Food,
- any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and DRG4Food in the framework of the sub-project.

The Subgrantee shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and DRG4Food does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the Subgrantee representative, the DRG4Food consortium, if such permission is provided by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary's security, academic or commercial interests.

Subgrantee representative(s) are permitted to disclose confidential information to the DRG4Food consortium and selected evaluators, who will be bound by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

Applicants are required to confirm that all proposed services, including their delivery and maintenance methods, have been reviewed to ensure alignment with relevant legislation on data protection, privacy, and fundamental rights.

6.2. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)

6.2.1. DRG4Food Consortium

The DRG4Food Consortium itself will not retain an equity stake in any applicant's organisation, nor will it retain any IPR.

6.2.2. Beneficiaries

The results and intellectual property rights (IPR) developed during the sub-granted project's implementation will be exclusively owned by the respective partner or consortium. Applicants are advised to incorporate IPR concerns, and the dissemination of outcomes generated through DRG4Food funding into their internal Consortium Agreement.

As the DRG4Food project assists beneficiaries in creating favorable conditions for their solutions to penetrate the market and achieve commercial viability, it's also anticipated that beneficiaries will contribute by sharing results openly. While the results and intellectual property rights (IPR) will remain with the beneficiaries, they are encouraged to share parts or the entirety of the code/algorithms behind their solution through the DRG4Food Toolbox as open source. Additionally, all funded projects must prioritize responsible development and operation of data-driven solutions by implementing DRGs into relevant project aspects.

6.2.3. Evaluators

Prior to accessing the proposal database, every evaluator will be required to sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). This step is taken to safeguard the intellectual property of the applicants.



6.3. Linked Applicants

When multiple linked applicants submit proposals, they must explicitly highlight distinctions in technical aspects, market strategies, and team compositions to avoid any potential for double funding. To address such concerns, DRG4Food reserves the right to assign these applications to the same group of evaluators. If doubts persist after the evaluation process, all linked applications may be excluded from consideration.

6.4. Ethics, Data Protection and Confidentiality

In terms of transparency and statistical reporting, a list of applicants containing basic information will be compiled and shared with the EC for project communication materials. However, this list will not be made public.

The final list of awarded projects and SME applicants/beneficiaries will be publicly disclosed, including project names, abstracts, entity names, entity types, countries of origin, project results, durations, and budgets.

During the execution of sub-projects and for a period of up to five years after their completion, all parties involved are required to maintain the confidentiality of any data, documents, or materials marked as "confidential information" during the Sub-grant Agreement signing.

Upon the Subgrantee's request, the Commission and the DRG4Food consortium may jointly decide to extend the confidentiality period for such information beyond the initial five years. This extension will be explicitly detailed in the Sub-grant Agreement (Annex F). If information attains confidential status either during the subproject's execution or through verbal communication, this status will be recognized only when approved by the DRG4Food Coordinator and formally confirmed in writing within 15 days of oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed, confidential information shall be used exclusively for the purpose of Sub-grant Agreement implementation.

The representative(s) of the Subgrantee may share confidential information with the DRG4Food consortium and the designated reviewers, who will be required to sign a dedicated Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

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

6.5. Liability

The DRG4Food consortium and the European Commission bear no liability for the actions or oversights of the applicant in relation to the selected sub-granted project. They shall not be responsible for any issues arising from products, processes, or services developed in the sub-granted project, including anomalies in their functioning or performance. If the subgrantee causes harm to a third party, they are solely responsible for any resulting damage, and the DRG4Food Consortium bears no responsibility for such damage.



7. Contact Information

Applicants for the DRG4Food Open Call #1 will solely receive updates and information via the DRG4Food website at <https://drg4food.eu/open-calls/>, ensuring transparency and equal access to information for all participants.

No binding information will be provided via any other means (e.g., telephone or email).

- To start the application process, please use the following link: <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1>.
- Have questions? Join our Guidelines Webinars to delve into the application process, requirements, eligibility criteria, and challenges. Reserve your spot for Webinar #1 on October 12th at 3:30 PM CET via <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-guidelines-webinar-1>. Webinar #2 on November 21st at 10:30 AM CET at <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-guidelines-webinar-2>.
- If you require assistance in finding partners and assembling a consortium for Open Call #1, please don't hesitate to reach out. We are here to support you in this process. To request assistance, please complete the Meet Your Match request form at <https://www.f6s.com/drg4food-open-call-1-matchmaking/apply>. Please note that our matchmaking service facilitates introductions but does not guarantee selection or outcomes in Open Call #1. Participants should exercise due diligence when evaluating potential collaborations.
- Should you encounter any technical issues related to the application platform, don't hesitate to contact the DRG4Food Open Call support team at opencalls@drg4food.eu. The technical team stands ready to provide assistance to the best of their ability, up until December 8th at 5:00 PM CET (72 hours before the deadline). Please note that any requests received after this time will not be considered or answered.